

... FEBRUARY 2009 ...

QUICK TAKES**DON'T LET STRESS MAKE YOU SICK**

Listen to your body so that you know when stress is affecting your health. Deep breathing is a good way to relax. Try it a couple of times every day. Here's how to do it.

1. Lie down or sit in a chair.
2. Rest your hands on your stomach.
3. Slowly count to four and inhale through your nose. Feel your stomach rise. Hold it for a second.
4. Slowly count to four while you exhale through your mouth. To control how fast you exhale, purse your lips like you're going to whistle. Your stomach will slowly fall.
5. Repeat five to ten times.

Better Health Made Simple

Reduce your risk for health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some forms of cancer by changing the following behaviors.

DIET

Our on-the-go lifestyles can make healthy eating a challenge. Many of us eat what is easiest rather than what is healthiest. Fortunately, you can begin immediately improving your diet with simple steps.

- First, increase your consumption of fruits and vegetables. A growing body of research shows fruits and vegetables are critical to promoting good health and protecting from disease.
- Second, choose whole grains instead of refined grains at every opportunity. You'll increase your intake of fiber, vitamins, mineral, and health-protective phytochemicals.
- Finally, limit your intake of saturated and trans fats to reduce your risk for certain diseases. Food high in these types of fats include commercial baked goods, fried foods, margarine, butter, full-fat dairy products, and meats such as bacon, salami, ribs and sausage.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Our on-the-go lifestyles can make healthy eating a challenge. Many of us eat what is easiest rather than what is healthiest. Fortunately, you can begin immediately improving your diet with simple steps.

Being inactive increases your risk for heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes. People who are inactive are more likely to be overweight or obese, which in turn is associated with certain cancers, osteoarthritis and back problems. Lack of exercise can also increase fatigue, stress and anxiety. Guidelines recommend all adults get at least 2 1/2 hours of moderate physical activity per week. This is easily achieved by exercising 30 minutes, 5 days a week. When exercising aerobically, such as walking, riding a bike, jogging, or swimming, you can also break this down into segments of at least 10 minutes.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Being overweight or obese greatly raises the risk for heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, reproductive problems and gallstones. To safely lose and maintain weight, set realistic goals. Focus on limiting energy IN (the calories from food and drinks) and maximizing energy OUT (the calories burned through physical activity). Follow a healthy eating plan, keep your calorie needs in mind, and focus on portion size. Find ways to move: take the stairs instead of the elevator; walk the dog; play outside with your kids; go dancing; scrub the floor; just get active!

TOBACCO USE

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in this country. If you do not use tobacco but are exposed to secondhand smoke, you are also at increased risk for developing cancer and heart disease. If you use tobacco, quitting is the best thing you can do to improve your health right now and in the future. Discuss your options with your doctor or pharmacist as they can be good sources of information.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

When you experience stress for prolonged periods of time, it can take a toll on your body in the form of elevated blood pressure and blood glucose, and aggravated headaches, backaches, and other ailments. Different people find success with diverse strategies, including exercise, meditation, relaxation, prayer, yoga and social support. Any or all can break the cycle of chronic stress, and give your body and mind a chance to return to a balanced, peaceful state.

How to Start a Walking Program

Regular exercise can improve heart function, lower blood pressure and cholesterol, and lower risk of heart disease. Walking is an excellent form of exercise and can improve strength and endurance and the body's ability to burn fat.

Leave time in your busy schedule to follow a walking program that will work for you. Keep the following points in mind as you plan your program:

- **Choose a safe place to walk. Find a partner or group of people to walk with you. Your walking partner(s) should be able to walk with you on the same schedule and at the same speed.**
- **Wear shoes with proper arch support, a firm heel, and thick flexible soles that will cushion your feet and absorb shock. Before you buy a new pair, be sure to walk in them in the store.**
- **Wear clothes that will keep you dry and comfortable. Look for synthetic fabrics that absorb sweat and remove it from your skin.**
- **For extra warmth in winter, wear a knit cap. To stay cool in summer, wear a baseball cap or visor.**
- **Think of your walk in three parts. Warm up by walking slowly for 5 minutes. Then, increase your speed and do a fast walk.**

Finally, cool down by walking slowly again for 5 minutes.

- **Do light stretching after your warm-up and cool-down.**
- **Try to walk at least three times per week. Each week, add 2 or 3 minutes to your walk. If you walk less than three times per week, you may need more time to adjust before you increase the pace or frequency of your walk.**
- **To avoid stiff or sore muscles and joints, start gradually. Over several weeks, begin walking faster, going further, and walking for longer periods of time.**
- **Set goals and rewards. Examples of goals are participating in a fun walk or walking continuously for 30 minutes.**
- **Keep track of your progress with a walking journal or log.**
- **The more you walk, the better you may feel and the more calories you may burn.**

Experts recommend 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, if not all, days of the week. If you cannot do 30 minutes at a time, try walking for shorter amounts and gradually working up to it.

Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Grapefruit and Spinach Salad

Makes: 6 Servings

Sweet, juicy grapefruit are plentiful at this time of year. Marinating the red onion slices in a mixture of vinegar, sugar and oil mellows the onions' bite and turns them a vibrant pink.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 teaspoons sugar
1 teaspoon olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 red onion, cut in half vertically and thinly sliced
2 large grapefruit, preferably red or pink
1/3 cup frozen orange juice concentrate
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
10 ounces (300 g) baby spinach leaves

Preparation

1. In a bowl, stir together vinegar, sugar, oil, a pinch of salt and a generous grinding of black pepper. Add onions and stir to coat thoroughly. Set aside for 15 to 30 minutes to marinate and soften.
2. Remove grapefruit skins with a serrated knife. Working over a bowl, cut the grapefruit segments from the membrane, letting them drop into the bowl. Squeeze any juice from the membranes into the bowl as well.
3. To make the dressing: in a food processor or blender, combine orange juice concentrate, mustard, the juice from the grapefruit segments, 1 heaping tablespoon of the marinated onions and a pinch of salt. Puree until smooth.
4. In a large salad bowl, toss spinach and salad dressing. Drain marinated onions and add to the salad along with the grapefruit segments. Toss gently and serve.



Nutritional info / serving

85 Calories
1.3g Fat
0.2g Saturated fat
2.6g Protein
18g Carbohydrate
2.8g Fiber
53mg Sodium