IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

Forgive yourself for past mistakes and start living a healthier life today

WINTER 2017

Be a healthier you

6 ways to choose a supplement

plus: HEALTHY FEET WITH DIABETES | WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT HPV
What You Need to Know About

HPV

Knowing the facts about human papillomavirus, or HPV, is important for many reasons. The virus is extremely common, easy to catch and can cause cancer.

HPV is so common that almost all sexually active men and women get it during their lifetimes. HPV is transmitted through any type of sex — not just intercourse — and people can spread the virus even when they have no signs or symptoms.

In the vast majority of cases, HPV is self-correcting with no treatment. However, it also can cause genital warts and cancer.

“It’s important to understand the risks of HPV and how to protect yourself and your children,” says Amber Savells, MD, an obstetrician/gynecologist with Baptist Health Medical Group. Protecting your children means getting them vaccinated, Dr. Savells said. The vaccine is recommended for all boys and girls ages 11 and 12.

Women should begin having Pap smear testing to screen for cervical dysplasia or cervical cancer beginning at age 21. That screening should include HPV testing when there are abnormal cells noted on the Pap smear of young women. For women older than 30, HPV testing should be performed routinely.

FOOT HEALTH 101
FOR DIABETES

Don’t forget to pay attention to your tootsies

Foot ulcers, or sores, are a common problem. They can become infected and even lead to limb amputation. Wound infection is of special concern because those with diabetes do not heal as well as others, in part because of poor blood supply.

Having footwear that fits properly is important. Anything too tight creates unwanted pressure, which further decreases the blood supply to the area, says George Valentini, MD, medical director of Baptist Health Paducah Wound Care.

Those with diabetes should examine their feet weekly, from all angles, to be sure they don’t have any calluses or other areas of concern, Dr. Valentini said. Calluses should be treated by a podiatrist, because ulcers can develop on top of them. People with diabetes should use lotion to keep their feet moist, as dry skin can crack and turn into ulcers.
A Pain in the Leg

No, you’re not being vain about your veins. Varicose veins — those raised and swollen blood vessels, usually in the legs — are not simply a cosmetic issue. They can cause aching, cramping, burning, throbbing and tingling.

Fortunately, you can keep the ones you have from getting worse and take steps to delay more from forming.

COMPRESSION STOCKINGS: If your symptoms are mild, try regular panty hose, tights or knee socks, which can relieve swelling and aching. If your pain is more serious, you can get a doctor’s prescription to buy compression stockings from a medical supply store.

MIX IT UP: Take a break from long periods of standing or sitting. Try not to cross your legs when sitting, and even elevate them if you can. (Ditto for resting and sleeping.)

KEEP IT LOOSE: Tight clothes can make varicose veins worse, especially clothing that’s tight around your waist, upper thighs and legs. Ditch your highest heels for lower-heeled shoes that can help tone your calf muscles.

Snot Decoder

YELLOW
When you have a cold, your body sends infection-fighting white blood cells to the nasal area. Once they’re done fighting, the mucus carries them away, creating a yellow color.

GREEN
Green mucus is lined with even more dead cells — they have a green-colored enzyme, so when there are lots of them, they tint the mucus. This color shows that your immune system is working overtime fighting an illness, whether bacterial or viral.

RED
It’s not unusual to have a small amount of blood in your mucus if your nose is dried out or irritated. A little red is not a problem, but if there’s a lot of blood, you should contact your doctor.

5 MINUTES FOR A HEALTHIER YOU

BAN THE CAN
Need a few good reasons to drop diet soda? Here are five!

1. Whether consumed daily or occasionally, it adds belly fat.
2. Artificial sweeteners in soda can mess up the balance of bacteria in your gut.
3. One study showed that drinking several diet sodas a day was related to declining kidney function.
4. By providing a sweet taste without calories, the artificial sweeteners trick your brain into craving more sweet foods and drinks.
5. Drinking daily diet sodas is linked to higher rates of obesity.

YOUR GO-TO HEALTH RESOURCE
Get the latest health information — plus healthy recipes — from the award-winning blog BaptistHealthForYou.com.
Reverse Your Health Mistakes

When it comes to making healthier decisions, it’s never too late — so why not start now?

It’s only human to regret your past sins — and that goes for health sins, too. If only you hadn’t made a greasy burger with fries your go-to lunch. If only you had put on sunscreen as a teenager instead of tanning oil. If only you had never bought that first pack of cigarettes in college.

Well, it happened. But you can undo some of the damage done when you treated your body like a shack instead of a temple. You can set aside regret and make positive changes. We’ll help illuminate the path to redemption.

SO YOU...smoke. You didn’t mean to start. But you tried your first cigarette and before you knew it, there you were: a smoker. The harm that cigarettes do to the body is extensive and well-documented — smoking harms almost every organ of the body. Blood vessels get thicker and narrower, lung disease is a significant risk, and smoking causes stroke and coronary heart disease, among other serious health problems.

But you can...quit. Many of the risks and symptoms associated with smoking start to go away within minutes of taking that last puff. Only 20 minutes after smoking your last cigarette, your heart rate returns to normal. Twelve hours later, the level of carbon monoxide in your blood drops to normal. As months go by, coughing and shortness of breath subside, and as years pass, your cancer risk becomes that of a nonsmoker. Quitting might not be easy, but it isn’t something you have to do alone. Either talk to your doctor to make a plan.

SO YOU...eat junk food. When your choices are a salad or a cheeseburger, you pick the cheeseburger every time. When dessert is offered, you always say yes. Extra fat and calories can really take a toll on everything from your waistline to your heart health. This kind of diet also ups your risk of type 2 diabetes and cancer.

But you can...make a few small changes for big impact, keeping calories, fat and added sugars in mind. Swap fried chicken for grilled, and add more foods with healthy fats, such as salmon and avocados. If you want to have a burger, order a side salad instead of fries. Phase out one of your daily soft drinks, or trade your post-dinner bowl of ice cream for an orange or apple, which will give you a sweet taste plus vitamins and fiber.

SO YOU...beat up your body. Exercise is critical for a healthy life, but even this healthy habit has its downsides. Maybe your half-marathons have left your joints aching, or you pushed yourself to finish that patio project even though your back was screaming at you to stop.

But you can...treat, then recover. If strains and sprains from overexertion have you down, you’ll first need to remember RICE: rest, ice, compression and elevation. Give your body a rest, ice the strained area to reduce swelling, compress it with a bandage, if needed, and elevate it. Once the initial pain has improved, it’s time to rehab. Your healthcare provider can put you on an exercise plan to reduce stiffness, strengthen muscles and improve flexibility and motion. If you’re overweight, your doctor may suggest trying to shed some pounds to ease pressure on your joints.

SO YOU...worship the sun. For years, your motto was “SPF? Who needs it?” When you were younger, you loved your sun-kissed glow and brushed off sunburns. Now, freckles and age spots have arrived, and you’re worried about skin cancer.

But you can...make sunscreen part of your daily routine, starting now, even when it’s not a sunny day. Then, make a plan to touch base with a dermatologist. More skin cancer is diagnosed in the U.S. than all other cancers combined, so it’s important to keep an eye on moles and changes in the skin. From here on out, limit sun exposure. Sit under an umbrella at the beach or pool instead of baking in the sun. Your dermatologist also may recommend a topical treatment to help skin rebuild and refresh.
SO YOU...skip sleep. Between long hours at work, soccer practice, book club, school meetings and wanting a few minutes to yourself, who has time for sleep? There are, of course, real health consequences to skimping on shut-eye. Sleep deprivation slows reaction time, impairs memory and is linked to cardiovascular disease. In one study, people who slept fewer than six hours a night were twice as likely to have a stroke or heart attack than those who slept six to eight hours a night.

But you can...commit to paying down your sleep debt. While it’s true that it is difficult to “catch up” on lost sleep, you should try. One way to start is to make a Saturday sleep date with yourself. Set aside extra time on the weekend to sleep, and don’t set an alarm. Most people need between seven and nine hours of sleep a night, so if you’ve only gotten five hours each night this week, you should try to add extra hours each night the next week. And once you get into a cycle of good sleep habits, keep it up — you’ll be motivated by how much better you feel.

THE PERKS OF PLANTS

It’s not easy eating green, but the benefits are worth it. Following a vegetarian (no meat) — or even vegan (no animal products) — diet is a way to improve health.

A vegetarian’s plate is more likely to be loaded with vegetables, fruits and whole grains and not with fried or sugary foods, says Baptist Health dietitian Beth Mueth, RD, who works with bariatric (weight-loss) patients.

Eating more plants and whole grains can reduce sugar consumption, which is a big plus for those with diabetes, Mueth said. And vegetarian diets typically feature low-fat, fiber-rich foods, helpful for weight loss.

“You’re eating fewer calories because you’re getting full on fiber and bulk versus fat,” she said, which will help drop pesky pounds.

As with carnivores, vegetarians and vegans would be wise to bypass processed foods — such as cookies, crackers and baked goods — and reach instead for vegetables and fruits. That helps lower salt intake, an important goal for those who struggle with high blood pressure.

Mueth said it used to be harder for vegetarians and vegans to get proper nutrients or enough protein. But now, food and beverages fortified with vitamins — such as almond milk and soy milk — have become much more widely available, making eating green that much easier.
THE ABCs OF SUPPLEMENTS

This guide will help you decide what to take and when not to bother

From vitamin A to zinc, pharmacy shelves boast an alphabet soup of dietary supplements. William Conyer, MD, family medicine physician with Baptist Health Urgent Care in Paducah, walks us through choosing which ones to take.

A is for Ask Your Doctor
Your primary care doctor should be aware of anything you are taking, including supplements and vitamins. Dr. Conyer recommends getting a doctor’s advice about any vitamins you might specifically need that the average person doesn’t require. Fact: Vitamins and supplements can interact and interfere with prescription medicines, so always consult your doctor first.

B is for Vitamin B12
B12 helps keep nerve and blood cells healthy, helps make DNA and prevents a certain type of anemia. Recommendation: Those who do not eat animal products should take 1,000 micrograms a day. For others, 2,500 micrograms once a week is enough, Dr. Conyer said.

Older people also can be at risk for deficiency because of a decline in stomach acid production, which results in decreased absorption of vitamin B12. Recommendation: Those older than 50 should either take a supplement or eat fortified foods.

C is for Caution
The vitamin and supplement industry is a multibillion-dollar enterprise. Marketing claims are plentiful and misinformation is common, Dr. Conyer said. Be sure to carefully evaluate claims about medical benefits with your doctor’s assistance.

D is for Vitamin D
Dr. Conyer considers this the most important supplement to take. Bodies require vitamin D to absorb calcium and for bone growth. Because so much of our living and working activity is now indoors, many people have low levels of this vitamin, which the body makes in response to sunlight. Recommendation: Most people can take 1,000 units of vitamin D3 daily, according to Dr. Conyer. People older than 60 should take 2,000 to 4,000 units a day.

E is for Eating
“A healthy diet is vastly more important than any supplement,” said Dr. Conyer. “No supplement can do for you what a healthy diet can do in terms of preventing and reversing health issues.”

F is for FDA
Finally, keep in mind that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not require that dietary supplements be proven safe before they are marketed. The FDA also does not require that the manufacturer prove that its claims about its product are accurate. Talk to your doctor to make an informed decision before you take anything.
Healthy Bean Soup with Kale
Serves: 8 | Calories per serving: 247

1 tablespoon olive oil
8 garlic cloves, minced
1 medium yellow onion, chopped
4 cups raw kale, chopped (remove the spiny sections)
4 cups chicken or vegetable broth, divided
2 (15-ounce) cans cannellini or navy beans, undrained, divided
2 (15-ounce) cans sliced carrots, undrained
1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes
2 teaspoons Italian herb seasoning
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup chopped parsley
½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese, optional garnish

Directions
In a large pot, heat olive oil. Add garlic and onion; sauté until soft and the onion is transparent. Sauté kale, stirring until wilted, about 15 minutes. Add three cups of the broth (reserving one cup), two cups of the beans (reserving one cup), and all of the tomatoes, carrots, herbs, salt and pepper. Simmer five minutes. In a blender or food processor, mix the reserved beans and broth until smooth. Stir into the soup to thicken it. Simmer 15 more minutes. Ladle into bowls; sprinkle with chopped parsley and shredded Parmesan.

Source: Food.com

WINTER Warm-Up

A hearty soup is just the thing to stave off the chill of winter. And a bean soup is even better, because it’s loaded with nutrients. Beans are full of fiber, which helps you feel satisfied faster — and eat less.

This soup features not just beans but also another hardworking health helper: kale. The leafy green vegetable is full of protein, fiber, vitamins A, C and K, and other nutrients. Cozy up by a fire with this healthy, savory soup.

TIP: Try it with cornbread!

BaptistHealthForYou.com

Try your hand at new heart-healthy recipes on our award-winning blog.
Robert Learch, DO, earned his Doctor of Osteopathy degree (DO) in 2012 from Kansas City University College of Medicine in Kansas City, Mo. He completed an internal medicine residency in 2015 at the University of Kentucky.

Dr. Learch is a member of the American College of Physicians, the Christian Medical and Dental Association, and the Kentucky Medical Association. Dr. Learch looks forward to joining and serving the Paducah community as part of Baptist Health.