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Provided By: Northwest Iron Workers Health & Security Trust



HealthyLife® Letter

June 2018

Promoting Health. Enhancing Life. Reducing Costs.

WAYS TO IMPROVE



BRAIN HEALTH

43.8 MILLION
American adults
experience mental illness
each year.



5.7 MILLION
Americans are living with
Alzheimer's dementia.



DANCING

Dancing offers social interaction and a distraction from the day's stress. It's also a great way to get aerobic exercise. Dancing challenges the mind, which supports a healthy brain.



RUNNING

Studies have shown aerobic exercise like running reduces anxiety and depression. Being active may also reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease.



SLEEPING

Lack of sleep hurts reasoning and problem-solving skills. Some studies suggest that sleep helps clear out toxins from the brain, helping it to stay healthy and sharp.



RELAXATION

Deep breathing, prayer and meditation can help relax the mind and lower stress levels. Long-term stress can damage how the brain works, so coping with stress in healthy ways gives your brain a boost.

Non-drug options for chronic pain

Pain that lasts a long time or is ongoing is called chronic pain. A variety of conditions may lead to chronic pain, including arthritis, fibromyalgia, past injuries, or migraine headaches.

Always speak to your doctor about any natural remedies you wish to try and any herbs or supplements you take. Not all natural treatments are safe for everyone, including if you are pregnant. Some can interact with medicines. Your doctor can help you find options that will be best for you. The following options are alternative, non-drug treatments that may be helpful.

ACUPUNCTURE

This Chinese medicine practice involves the placement of thin, small needles into the surface of the skin at various points on the body called meridians. Acupuncturists should be certified or licensed and should use sterile needles. Some studies suggest acupuncture may help with osteoarthritis pain, lower back pain and headaches.



MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which you focus on the present moment only. You calmly acknowledge feelings and thoughts that arise and go back to thinking about the present moment. This treatment may be helpful for people with chronic pain.

HERBS AND DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

Various natural supplements may be helpful for chronic pain.



- Omega-3 fatty acids, gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) and the herb thunder god vine may help with rheumatoid arthritis pain.
- Butterbur, feverfew, magnesium, riboflavin and coenzyme Q10 may help prevent migraines.
- Vitamin D supplements may reduce pain in people with fibromyalgia who have low vitamin D levels.
- Devil's claw and white willow bark taken by mouth may be helpful for back pain.
- Cayenne, comfrey, Brazilian arnica and lavender essential oil may help back pain when used on the skin (do not take these by mouth).



MASSAGE

Massage therapists use their hands to rub or knead the muscles and joints of the body. Some studies show that massage therapy can help with neck pain. Massage may also help reduce pain from osteoarthritis.

Don't play with fire:

fireworks safety tips

The most common firework injuries involve the fingers and hands, but may also include the face, head, ears, arms and legs. Many people injure their eyes from fireworks. They may burn or scratch the eye, or could even go blind if a firework ruptures the eyeball or harms the retina.

Firecrackers are the worst offenders, accounting for 25 percent of all fireworks injuries. Sparklers can also cause serious harm because they burn up to 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit, or 10 times hotter than boiling water, while people are holding them.



The best way to enjoy fireworks is to attend a professional show in your area. But, if you decide to use fireworks at home, here are some tips:

- Do not handle or buy illegal fireworks.
- Follow local laws and ordinances that say when and where fireworks can be used.
- Don't drink alcohol before or while using fireworks.
- Use fireworks outdoors in a cleared area, away from buildings and vehicles.
- Don't use fireworks if there has been a drought or low rain in your area. Local governments often ban fireworks when this happens to reduce risk of fires.
- Don't try to relight a "dud" firework. Leave it alone for at least 20 minutes, then put it in a bucket of water.



- Keep a bucket of water and a working water hose nearby when using fireworks.



- Don't put fireworks in your pocket.
- Don't shoot fireworks into metal or glass containers.
- Wet down any used fireworks and place in a metal trash can. Keep them away from materials that could be combustible or flammable.
- Do not let children handle any fireworks, including sparklers.
- Wear safety glasses when lighting or using fireworks.
- Light only one firework at a time.

- Once the firework is lit, quickly move a safe distance away from it.
- Seek emergency care for injuries caused by fireworks.
- Don't have pets around fireworks or bring them to a fireworks show. Fireworks can cause fear and extreme anxiety in pets.
- If possible, keep your pet in a safe interior room of the house during fireworks shows.
- Make sure your pet has a microchip and/or ID tag on their collar. Many pets run away because of fear during fireworks shows.
- Use ear plugs if you will be close to fireworks, especially for children. Loud noises can cause permanent hearing loss.

Sources: Consumer Product Safety Commission, American Academy of Ophthalmology, National Council on Fireworks Safety

Iron in foods: why it matters



People need iron because it transports oxygen to the body's organs and tissues. The body uses iron to make new red blood cells. It's also important for healthy cells, skin, hair and nails.

Eating foods that contain iron is important. This is the main way most people get the iron they need.

Iron deficiency: a common problem

Iron-deficiency anemia means you don't have enough iron in your body. It is the most common nutritional deficiency in the U.S. It affects more women than men. Causes of iron-deficiency anemia include:

- Not getting enough iron from foods
- Digestive health problems such as celiac disease, Crohn's and ulcerative colitis which don't allow the body to absorb iron well
- Heavy menstrual periods
- Stomach bleeding, which may be caused by an ulcer or using aspirin, ibuprofen or naproxen for long periods of time
- Losing too much blood from surgery, frequent blood tests or an injury

Low iron can be serious

If iron levels get too low, a person may have an increased risk of:

- Depression
- Heart problems
- Infections

Pregnant women who have low iron may deliver their baby too early. Sometimes the baby doesn't grow as much as they should.

Children who don't get enough iron can have problems with learning, thinking and developing their motor (movement) skills.



Get your iron in the kitchen!

Eating healthy foods high in iron may help you avoid getting iron-deficiency anemia. Many delicious foods are good sources of iron.

The best animal sources of iron include:

- Beef or chicken liver
- Lean beef
- Chicken
- Turkey
- Oysters

Good plant food sources of iron include:

- Beans and lentils
- Baked potatoes
- Tofu
- Cashews
- Spinach and other dark green leafy vegetables
- Breakfast cereals that are fortified with iron
- Whole grain breads

You can also cook with a cast iron pan. Some of the iron from the pan absorbs into the foods you cook. Acidic foods like tomato sauces absorb the highest amount from cast iron pans.

There's another way to get even more iron out of the foods you eat. Eating a high-iron food with a food that contains vitamin C helps your body absorb iron better. Vitamin C-rich foods include:

- Oranges and citrus fruits
- Kiwi fruit
- Mango
- Papaya
- Pineapple
- Strawberries
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Bell peppers
- Sweet potatoes
- Tomatoes and tomato juice

FEATURED RECIPE:

Argentinian grilled steak with Salsa Criolla

Ingredients

For the salsa:

- 1 large, ripe tomato
- 1/4 small red onion
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley
- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons red wine vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/8 teaspoon low-sodium adobo seasoning
- 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper



For the steak:

- 1 pound skirt steak
- 1/8 teaspoon low-sodium adobo seasoning

Directions

For the salsa:

1. In a small bowl, mix together tomato, onion, parsley, olive oil, vinegar, garlic, oregano, low-sodium adobo seasoning and crushed red pepper.
2. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up until 48 hours.

For the steak:

1. Heat grill to medium-high heat. Sprinkle steak on both sides with low-sodium adobo seasoning. Place steak on hot, greased grill grates.
2. Cook until steak is well browned on both sides and cooked to 145 °F.
3. Let rest for 5 minutes. Thinly slice steak and serve. Top with reserved Salsa Criolla

Nutrition information: Serves 4. Calories 220; Total Fat 11 g; Saturated Fat 4 g; Sodium 80 mg; Total Carbohydrate 5 g; Dietary Fiber 1 g; Protein 25 g

Source: What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl



See your doctor about iron

You can get your iron levels checked by your doctor with a blood test. Some people already have high iron levels and should not use cast iron pans or take iron supplements. Talk to your doctor about iron, including any recommended diet changes.

Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, U.S. National Library of Medicine

Tips to save on your summer vacation

You want your vacation to be memorable, but you probably don't want to remember spending a lot of money. With some advanced planning, you can save a good amount of your travel and vacation expenses. Here's what travel experts recommend:



DON'T PICK PRIME TIMES FOR FLIGHTS.

If you're flying, you'll usually pay less for airline tickets during off-peak times. This means flying during the middle of the week, early in the morning or late at night.



BE FLEXIBLE.

When booking airline tickets, choose the flexible dates option to find the lowest price for airfare. Sometimes, the savings can be substantial.



VISIT DURING THE OFF-SEASON.

Many people travel to warm, tropical destinations during the winter months. Try going during the late fall or early spring instead.



CHECK OUT RENTING A HOUSE.

Many destinations offer houses for rent at about the same price per night as hotels but with much more space. When you share with another family, you split the cost for even more savings.



LOOK FOR ONLINE DEALS & COUPONS.

Look online for local activities you want to do, such as visiting museums or scuba diving excursions. Many places offer deals or coupons if you book in advance. You may also be able to avoid lines for buying tickets.



DON'T FORGET YOUR DISCOUNTS.

Companies like AARP and AAA often have discount rates for members. Some employers have discounts available to employees for car rentals and other vacation items.



PACK SNACKS.

Pack healthy snacks in a cooler for a car trip like fresh-cut fruits and vegetables. For flights, bring your own food to the airport and eat before getting on the plane. Keep in mind liquids more than 3.4 ounces can't be taken through the security checkpoints.



GET A KITCHEN.

Look for hotel rooms that have a full kitchen so you can store food and beverages, cook your own meals and avoid the higher costs of eating out.



TRY CAMPING.

Instead of traditional hotels, look for campsites. Camping often costs a fraction of what a hotel costs, as long as you have a tent, mats to sleep on and a few more basic camping supplies.



LOOK NEARBY.

If the prices of airline tickets and hotels aren't in your budget, look for daytrip options. Destinations within 2 hours of home are often doable for families and can be just as fun as a longer trip.

Can stress really break your heart?

We know that stress affects the body in many ways. When you're stressed, your heart may race, you may sweat or get a headache and some people even get sick. But experts say that extreme stress can also cause a condition known as broken heart syndrome.



Broken heart syndrome is sometimes called stress-induced or takotsubo cardiomyopathy. It can happen when someone has extreme stress like grief, shock or anger. It can also happen when the body is under physical stress, such as extreme exercise, surgery or dealing with a serious illness.

Why does broken heart syndrome happen?

Some medical experts believe that a high release of stress hormones affects how well the heart can pump blood, causing a problem with the heart muscle. This effect is only temporary, however, and the heart usually returns to its normal function. Or, high stress may cause a spasm in one of the arteries that supplies blood to the heart.

What does broken heart syndrome look like?

Symptoms of broken heart syndrome look a lot like a heart attack. They include chest pain and feeling out of breath. These symptoms begin within a few minutes to hours after the stressful event happens.

Because there's no way to know if you have broken heart syndrome or a heart attack, it's important to go to the emergency room if you notice these symptoms. Usually, the doctors will run tests like a chest x-ray, EKG or other procedures to see how the heart is working. These tests are painless.

How is it treated?

First, the doctors will want to improve blood flow to the heart. Certain medicines for blood pressure may be used or blood thinners. In some cases, medicines for anxiety are used to help lower stress hormones in the body.

Some people may need to stay in the hospital for a few days. Most people recover within a few days without any long-term damage to their heart.

Remember, if you have chest pain or shortness of breath, it's always important to get medical help right away.

Staying active when school's out

When summer arrives, kids often want to spend time in front of the TV or on their computer and digital devices. But, exercise is important year-round. In fact, most kids need at least an hour of vigorous exercise each day. How can you get your kids to exercise during the summer?

- **Get them together with friends.** Older kids may enjoy a bike ride or walking the dog if they have a buddy alongside them. When friends come over, make all screens off-limits.

- **Find summer camps.** If your child likes a sport, many programs offer camps that give them social time as well as exercise. Also, there may be programs for dance, gymnastics, swimming and other activities.
- **Talk to your sitter about rules.** If you have a babysitter during the summer, make your screen-time limits clear. Have the babysitter take them outside or to the local park, if possible. Choose a sitter who is willing to play with them outside and encourage them to be active.



Source: U.S. National Library of Medicine



Why kids need exercise

Kids of all sizes, shapes and ages need exercise every day. Exercise helps kids:

- Learn and grow in school
- Build healthy bones, muscles and joints
- Get better sleep, which is important for their overall health and mental well-being
- Develop a healthy habit that is important throughout life
- Feel more confident and happier
- Deal with stress

If your child isn't active, it's never too late to start. Find an activity they like and help them get moving.