

# Completely Well



Insurance Agency

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Preventive

## The Doctor-Patient Partnership



Times have changed. Not too long ago, the family doctor was someone seen primarily during an illness, and he or she was often thought of as the unquestionable expert on our health. While still considered experts, doctors are now more often thought of as partners in our health. This shift may seem small, but the implications are wide reaching. Patients are encouraged to work with their physicians, especially in wellness care. This approach seeks to reduce the risk of chronic illnesses and improve the quality of life. Let's look at why this is a good idea and how to achieve it.

When patients see themselves as partners in health, they are more likely to act on health advice as well as discuss concerns openly. Patients who are treated as partners in their health feel validated that their concerns are listened to and seriously considered. Doctors benefit as well. With more information from the patient, the doctor is better able to diagnose and prescribe actions to improve patient well being.

There are a number of ways to improve the doctor-patient partnership. For physicians, providing different methods for a patient to contact the office can increase communication. Patients are often more likely to email non-urgent concerns than call or make an appointment. Also, it's important to allow enough time during each appointment. Finally, giving patients access to their medical records, including test results and prescription instructions, helps them better manage their health and improves communication between specialists.

The patient can also help improve the doctor-patient relationship. Patients should communicate openly with their doctors, including honest information about nutrition, supplements, exercise, and use of alcohol and tobacco. Patients should also write down all questions and concerns for their doctors; this eliminates the possibility of forgetting something that could be important. Patients should follow the doctor's instructions and should tell the doctor if they do not or do not plan to. Being honest is the best way to get the best treatment. If you don't plan on following a specific recommendation regarding nutrition, for example, discussing it honestly with your doctor can help the two of you find another recommendation that could work.

It's important for doctors and patients to work together. If you find that you cannot speak openly with your doctor or don't feel that he or she is giving you the time and attention you need, it may be time to find a new physician. Finding a doctor you can partner with can go a long way to improving your health.

### In this Issue:

All about Water, The Doctor-Patient Partnership, The Importance of Hobbies, Fitness Trainers, Ask the Trainer – How Much Rest to Get Between Workouts, Produce of the Month: Understanding Vegetable Oil.



## Produce of the Month: Understanding Vegetable Oil

We are taking a break this month from introducing you to a new produce to talk about something you probably already have in your kitchen cabinet: vegetable oil. Vegetable oils are oils derived from plants, and all of them have about the same amount of calories and fat. However, they do differ in the type of fat they contain as well as their effect on cholesterol levels and possibly other health conditions.

In general, there are 3 types of fats: saturated, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated. Saturated fats are found primarily in animal foods, but coconut and palm (including coconut oil and palm oil) are also high in saturated fat. Saturated fats are associated with increased cholesterol levels and are considered bad for the heart. Both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are considered heart healthy. The most common sources of monounsaturated fats are olive oil, canola oil, and nuts. Polyunsaturated fats are found in sunflower, corn, soybean, canola, and flaxseed oils. Omega-3 fatty acids are found in polyunsaturated fats, especially in olive and canola oil. Omega-6 fatty acids are found in corn and sunflower oils. Some research indicated that too many omega-6 fatty acids might actually not be healthy. Though more research needs to be done, it is clear that using olive oil and canola oil may be the best choice, though all fats should be used in moderation.

Finally, be sure to read all labels to see what types of fats are being used in prepared foods. You must read the ingredient list for the most accurate information.

## Nutrition

### All About Water

Getting enough water everyday is important. But do you know why?

Water is important because it

- Helps to regulate your body temperature.
- Prevents constipation and helps the liver and kidneys to flush waste products.
- Keeps joints lubricated.
- Keeps tissues moist and can help prevent viruses transmitted through the nose and mouth.
- Is necessary for blood volume.

Getting enough water is easy if you do the following:

- Choose to drink water over soda pop and juice during the day. You do get water in sodas and juice but take in many more calories than are needed.
- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. It is estimated that water makes up approximately 90% of all fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid caffeinated beverages, especially after the morning cup or two of coffee. Caffeine is a natural diuretic and causes you to lose fluids.
- Drink more during hot weather and when exercising. Also, drink more when sick (unless you have a stomach virus). Extra fluids help to thin mucus when you have a cold.

Need more reasons to drink more water? Water can also increase energy and can help you lose weight. Make sure you are drinking enough water each and every day.



## Hobbies are Healthy!

Do you have a hobby you enjoy? Knitting? Reading? Building model cars? Whatever the hobby is, you should know that having a hobby is a healthy habit! Hobbies are great stress relievers and can be as healthy as exercise and eating right.

A study published in the *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* reported that people who engaged in leisure activities, such as hobbies, had lower heart rates and reported less stress and improved moods than those who did not. Additionally, it didn't seem to matter what kind of leisure activity and individual chooses. Any hobby or leisure activity that was enjoyable to the individual had a positive effect on his or her physical health.

Stress is a part of day-to-day life. Whether responsibilities, work deadlines, family dynamics, or even the grind of the commute, stress is all too common. The problem is that chronic stress can lead to an increased risk for depression, weight gain, heart disease, and a less robust immune system. Finding ways to combat stress is important, and the research is clear.

Participating regularly in a hobby can reduce all of the negative effects of chronic stress. So don't feel guilty about taking time to enjoy your hobby. It's a healthy thing to do!

### Did you know?

**One of the benefits of having a hobby is finding others who share it. Spending time with people who share your interests is another great stress reducer!**

## Lifestyle

### Don't have a hobby?

Here are some ideas to get you thinking about a possible hobby:

- Check out your local library. Many offer different events and regular clubs. These can include a book club, computer classes, genealogy classes, and lecture series.
- Have an interest in history? Look online for local groups that share your interest. Whether it's Civil War reenactments or a group that is interested in WWII, finding others who share your interest can get you started.
- Love the needlework and knitting you see others do but don't know how to start? Many stores that sell these kinds of supplies also offer beginner classes.
- Check out your local park district and community college offerings. You can often find classes or seminars on a variety of topics. Give one a try! You will find out if you truly enjoy the hobby as well as meet others interested in your hobby as well.

## Fitness Trainers

You may have heard that working out with a fitness trainer can help you meet your fitness goal. But you may not know how to choose the best person to help you. There are different types of certification for fitness trainers, and some people may not be certified at all. It's important to understand how certification works and to ask questions when choosing a fitness trainer.

Many different organizations offer fitness certification, The National Commission for Certifying Agencies lists accredited organizations. To become certified, the trainer will be expected to complete an evaluation, often a written exam and a practical exam. Certified Personal Trainers (CPT) are trained to assess a client's fitness level and help him or her to safely progress through an exercise program. Special certification is offered for Pilates, yoga, and other specific fitness programs.

Don't be afraid to ask questions when selecting a Fitness Trainer. Ask what certification he or she has as well as any recent training or continuing education classes attended. Working with a personal trainer can help you achieve your fitness goals more quickly. Find one who has the training required to help you meet your goals safely.

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## Want to know more?

Contact Teachers Credit Union for information on wellness programs. We can help you reduce healthcare costs and improve employee well being.



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