



Your Health Matters

**CCMHG – Your Town, County, District, Authority
Working together for your health**

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Feel Great During Ragweed Season

Want a better way to allergy relief this season? Taking good care of your total health is the smart call. It's nearly as important as getting tested, avoiding your triggers and taking your prescribed medicine. That's because bad health habits, stress and poor sleep not only make allergy symptoms worse - they can also make them much harder to cope with. Try these five steps to boost your health and fend off allergy symptoms:

Eat a healthy diet Research suggests that fortifying your diet with anti-inflammation nutrients -- like omega-3 fatty acids and folate (vitamin B9), for example - may help prevent your immune system from overreacting and making your symptoms worse during allergy season. Inflammation-fighting foods you may want to add to your plate include fish, almonds, walnuts, pumpkin and flax seeds. And it's also important to make sure you get at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Exercise Wondering how regular exercise can help you cope with your allergy symptoms? Exercise improves your sleep, overall health, immunity, fitness and energy levels. It also increases production of mood-boosting neurotransmitters, such as dopamine, serotonin and norepinephrine, to help ease allergy-induced stress. Just be sure to ask your doctor about exercises that are safe for allergies and asthma.

Kick bad habits You'll also have an easier time taming your allergy symptoms if you limit your alcohol intake and don't smoke. Trying to quit smoking? **Our Kick Butts Program is beginning on 05/27/15 5pm in Barnstable! Contact me ASAP if you would like to join this class!!!**

Get sound sleep Allergy symptoms can steal your sleep, adding to the daytime fatigue and misery brought on by a stuffy nose, constant sneezing and itchy, watery eyes. Ease nighttime symptoms with dust-proof pillow and mattress covers, a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter in your bedroom and a nice warm shower before bed.

Reduce stress Allergies can send your stress levels soaring, so carve out time for meditation, yoga, tai chi or even a weekly massage. These remedies might not cure your allergies, but they can help you overcome the tension that is part of dealing with them. *Source: [ShareCare](#)*



Keep Your Mouth Clean This Spring

Doing some spring cleaning this month? While you're busy beating rugs, cleaning curtains and organizing cabinets, don't forget to check your bathroom counter! Here are four things to add to your checklist.

Replace old or worn toothbrushes - If your toothbrush or toothbrush head is more than three months old, it's time to get a new one. Other signs for replacement include worn or frayed bristles. If it looks a little used and abused, your toothbrush is probably not getting in all of your teeth's nooks and crannies for proper cleaning. But you don't have to throw it out just yet – a used toothbrush is perfect for cleaning tight spots around the house!

Check the expiration date on your mouthwash - Most mouthwash has a shelf life which should be indicated on the bottle. Using mouthwash past the expiration date can affect the taste and its effectiveness, so make sure yours is still in its prime.

Replenish your floss supply - You should be using 18 inches of floss every time you clean your teeth. If you're flossing daily as recommended, that's roughly 45 feet of floss a month!

Schedule a dentist appointment - You're already thinking about cleaning, and now you're thinking about your oral health. Why not combine the two and schedule your regular dental appointment if it's not already on the calendar? Seeing your dentist regularly helps him or her spot problems before they become bigger issues – and require more expensive fixes. Plus, there's nothing like that clean mouth feeling you experience after a professional brushing and flossing.



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Need help caring for your children, aging parents, pets or your home? Need a safe and simple way to find the right caregiver for your family? Need a back-up plan for days when your regular care falls through? **Harvard Pilgrim** members and visitors now save up to 25% on Premium Membership at Care.com. Membership includes access to:



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Wellness News

Couch to 5k Running Program

We have completed our Dennis program and many from our group will be running the Cultural Centers' Run for the Arts 5k on June 20th in Yarmouth, please stop by and cheer us on or join in!!! The Sandwich program has started on the Cape Cod Canal! What a beautiful place to run! The next program will begin on August 11th at the Stony Brook Elementary School in Brewster!! We will meet every Tuesday/Thursday at 4:45pm. If you are interested in taking part in this program please contact me as soon as possible at capecodhealthyconnections@gmail.com or 508-631-7263. Space is limited and we continue to fill up fast!! Remember that registration is on a first come basis and I am only able to accept 20 members! *As with all physical fitness programs: You must discuss this program with your doctor prior to start!*



Biometric Screenings

Our Screenings were a great success this year servicing 14 different units and over 420 members! We saw many members at several Health Benefits Fairs this year. Remember if you would like to see our team you need to book early! Services offered are: Blood Pressure and Pulse; Cholesterol and Glucose; Weight, Body Mass Index and Waist Measurement; UV skin damage assessment; Hearing Test; and Bone Density screening.

Kick Butts Program

Our Eastham group graduated with an 86% success rate!! We will be conducting our next program at the **Hyannis Youth and Community Center at 5pm beginning May 27th!** capecodhealthyconnections@gmail.com or 508-631-7263. It is an incredible step you can take to better your health! You do not need to be smoke free to begin this program!

Spring Walking Challenge

I'm so excited to report that we have 189 members signed up for our SWC this year! We also had a great group of 22 that came to our Kickoff Celebration at Marathon Sports. Check out the pictures on Twitter [@cchealthy](https://twitter.com/cchealthy) or on Facebook - [Cape Cod Municipal Health Group](https://www.facebook.com/CapeCodMunicipalHealthGroup)! As of this writing participants have travelled the distance from Dennis to Las Vegas! Please RSVP if you would like to attend any of the remaining weekly walks (all are invited): Orleans Town Offices May 26th @12:15pm; Barnstable Town Hall May 27th @4:45pm; Heritage Park, Mashpee June 2nd @6:15pm; Grey's Beach, Yarmouth Port June 6th @8:00am; and Peter Homer Park, South Yarmouth June 13th @9:00am!!

Programs on Martha's Vineyard

For more information on MV programs contact Krystle Rose, MV Wellness Coordinator at krystlearose@gmail.com or (401) 623-6006 or www.ccmghmarthasvineyard.com

Hot Topics

Go Figure?

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Extra calories that regular breakfast eaters burn per day compared with people who often skip the meal. Morning noshers tend to be more active, perhaps because fueling up translates to more energy.

Source: American Journal of Clinical Nutrition

Vitamin D: Vital Role in Your Health

Vitamin D is vital for your memory, skin, heart, bones, and arteries, and it helps fight off cancer. Yet 75% of people don't get enough D.

Recent evidence links low levels of the vitamin to an increased risk of type 1 diabetes, muscle and bone pain, and, perhaps more serious, cancers of the breast, colon, prostate, ovaries, esophagus, and lymphatic system.

If you want to lower your blood pressure or lower your chances of heart attacks, rheumatoid arthritis, or multiple sclerosis, then vitamin D should be at the front of the line in your daily supplement regimen!

Source: [WebMD](#)



Superman Pose: Lay flat on your belly with your toes flat on the floor. Reach your arms out to the sides, with your palms flat on the floor — facing down. Scoop your tailbone under slightly and bring your legs together. Inhale, and lift as much of your body off of the mat as you can. Draw your hands down by your hips. On an exhale, raise your thighs and chest high up off of the mat, and press your feet into your hands to open your shoulders. As you extend, take a moment to feel yourself extend, and lift everything up even higher. Hold for 8 breaths, and then lower your body down. Source: [everydayHEALTH](#)

Vitamin C for Springtime Cold Prevention?

Since the '70s, numerous studies have been conducted to test the effectiveness of vitamin C against colds. Unfortunately, the results have **not** been overwhelmingly positive. A 2010 Cochrane review of 29 trials, which included more than 11,000 participants, found that regularly taking vitamin C had no effect on how often people got the common cold. However, regular intake of vitamin C may offer a decent reduction (up to 50 percent) in risk for the common cold for people who are engaged in short periods of extreme physical stress, which is great news for marathon runners. Vitamin C acts as an antioxidant in the body, and aids in the formation of collagen (a protein that helps heal wounds and is important in tissue structure). It also helps the body to more easily absorb iron from plant sources. It's a crucial part of a balanced diet and, as with any nutrient, it's best to get it by eating a diet rich in healthy foods. Foods high in vitamin C include: citrus fruit, bell peppers, cantaloupe, kiwi, mango, papaya, pineapple, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and cranberries. The National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements recommend that adult men get 90 mg of vitamin C each day (about the amount of a large orange) and women get 75 mg per day (about the amount of half of a red bell pepper). Most people get plenty of vitamin C from their diet, but if you do choose to add a supplement, stay below the recommended upper limit of 2,000 mg per day for adults. Any more than this can cause side effects such as stomach cramps, nausea, and diarrhea. Source: [everydayHEALTH](#)

Food for thought

Jillian Michaels: 5 Reasons You're Overeating

Reviewing past and current self-defeating behaviors can help identify where you got stuck, discouraged, or overwhelmed, and used food to 'fix it.'



- 1. Emotion.** Eating as a coping mechanism, to numb suffering, calm fears, or combat loneliness are typical examples of emotional eating.
- 2. Reward.** Eating indulgently to reward yourself for a job well done is another way to misuse food and overeat.
- 3. Seeking acceptance.** Eating to be socially accepted or fit, or so you don't offend a party host, are other surefire ways to sabotage weight-loss goals through overeating.
- 4. Boredom.** Eating due to boredom or the perceived lack of anything else to do is an overeating trap that requires keeping your mind and body stimulated and busy.
- 5. Procrastination.** Eating to procrastinate or avoid a chore defeats two purposes; weight loss and getting things done.

Greek Yogurt Chicken Salad

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons nonfat Greek yogurt
 1/2 teaspoon mustard
 1 teaspoon low-fat mayonnaise
 2 tablespoons chopped celery
 1/2 medium carrot, chopped
 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
 1 tablespoon chopped chives
 1 cup chopped cooked chicken
 1 cup sliced cucumber
 Pinch of salt
 1/4 teaspoon sugar
 2 tablespoons white vinegar
 1/2 teaspoon canola oil
 1 teaspoon chopped fresh dill
 1 cup chopped romaine lettuce



Directions: Combine yogurt, mustard, mayonnaise, celery, carrot, parsley and chives in medium bowl. Toss in chicken and mix thoroughly. In another medium bowl whisk salt, sugar, vinegar, oil, and dill until combined. Mix in cucumbers. Serve cucumber salad with chicken salad over romaine lettuce.

Nutrition Facts: Amount Per Serving: calories 178; Total Fat 5g; Saturated Fat 1g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Polyunsaturated Fat 2 g; Cholesterol 60mg; Sodium 167mg; Potassium 447mg; Carbohydrate 6g; Dietary Fiber 2g; Sugars 4g; Protein 25g; Vitamin A 78%; Vitamin C 28%; Calcium 8%; Iron 10%

How Much Sleep Do You Need?

Sure, you're eating your vegetables and fruits and squeezing in exercise at least 20 minutes a day, but are you getting enough sleep, too? The latest sleep recommendations from the National Sleep Foundation may make you want to think twice about skimping on essential shut-eye. Sleep is key to your physical health and emotional vitality, but just how many hours of sleep you need depends on your age and stage of development.



The Last Word

"Sleep is important for mental function: alertness, memory consolidation, mood regulation, and physical health," says Phyllis C. Zee, MD, PhD, professor of neurology and director of the Sleep Disorders Center at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago.

Too few hours of sleep or poor sleep could pave the way to a myriad of emotional and physical problems, from diabetes to obesity, explains Dr. Zee. "In fact, data shows that with sleep loss, there are changes in the way the body handles glucose, which could lead to a state of insulin resistance (pre-diabetes)," says Dr. Zee. "There is also evidence that lack of sleep alters appetite regulation, which may lead to overeating or food choices that can also contribute to overweight and obesity."

Your Sleep Needs Change Over the Years

How much sleep you need to stay healthy, alert, and active depends on your age and varies from person to person — most adults need at least seven or more hours of sleep each night. The National Sleep Foundation and a panel of 18 experts combed through more than 300 studies to identify the ideal amount of time a person needs to sleep according to their age:

Newborns (0 to 3 months): 14 to 17 hours of sleep
Infants (4 to 11 months): 12 to 15 hours of sleep
Toddlers (1 to 2 years): 11 to 14 hours of sleep
Preschoolers (3 to 5 years): 10 to 13 hours of sleep
School-aged children (6 to 13 years): 9 to 11 hours of sleep
Teenagers (14 to 17 years): 8 to 10 hours of sleep
Young adults (18 to 25 years): 7 to 9 hours of sleep
Adults (26 to 64 years): 7 to 9 hours of sleep
Older adults (65 years or older): 7 to 8 hours of sleep

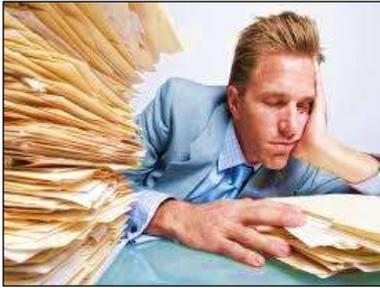


Gender Affects Sleep Patterns

Although most men and women need about seven to eight hours of sleep per night, their sleep patterns are generally different. Women often sleep more than men and experience a lighter sleep that is more easily disrupted. Many women have undiagnosed sleep disorders.

Problems that can disrupt women's sleep include depression, major life events (such as divorce), pregnancy, hormonal changes related to menopause, sleep disorders (i.e., obstructive sleep apnea and restless legs syndrome), and medical problems like arthritis, back pain, and fibromyalgia.

Research shows that men often lose sleep over job-related stress. Men also tend to take sleep for granted and stay up longer than they should. Today, helping take care of the kids and keeping up with the household chores only adds to the pressure on men.



Additional stressors that cause men to lose sleep include life issues (regarding marriage/divorce, children, employment, money), medical problems like epilepsy and heart disease, sleep disorders, substance abuse, and depression.

If you believe you need professional advice about your lack of sleep, a good idea is to maintain a sleep diary for about a week. This will help your doctor get an accurate picture of your sleep history. Your doctor might recommend prescription medication, a device to keep your air passageways open, or a weight-loss plan, based on your individual symptoms and needs.

Source: [everydayHealth](#)

Exercise just as beneficial as giving up smoking for older men

New research finds that just thirty minutes of physical activity six days a week is associated with 40 percent lower risk of death among elderly men -- and even light activity helps. The study, published online today in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, also found that increasing exercise levels appeared to be as good for health as quitting smoking.

Researchers from Norway began with a survey of 15,000 men born between 1923 and 1932. As part of the Oslo Study in 1972, the men's height, weight, cholesterol, blood pressure, and smoking status were recorded. They also logged their weekly leisure time physical activity levels, which were categorized as sedentary (watching TV/reading); light (walking or cycling, including to and from work, for at least 4 hours a week); moderate (formal exercise, sporting activities or heavy gardening for at least 4 hours a week); and vigorous (hard training or competitive sports several times a week).

Nearly three decades later, about 5,700 of the surviving men repeated the process. They were monitored for almost 12 more years to see if physical activity levels over time could be linked to a lowered risk of death from heart disease or any cause, and to see how its impact compared to smoking cessation.

During the monitoring period, 2,154 of the men who had participated in both studies died. The results showed that while less than an hour of light exercise per week had little effect on risk of death; more than an hour was associated with a 32 to 56 percent lower risk. Additionally, less than an hour of vigorous exercise appeared to cut the risk of cardiovascular disease and death from any cause by between 23 and 37 percent.

The more time spent participating in vigorous physical activity, the lower the risk seemed to be. Men who regularly took part in moderate to physical activity ***lived an average of five years longer*** than participants who classified their leisure time as sedentary. When looking at all the numbers, researchers determined that 30 minutes of physical activity, whether light, moderate, or vigorous, six days a week, was associated with a ***40 percent reduction in risk of death from any cause***. Source: [CBS News](#)

Your Health Matters is a quarterly publication for municipal employees and family members of the Cape Cod Municipal Health Group.

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