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SEE YOUR fitness progress

When you're trying to get fit, it can be hard to stay motivated. Look for ways that you're making progress. This can help you keep going!

Progress isn't just about weight. You are making progress if:

- You have more energy. Do you feel less tired than you used to? Are you getting more done?
- Your daily tasks are easier. Maybe carrying the groceries isn't as tough as it used to be. Or going upstairs doesn't leave you out of breath.
- You're getting better sleep. Exercise can help you sleep better, leaving you feeling refreshed and energized in the morning.

Keep it up! The longer you exercise, the better you'll feel!

Source: National Institute on Aging

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Cool that heartburn

Do you get a burning feeling in your chest after eating or at night? Does it get worse if you lie down or bend over?

Many people have heartburn once in a while.

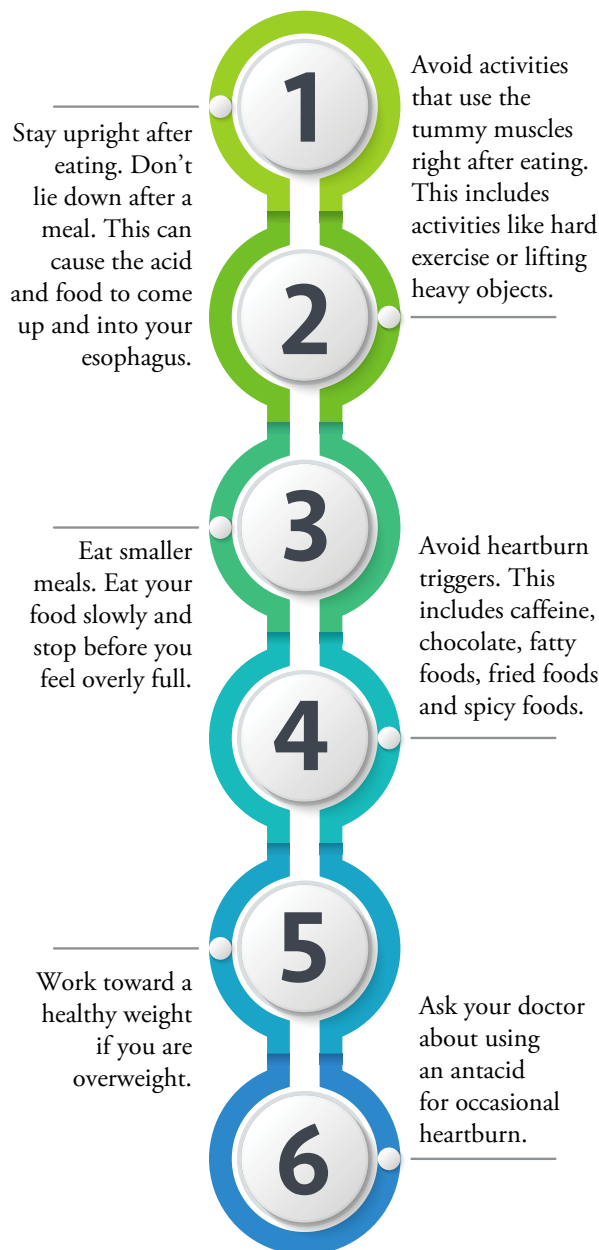


DON'T IGNORE FREQUENT HEARTBURN

When heartburn keeps happening, it could hurt your health. Frequent heartburn that lasts longer than two weeks is called gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). This condition can damage your throat or even cause breathing problems.

See a doctor about frequent heartburn so you can get treatment.

IF YOU GET OCCASIONAL HEARTBURN, THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS YOU CAN REDUCE IT OR AVOID IT:



HEARTBURN DRUG RECALL

Recently, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) found that an acid reflux (GERD) medicine contained a “probable human carcinogen” at low levels. This means that these medicines contain something that could potentially cause cancer.

The drug, known as ranitidine or Zantac, is an H2-blocker. It works by reducing the amount of acid in the stomach.



After FDA's announcement, some drug companies recalled their ranitidine products. Some pharmacies also pulled the medicine off their shelves.

If you are taking ranitidine or Zantac, talk to your doctor. There are other FDA-approved medicines that could work for you. Your doctor can help you choose the best treatment.

FDA continues to evaluate the safety of ranitidine and will provide more information as it becomes available.

Source: Food and Drug Administration

Be smart about seizures

A seizure is a sudden surge of electrical activity in the brain. It can cause a person to have uncontrolled movements.

A grand mal seizure or tonic-clonic seizure is the most serious. It usually involves jerking movements, shaking and the inability to talk or communicate.

When it comes to seizures, there are plenty of myths. Knowing the truth about seizures could save someone's life.



MYTH:
A person having a seizure could swallow their tongue.

TRUTH:
This is not possible. Never put something in a person's mouth if they are having a seizure.



MYTH:
You should hold the person down.

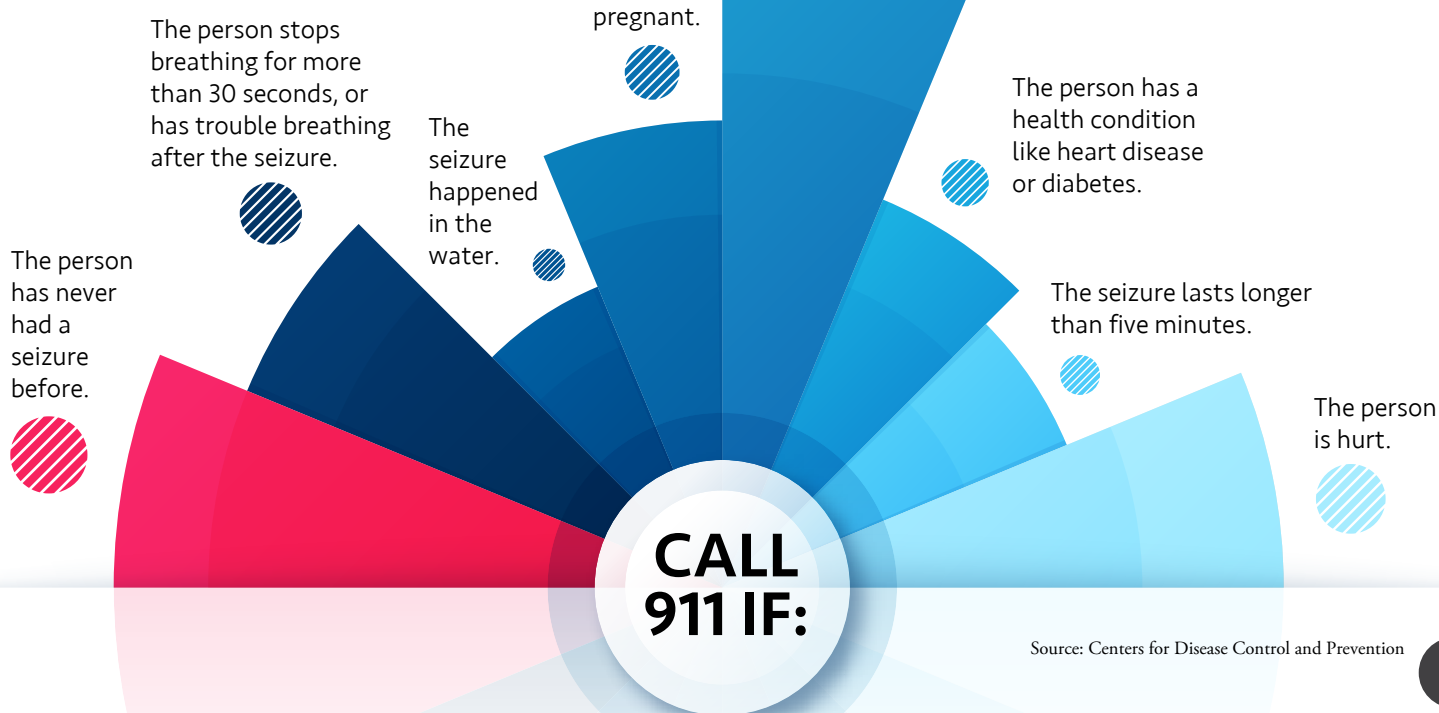
TRUTH:
Do not try to hold or move the person unless they are in immediate danger of getting hurt. You can help get them on the floor and turn on their side. This keeps the person from injuring themselves or falling.



MYTH:
You should always give mouth-to-mouth or CPR during a seizure.

TRUTH:
People usually start breathing normally after the seizure is over. But if the patient stops breathing for more than 30 seconds, call 911 and begin CPR.

Should you call 911?



Busting diet *myths*

Losing weight can be challenging. It means you have to change your eating and exercise habits. But does it mean you have to give up all the foods you love?

Many myths about a healthy diet can make the task harder than it needs to be. But the truth is, you can change your diet for the better and still enjoy your food.



Learn to recognize these common diet myths. You can make a healthy change to your eating habits.

MYTH:

Dieting means I can't eat my favorite foods.

FACT:

You can use moderation to still enjoy your favorite foods. Moderation means you can have a small amount once in a while. It means you may have to cut back, but you don't have to give it up.

Having your favorite high-calorie foods in small amounts can be fine for most people. A small piece of cake at a birthday party or a little piece of dark chocolate can still fit into your healthy eating plan.



MYTH:

To lose weight, you have to give up breads, pasta and other grains.

FACT:

Many grains can be part of your healthy diet. You should limit refined, processed grains like white bread and white pasta. But whole grains contain fiber and nutrients you need. Examples of healthy grains include:

- Whole wheat bread and pasta
- Brown rice
- Quinoa
- Oats



Read the nutrition label on whole grain products to help avoid high-calorie choices and added sugars.

MYTH:

Gluten-free foods are healthier options for weight loss.



FACT:

Only people who have celiac disease or sensitivities to gluten need to avoid gluten.

Just because a food says it is "gluten-free" does not mean it's healthier or has fewer calories than a food that contains gluten. In fact, if you avoid gluten, you could miss out on important nutrients. See a doctor if you think you have a gluten sensitivity.

MYTH:

You should avoid fat to lose weight.

FACT:

Some fat in your food is necessary and healthy. Try to eat foods that contain healthy monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats. Eating small amounts of healthy fat can even help you feel full.

These foods contain healthy fats that are important for overall health:

- Olive oil
- Avocados
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Eggs
- Salmon, trout



Dealing with holiday money stress

The holidays can put a strain on the wallet. Between gifts, parties and travel, many people spend more this time of year.

It's easy to become overwhelmed. In the process, you may even forget to enjoy your holidays. If money worries are causing you stress, try these strategies to help.



AVOID DECISION OVERLOAD

Are you faced with multiple questions about spending? Try to tackle just one at a time. For instance, today you decide on a gift for a friend. Tomorrow, start to think about your travel plans.



TRACK IT

It can be painful to see how much money you're spending. But tracking it can help you gain control over spending. When you see how much you've spent on gifts or eating out, you may be motivated to cut back.



MAKE A PLAN

Think about ways you and your family can spend less. Write down a few ideas and commit to trying one or two of them. Include your children in the decision-making to help make the changes easier for them to accept.



ASK FOR HELP

If you know you need help paying a bill, call the company or your bank. Sometimes they can work with you to set up a payment plan that fits within your budget.



THINK ABOUT HOW YOU DEAL WITH FINANCIAL STRESS

Some people try to escape stress through unhealthy activities. Overeating, alcohol use, gambling and smoking are a few examples. If you struggle with this, seek help from your doctor or a counselor.



GO SHOPPING WITH A PLAN

Before you head to the mall or shop online, have a set dollar amount of what you will spend. Whenever possible, have a list of what you plan to buy and stick with it. This can help you avoid impulse purchases or overspending.



REMEMBER THE VALUE OF YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The holidays aren't about money and gifts. Your relationships are important. Spend time with people who matter to you. This is one of the best gifts you can give to another person — and yourself.

Balancing work & caregiving

Many people have to care for a loved one and work outside the home. Doing both of these things can be challenging.

If you're having trouble with your dual role, you're not alone. There are some things you can do to help make things easier.

First, try to take care of yourself.

Find time for exercise, relaxation or getting out. Self-care is important for caregivers!



Be open with your supervisor

Having a talk with your supervisor may help relieve stress. You can get your challenges out in the open.

Find out if they have suggestions that could help you. Maybe you have some ideas of how you can get your job done while still meeting your caregiving responsibilities. If so, share them!

Check into policies and programs

Your workplace may have some policies or programs that can help you. Some examples include:

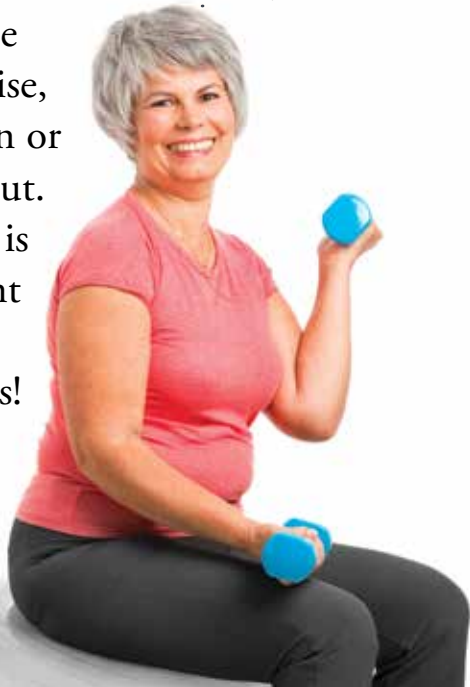
- **Employee assistance programs.** Many employers have resources to help their employees deal with challenges. They may have counseling services or can help you find services in your community.
- **Flexibility with hours.** Depending on your job, you may be able to work different hours. Talk with your supervisor or human resources department if this would work for you.
- **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).** Under FMLA, some employees are able to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a loved one. You have to meet certain qualifications for this, so ask your human resources department about the details.

Consider other options

Caregiving can be difficult. Some people find that they need to use some caregiving services. These services can be life-changing if you work and need some extra help. You may want to check out:

- **Local Area Agency on Aging.** This organization can help you locate programs and services that can help you. Go to www.acl.gov to learn about U.S. programs for aging people.
- **Adult day care.** These centers can provide social interaction for your loved one while you work. Some of them may also provide meals, personal care and medical care.
- **Help from others.** Some people ask for caregiving help from a neighbor, family member or friend. You may also hire a nurse or home care aide to come in and help when needed.

Source: American Academy of Family Physicians



4 “S”s for smooth skin

Winter is hard on your skin. Dry indoor air, frequent washing and cold outside air can make skin itchy and painful. Your skin is the largest organ in your body and an important barrier. Protect it!

1

STAY SAFE WITH GERMS

Don't skip handwashing because your hands are dry. You could end up sick or may spread germs to others. Instead, keep hand cream in your purse, pocket or desk. Apply the cream after you wash your hands.

2

SHORT SHOWERS

A long, hot shower strips skin of its protective oils. Keep showers and baths short and not too hot.

3

SLATHER MOISTURIZER

After bathing, apply a rich cream or ointment before skin is fully dry. Petroleum jelly is a low-cost and effective choice.

4

SKIP HARSH SOAPS

Many products contain drying detergents. These can leave skin feeling irritated and dry. Look for products that don't contain alcohol or fragrances.

Wear sunscreen. Harmful rays can pass through windows and on cloudy days.

The teen driver 'danger zones'

Every day, six teens are killed in car crashes. But many of these injuries and deaths can be prevented. Know the eight “danger zones” of teen driving to help keep them safe.

1. **Inexperience.** Make sure your teen gets at least 30 to 50 hours of driving practice with an adult. Practice at different times and in different places.
2. **Teen passengers.** Limit your teen’s passengers for at least the first six months. Keep the number of passengers at zero or one.
3. **Nighttime driving.** Limit their nighttime driving for at least the first six months.
4. **Not using seat belts.** Tell them everyone buckles up. Always.
5. **Distracted driving.** Don’t play with the radio or eating while driving. And absolutely NO cell phones.
6. **Drowsy driving.** Don’t let them drive when they might be tired. Make sure they get enough sleep.
7. **Reckless driving.** Teach them to leave space between cars and obey speed limits and traffic laws.
8. **Impaired driving.** Stress that alcohol and driving don’t mix. Even one drink is too many.



What is distracted driving?

Anything that takes your attention away from driving is a distraction. This includes:

- Looking at a map or directions
- Eating
- Talking on the phone
- Sending a text message or looking at email

When you send or read a text message, you take your eyes off the road for about 5 seconds. This is long enough to go the length of a football field at 55 mph.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention