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EXERCISE LOWERS breast cancer risk

In just 30 minutes a day, a woman can lower her risk of breast cancer. You don't need special equipment or a gym. Power walking is a good choice to make a difference!

Exercise lowers breast cancer risk by:

- **Helping you get to a healthy weight.** Being overweight raises the risk of getting breast cancer. This is because fat cells make estrogen that can allow some types of breast cancer cells to grow.
- **Boosting your immune system.** This could help stop or slow the growth of cancer cells.

Source: National Breast Cancer Foundation

Do you live with a sleepwalker?

If you or a family member sleepwalks, you may know the signs well. It often involves doing some of the following during sleep:

- Sitting up
- Walking around
- Talking
- Getting food or eating

When a person is sleepwalking, it can be confusing or even frightening for others in the house. They look like they're awake. They may say or do things that don't make sense. But the person won't remember saying or doing anything when they wake up.

Sleepwalking happens during deep sleep. This is often early in the night. It can happen to children and adults.

IS IT DANGEROUS?

Many people feel alarmed when a family member starts sleepwalking. Sleepwalking itself isn't usually dangerous. The best thing to do is to make sure the sleepwalker can't get hurt. Here's how to do it:

- Keep the home – and especially their room – picked up. Make sure things like electrical cords are out of the way. Have children pick up their toys, books or other objects.
- Keep exterior doors locked. If you can, use extra locks that are difficult to open, such as a chain lock or a dead bolt.



- Close and lock all windows at night.
- Never yell at or shake someone who is sleepwalking. Instead, guide them safely back to their bed.
- Consider putting a gate across stairways. Use gates that are designed for this purpose.



HOW TO AVOID IT

Some people may be more prone to sleepwalking. However, there are ways to lower the chances of it happening. They include:

- Don't drink alcohol.
- If you are taking anti-depressant medicine, talk to your doctor about it. Some of these medicines can cause sleep problems. There may be a different medicine that works for you.
- Go to bed at the same time every night.
- Make sleep a priority. Adults should get at least seven hours. Children often need much more than this. Ask a doctor how much sleep you or your child should get.

SEEING A DOCTOR

If sleepwalking happens a lot, talk to a doctor. There is no test for sleepwalking. But your doctor can check for other sleep problems or health conditions that may be causing sleep problems.



Source: American Academy of Family Physicians

BRCA gene *for breast cancer*

You may have heard of the BRCA gene for breast cancer. But many people don't understand what this gene is, or what it really means for breast cancer risk.

WHAT BRCA REALLY MEANS

"BRCA" is an abbreviation for "BReast CAncer." There are two types: BRCA1 and BRCA2. Everyone has both of these genes. Having them does not mean you will get breast cancer.

In fact, BRCA genes actually help prevent breast cancer. They can stop or slow breast cancer growth.



WHEN BRCA GENES AREN'T GOOD

In some people however, the BRCA genes don't work properly. This is called a BRCA gene mutation.

When this happens, the BRCA genes can't prevent breast cancer. This makes the person more likely to get breast cancer. They may also develop breast cancer at a younger age. Those with BRCA mutations have a higher risk of developing other cancers too, including ovarian and pancreatic.

Up to 65 percent of women with a BRCA1 mutation will develop breast cancer before age 70. About 45 percent of women with a BRCA2 mutation will develop breast cancer by age 70.

People who have a mutated BRCA gene may also pass this along to their children.

WHAT TO DO

Women who have one of the following should talk with a doctor:

- A family history of breast cancer
- History of ovarian cancer
- History of two or more cancers of any type

In some cases, you may need a test to look at the BRCA genes. If the test finds that you have a BRCA mutation, talk with your doctor about next steps. This may include:

- Watching closely for breast cancer signs and getting regular screenings
- Taking certain medicines that can reduce estrogen, which can lower breast cancer risk
- Having a mastectomy, which is surgical removal of the breasts

SCREENING IS KEY

Even without a BRCA gene mutation, all women should talk with their doctors about breast cancer risk. They should get regular breast cancer screenings.



Finding breast cancer early is key. It means you have the best chance for successful treatment.

Is sea salt *better* than regular salt?

Many food products contain “sea salt” as an ingredient instead of table salt, also commonly called “salt.” In particular, many so-called natural food products say they use sea salt. But is sea salt any healthier than old-fashioned table salt?

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?

In general, sea salt has a coarse, crunchy texture. Table salt has a more fine grind and may have a weaker taste. In foods like potato chips or sea salt caramels, some people prefer the flavor and texture of sea salt.

Sea salt is made from evaporated sea water. It’s usually not processed, so it may be considered a more “natural” choice. It may contain trace levels of minerals like magnesium, potassium and calcium. But, these minerals are found in small amounts. So, eating sea salt is not a reliable way to get more minerals in your diet.

Table salt comes from mined salt deposits. It is processed into a fine texture. During this process, it usually loses its other minerals. However, most table salt brands contain added iodine, which is a necessary nutrient that many people don’t get enough of. Table salt may also contain some additives to prevent clumping.

GOING COARSER

Some very coarse salts like kosher salt may have slightly less sodium, teaspoon for teaspoon. This is because the larger crystal size makes it less compact, so you can’t get as much salt into your measuring spoon.

In these cases, using a coarse type of salt in cooking may help you reduce sodium content, but probably not by very much. Some people prefer the taste and texture of a very coarse salt. But don’t use it thinking that you’ll really reduce your sodium intake.

Choose the type of salt you prefer, and use it sparingly. One type isn’t healthier than another. Talk to your doctor about how much sodium you should eat each day.

SAME IN SODIUM

Although sea salt shows up in many “natural” food products, it’s not usually healthier. Sea salt and table salt have about 40 percent sodium by weight.

Some types of sea salt say that they contain less sodium than table salt. To check this, read the Nutrition Facts panel on the package. Table salt contains about 575 mg of sodium in $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon.



Should you “wash” your food?



When COVID-19 started to spread, many people became more concerned about germs. Some articles and videos about washing your food started to make the rounds on the Internet. But are you supposed to sanitize food or use soap? Or is water enough?

If you're worried about keeping your food clean, here are some tips.



AT THE GROCERY STORE

Start with a clean cart. Most grocery stores have sanitizing wipes at the entrance. Some are also sanitizing carts themselves and giving customers a clean cart or basket as they arrive.

Get a sanitized cart or use a sanitizing wipe to clean the handle and other surfaces you might touch.

Make sure any raw meats you purchase are in their own plastic bags. Keep them separated from other foods in your shopping cart and grocery bags.



CLEANING MEATS – DON'T DO IT

Do not wash or rinse meats, poultry or fish. This includes running it under water, soaking it or using vinegar or other solutions to “clean” it. Experts say rinsing, soaking or cleaning meat does not help you. Instead, it spreads germs and bacteria in your kitchen.

Today's meats, poultry and fish in stores are already cleaned during processing. The practice of cleaning these foods at home is outdated and not healthy.

Keep these foods each in their separate

bag and keep them in the fridge or freezer until you're ready to use it. Wash and sanitize counters, cutting boards and other surfaces that come into contact with raw or frozen meats, poultry and fish.



CLEAN HANDS ARE KEY

After a trip to the grocery store, wash your hands with soap and water. After touching any raw foods, wash your hands again. And finally, before you prepare any food at all, wash your hands!



CLEANING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Rinse any fresh fruits or vegetables well under running water. Do this before cutting, peeling or eating them.

You can wash foods that are labeled as “pre-washed,” but it's not necessary. These are ready to eat.

DON'T USE SOAP OR SANITIZERS

Sanitizing wipes and other chemicals are not safe to consume. Even household dish soaps are not safe to eat. So, don't use these things on your food.

Rinse fruits and veggies well. Make sure you get any visible dirt off. Use a clean scrub brush on tough things like potatoes or cantaloupe.

Babies, pacifiers & thumb sucking

Many babies use pacifiers or their fingers to soothe themselves. But which is best and when should they stop?



THE THUMB AND FINGER HABIT

Many babies will suck on a favorite thumb or finger. This is normal. There are some good things about this habit:

- You don't have to buy a pacifier. And, you don't have to worry about it falling on the floor and getting dirty.
- A baby always has it when they need it.

There are some downsides to this habit, including:

- Babies may touch things and get germs on their hands. Then, these germs get in their mouth.
- Thumb sucking may increase the risk of ear infections.
- You can't take it away when you want them to quit the habit!

USING A PACIFIER

Many babies get pacifiers right after birth and use them for months or years. They can be helpful because they:

- Can reduce pain during shots or blood draws.
- They may reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- You can take them away when you want them to stop using it.

Pacifiers aren't always good. They can:

- Cause problems with breastfeeding.
- Get lost or fall on a dirty floor or surface.
- Increase the risk of ear infections.
- Cause dental problems with long-term use (longer than 6 months).

YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS

Many parents find that they need to allow their baby to soothe with fingers or a pacifier. Without it, their baby may be fussy or may not sleep well. Keep these things in mind when weighing the pros and cons:

- It's best to use pacifiers in babies under 6 months. After 1 year of age, babies should start to wean off the pacifier.
- Don't put honey or anything else on a pacifier. Wash it often and especially after it touches the floor or dirty objects.
- Thumb and finger sucking can be hard to stop. If your child doesn't stop by age 4, talk to their doctor.

If you have questions about pacifier use or thumb sucking, talk to your child's pediatrician.



Source: American Academy of Family Physicians

Own your work *from home*

Are you working from home or considering doing so? While working from home has advantages, it can also be a challenge. Set yourself up for success with these tips.

Talk
with your
supervisor.

Have a
space for
work.

Maintain contact
with your peers,
colleagues and/or
customers. Check
in with them often.
Don't allow yourself
to "fall of the
radar."

Be sure you
know what your
supervisor wants
you to get done
each day. If you
don't know, ask.

A desk or
table for your
computer
and papers is
important. Don't
simply use a bed
or couch.

Keep in
touch with
others.



Going gray *because of stress?*

Many people joke about stress causing gray hair. But new evidence suggests this old “myth” is actually true. The body’s stress response, known as fight-or-flight, plays a part in making hair turn gray sooner.

WHY HAIR HAS COLOR

Your hair contains special stem cells called melanocytes. Melanocytes live in the hair follicle at the hair root. They make pigment, or color, that gives your hair its natural hue.

The natural aging process causes melanocytes to disappear, leading to gray hair. Once gone, melanocytes don’t come back.



STRESS AND GOING GRAY

Researchers say that certain kinds of stress may cause hair to turn gray. It happens because certain nerves that work with the fight-or-flight response affect the body — including hair follicles.

These fight-or-flight nerves release a chemical called norepinephrine directly into the follicle. Then, the norepinephrine forces the melanocyte stem cells to leave.

Without these stem cells, the hair follicle can’t produce new color. So, the hair turns gray or white.

MANAGE STRESS

Stress can be hard on your health — not just your hair. If you have high stress often, talk with your doctor about it.

Source: National Institutes of Health