

Completely Well

In this Issue: Ways to Track Fitness, Still Summer, Liquid Calories, Healthy Hands and Feet, Less is More: Going Out, Ask the Trainer, Cantaloupe



Insurance Agency



Still Summer

School supplies are hitting the shelves and magazines are featuring fall styles, but there is still plenty of summer left to enjoy. And if you need some ideas, try the following:

- Farmer's Markets– There is still time to enjoy fresh, local produce. Look for Farmer's Markets to be listed on your municipal website. Or you can go the CWS website where you will find a link to find Farmer's Markets in your area.
- Festivals / Fairs – Look for organizations in your area (park districts, churches, schools, etc.) to host end of summer events. Whether it's a county fair or church picnic, August is prime time for weekend fun!
- Concerts / Performances – Many performance groups put on an end of summer show, highlighting what they worked on in June and July. Look for these to be advertised in your local paper, on a community website, or through mail or email.
- Sports – Even if you are not a sports fan, a summer afternoon at a baseball game can be great entertainment! Many minor league parks offer affordable tickets and parking. Or see if there is a summer league near you. Contact your local high school or community college for more information.
- City Sites – Think like a tourist in your own town! Check out museums, botanical gardens, amusement parks, the zoo, forest preserves, walking trails, and local lakes.

Take advantage of these final weeks of summer by trying something new. Bike or walk a new trail, rent a canoe or kayak on a nearby lake, or visit a historical building near you. Enjoy summer fruits and vegetables, and spend time with family and friends. The sun is still bright, temperatures are still warm, and there is still plenty to do this summer!



Healthy Hands and Feet

When we think of health, we are more likely to think of our heart, lungs, cholesterol levels, and even dental health. What we may not think about are our hands and feet, though they are vital indicators to our overall health and can have problems all their own.

Hands: Our hands work hard everyday – and our skin, joints, and nails can take a beating: repeated use, cold temperatures, harsh soaps, etc. Here are some symptoms to check out –

- Swollen Fingers – Swollen fingers can be a result of weather related swelling, eating too much salt, or retaining water for some other reason. Watch out for this if you have a history of high blood pressure or heart related problems.
- Discolored nails – Nails that are dark yellow or green should be looked at by a doctor, as it is possible to have a fungus infection.
- Itchy palms – Often a sign of eczema, itchy hands can usually be treated by using mild soaps and heavy

moisturizers. See your doctor if the itch worsens or is accompanied by a rash.

- Pale nails – Pale nails can be a sign of anemia, so schedule a visit to your doctor and ask whether you need a blood test.
- Blue tinged nails – Nails that have a bluish look to them can indicate a lack of oxygen to the extremities. Have your doctor check your oxygen levels and lung function.
- Hives on the wrists – Red, itchy, raised bumps on the wrists (not associated with dermatitis) can be linked to liver issues. See your doctor for any sudden, unexplained change in skin.

Feet: The daily pressure on our feet is only one reason we may experience foot pain or discomfort. Here are some other foot concerns –

- Foot cramps – Repeated cramping of the foot can mean you are dehydrated. Drink more water

throughout the day.

- Cold feet – Feet that are cold most of the year can be a sign of circulation problems or hypothyroidism. A blood test can check your thyroid. If your thyroid is fine, discuss circulation concerns with your doctor.
- Heel pain – Plantar fasciitis is a strained ligament that creates a severe pain in the heel. Often caused by overuse or improper shoes, it can be improved by rest.
- A sore or wound that won't heal – Anyone with a sore or wound that won't heal should see a doctor as soon as possible. Sores that won't heal can be a sign of diabetes. If you have been diagnosed with diabetes, you should have your feet checked at every doctor's visit and call your doctor if you notice any sores not healing.

Be kind to your hands and feet. Protect them and take notice of any symptoms that are bothersome or that linger.

Nutrition

Liquid Calories



If you've been watching what you eat and still not losing the pounds you want, you may want to think about what you are drinking. Many people don't consider that some drinks can contain as many calories as a small meal! Not only can they be high in calories, they won't fill you up. Here are some ways to manage those liquid calories.

Limit juice

While juices can provide needed vitamins and hydration – a steady diet of juice does little more than add unnecessary calories. Enjoy a small glass of juice with breakfast if you like, but eating the whole fruit (an orange instead of orange juice) provides the same vitamins along with added fiber.

Limit or eliminate soda and sweetened drinks

According to the Harvard School of Public Health – sports drinks and soda are a significant factor in the obesity epidemic in our country, especially in children. Additionally, the National Institute of Health reports that 50% of the U.S. population drinks a sugary beverage every day. What makes that statistic even worse is that the average size of beverages has increased over the past 25 years, causing the *American Journal of Public Health* to publish that the average soda size is twice what the FDA recommends. Sodas – less expensive than milk, juice, and bottled water – have no nutritional value and are considered “empty calories.” Avoid or limit soda and watch the portion size. Diet soda has been the subject of a number of articles concerning the safety of artificial sweeteners, the relationship between diet soda and obesity, and more. With research continuing, it is safe to say that diet soda is not a substitute for plain water and should also be limited. As for sports drinks, while they can provide needed electrolytes and hydration for athletes, they are not necessary as an everyday drink. Save the sports drink for an extended workout, especially in hot weather.

Limit or eliminate alcohol

Alcohol carries a pretty big calorie punch, depending on what you choose and how much you drink. While “light beer” and wine are relatively low in calories, mixed drinks can be as much as a dessert. It's also important to note that drinking alcohol can lead to eating more, especially “junk food” or bar food. Most importantly, alcohol provides no nutritional value and is linked to a number of health issues. If you choose to drink alcohol, limit your consumption to less than 1 drink a day.

Meal Replacement / Supplements

If you choose a meal replacement drink or supplement that is not under medical supervision, please read the label carefully as many over the counter drinks are loaded with sugar. Also, unless you have trouble keeping on weight or have other nutritional needs, supplements are rarely necessary.



What to drink –

- Water
- Tea – green, black, or herbal
- Coffee – black, with low or no fat milk, or lightly sweetened
- No-fat or low-fat dairy (or plant equivalent, such as almond or soy milk)

Produce of the Month: Cantaloupe

Cantaloupe is a staple of the breakfast brunch and can be found alongside many breakfast items in many restaurants. Often overlooked, cantaloupe is a great source of vitamin A and C and may help to reduce the risk of metabolic syndrome, a collection of risk factors that increase the risk for cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

The Basics: Selecting a ripe cantaloupe begins by picking it up and feeling its weight. It should feel “heavy.” The outside of the cantaloupe shouldn’t be bruised. You can try tapping the melon, listening for a low or deep sound, indicating ripeness. Or you can look at the softer end of the fruit, the one where the vine had been, and press on that spot. It should not be hard or overly soft, but should give slightly when you press it. A cantaloupe can be left on your kitchen

counter for a couple of days to ripen. Ripe cantaloupes should be stored in the refrigerator for no more than 4 days. Before slicing, wash the outside of the melon so that your knife won’t spread bacteria or dirt from the outside of the fruit to the fruit itself. Once washed, you may slice and enjoy. Cut fruit can be stored in the refrigerator up to 1 week.

Try This: Chunks of cantaloupe pair well with almost any fruit dip. Try making your favorite fruit dip with lower fat and lower calorie options such as reduced fat cream cheese or low fat cottage cheese. You can turn your fruit salad into a more savory option by including chopped mint on top, a great addition to both pork and chicken main dishes.

The Facts: One cup of cantaloupe has just a little more than 50 calories and is an excellent source of vitamin A and C and is a very good source of potassium and fiber.

Less is more: Buying Organic

There are a few things you must know in order to be a smart organic shopper.

When purchasing fruit and vegetables, look at how the item comes naturally. Anything that has a peel or outer layer is less prone to soaking up pesticides and chemicals. This is due to that protective outer shell, and that means that you can save your pennies and buy regular (or conventional), not organic. The Environmental Working Group (EWG) came up with a list of what they call the “Clean 15,” based on tests done by the USDA. These foods are onions, avocados, sweet corn, pineapples, mango, sweet peas, asparagus, kiwi fruit, cabbage, eggplant, cantaloupe, watermelon, grapefruit, sweet potatoes, and sweet onions.

In contrast, there is a “Dirty Dozen” list. These are foods that are more prone to soak up pesticides and chemicals. These items are worth the higher price tag that comes with buying organic. This list, also from EWG, includes celery, peaches, strawberries, apples, blueberries, nectarines, bell peppers, spinach, kale, collard greens, cherries, potatoes, grapes, and lettuce. Watch throughout the year for your store to offer sales (such as 10 for \$10 deals). This is the time to buy and freeze for later.

Always remember to wash your products prior to any cooking or cutting. You cannot wash away chemicals but this is overall good practice as that item has gone from the field to shipping trucks to being picked over in the store. Also, remember to wash the outside of melons and oranges before cutting. You don’t eat the outside but what is on it will travel inside as your knife passes through.

But what about organic meats and eggs? As a general rule it is ok to spend a bit more on good meat and eggs. The benefits really outweigh the extra \$1. Not only will you consume fewer chemicals but these products are typically lower in fat content, which is something you always want to look for. When purchasing meat you do not need to go all the way up to top shelf but look for a few key phrases such as grass fed, free range, antibiotic free, and all natural. These items can also be found at stores such as Sam’s Club and Costco where you can buy in bulk for a better price.

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Less is More, Continued

To really save some money, do your research. Get online and look up local vendors in your area. Farmers markets are great places to shop healthy for less; also some meat producers have the capability to sell their cuts direct.

Be smart about shopping organic and do your research. The more you know the more you can save.

-Marie McFadden, CHES

Fitness

Ask the Trainer

Question: How can I lose weight when I cannot work out? I injured my shoulder in January and it has done nothing but gotten worse. I have an appointment (after 3 doctors, 3 chiropractors, PT) on Wednesday but haven't been able to work out because I am in too much pain and too numb to do so! I have gained weight and want it gone! What do you suggest?

Answer:

I'm so sorry to hear about your shoulder issues. I know situations like this can be very frustrating, especially when you want to work out and your body just isn't allowing you too. There are still things that you can do to lose weight though. I would first suggest getting on a rigorous walking regimen. You may need to get a sling to hold your arm/shoulder next to your body if the walking motion aggravates it. If you can walk for 30+ minutes 5-6 times a week, this would be a great start until you can use your arms again. I would also recommend starting to incorporate some lower body exercises. You should still be able to do things such as squats, lunges, butt lifts, calf raises, etc. along with some abdominal work that doesn't utilize the shoulder. A key thing when doing these things is to stabilize the shoulder so you don't do anything else to injury it.

Another thing that you can do would be to start tracking what you have been eating. Sometimes in situations like this we get so frustrated with not being able to workout we sabotage ourselves. We start eating food that we normally wouldn't as a way to deal with the stress of the situation. Make sure you are eating a very clean diet full of whole foods and watching the amount of fat, sugar and salt you are in taking. Just writing down what you are eating, when you are eating it, and how you are feeling emotionally can help you get back on track and lose some of those extra pounds you have put on.

These would be my suggestions to get started and see if you can make some progress in losing some of that extra weight you have gained.

Erin M. Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT

Tracking Your Fitness

Working out and need to see more progress? Try these different ways to track your fitness.

- **Minutes** – Rather than how many days you work out, try keeping track of minutes and add more minutes every week or two.
- **Heart rate**– Make sure you are working out at an aerobic level by measuring your heart rate during exercise through a heart rate monitor or by taking your pulse To find your target heart rate, subtract your age from 220. This is your maximum heart rate. Your target heart rate is 60%-80% of the maximum. You can measure this by taking your pulse at certain points of your workout or by wearing a heart monitor. If you wish to take your pulse, begin by exercising for 10 minutes then take your pulse by placing 2 fingers against your wrist or along your neck. Press gently to feel the beats. Count the beats for 15 seconds and then multiply by 4 for your total number. This number should be in your target heart rate zone. A heart monitor will read your heart rate throughout your workout. Tracking the number of minutes you are in your target heart rate is a good way to monitor your progress.
- **Waist Size** - Waist size is related to overall health and an increased risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Men should have a waist size no larger than 40 inches, and women should have a waist size no larger than 35 inches. Taking your waist measurement each month is a great way to monitor your fitness and overall improvement.

Want to know more?

Contact TCU Insurance for information on wellness programs. We can reduce healthcare costs and improve employee well being.



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