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Losing Weight, Keeping It Off

Have you even known someone who lost weight and kept it off? Have you wondered how they did it? Researchers at the National Weight Control Registry found four strategies that worked:

1. Eating a low-fat, low calorie diet—which includes restricting certain foods, limiting quantities, counting calories, counting fat grams, using a liquid formula or using an exchange diet. Bottom-line, reduce overall caloric intake.
2. Getting high levels of physical activity—the average exercise expenditure was equivalent to about one hour of brisk walking every day. Walking was the most common activity, but incorporating any physical activity is beneficial.
3. Eating breakfast—this keeps your blood sugar constant and discourages binge eating and slowing of your metabolism.

4. Frequent weighing—this helps you monitor your progress. This also helps you to recognize small weight regain early and get back on track.

At the core of almost any plan are both commitment and motivation to adopt a lifestyle that consistently includes eating a healthy, low-calorie diet and getting plenty of physical activity

Source—Mayo Clinic Health Letter, Jan. 2007



HEARING LOSS—How loud is too loud?

We live in a noisy world. Vacuum cleaners, power lawn mowers, power tools and personal stereo systems are just a few of the noises that bombard us daily. Because hearing loss occurs so gradually, you may not even be aware it's happening.

Be aware of noise—whenever you can, turn down the volume

of radios, TVs or speakers. If you can't hear or be heard by someone within three feet of you because of noise, the noise is too loud.

Be cautious of headphones—if you're using headphones and the person next to you can hear what you're listening to, it's too loud! With the popularity of portable music players such as iPods and MP3 players, which can produce sounds

as loud as 130 decibels, doctors expect more people will have hearing loss, and at younger ages.

Give your ears a rest—Alternate noisy activity with quieter activity. In addition to the intensity, the length of time you're exposed to a noise plays a role in hearing loss.

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WINTER SKIN CARE

Winter can be especially hard on skin. Moisture can be sapped from the skin with dry air and harsh winds causing it to become chapped, cracked, irritated and itchy. Ultra-violet rays can still damage skin even though it's not hot outside. The following tips can help minimize this seasonal misery:

- Use soap only on select areas of the body. Unless there is visible dirt or you have very oily skin, just plain water does the job. Water will wash off what needs to be washed off and will leave the skin's natural lipids and oils, which will help protect the skin. If you do need soap, such as on your face, under your arms or in the groin area, use a small amount of mild soap.
- Limit your shower time. Take a short
- shower with lukewarm (not hot) water. Avoid the use of washcloths or scrubbing pads. When finished pat the skin until almost dry and apply a good moisturizer while the skin is still damp.
- Wear sunscreen everyday. Even in the winter this is necessary to protect your skin from harmful ultraviolet rays.
- Follow a balanced diet that is rich in vitamins for healthy skin from the inside out. Your skin reflects what you eat.
- Wear lip balm or a lipstick with sunscreen to protect your lips.

By following these simple steps you can help keep your skin as healthy as possible during the winter months.



Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious disease caused by an organism that usually infects the lungs. When a person who has tuberculosis coughs, sneezes or laughs the TB causing organisms are released in the air where other people can inhale them. This is how TB is spread. Children and people with weak immune systems are more at risk.

Most people who are exposed to TB never develop the disease because their immune systems are able to stop the disease. People who de-

velop symptoms of TB such as persistent cough, weight loss, night sweats, and fever need drug treatment to stop the disease from progressing and to reduce the risk of spreading it to others. Treatment which consists of several medications may last from 6 months to 2 years.

To prevent TB, avoid close contact with people who have TB. If you have been exposed to TB, get tested. The TB skin test is a way to determine if a person has TB infec-

tion. For this test a small amount of serum is injected under the skin of the forearm. The test is to be examined 48-72 hours later. If a red welt has formed they may be indicative of TB or exposure to TB. A chest x-ray and mucus testing are the next steps to confirm diagnosis.

There is a TB vaccine called BCG available in parts of the world where the disease is common, however the vaccine has drawbacks and limitations; therefore is not recommended in the United States

Tip of the Month

A Positive attitude promotes better health!

The Kissable Mouth

With Valentine's Day approaching here are a few tips on oral health care. Beating bad breath—also known as halitosis, often stems from food particles in your mouth or from dry mouth or health problems. To prevent or reduce bad breath:

- * Brush your teeth or use a mouthwash after you eat—brushing is best. If you use a mouthwash, swish it around for 30 seconds before spitting out.
- * Floss your teeth at least once a day—
- * Flossing removes decaying food and plaque, a clear sticky bacterial substance that forms on teeth. Floss your teeth before you brush.
- * Brush your tongue—Brush the back of your tongue while brushing your teeth.
- * Drink water to keep your mouth moist—When your mouth is dry, there's insignificant saliva to wash away dead cells. Chewing sugarless gum or sucking on sugarless hard candy can help stimulate saliva production.
- * Avoid foods that may cause bad breath—This often includes onions and garlic. Oils from these foods are transferred to the lungs and exhaled.
- * See your dentist or doctor—Bad breath that doesn't respond to simple measures may be related to periodontal disease, an abscessed tooth, an infection, chronic sinusitis, chronic bronchitis, post nasal drip or another condition.