

A young woman with curly brown hair is smiling broadly while eating a salad. She is holding a blue bowl filled with green leafy vegetables and purple onions. She is using a white-handled fork to bring a piece of lettuce to her mouth. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Your
Health



Self-Care

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Maybe you're in the thick of summer vacations, travel, kids being out of school and routines upended — or maybe it's a normal day of work, school, family obligations, community service and more.

Taking care of yourself is critical. The National Association on Mental Illness compares it to putting on your own oxygen mask in an airplane before you can help anyone else. This is especially true for caregivers, doctors, counselors and others in a caring profession, but

it's a good skill for everyone to have.

GET ENOUGH SLEEP

The CDC recommends seven hours or more a night for adults. It's not just about the hours logged, though; the quality of sleep is important as well. Signs of poor sleep quality are not feeling rested even after getting seven hours, waking up multiple times during the night, snoring or gasping for air. Ways to ensure good sleep habits are going to bed and getting up at the same time each day; having a quiet, dark bedroom; getting TVs out of the bedroom; and avoiding large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Eliminating stress entirely is impossi-

ble, but using effective stress management techniques can help you alleviate negative health effects. The Mayo Clinic recommends identifying stress triggers (both positive and negative), then identifying what you can control, even if it's simply your reaction to that trigger. Cultivate a support group; practice deep breathing, yoga or other relaxation techniques; exercise regularly; and spend less time in front of a screen.

EATING WELL AND EXERCISING REGULARLY

Eating a healthy, balanced diet can have positive effects on any number of conditions like diabetes and heart disease and obesity, but it can also just make you feel better generally and give

you more energy. Regular exercise offers the same benefits. This could be mountain climbing, running marathons or triathlons or other high-intensity exercises, but don't discount the benefits of walking, yoga and other low-intensity exercises. All of it will help you feel better.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY

Going to the doctor or needing a sick day rarely happens at a convenient time, and it's easy for us to put those off. Depending on the ailment, though, not taking care of yourself can make it worse. Listen to what your body is telling you, take a rest day, see a doctor or otherwise do what you need to do so you can be healthy.



Cholesterol 101

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Do you know your blood cholesterol level? Do you know what that number means? According to the CDC, cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that your body needs to make hormones and digest fatty foods.

Too much of it can lead to a greater risk of heart disease

and stroke.

Your body makes cholesterol in your liver and uses it. Dietary cholesterol is found in animal products like egg yolks, meat and cheese.

About one in six American adults has high cholesterol, which doesn't manifest itself through any symptoms; your doctor will do a blood test to measure it.

TYPES OF CHOLESTEROL

There are two types of cholesterol – low-density lipoprotein, known as LDL or bad cholesterol, is most of the cholesterol in the body. High

levels of LDL can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. Too much LDL can build up on the walls of blood vessels; this buildup, called plaque, can cause blood vessels to narrow. High-density lipoprotein, or good cholesterol, absorbs LDL and takes it back to the liver, which then flushes it from the body. High levels of HDL lower the risk of heart disease and stroke.

RISK FACTORS FOR HIGH CHOLESTEROL

High cholesterol could be due to family history, lifestyle choices or certain health con-

ditions like diabetes or obesity. Lifestyle factors that can contribute to high cholesterol include eating a diet high in saturated and trans fats, not getting enough exercise, using tobacco or drinking too much alcohol. Family history can also play a role, although that's likely a combination of genetics and having a similar lifestyle.

TREATING HIGH CHOLESTEROL

Just as an unhealthy lifestyle can put you at greater risk of high cholesterol, a healthy lifestyle can help you

manage cholesterol. A diet that is low in trans and saturated fats — particularly from animal products — and added sugars, while eating lots of fruits, vegetables, high-fiber foods like beans, lean meats like fish and unsaturated fats like avocado, olive oil and nuts.

Regular exercise, limiting alcohol, giving up smoking and maintaining a healthy weight also can help control cholesterol. Talk with your doctor to determine if lifestyle changes will be sufficient or if you may need medication to control high cholesterol.

Keeping Blood Pressure in Check

Taking your blood pressure is one of the first tasks your doctor does when you arrive for any appointment.

It can be a cause for concern for many people; high blood pressure, or hypertension, can increase a person's risk for heart disease and stroke, two of the leading causes of death for Americans. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention talks about what you need to know about blood pressure.

Blood pressure is measured by two numbers. The systolic blood pressure, the number that comes first, measures the pressure in the blood vessels when the heart beats. The second number, diastolic blood pressure, measures the pressure in the vessels when the heart is resting between beats. A normal blood pressure is 120/80. When it reaches 140/90, that is considered high blood pressure.

THE RISKS OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

About a third of American adults have high blood pressure. There are no symptoms, so getting it checked regularly (if not at the doctor's office, many pharmacies have blood pressure machines) is likely the only way to know if you're at risk. Hypertension can harden your arteries, which



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means less oxygen-carrying blood is getting to your heart and brain. This can lead to chest pain, heart failure or heart attack, or burst arteries to the brain, causing a stroke. Untreated high blood pressure can also contribute to chronic kidney disease.

CAUSES OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Most adults with hyperten-

sion don't have an identifiable cause, according to the Mayo Clinic. This type, called primary hypertension, tends to develop gradually over time, with risk factors like age, genetics, being overweight, not eating a healthy diet or using tobacco. Secondary hypertension is caused by an underlying condition like kidney problems, genetic defects, certain medications

or thyroid problems, and it tends to appear suddenly and cause higher blood pressure than primary hypertension.

PREVENTING OR TREATING HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

There are a number of non-medical options to control hypertension. A healthy diet that is low in salt, fat and cholesterol, and full of fresh

fruits and vegetables can help to keep your blood pressure low. Physical activity can help as well. If you're not exercising at all right now, ease into it with short, brisk walks a few times a day five days a week.

There also are medications that treat high blood pressure. Talk to your doctor about what treatment regimen is best for you.

Healthy Weight Loss

Ditch the fad diets, the CDC recommends, and go for slow and sustainable weight loss — one to two pounds a week. Not only is this better for your body, but you're more likely to keep the weight off. You're not looking for a diet so much as a healthy, long-term lifestyle change.

This should include both different eating habits — more fruits and vegetables, fewer processed foods and fats — as well as regular exercise.

WHY LOSE WEIGHT?

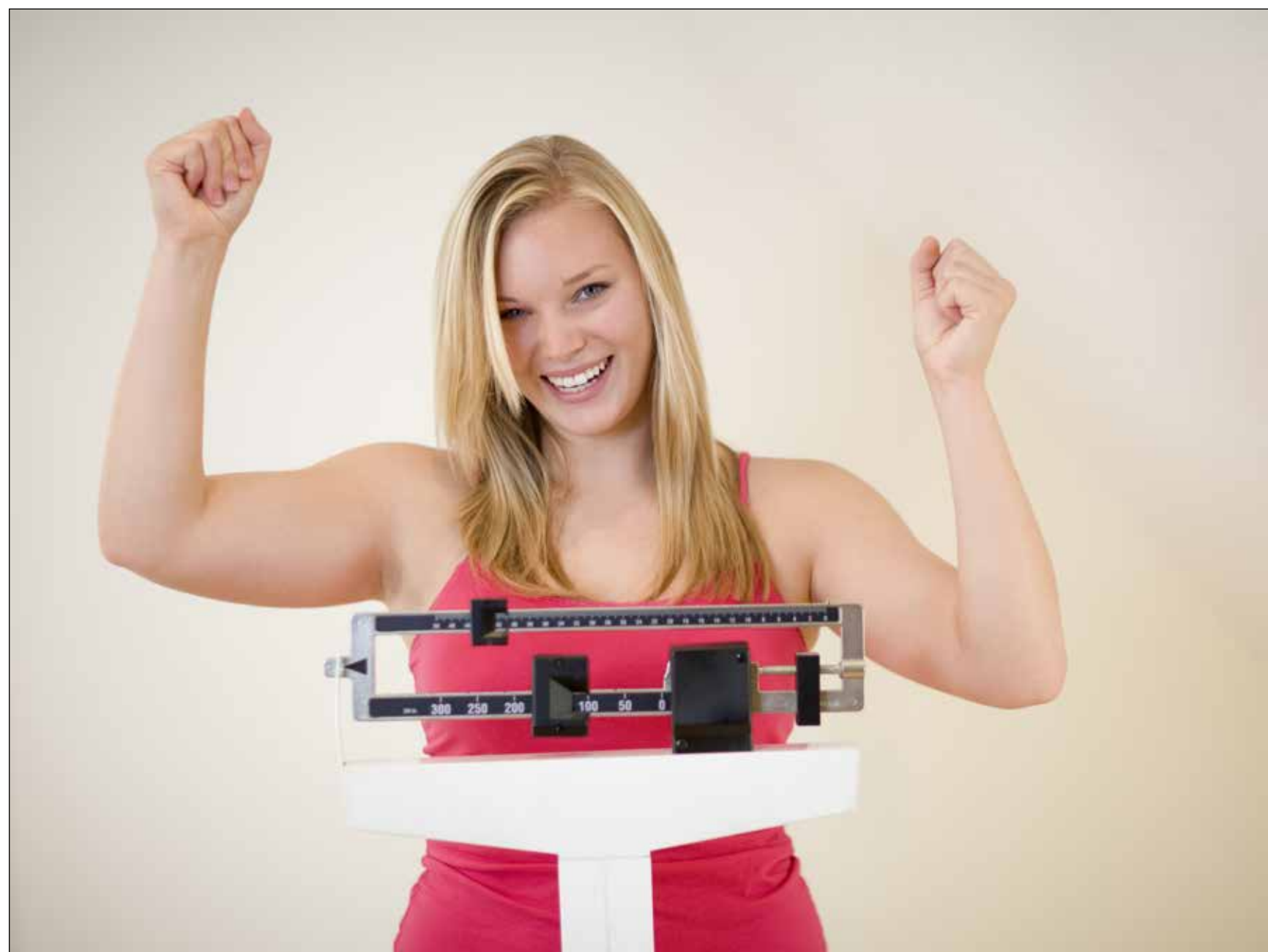
Even losing a small amount of your body weight can contribute to greater overall health, including lower blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugars, all of which are risk factors for chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease. People who lose weight also report better energy levels, physical mobility, mood and self-confidence.

EATING FOR WEIGHT LOSS

Cutting back your calories is the biggest factor in weight loss, but doing it smartly means you won't be hungry all the time. Eat lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, lean meats such as poultry and fish and other lean proteins, such as beans, eggs and nuts, while keeping your diet low in saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, salt and added sugars.

Healthy eating often requires more preparation, so look for shortcuts and plan ahead. You can eat frozen and canned fruits and vegetables (though make sure canned fruit doesn't have any added sugar) On your day off, make food that can be frozen and reheated. You can also substitute foods like whole wheat pasta and bread in your favorite recipes.

Tracking your calories can be very beneficial, as can measuring out your food so you'll know exactly how much you're eating. There are a number of



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mobile apps or websites that allow you to track your food and keep tabs on calories for you.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Most weight loss comes about from

eating fewer calories, but exercise means burning more calories and quicker weight loss without having to cut out quite as many calories. To maintain weight, set a goal of 150 minutes of moderately intense aero-

bic activity per week. Moderate exercise means your breathing and heart rate are faster but you can still carry on a conversation. Build your way up to this if you don't exercising regularly already.

Anxiety and Depression

It's not just feeling sad, anxious, worried or stressed. Depression and anxiety are serious mental illnesses that require the same level of treatment and care that a physical illness does. A quarter of the U.S. population suffers from either anxiety or depression, according to the National Association on Mental Illness.

ANXIETY

About 18 percent of adults and 8 percent of children and teens suffer from an anxiety disorder, making it the most common mental health concern in the country. There is not one disease; the spectrum of anxiety disorders share a persistent, excessive fear or worry in situations that should not be threatening. Other symptoms could include:

- Feeling tense or jumpy.
- Restlessness or irritability.
- Feelings of dread or apprehension.
- Anticipating the worst and signs of dangers.
- Pounding or racing heart, shortness of breath.
- Sweating, twitches, shaking.
- Headaches, fatigue, insomnia.
- Upset stomach or frequent urination.

Anxiety disorders can be caused by genetics or stressful or traumatic life events. It can be hard to diagnose because the physical symptoms of anxiety often look like heart disease or other conditions. Treatment can include therapy, prescription medication and treatments like relaxation or stress-management techniques.

DEPRESSION

Almost 7 percent of the U.S.



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population has depression, according to NAMI. Depression looks different depending on the person, which can make it hard to diagnose. Common symptoms are:

- Changes in sleep patterns and appetite.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Loss of energy or interest in

activities.

- Hopelessness.
- Physical aches and pains.
- Thoughts of suicide or suicidal ideation.
- Fatigue.
- Feelings of guilt or low self-worth.

Science also hasn't found a determinant cause for depres-

sion. It can be brought on by a life event, such as a crisis or a physical illness, but often it's not triggered by anything. Early life trauma, genetics and drug and alcohol abuse can cause actual changes in the brain, which can lead to depression.

While treatment for depression often is as unique as the

symptoms, most people do find relief either on their own or by combining different strategies. Cognitive behavioral therapy and interpersonal therapy and medications like antidepressants and mood stabilizers are often prescribed. Exercise can help with prevention and mild symptoms.

Summer Symptoms

We're outdoors more, enjoying nature and the sun and waterways and eating picnic food that may or may not have been cooked or stored properly. While it can be a lot of fun, it can also lead to various illness and conditions that can sideline you or your family for a weekend. Take steps to keep yourself healthy this summer.

BUG BITES

More people outside means more infections from insect bites, which the CDC reported has increased at surprising rates in recent years. In 2016, almost 100,000 disease cases came from infected mosquitoes, ticks and fleas — triple the rates of a decade ago. Some of that could be attributed to new illnesses or diseases that have traveled from other countries.

To avoid infection while still enjoying the outdoors, always use insect repellent; wear long-sleeved shirts and pants when outdoors; treat boots, pants, socks and tents with permethrin; appropriately treat and frequently check pets for fleas and ticks; and take steps to keep your yard and surrounding areas free from pests.

SUN PROTECTION

It sounds simple, but protecting your skin from sun damage can drastically decrease your risk of skin cancer. According to the CDC, nearly 5 million Americans are treated for skin cancer annually. While most skin cancer is very treatable, it still costs upwards of \$8 billion each year — and most of the damage could be prevented through proper care.

The CDC recommends sunscreen of at least SPF 15 with frequent reapplication, cover-



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ing all of their exposed skin (that includes the hairline, top of the head, ears, top of the feet and anywhere else the sun could hit). Wear a hat with a brim and take frequent breaks in the shade to stave

off sunburn.

FOOD POISONING

It's the season of picnics, barbecues and potlucks — lots of opportunities to make or eat food in less than ideal con-

ditions, which can lead to foodborne illnesses. One of the biggest culprits is mayonnaise-based foods like potato salad that spent too long out of the fridge and spoiled. Make sure to keep foods at the prop-

er temperatures and keep raw meat away from vegetables and fruit salads. Cook foods to the right temperatures and don't let anything sit out too long. Wash your hands and cooking surfaces often.

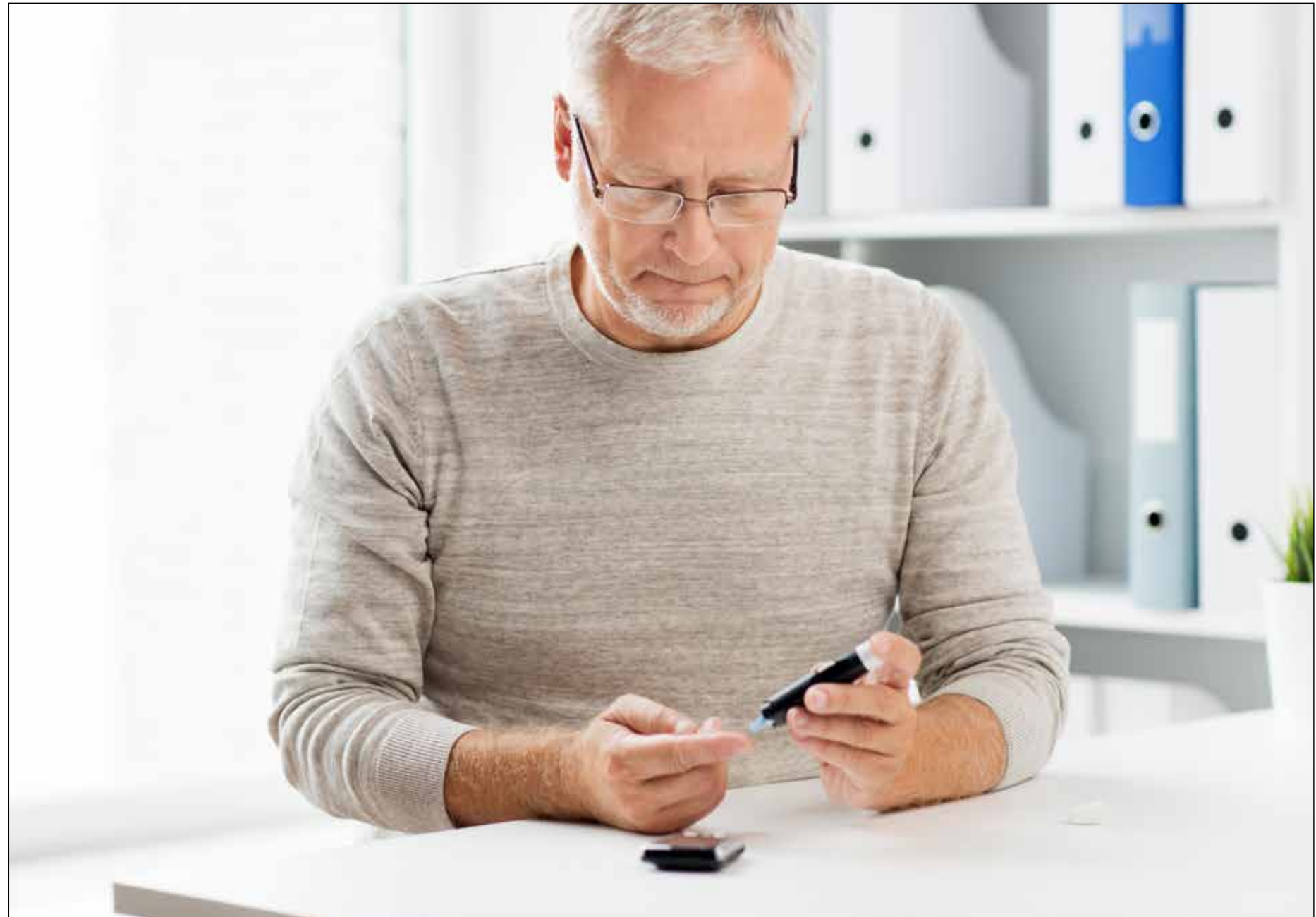
The Basics of Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus is a condition in which the body isn't able to pull glucose out of the blood, which is how the body gets energy into the cells.

There are two types of diabetes. Type 1 diabetes, previously known as juvenile diabetes, is usually diagnosed in children and young adults. The body doesn't produce insulin, which is needed to get glucose out of the bloodstream. It can be treated with insulin therapy. Only about 5 percent of diabetics have Type 1 diabetes.

In Type 2 diabetes, the far more common form of the condition, the body produces insulin but doesn't use it properly, so glucose builds up in the blood. This means your cells don't get enough energy, and in the long term, high blood glucose levels can damage the eyes, kidneys, heart or nerves.

While doctors can't point to a single factor that leads to Type 2 diabetes, they have identified a number of risk factors, including being overweight or obese, not being physically active, high blood pressure or high cholesterol. There also are non-lifestyle factors. As people age, there is an increased risk for diabetes. African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, American Indians, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders and Asian-Americans



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have a higher risk for Type 2 diabetes, as well as heart disease and stroke. People with immediate family members who have Type 2 diabetes are at greater risk as well.

Type 2 diabetes isn't always noticeable. The symptoms make come on slowly and often don't offer a perfect match. The ADA estimates more than 7 million people

who have diabetes are undiagnosed. Symptoms of Type 2 diabetes include frequent urination and feeling hungry and thirsty, blurred vision, cuts and bruises that are slow to heal, weight loss and tingling, pain or numbness in hands and feet.

Often people with Type 2 diabetes can control their blood glucose levels through

non-medical means like balanced, healthy eating and physical exercise. However, Type 2 diabetes often gets worse over time, so many people need medication; your doctor may prescribe oral medications or insulin.

Pregnant women with high blood glucose levels during their pregnancy have a condition known as gestational dia-

betes, which the CDC estimates affects almost 10 percent of pregnant women. Doctors believe hormones from the placenta block the action of the mother's insulin. It may also occur when the mother's body can't make all the insulin it needs. Pregnant women should be tested and gestational diabetes can be treated fairly easily.