

A young woman with long, wavy brown hair is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a bright green t-shirt and holding a ripe red apple with yellow-orange streaks in her hands. The background is plain white.

# YOUR HEALTH

Are You  
**Eating Clean?**

Cutting out sugars, preservatives  
is more than the latest diet fad

# Are You Eating Clean?

**I**t's a health industry buzz phrase that has helped promote the effort of consuming healthier, more natural foods. But "eating clean" is anything but a passing trend.

It is a lifestyle for many people as they try to cut out the added sugars and preservatives that make their way into American shopping carts, homes and bodies.

The nutritional impact that eating clean has on waistlines – and the environment – is the primary catalyst behind the movement. Here's how you can alter your eating and cooking habits to join the movement:

## FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

The United States Department of Agriculture urges adults to consume about three cups of fruits and vegetables per day. The specific amount of fruits and vegetables your body requires to remain at optimal health depends on your age, sex and level of physical activity.

By making half of your plate fruits and vegetables at each meal, you can easily meet your body's needs. And your body will thank you for the extra vitamins, antioxidants and heart-healthy fiber found in most all fruits and vegetables.

## CUT ADDED SUGARS AND SODA

The American Heart Association recommends women consume no more than about six teaspoons of added sugar per day and men consume no more than about nine. Drinking one soda per day can wipe out that allowance quickly, since the typical can contains about nine teaspoons.

Other foods to avoid or limit include sugary cereals, candy, yogurt and baked goods. Always read the nutritional information of the products you are considering buying. If the sugar content of a potential purchase makes up a large percentage of your daily intake, consider swapping it out for a fruit or vegetable.



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## COOK SMARTER

Cooking clean doesn't have to translate to you spending hours upon hours in the kitchen. In fact, by simply doubling your favorite clean recipe, you can have plenty to

portion and store in the freezer for future meals.

This strategy can help arm you in your fight against the urge to splurge on takeout. Instead, you can choose the easy and affordable option of reheating and enjoying your clean meal.

# Optimism Helps Your Heart

Smiling, laughing and simply being happy can make all the difference for our hearts. In fact, new research shows that people with higher levels of optimism may be less at risk for heart failure than those who are more pessimistic.

And with the breadth of heart failure's effect on the nation – about 5.1 million Americans are afflicted every year according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – a little extra optimism is surely needed.

## HEART FAILURE STATISTICS

Other eye-opening statistics from the CDC include:

- One in nine deaths include heart failure as a contributing cause.
- About half those who develop heart failure die within five years of diagnosis.

Heart failure costs the nation about \$32 billion worth of health care services, medications and missed days of work annually.

## THE MAIN BEHAVIORS THAT CAN INCREASE YOUR RISK FOR HEART FAILURE ARE, THE CDC REPORTS:

- Smoking tobacco.
- Eating foods high in fat, cholesterol and sodium.
- Not getting enough physical activity.
- Being obese.

## POSITIVITY STUDY

In the study linking happiness to heart health, optimism was defined as “an expectation that positive things will happen.” Researchers from the University of Michigan and Harvard University analyzed the linkage between optimism and heart failure diagnoses in older adults, since statistics show that people ages 65 years and older are most prone to heart failure diagnoses.

Researchers gathered, analyzed and translated data of more than 6,800 older adults, including health history, background information and psychological data over the course of four years. They also took into account factors that could affect heart failure risk, such as chronic illnesses and demographic factors.

The findings, published in the journal “Circulation: Heart Failure,” showed that the adults who had higher levels of optimism reduced their risk of heart failure by 73 percent. Researchers deduced that staying positive may lead people to making healthier lifestyle choices, therefore reducing their risk for heart failure.





# Healthy Mouth: The Early Years

Caring for your teeth and gums is a lifelong journey that begins shortly after birth. Dental professionals urge parents to bring their child in for a visit whenever the first primary tooth is visible.

This recommendation, which used to define 3 as the starting age, has shifted over the years as the science related to oral hygiene has improved.

What's behind the change? The importance of baby teeth now carries more weight than ever before. The American Dental Association says that properly caring for those mini-pearly whites that begin popping up through the gums at around 6 months is crucial in keeping space in the jaw for adult teeth.

## PARENT EDUCATION

A child's first trip to the dentist can be an educational experience for parents. Dental professionals will show you how to properly clean your baby's teeth and recognize trouble signs in the mouth, which are critical health tips not usually doled out during pregnancy or within parenting magazines.

Dentists can also explain baby-specific concerns regarding dental health, which include baby bottle tooth decay. Avoiding this potentially damaging issue is simple: The ADA recommends wiping your baby's mouth with a clean gauze pad to help remove plaque that can harm erupting teeth. Gentle brushing with a toothbrush and water should begin as soon as you start seeing teeth.

## DENTAL EMERGENCIES

Once more teeth start showing up, the risk for dental emergencies increases. Accidents happen, but knowing how to react in such situations can be the key to retaining your child's oral health. Here is how the ADA recommends you act in a dental emergency:

- Keep a knocked-out tooth moist at all times. If you can, place the tooth back in the socket without touching the root and call your dentist right away.
- For a cracked tooth, immediately rinse the mouth with warm water to clean the affected area. Look out for facial swelling and treat appropriately with cold compresses.

# Cervical Cancer: Reducing the Risk

**T**he National Cancer Institute estimates that more than 12,000 new cases of cervical cancer and 4,000 deaths from the disease will be reported in the U.S. this year.



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Cervical cancer forms in tissues of the cervix, which is the organ connecting the uterus and vagina. It is usually a slow-growing cancer that may not have symptoms.

Cervical cancer is almost always caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, according to the National Cancer Institute. And while these types of cancers start from pre-cancerous cells, only some women with pre-cancers will actually develop cancer.

The change from cervical pre-cancer to cervical cancer usually takes several years, but it can happen in less than a year, according to the American Cancer Society.

## EARLY DETECTION

The Papanicolaou (Pap) test was introduced in the 1950s and still serves as the most crucial screening to identify cervical cancer. The test – named after the doctor who invented it – examines a sample of cervical cells under a microscope to identify any problems and detect cervical cancer early.

The United States Preventive Services Task

Force recommends screening begin at age 21, regardless of when a woman becomes sexually active. As a result of the Pap test, cervical cancer rates have declined dramatically: U.S. cervical cancer incidence and death rates were reduced by more than 60 percent between 1955 and 1992.

## TREATMENT & COPING

Cervical cancer treatment options include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, immunotherapy and vaccine therapy. Depending on a patient's specific needs, treatment may need to employ only one of these treatment plans. Others strategies may contain a combination of options.

Coping with cervical cancer can be challenging, even for the strongest of patients and families. Many people who have been diagnosed with or treated for cancer can develop symptoms that affect their quality of life.

From physical to emotional hardships, patients are urged to reach out to their local physicians or support groups to find ways to cope.

# Kids and Television



**H**ow much daily tube time do you give your kids? Two hours? Four? Six? The amount of time children spend watching television can have a direct impact on their sleeping habits, according to new research.

The researchers, from Massachusetts General Hospital for Children and the Harvard School of Public Health, followed 1,800 children from infancy to almost 8 years old. The team asked their parents how much TV the kids watched when they were 6 months old, then every year after.

The result was clear: The more TV the kids watched, the less they slept. Children

with a TV in the bedroom also lost sleep – sometimes up to half an hour less than those in TV-less rooms.

## TV-SLEEP CONNECTION

One of the main reasons TV can shift sleep patterns is its ability to stimulate a delay in the onset of sleep. Watching violent TV might also lead to

interrupted sleep, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, since it might create anxiety that could prevent sleep if awakened in the middle of the night.

So why is sleep so important to children? Sleep deprivation in children is linked to worse performance in school, along with depression, injury, and obesity, according to the sleep study authors. By cutting down on

TV and spending more time enjoying other pastimes, children can improve their sleep quality.

## FAMILY MEDIA PLAN

The AAP is concerned not only about children and TV, but also what it describes as new media spanning cell phones, social media, iPads

and other devices capable of connecting online.

TV remains the most popular medium for children and adolescents, but these other options are providing more “screen time” across the board. The AAP encourages parents to establish and enforce family media plans that spell out clear guidelines for when and how often children can have access to media.

# Preventive Tests for Men

The words “men” and “doctor” don’t always fit in the same sentence, but they should. Screening tests can find potentially harmful diseases early on, when they’re easiest to treat. This can mean more years of enjoying time with your family and friends, as opposed to fighting illness or worse.



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends the following screenings for men:

## **BODY MASS INDEX**

BMI is a measure of your body fat based on your height and weight. It is used to screen for obesity and can serve as a helpful measurement to keep you on track with your diet and exercise plan.

## **CHOLESTEROL**

Once you turn 35 years old, have your cholesterol checked regularly. High blood cholesterol is one of the major risk factors for heart disease. Catching it early can lead to effective treatment and better heart health.

## **BLOOD PRESSURE**

High blood pressure increases your chance of getting heart or kidney disease, and is recommended to be checked every two years.

## **CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE**

Beginning at age 45, you should ask your doctor about incorporating a daily aspirin to help reduce your risk of a heart attack. A special screening will help your doctor make the decision.

## **CANCERS**

Men ages 50 and above should be tested for colorectal cancer. How often you are screened depends on your risk factors, and you may need to be checked before age 50. Also ask your physician about testing for other cancers, including prostate, lung, oral or skin.

## **DEPRESSION**

If you have felt “in the dumps” during the past couple of weeks, you may need to speak with your doctor about depression. It is a treatable illness, and keeping it in check can help you maintain interest in the hobbies and activities that you enjoy.

## **DIABETES**

If your blood pressure is higher than 135/80, ask your doctor to test you for diabetes. High blood sugar can cause problems with your heart, eyes, feet, kidneys, nerves and other body parts.

# Staying Healthy on a Cruise

**A**s you slowly float away into a tropical paradise, the last thing on your mind should be anxiety or worry. That's why proper preparation for a cruise vacation can help keep the experience what it should be – relaxing.

Staying informed of the potential health hazards that accompany any cruise can help you stay healthy and get the most out of your excursion.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

Many health insurance companies carry policies that cover medical care you may need in another country or on board the ship. If your existing policy does not cover these items, you should be able to purchase travel health insurance to cover you during the trip.

Medical evacuation insurance can be one of the most important to secure before taking a cruise, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Evacuation by an air ambulance can cost up to \$100,000 and in many cases must be paid up front by people without insurance.

## PROPER VACCINES

Another way to properly prepare yourself for a cruise vacation is ensuring that you're up to date on vaccines. Routine ones that cover measles, mumps, rubella, varicella and seasonal flu are crucial on a cruise, since many crew members and fellow travelers



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come from countries where these diseases are more common.

Speak with your physician about your cruise itinerary to determine what shots you will need, but also check with your cruise ship company; many have requirements that

differ from those of the countries you will be visiting.

## ON THE CRUISE

The CDC warns against on-cruise health issues, including:

- Outbreaks of nausea: Virus-caused disease can cause vomiting and diarrhea, sure to ruin any cruise experience. Wash your hands regularly while on board to reduce this risk.
- Seasickness: If you're prone to getting seasick – or if

you're not sure – a medication for decreasing your symptoms can help.

• Other health concerns: Many chronic illnesses can be worsened by on-cruise stressors such as change in diet, climate variation and sleep pattern changes.