

# HealthConnection

GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY

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THIS MONTH'S  
Featured Article

**WHEN SHOULD SCREENING START?**

PG. 3



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## Senior Health Update Seniors and Depression

Depression may be undiagnosed or misdiagnosed in some older adults because sadness is not their main symptom. They may have other, less-obvious symptoms of depression, or they may not be willing to talk about their feelings. It is important to know the signs and seek help if you are concerned.

If you have been experiencing several of the following symptoms for at least two weeks, you may be suffering from depression:

- Persistent sad, anxious or “empty” mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Decreased energy, fatigue, feeling “slowed down”
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, early morning awakening, oversleeping
- Appetite and/or unintended weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts
- Restlessness, irritability
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not have a clear physical cause and/or that do not ease even with treatment

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

## Hot Topics

# Coffee and Your Health

The U.S. is in love with coffee. Roughly 62 percent of Americans drink it every day, an all-time high—and coffee may just well love us back. Recent scientific studies suggest moderate consumption may help reduce some disease risks. These studies are observational, meaning that researchers draw conclusions based on differences between the number of disease cases in coffee drinkers versus non-drinkers.

Two decades of research suggests that coffee may help reduce the risk of illnesses ranging from cancer to heart disease to Alzheimer’s. “Although coffee was considered unhealthy and possibly harmful a few decades ago, recent studies suggest that coffee may, in fact, provide health benefits,” says Edward Giovannucci, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, in a recent Consumer Reports article about the best coffees and coffee makers and the surprising health benefits of java. Several studies have found that coffee

drinkers are less likely to die prematurely than non-coffee drinkers. Other research has suggested additional benefits:

- Long-term coffee drinkers may be at a reduced risk of onset of type 2 diabetes.
- Drinking coffee regularly could lower rates of disease progression in both liver cancer and cirrhosis.
- Caffeinated coffee may play a role in preventing symptomatic gallstone disease.
- Recent studies suggest that drinking coffee doesn’t have a harmful effect on heart disease or stroke.
- Drinking caffeinated beverages may lessen the risk of Parkinson’s disease.

“For people who shouldn’t drink too much caffeine, such as pregnant women or people taking certain antibiotics, antidepressants and antipsychotics, decaffeinated coffee may be a healthy option,” Giovannucci says.

Source: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health





## Breast, Colon and Prostate Cancer Testing

# When Should Screenings Start?

The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends these cancer-screening guidelines. Ask your doctor if you should begin any of these tests earlier based on your or your family's medical history.

### Breast Cancer

- Women ages 40 to 44 should have the choice to start annual breast-cancer screening with mammograms if they wish to do so.
- Women ages 45 to 54 should get mammograms yearly.
- Women 55 and older should switch to mammograms every 2 years, or they can continue yearly screening.
- Screening should continue as long as a woman is in good health and is expected to live at least 10 more years.

Women should know how their breasts normally look and feel and should report any breast changes to their doctors right away. Some women, because of family history, a genetic tendency or other factors, should be screened with MRIs along with mammograms. Talk with your doctor about the best screening plan for you.

### Colon and Rectal Cancer and Polyps

Starting at age 50, both men and women should follow one of these testing plans:

Tests that find polyps and cancer:

- Colonoscopy every 10 years
- CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy) every 5 years\*

- Flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years\*
- Double-contrast barium enema every 5 years\*

Tests that mostly find cancer:

- Yearly fecal immunochemical test (FIT)\*\*
- Yearly guaiac-based fecal occult blood test (gFOBT)\*\*
- Stool DNA test (sDNA) every 3 years\*

\*If the test is positive, a colonoscopy should be done.

\*\* The multiple-stool take-home test should be used. One test done in the office is not enough. A colonoscopy should be done if the test is positive.

If you are at high risk of colon cancer based on family history or other factors, you may need to follow a different schedule.

### Prostate Cancer

Starting at age 50, men should talk with a doctor about the pros and cons of testing so they can decide if testing is the right choice for them. If you are African American or have a father or brother who had prostate cancer before age 65, you should have this talk with your doctor starting at age 45.

If you decide to be tested, you should get a PSA blood test with or without a rectal exam. How often you're tested will depend on your PSA level.

For more on what you can do to help reduce your cancer risk, visit [Cancer.org](http://Cancer.org) or call 1-800-227-2345.

Source: American Cancer Society

### To-Do List

## Is Biking to Work for You?

The benefits of biking to work appear to outweigh the risks, according to Walter Willett, professor of epidemiology and nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and a longtime bicycle commuter.

According to Willett, a recent Scottish study found bike commuters had a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer or death from any cause during the five-year study period compared with those who took a car or public transportation to work. Walking also was linked to a lower cardiovascular-disease risk.

"This study is important because it confirms, with a much larger sample size, previous findings from other countries," says Willett. "Moreover, it shows that the benefits strongly outweigh the risks."

If traffic or road conditions make it unsafe to bike to work, Willett urges riders to contact local officials to request safe, convenient bike paths and secure bike-parking facilities.

Source: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health



## Moms' Corner

### New-Mom Tips: When Is It Safe to Get Pregnant Again?

Getting pregnant too soon after giving birth can be risky for both you and your baby. Becoming pregnant again within a year of giving birth increases the chance that your new baby will be born too soon and have possible health problems.

Planning your next pregnancy if you want more children (or preventing a pregnancy if you don't) is important. Spacing pregnancies at least 12 months apart will give your body time to fully recover. In the meantime, using reliable birth control is the best way to prevent pregnancy until you decide if and when to have another baby.

Women who have just given birth should wait three weeks before using birth control that contains both estrogen and progestin. This includes the pill, the patch and the vaginal ring. Using these methods in the early weeks after giving birth increases the risk of dangerous blood clots. Wait six weeks to use birth control with both estrogen and progestin if you delivered by C-section or have other risk factors for blood clots. These risk factors include obesity, history of blood clots, smoking or preeclampsia. Talk with your doctor about your best birth-control options.

Source: Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



## Kids' Health

### New Study Links Sleep Apnea and Brain Function in Children

When describing his research on the effects of sleep apnea in children, Raanan Arens, M.D., likens the brain to a room. "If you look at the size of a room, that's the volume, or macrostructure. The organization of the furniture within the room is the microstructure," says Arens, chief of the Respiratory and Sleep Medicine Division, Department of Pediatrics, at The Children's Hospital at Montefiore in Bronx, New York.

That concept lies at the heart of Arens' research, recently published in *The Journal of Neuroscience*, on the neurological impacts of obstructive sleep apnea syndrome (OSAS,) a disorder in which a person frequently stops breathing during sleep. Arens, along with a team of researchers, conducted sleep studies on about two dozen teenagers, half of whom experienced OSAS.

They discovered that OSAS subjects had a significantly different microstructural makeup in a section of the brain that is important in learning, memory, emotion and behavior.

The neurological effects of OSAS include poor academic performance and behavioral issues. Children with OSAS also face a heightened risk for cardiovascular diseases and metabolic disorders such as diabetes. OSAS affects up to 4 to 5 percent of children, and it's much more prevalent among overweight children, those with craniofacial abnormalities, and those with neurological and genetic disorders, such as Down syndrome.

Removal of the adenoids and tonsils is usually the first line of treatment. Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy has proven effective, although it can be uncomfortable for children because it involves wearing equipment while sleeping. "For overweight children, weight loss is an excellent therapeutic measure," Arens adds.

Sources: Children's Hospital Association; The Children's Hospital at Montefiore; *The Journal of Neuroscience*

For additional articles on kids and sleep, visit [MyGNP.com](http://MyGNP.com).



*Your Healthy Pet***Adding a New Puppy to Your Family**

Introducing a puppy into your family is a major decision, and with that addition comes a great deal of responsibility. These tips can help you prepare your home and family for your new puppy's arrival.

Go shopping. Before you bring home your four-legged bundle of joy, there are a few items that you'll need to care for the puppy.

- Bowls for water and food, as well as the food your puppy will eat
- A leash and collar
- A bed that will be comfortable for your puppy and easy for you to clean
- A crate that is big enough for your puppy to stand up, turn around and lay down in
- Toys for playtime

Puppy-proof your home. Puppies can get into trouble until they've learned the rules and developed physical skills. Make sure to puppy-proof in advance.

- Put small objects away where your puppy can't get to them to chew.
- Secure cabinets and move anything toxic to a high shelf.
- Remove any poisonous plants, such as poinsettia and calla lilies.
- Use baby gates to block off any steps so your puppy can't fall and hurt itself.
- Make sure that electrical wires and cords are out of the reach of curious mouths. Ask your veterinarian about other ways to make your home safe for your pet.

Schedule a veterinary examination to assess the health of your new companion as soon as possible to ensure your puppy receives the appropriate vaccinations and any needed health care.

Sources: American Kennel Club; American Veterinary Medical Association



## Health Q&A

### Should We Still Be Concerned About Zika in the U.S.?

**Q: The Zika virus was in the news so much for a while, but now I don't hear much. Is it still an issue?**

**A:** According to a 2017 update from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, many areas in the U.S. have the type of mosquitoes that can become infected with and spread the Zika virus. The virus is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito. The illness is usually mild, with symptoms lasting up to a week, and many people do not have symptoms or will have only mild symptoms. However, Zika virus infection during pregnancy can cause a serious birth defect called microcephaly and other severe brain defects. To learn more [cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html](http://cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html).

Help protect yourself from mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants, staying in places with air conditioning and screens, treating clothing and gear with permethrin, and using EPA-registered insect repellents that contain one of the following ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol or 2-Undecanone.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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for more information.



*Eat Smart*

# The Good and Bad of Carbohydrates

Nutrition experts sometimes divide carbohydrates into “good” and “bad.” Good carbs, such as whole grains, brown rice and legumes, don’t raise blood glucose quickly. Bad carbs, such as white bread, cookies and sugary sodas, cause blood glucose to rise quickly. Experts advise lowering the share of overall daily calories that come from carbohydrates. (In a typical American diet, 55 percent of overall calories come from carbs.)

“Eating moderate carbohydrates can be healthy if they’re comprised of high fiber and whole grains,” says Walter Willett, professor of epidemiology and nutrition and chair of the Department of Nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. “Personally, I avoid refined

starches and sugars and limit my carbohydrates to what I get from vegetables and whole grains,” says Willett. “If I only eat healthy carbs, I feel so full; I really can’t consume more than 40 percent of my calories from carbs per day, so I tend to stay well under that.”

“Reduce refined carbs in the diet, and replace them with lean protein, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes and fats from vegetable sources,” advises Frank Hu, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. “Reduce your overall carb intake from 55 percent of calories to below 40 percent, and as much as possible, try to make those ‘good’ carbs,” he adds.

Source: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health





### *Living with Diabetes*

# Know the Diabetes Warning Signs

The following symptoms of diabetes are typical, according to the American Diabetes Association. However, some people with type 2 diabetes have symptoms so mild that they go unnoticed.

Common symptoms of diabetes include:

- Urinating often
- Feeling very thirsty
- Feeling very hungry even though you are eating
- Extreme fatigue
- Blurry vision
- Cuts/bruises that are slow to heal
- Weight loss, even though you are eating more (type 1)
- Tingling, pain or numbness in the hands/feet (type 2)

Early detection and treatment of diabetes can decrease the risk of developing complications.

#### **Warning Signs for Diabetes Complications**

Have you already been diagnosed with diabetes but are concerned about symptoms that may be the result of complications related to diabetes? Here are some things to watch for.

- **Kidney disease.** Keep your diabetes and blood pressure under control to lower the chance of getting kidney disease.
- **Neuropathy.** Nerve damage from diabetes is called diabetic neuropathy. About half of all people with diabetes have some form of nerve damage.
- **Eye complications.** Keep your risk of glaucoma, cataracts and other eye problems low with regular checkups.
- **Stroke.** Maintain target levels for blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol to reduce your risk of stroke.
- **High blood pressure.** Also called hypertension, high blood pressure raises your risk for heart attack, stroke, eye problems and kidney disease.

#### **Gestational Diabetes — When Warning Signs Don't Appear**

Women with gestational diabetes often have no symptoms, which is why it's important for at-risk women to be tested at the proper time during pregnancy.

During pregnancy (usually around the 24th week), many women develop gestational diabetes. A diagnosis of gestational diabetes doesn't mean that you had diabetes before you conceived or that you will have diabetes after giving birth. But it's important to follow your doctor's advice regarding blood glucose (blood sugar) levels so you and your baby both remain healthy.

Source: American Diabetes Association

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