

# Healthy Living Newsletter

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## **A Word About Salt**

- All Americans should limit their sodium intake to no more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium (about 1 teaspoon) a day.
- People with high blood pressure or heart failure, and people over 50 should limit salt to less than 1,500 mg per day.
- This includes all sodium consumed, whether in cooking or at the table, or already present in food products. In fact, processed foods account for most of the salt and sodium Americans consume.
- Main sources of sodium in the average U.S. diet:
  - 5% added while cooking
  - 6% added while eating
  - 12% from natural sources
  - 77% from processed and prepared foods.

Sources: [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com) &  
[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) &

## **Child Safety Tip**

Keep all drugs in medicine cabinets or other secure places children can not reach. Avoid taking medicines in front of children, who like to imitate adults. Do **not** call medicine “candy”.



## **High Blood Pressure**

### **Definition**

- ❖ It is often stated as two numbers. Systolic pressure, the upper number, represents the pressure when the heart contracts. Diastolic pressure, the second number, represents the pressure when the heart rests between beats.

### **Recommended Blood Pressure Levels**

- ❖ Blood Pressure Category – **Normal**  
Systolic – less than 120mm Hg / Diastolic – less than 80-89mm Hg
- ❖ Blood Pressure Category – **Prehypertension**  
Systolic – 120-139mm Hg / Diastolic – 80-89mm Hg
- ❖ Blood Pressure Category – **Stage 1**  
Systolic – 140-159mm Hg / Diastolic – 90-99mm Hg
- ❖ Blood Pressure Category – **Stage 2**  
Systolic – 160mm Hg or higher / Diastolic – 100mm Hg or higher

### **Statistics**

- ❖ More than 50 million people in the United States have high blood pressure.
- ❖ Nearly 30 percent of people with high blood pressure do not know they have it.
- ❖ Another 36 percent either are not on medication or do not have their blood pressure adequately controlled.
- ❖ One in three cases of heart failure in women results from high blood pressure.
- ❖ Blood pressure tends to get higher as women age. More than half of women over age 50 suffer from high blood pressure.
- ❖ High blood pressure is two to three times more common in women taking birth control pills. The risk is especially high in women who take the Pill and are overweight or obese.
- ❖ Women who have had a heart attack are less likely to experience a second one if they lower their blood pressure.
- ❖ During pregnancy, some women may develop Preeclampsia, a condition related to high blood pressure and the presence of protein in pregnant women’s urine, is the second leading cause of maternal death in the United States.
- ❖ The prevalence of high blood pressure among African-Americans is the highest in the world. Black women are especially prone to high blood pressure. They have an 85 percent higher rate of medical care visits for high blood pressure than white woman.

Sources: [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) & *UPS Wellness Guide – Road Map To Health*



## Bike-to-Work Week (May 12 – 16)

### Rules Of The Road For Bicyclists

- Ride on the right. Riding against traffic is a major cause of bicycle accidents.
- Be predictable. Avoid sudden swerves and stops.
- Be visible. Wear bright, reflective clothing. Use lights and reflectors in low-light conditions.
- Follow and obey signs, signals, and pavement markings.
- Signal when you are turning or stopping. Look over your left shoulder for traffic before you make a move. This also signals motorists.
- Yield to pedestrians.
- Watch for road hazards such as broken glass, gravel, and potholes.

Source: BIKE TO WORK

### Allergy Tests

- **Skin Prick Test** – A test where a needle is used to scratch the skin with a small amount of allergen. A response can usually be seen within 15 to 20 minutes.
- **Intradermal Test** – A test where an allergen is injected just underneath the skin. Intradermal tests are generally used when results from a skin prick test are unclear.
- **Challenge Test** – A test used to confirm an allergy to specific substances. A doctor will administer small, but increasing amounts of a suspected allergen until an allergic response is noticed. Due to the risk of anaphylaxis, this should only be performed in a controlled setting.

Source: [www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org)

### Child Safety Tip

Be careful when giving over-the-counter cough and cold medicine to children. The FDA earlier this year warned parents not to give these products to children younger than two because of potentially life-threatening side effects.

If you are considering the possibility of changing your method of getting to work, there are a few tips that you might like to consider:

1. If you can walk a mile, you can easily pedal five. Most people, even if they're not in top shape, can walk three. So pedaling anywhere between 5 to 15 miles to work generally should not pose a problem. Remember, it's not a race. You just need to pedal comfortably.
2. A big bonus to bike commuting is all the calories you will burn. An average 150-pound person will burn about 500 calories riding a leisurely paced 30 minutes to work and 30 minutes home.
3. The average cost of a new car in the U.S is \$13,532. The average cost of a new bicycle in the U.S is \$385.
4. The average annual price of keeping an automobile running is at least \$3,000. The cost of running a bike for a year is less than \$300.
5. More than 60 percent of Americans are overweight or obese, and rates of obesity related diseases such as diabetes are soaring. Ride your bike to work and you no longer need to make time to exercise. Rack up just three hours of riding time a week and you can slash your risk of heart disease and stroke in half.

While reviewing the advantages of commuting to work by bicycle, you also need to be aware of bicycle security. Here are some tips for protecting your bicycle:

- Use a high quality, non tubular key-based u-lock.
- Use multiple locking techniques – u-lock and a chain / cable with a padlock.
- Remove any quick-release components such as the front wheel and saddle.
- Lock all wheels and the frame to a bike rack.
- If possible, lock the bike in a covered area with no exposure to rain, water, excessive humidity, or wind.

Source: BIKE TO WORK

## Tips to Control Indoor Allergens

1. **Control dust mites.** Keep surfaces in the home clean and uncluttered. Bare floors and walls are best, particularly in the bedroom. If you must have carpet, throw rugs that can be washed or low-pile carpets are better.
2. **Vacuum once or twice weekly.** Vacuuming helps to keep allergens to a minimum. If you have allergies, wear a dust mask while doing housework. Use a damp or treated cloth for dusting. Leave the house for several hours after cleaning it.
3. **Prevent animal dander.** Most doctors suggest that people allergic to animal dander not keep household pets with feathers or fur. If you decide to keep a pet, bar it from the bedroom and keep the door closed. Cover vents with dense material like cheesecloth. Because animal allergens are sticky, you need to replace wall-to-wall carpet with bare floors or at least a low pile carpet.
4. **Prevent entry of pollen by keeping windows and doors closed.** Air conditioning in warm weather is best and also helps control dust mites by reducing humidity. Change filters often in window units.
5. **Avoid mold spores.** Reduce moisture around the bathroom, kitchen, and other water areas of the home. Dehumidifiers will help reduce both mold and dust mites. Limit yourself to a few house plants. Fix all leaks and other causes of damp area. Clean moldy surfaces.
6. **Control cockroaches.** Do not leave food or garbage uncovered. Use poison baits, boric acid, and traps rather than chemical agents that can irritate rhinitis and asthma.



## Avoid Insect Stings

The following are some precautions to help avoid insect stings:

- ❖ Avoid wearing sandals or walking barefoot in grass. Honeybees and bumblebees forage on white clover, a weed that grows in lawns throughout the country.
- ❖ Do not drink from open beverage cans. Stinging insects will crawl inside a can attracted by the sweet beverage.
- ❖ When eating outdoors, try to keep food covered at all times.
- ❖ Avoid sweet-smelling perfumes, hair sprays, colognes, and deodorants.
- ❖ Avoid wearing bright-colored clothing.
- ❖ Yard work and gardening should be done with caution.
- ❖ Keep prescribed medications handy at all times and follow the attached instructions if you are stung. These medications are for immediate emergency use while in route to a hospital emergency room.

Source: [www.medem.com](http://www.medem.com)

## Beware of Poison Ivy, Poison Oak, and Poison Sumac

- **Poison ivy** has shiny green leaves that grow in groups of three. Poison ivy may grow as a vine or as a low shrub.
- **Poison oak** also has leaves grouped in three. It grows as a low shrub, which may have clusters of green or white berries.
- **Poison sumac** has 7 – 13 leaves found in pairs with a single leaf at the end. These long, smooth leaves are bright orange and velvet-like in the spring. They become dark green and glossy on top and light green underneath. Sumac grows as a tree in swampy areas.

To avoid these plants, keep covered up while outdoors. Wear long pants, long sleeves, and gloves when working in your yard. Stay on trails while hiking or camping in the woods. Source: [www.georgia.gov](http://www.georgia.gov)

# Bee Stings and Allergic Reactions

One of the many things to be aware of during the spring and summer season is the possibility of bee stings. Allergic reaction to bee stings occurs when a person becomes sensitized to the venom from a previous sting.

Ordinarily, bee venom is not toxic and will only cause local pain and swelling. The allergic reaction comes when the immune system is over sensitized to the venom and produces antibodies to it. Histamines and other substances are released into the bloodstream, causing blood vessels to dilate and tissues to swell. Severe reactions can lead to anaphylactic shock, a life-threatening series of symptoms including swelling of the throat and difficulty breathing. People who develop an allergy to bee stings should carry prescription bee sting kits to counteract the reaction to bee venom.

### First Aid

- Remove the stinger if still present by scraping the back of a credit card or other straight-edged object across the stinger. Do not use tweezers – these may squeeze the venom sac and increase the amount of venom released.
- Wash the site thoroughly with soap and water.
- Place ice (wrapped in a washcloth) on the site of the sting for 10 minutes and then off for 10 minutes. Repeat this process.
- If necessary, take an antihistamine or apply creams that reduce itching.
- Over the next several days, watch for signs of infection (such as increasing redness, swelling or pain).

### Severe reactions

- Check the person's airway and breathing. If necessary, call 911 and begin rescue breathing and CPR.
- Reassure the person. Try to keep him or her calm.
- Remove nearby rings and constricting items because the affected areas may swell.
- Use the person's Epi-pen or other emergency kit, if they have one. (Some people who have serious insect reactions carry it with them.)
- If appropriate, treat the person for signs of shock. Remain with the person until medical help arrives.

Source: [www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov)



## Camping and Hiking Safety

The weather is warming up and you have the urge to get out and commune with Mother Nature. Below are a few things you should be aware of as you camp.

- Always bring a first aid kit and know how to use it.
- Use the buddy-system. Never camp alone. If you will be entering a remote area, your group should have a minimum of four people; this way, if one is hurt, another can stay with the victim while two go for help.
- Make sure to leave a copy of your itinerary with a responsible person. Include the make, year, license plate of your car, the equipment you are bringing, and when you plan to return.
- Take whistles in case you get lost or run into trouble.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants to avoid tick and insect bites.
- Take a supply of clean drinking water. People can become dehydrated very quickly in warm, dry, or windy conditions.
- Don't provoke, touch, or get close to wild animals.
- Never leave a campfire unattended.
- Before leaving a campsite to return home, make sure all fires are out and the ashes are cold.

Sources: [www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov) & [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)



## Tap Water Scalds

The Consumer Product Safety Commission urges all users to lower their water heaters to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. In addition to preventing accidents, this will conserve energy and save money.

Most adults will suffer third-degree burns if exposed to 150 degree water for two seconds. Burns will also occur with a six-second exposure to 140 degree water or with a thirty second exposure to 130 degree water.

Source: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)



## Toll-Free Numbers for Health Information

[www.health.gov/nhic/pubs/tollfree.htm](http://www.health.gov/nhic/pubs/tollfree.htm)

This listing provides toll-free numbers for organizations that provide information, education and support for over 100 health-related topics.

Examples:

- AIDS Info  
(800) 448-0440
- Alzheimer's Association  
(800) 272-3900
- Arthritis Foundation Hotline  
(800) 283-7800
- American Cancer Society  
(800) 227-2345
- American Diabetes Association  
(800) 342-2383
- American Heart Association  
(800) 242-8721
- American Lung Association  
(800) 586-4872
- American Thyroid Association  
(800) 849-7643
- March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation  
(888) 663-4637
- National Immunization Hotline (CDC)  
(800) 232-4636



## Women's Health and Food Don'ts

There are three main dangers lurking in the food that pregnant women eat. They are:

- **Listeria** – a bacterium that can grow even in cold refrigerators.
- **Mercury** – a metal found in high levels in fish.
- **Toxoplasma** – a parasite found in undercooked and unwashed fruits and vegetables.

These things can cause serious illness or even death. Follow these food facts to help keep you and your baby healthy:

- **DON'T** eat raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish, or shellfish (sushi or sashimi).
- **DON'T** eat swordfish, tilefish, king mackerel, and shark.
- **DON'T** eat refrigerated smoked seafood like whitefish, salmon, or mackerel. These products are usually labeled "Nova-style," lox, kippered, or jerky.
- **DON'T** eat hot dogs and luncheon meat unless they are reheated until steaming hot.
- **DON'T** eat refrigerated pates or meat spreads.
- **DON'T** eat soft cheeses like feta, brie, camembert, "blue-veined cheeses," "queso blanco," "queso fresco," and Panela unless the label says they are pasteurized or made from pasteurized milk.
- **DON'T** drink raw or un-pasteurized milk or eat foods that contain un-pasteurized milk.

Source: [www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov)



## Tips for Better Sleep

- Go to bed and get up at about the same time every day,
- Don't eat or drink large amounts before bedtime. Eat a light dinner about two hours before sleeping. Also, limit how much you drink before bed.
- Avoid nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol in the evening. Avoid caffeine for at least eight hours before your planned bedtime. Your body does not store caffeine, but it takes many hours to eliminate the stimulant and its effects.
- Exercise regularly.
- Make your bedroom cool, dark, quiet, and comfortable.
- Sleep primarily at night. Daytime naps may steal hours from nighttime slumber. Limit daytime sleep to about a half-hour and make it during mid afternoon.
- Choose a comfortable mattress and pillow.
- Start a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Go to bed when you are tired and turn off the lights. If you do not fall asleep within 15 to 20 minutes, get up and do something else. Go back to bed when you are tired.
- Use sleeping pills only as a last resort. Check with your doctor before taking any over-the-counter sleep medications.

Source: [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)