

Personal Best

HOPE Health Letter®

NOVEMBER 2022

Boost Brain Health

Thinking about your mental fitness? Many everyday habits and conditions can impact our brain power — up or down. Memory lapses can occur at any age, and aging alone is generally not a cause of mental decline.

When significant memory loss occurs as we age, it is likely due to physical disorders, brain injury or neurological illness. Many studies indicate we can help protect our brain health and reduce dementia risk with basic good health habits.

Do your best to:

- **Stay physically active.** People who regularly exercise throughout life are less likely to experience a decline in mental function as they age and have a lower risk of developing dementia, including Alzheimer's disease.
- **Get adequate sleep.** For body and brain health, we need seven to nine consecutive hours of sleep every 24 hours.
- **Manage stress and guard brain health and recall.** Your brain is similar to a muscle; use it or lose it. Choose enjoyable mental activities that may boost brain power, such as doing crossword puzzles, reading for learning or taking classes.
- **Socialize.** Regular interaction with family, friends, coworkers and others helps us manage stress or depression; both may contribute to memory loss.
- **Choose a Mediterranean-style diet.** Studies suggest those who do may be less likely to develop cognitive decline compared to people who follow a typical Western diet. Foods in the Mediterranean eating pattern include vegetables, fruit, whole grains, legumes, fish, olive oil, dairy, chicken, eggs and herbs, while reducing highly processed foods, sweets and red meat.

Habits to avoid: If you drink, limit alcohol use to no more than one drink a day for women or two drinks for men. Don't smoke. And avoid long periods of sitting. Get up and move frequently.



BEST bits

■ **To reduce your risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) it may help to limit screen time that involves sitting.** Excessive TV viewing and leisure time screen use have been linked to CHD. Limiting leisure screen time to less than one hour a day could help prevent more than one in ten cases, regardless of your genetic makeup, according to recent University of Cambridge research. In this study, **people who viewed screens more than four hours per day were at greatest risk for CHD**, regardless of their risk for other genetic disorders. To examine the link between time spent in screen-based sedentary behaviors, including TV viewing and leisure computer use, an individual's DNA, and their CHD risk, researchers reviewed about 12 years of data from more than 500,000 adults.



■ **The U.S. Surgeon General has designated Thanksgiving as Family Health History Day.** Many of us have family members who have developed type 2 diabetes, heart disease or cancer — some of the most common serious conditions that can threaten our health and shorten our lives. You are more likely to get the same disease as your parent or sibling and you should consider earlier screening. Ask your health care provider about (1) when to start screening for identified diseases and (2) what other steps to take to prevent or manage the disease. Take action to protect your health.

Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date pandemic information visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, **Conquer That Cough**, is at personalbest.com/extras/22V11tools.

ISSN 1096-4606

“Your diet is a bank account. Good food choices are good investments.”

— Bethenny Frankel



TIP of the MONTH

Think Before You Drink

Alcohol is common during holiday meals, and it's easy to drink too much.

As part of your healthy eating regimen, remember to be moderate with alcohol. If you don't drink alcohol, don't start. If you enjoy alcohol, remember that moderate drinking is considered one drink a day for women, or two drinks a day for men (one drink is 5 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer or 1.5 ounces of other alcohol). Alternate alcoholic drinks with water, tea or seltzer. And never drink and drive.

eating smart

Celebrate Healthy Eating

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Holiday season is a time to celebrate with family and friends, and many events revolve around food. Sometimes this can be challenging for people who have special dietary needs or follow a rigid eating pattern. The influx of treats, sweets and celebrations focused on eating can be overwhelming.

Here are five tips on how to manage the festive season:

- 1. Remember moderation.** You may be invited to many holiday events, and it's nice to enjoy a decadent treat at each party. Moderation allows you to enjoy small portions without overdoing it. Plan ahead, pick your favorites and savor them.
- 2. Slow down.** When conversation (and alcohol) is flowing, it's easy to become distracted, ignore fullness cues and eat too much too quickly. Practice portion control with your first plate of food. Take your time with every bite.
- 3. Give yourself permission to indulge.** While accommodating any food intolerances, make sure to enjoy some holiday favorites, too. Mix nutrient-dense foods, such as turkey and vegetables, with side dishes, such as candied yams and stuffing, so you can enjoy a bit of everything.
- 4. Don't skip meals.** You may think you should save up your calories for a festive dinner by passing on breakfast or lunch, but this often backfires. It can make you ravenous and grumpy by dinnertime, forcing you to overeat. Instead, eat sensibly all day long, and enjoy your meal.
- 5. Bring a dish.** If you are concerned about meal choices to accommodate your needs, ask your host about making your own additions to the meal. Hosts are usually happy to have an extra vegetable dish, salad or protein option. Remember to make enough for everyone.



Parmesan-Roasted Broccoli

EASY recipe

6 cups broccoli florets	1 tbsp balsamic glaze (thick vinegar)
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil	Freshly ground pepper to taste
¼ tsp salt or more to taste	¼ cup fresh chopped basil
⅓ cup grated Parmesan cheese	

Preheat oven to 400°F. **Line** baking sheet with parchment paper. **On** baking sheet, toss broccoli with olive oil and salt. **Bake** 15 minutes; then remove from oven. **Add** Parmesan, stir to coat, and bake 10–15 minutes more. **Pour** broccoli onto serving platter and top with glaze, pepper and basil. **Toss** and serve.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 142 calories | 7g protein | 10g total fat | 2g saturated fat | 5g mono fat | 2g poly fat | 10g carbohydrate | 2g sugar | 4g fiber | 316mg sodium

Brain Benefits of Music

To exercise your brain, turn on some music. Research has shown that listening to music can help reduce anxiety, control blood pressure and relieve pain, as well as improve sleep quality, mood, mental alertness and memory.

Music therapy is used by hospice and palliative care board-certified music therapists to enhance conventional mental and physical treatments, including the management of pain and physical functioning with neurologic disorders.

Researchers have identified several benefits of music for their patients. Their clinical studies have shown that music routines can:

- Elevate mood by boosting the brain's production of dopamine, reducing depression.
- Ease stress by triggering biochemical stress reducers.
- Improve memory and communication by relaxing agitation in patients.
- Manage pain by reducing stress levels and pain signals from the brain.
- Boost exercise performance and endurance.

Tune in: Consider choosing a variety of different kinds of music, and pick what positively affects you, either by boosting energy or focus or simply relaxing your mood. Experiment and pay attention to how you react to music. When you're feeling down, turn on your music to help pick you up, much like exercise does.

Did you know? In 2009, archaeologists excavating a cave in southern Germany uncovered a flute carved from a vulture's wing bone. This artifact is considered the oldest known musical instrument on Earth — suggesting people have been making music for more than 40,000 years.

Defusing Family Feuds

Along with a festive meal, something else can be served up this time of year — family squabbles. Long-held resentments, political differences — lots of things can boil over around the turkey platter. Plan how you'll navigate around sensitive topics, cool down any potential arguments and steer conversations into a positive direction.

You can't magically calm hurt feelings and anger that have been simmering, sometimes for years, between family members. However, focusing on why family members gather at the holidays can help soothe emotions.

After all, you are family with common memories and ties. So, the American Psychological Association advises planning some activities at your holiday dinner that promote laughter and ease tensions, such as looking through old photo albums or playing a family-centered game, while the turkey cooks.

If a discussion between relatives becomes heated, whether you are involved or not, try saying, "I see you come from a different perspective, so it's natural to see things differently." Then politely try to switch to a non-contentious topic, such as travel plans.

You may be understandably annoyed by rudeness or sarcasm, but avoid escalating the situation with irritation or anger. If a conversation heats up, stay calm. Take several deep breaths. Remember, you can only control your behavior.

“For me, living a balanced life means nurturing the academic, physical, and spiritual aspects of my life so I can maintain a sense of well-being and self-esteem.”

— Denise Morrison



November is National Family Caregivers

Month, a time to remember those who clean and shop for, as well as comfort and tend to millions of elderly, ill and disabled loved ones. Are you or someone you know a caretaker? You aren't alone. According to National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) and AARP research, 53 million Americans are providing unpaid care for relatives and friends. If you are a caregiver, don't forget to care for yourself. The NAC offers self-care tips and information about finding community services, communicating with health care providers and more at [caregiving.org](https://www.caregiving.org).



“It’s better to look ahead and prepare, than to look back and regret.”

— Jackie Joyner-Kersey

Lowering sodium (salt) in your diet doesn’t have to be hard. Research shows your taste buds can adapt surprisingly quickly to a diet with a bit less salt. That’s welcome news if you are one of the millions of Americans with high blood pressure because less salt can help treat (and even prevent) hypertension.

Use these strategies to reduce salt as your taste buds adapt:

- Cut back on your intake of highly processed foods, restaurant and fast food — that’s where 71% of sodium in the diet comes from. Cook at home more often.
- Don’t automatically salt food as you cook or eat it.
- Compare labels and choose foods with less sodium (low sodium is 140 mg or fewer). Rinse salt from canned vegetables and beans.
- Season food with herbs and spices.

To learn more, search for **sodium** at www.nih.gov.

body&mind

Q: Tips to overcome fear of missing out (FOMO)?

A: Since we can’t be everywhere at once, we’re always missing out on something and that’s normal. While many people turn to social media when feeling dissatisfied, it can actually worsen FOMO. Instead, choose to pay attention to the things that make you feel *better* rather than worse. In addition:

- Know what situations trigger your FOMO and limit your exposure to them.
- Prioritize quality over quantity of experiences. Choose your commitments thoughtfully.
- Limit multitasking. Trying to do multiple things simultaneously is inefficient, stressful and unsatisfying.
- Let go of having it all. It’s not realistic or necessary for a fulfilling life.
- Take time to be thankful. What do you appreciate in your life?
- Focus on enjoying what you already have in the here and now. Savor your experiences.

— Eric Endlich, PhD



The Great American Smokeout is November 17.



Tobacco: Quit to Win

No Tobacco '22 is this year’s national program sponsored by the American Lung Association, helping people to stop using all tobacco products. You’ll find quit tips and resources on social media and at lung.org.

Cigarette smoking is a leading cause of death in the U.S., taking nearly a half million lives every year, including deaths from secondhand smoking. That’s about one in five deaths due to preventable diseases caused by smoking. It is also linked to nearly half of the deaths from 12 types of cancer combined.

Fortunately, the number of cigarette smokers continues to decline. The number of smokers has dropped from nearly 21 of every 100 adults, or 20.9% (age 18 and older) in 2005 to about 13 of every 100 adults (12.5%) in 2020. Among youth (12 to 17 years old) who smoked, 44% have quit smoking cigarettes since 2013.

Most smokers want to kick cigarettes and there is help for saying goodbye to tobacco and vaping for good. One common approach is a combination of medicine, emotional support and changing lifestyle habits. Here are three great sources to help motivate you:

- See your health care provider for guidance.
- Get quitting advice and tools at smokefree.gov.
- Visit cancer.org for phone and app quitline counseling services that show a high rate of quitting success.

Quitters share one thing in common: They have a strong desire to be tobacco-free.



Q: OK to exercise when sick?

A: Mild or moderate exercise is generally considered okay if you have a cold or upper respiratory infection. But if your symptoms are more severe than a stuffy nose, sneezing and sore throat, you should avoid physical activity, especially if you have a fever, fatigue or body aches. Frequent coughing, chest congestion, wheezing, nausea and abdominal pain are other signs that indicate you should skip exercise.

Decrease intensity and time. Even with the common cold, it's wise to cut back on regular physical activity. Instead of pushing yourself, do less than usual. Exercising at your normal pace when you're more than mildly sick may worsen the illness or cause an injury.

What to do if you have COVID-19: At least two weeks of rest are recommended for people recovering from the virus. Get your health care provider's advice before gradually resuming physical activity.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD



Tingling Feet

Odds are your feet have tingled at some point. In fact, most people have experienced a foot going to sleep after they sit in one position for a long time. Then they stand up, move around, and their numb foot tingles briefly before returning to normal.

Other causes can result in tingling feet lasting for hours, days or longer. Here are five common causes of tingling feet:

1. **Peripheral neuropathy** is a type of nerve damage most often caused by diabetes. It also sometimes causes burning and pain in your feet.
2. **B₁₂ deficiency, over time, can cause tingling feet.** Causes of this deficiency include a vegan diet, weight-loss surgery and proton pump inhibitors (heartburn medications).
3. **A herniated disc,** often the result of an injury or being significantly overweight, can put pressure on nerves in your back, resulting in tingling feet.
4. **Spinal stenosis** is a narrowing of the spaces in your spine. This can compress nerves and trigger foot tingling.
5. **Pregnancy** puts pressure on the uterus, especially as the baby grows in the last trimester. This can compress nerves in the mother's legs and cause tingling feet. Symptoms resolve after the baby is born.

If your feet tingle without an obvious cause, or if the tingling is associated with other symptoms, such as weakness, pain and balance problems, contact your health care provider to get a diagnosis and treatment. The good news? Most causes of tingling feet aren't serious, and it may be something as simple as changing your position when you sit or getting better-fitting shoes.



“A friend is a gift you give yourself.”

— Robert Louis Stevenson



Play is essential for children's mental health.

Unfortunately, free play time has decreased in modern life. This has taken a toll on some youngsters' emotional well-being, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. The good news? A University of Exeter study revealed that youngsters who were able to play more, even during the COVID-19 lockdown, were happier and experienced less anxiety and depression. Researchers suggest supporting children's mental health by encouraging adventurous activities (with appropriate supervision), such as camping, exploring a forest and trying out new skills on a skateboard or bike.

Personal Loans: Pros and Cons

By Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, CFP, AFC, MBA

Have you ever needed to borrow money but didn't want to be locked into rules on how to use it? A personal loan may be a wise choice. This is a type of installment loan where you receive an amount of money up front and are charged a fixed rate for the loan with fixed monthly payments. Personal loans are approved based on your credit score, amount of income and how much overall debt you have (debt-to-income ratio).

Consider the pros and cons to help you make the right choice.

Pros:

- Personal loans are unsecured; unlike a car loan or home mortgage, you do not have to attach an asset to your repayment of the loan.
- Personal loans typically offer lower interest rates than credit cards, making them a more attractive option for large purchases. Rates are tied to your credit score, so higher scores mean lower rates.

Cons:

- Higher monthly payments — Personal loans have specified terms and have to be paid off by the end of the term, raising your payment rate.
- Closing costs — Personal loans can have fees that increase the overall loan cost. If you miss payments, you may also incur increased fees, adding to your monthly payment.

Top Dollar Takeaway: If you have trouble managing money and frequently consolidate debt, it is time to examine your spending rather than asking for more money. However, if you have a high credit score and a specific purpose for the cash, you might consider a personal loan.

safety solutions

Drowsy Driving Prevention Week is November 6 to 12.



Nighttime Commuting

It's late, you've worked a long day and you have a long commute home. How do you reduce the dangers of drowsy driving? Here are some ways:

- Get adequate sleep every night. Sleep experts recommend seven to nine hours.
- Avoid taking medications that can make you sleepy or tired before driving. **Examples:** antihistamines, muscle relaxants, opioid pain relievers and antidepressants.
- Consider carpooling or taking public transportation if you work a long day and are tired.
- Never drink alcohol before driving.
- Don't drive if you've been awake for 16 hours or more.
- Maintain your vehicle to avoid breaking down at night.
- Make sure your headlights are clean and adjusted correctly.
- Make sure your windshield is clean.
- Slow down to compensate for limited visibility.
- Watch for wildlife.



Safe Hearth for the Holidays

There's nothing like enjoying a fire in a fireplace when it's cold and snowy outside.

Follow these guidelines to stay comfortable and safe:

Examine the fireplace and chimney for creosote buildup. **Best bet:** Get your chimney and fireplace professionally cleaned once a year. To find a certified chimney sweep, visit csia.org.

Inspect and clean your fireplace before you start a fire. This means vacuuming the hearth and checking for cracks on the floor and back wall of the firebox. **Note:** If you or someone else in your household has respiratory issues, hire a fireplace cleaning service.

Check the damper to ensure it is working. Open the damper before you light a fire.

Use a log grate to hold burning logs in place and always make sure that you use a metal mesh screen or glass doors to prevent hot embers from escaping.

Choose the correct type of seasoned wood. Your safest choice is dense wood, such as oak, that is stored in a dry area for at least six months.

Use kindling or fire starter squares to start a fire. Never use flammable liquids.

Ensure your smoke detector is working.

Never leave a fire unattended. Make sure it is completely extinguished before leaving your home.



November is Diabetes Month.



Type 2 Diabetes: Are You at Risk?

Diabetes is a complex disease that affects your body's primary source of energy — glucose (sugar). By far, the most common form of diabetes is type 2. It's caused by low levels of the hormone **insulin**, which controls the amount of sugar in your blood by moving it into your cells, where it can be used by your body for energy.

When this energy system fails, glucose accumulates in your bloodstream, leading to serious health complications. *Eventually, high blood sugar levels can create disorders of your circulatory, nervous and immune systems.* The longer you've had type 2, the higher your risk for medical side effects. Once diabetes is treated with medication, blood sugar levels can drop to dangerously low levels, too, so it's important to keep track.

How common is type 2 diabetes? More than 37 million Americans have diabetes (about one in ten), and more than 90% of them have type 2 diabetes. Type 2 most often affects people in middle age, but increasing numbers of children, teens and young adults are also diagnosed.

What are your chances of developing type 2 diabetes? It depends on multiple factors, including your genes and lifestyle. While you can't change your family history, age or ethnicity, you can control lifestyle risk factors. You are more likely to develop type 2 if you are physically

inactive, eat mostly ultra-processed foods and are overweight or obese. Other risks include:

- Age 45 or older.
- A family history of diabetes.
- High blood pressure.
- Low HDL (good) cholesterol or high LDL (bad) cholesterol.
- A history of gestational diabetes or giving birth to a baby weighing nine pounds or more.

To learn more, search for **risk** at diabetes.org.

What are symptoms of type 2 diabetes? Common symptoms include increased thirst, frequent urination and unintended weight loss. Overall, symptoms can be mild and develop slowly for several years; many people will have no symptoms. You may not be aware of the disease until you have related health problems, including blurred vision, heart trouble or circulation problems.

Managing diabetes requires healthy eating, weight control and being physically active. Your health care provider may prescribe insulin, other injectable medications or oral diabetes medicines. You'll need to eat healthy, exercise regularly and keep your blood pressure and cholesterol close to your provider-recommended targets, and get regular screening for related health problems.



Prediabetes Research Update

There's good news from a 21-year follow-up of more than 3,200 adults with prediabetes who participated in the original Diabetes Prevention Program trial. The trial period confirmed that lifestyle interventions or the medication metformin were effective long-term in preventing or delaying type 2 diabetes among adults with prediabetes compared to participants who received standard care. Participants in the lifestyle change program lowered their chances of developing type 2 diabetes by 58% while those who took metformin lowered their diabetes risk by 31%.

DR. ZORBA'S corner

Coconut oil is more hype than truth. There are lots of claims that it's good for the heart, but they're not backed up by rigorous, peer-reviewed scientific research published in reputable medical journals. When reputable journals review these studies as a whole (what's known as a meta-analysis), they find that coconut oil may raise LDL cholesterol levels, which is detrimental to heart health. As such, coconut oil is not recommended as the primary oil in a heart-healthy diet. My suggestion: Stick with heart-friendly oils. Extra-virgin olive oil is clearly the best one hands down. It's high in unsaturated fats and lower in saturated fats. Canola, avocado, peanut and flax oils are also healthful.

— Zorba Paster, MD

November Fill-in-the-Blank Puzzle

Find out how well you know the topics covered in this issue of the newsletter.

- 1 _____ drinking is considered one drink a day for women, or two drinks a day for men (one drink is 5 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer or 1.5 ounces of other alcohol).
- 2 _____ is used by hospice and palliative care board-certified music therapists to enhance conventional mental and physical treatments.
- 3 Cigarette smoking is linked to nearly half of the deaths from _____ types of cancer combined.
- 4 Research shows your taste buds can adapt surprisingly quickly to a diet with a bit less _____.
- 5 Frequent coughing, chest congestion, wheezing, nausea and abdominal pain are other signs that indicate you shouldn't _____.
- 6 At least two weeks of rest are recommended for people recovering from _____.
- 7 Peripheral neuropathy is a type of nerve damage most often caused by _____.



You'll find the answers at personalbest.com/extras/Nov2022puzzle.pdf.

The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, Conquer That Cough, is at personalbest.com/extras/22V11tools.

Stay in Touch. Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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