

JULY 2017

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

CARE CONNECTION

FACT OR FICTION: SORT THROUGH THESE MYTHS ABOUT SLEEP

1. YOU NEED MORE SLEEP WHEN YOU'RE YOUNGER AND LESS SLEEP WHEN YOU'RE OLDER.

FACT: The amount of sleep recommended for an average adult is seven to nine hours. While this is significantly less than the amount recommended for a child (an average toddler should get 11-14 hours, for example), this range generally stays consistent throughout adulthood — even as you age. Though your sleep pattern may change (which gives the illusion that you need less sleep to function properly), you still need the seven-hour minimum. Try to supplement your nighttime sleep with daytime naps if you're not getting enough sleep.



2. YOUR BRAIN RESTS WHILE YOU SLEEP.

FACT: Your brain is incredibly active while you're asleep, regulating your body temperature, breathing, and overall functioning, even though your body is resting. There are several phases throughout your sleep cycle where your brain is busy processing information. Your brain's activity is actually the reason you experience dreams or nightmares during sleep.

3. SNORING IS A COMMON, HARMLESS PROBLEM.

FACT: This is half-true. Snoring is incredibly common; approximately 90 million adults have experienced snoring, and 37 million experience snoring on a regular basis. But snoring could be a sign of an even bigger problem — sleep apnea. Sleep apnea occurs when there are pauses in your breathing (because of your throat narrowing during sleep) that prevent air from getting in or out of your airways; this reduces blood oxygen levels, can cause strain to your heart and cardiovascular system, and can increase your risk for cardiovascular disease. In addition, sleep apnea has been associated with hypertension.

4. INSOMNIA IS JUST NOT BEING ABLE TO FALL ASLEEP.

FACT: This is only one of four symptoms of insomnia. Others include waking up too early and not being able to fall back asleep, frequent awakenings, and waking up feeling unrefreshed. Insomnia is a common problem; approximately 30%-35% of people have brief symptoms of insomnia, 15%-20% have short-term insomnia disorder (lasting for three months), and 10% have chronic insomnia.

5. IF YOU WAKE UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, YOU SHOULD LIE IN BED AND COUNT SHEEP TO RELAX UNTIL YOU FALL BACK ASLEEP.

FACT: Some researchers claim that "counting sheep" actually distracts you from being able to fall asleep, and sometimes lying in bed just plain doesn't help either — and, whatever you do, don't watch the clock! At first, try to lie in bed and imagine relaxing imagery. If you don't fall back asleep within 15-20 minutes, you should get out of bed and do a relaxing activity (such as reading or listening to music). When you feel tired, you can return to bed, and you'll be more likely to fall back asleep. Consider, however, that waking up and being unable to fall back asleep may be a symptom of insomnia.

Source: [The National Sleep Foundation](#)

WELLNESS TIP!

Be social!

Studies suggest that engaging in casual conversation with other people for just 10 minutes each day will improve your mental functioning and preserve memory — as much as doing a word puzzle!

Source: [University of Michigan](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO SAVE MONEY ON YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS

Most people are aware that generic medications save money — for you **and** the Plan. Generic savings can be up to 80% of the cost of brand name medications! Under your prescription drug benefit with Sav-Rx, you will have **no co-pay for generic medications**. Although not all brand name medications have an equivalent generic, in some cases a generic alternative may be available in the same class, offering the same benefits at a fraction of the cost. Ask your pharmacist if a generic equivalent or alternative is available for your medication to begin saving on your prescriptions!

If there is no generic equivalent or alternative for your medication, you may still have the chance to pay less out of pocket for brand name medications. Many pharmaceutical manufacturers offer **co-pay savings cards** which offer discounts and may lower your out of pocket costs significantly! These co-pay cards typically involve a simple, online enrollment process which can be completed by you, your pharmacy, or your physician. Start with an internet search for the name of your medication, followed by the words "copay assistance" (i.e., "Advair copay assistance"). Most searches will provide the manufacturer drug page as one of the top results, and will include a link for "savings offers" or similar terminology. Be sure that you are selecting an *official website sponsored by the drug manufacturer*. Follow the directions on the website to enroll into the savings program. Most websites will offer a phone number to call, if needed. Once you complete the enrollment process, be sure to print the co-pay savings information to provide to your pharmacy. Then let the savings begin!

If you have any questions about co-pay savings cards or if you need assistance, contact Sav-Rx at 866-233-IBEW (866-233-4239).

Perfect Portions How-To

How much is too much? And what's enough, anyway? Use this nifty guide to help you portion some of your favorite foods!

- A 4 oz. portion of meat, fish, or poultry is about the size of an average smartphone.
- A 1/4 cup of nuts or trail mix is about the size of an egg.
- A 1/2 cup of cooked rice or vegetables should be the size of a standard lightbulb.
- If you're grabbing a snack, like pretzels or potato chips, don't take more than two handfuls — that's the 1 oz. portion size.



So how can you avoid portion distortion?

- **Learn to read food labels.** Pay attention to the number of servings contained in the package. You may be eating two or more servings in a single sitting without knowing!
- **Repackage supersize bags and family packs.** Supersize bags and family packs may be more economical, but they can also make it easier to accidentally overeat.
- **Use a smaller plate.** It takes less food to make a smaller plate look full, so you'll be eating less.

Sources: [Cleveland Clinic](#), [Dairy Council of California](#)

INFORMATION ABOUT PROTON PUMP INHIBITORS



If you're taking Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs) like Nexium, Prilosec, or Prevacid for gastrointestinal or other disorders, you may want to consider a chat with your prescribing doctor. Studies show that extended use or high doses of PPIs may lead to side effects, which can range from bone fracture to colon infections, pneumonia to muscle spasms. Research from the BMJ (formerly the *British Medical Journal*) indicated that postmenopausal women who took PPIs for at least two years had a 35% higher risk of hip fracture compared to postmenopausal women who did not take the drug. (Current or former smokers had an even higher risk — at 50%.) This may be because PPIs lower stomach acid and may hamper the body's absorption of calcium, which is vital to bone health. Especially if taken for more than one year, PPIs may have adverse effects on health — like leading to lower levels of magnesium in the blood, which can cause muscle spasms, irregular heartbeat, and seizures. Long-term PPI use is also associated with pneumonia, bone fracture (especially of the hip, wrist, and spine), and iron and vitamin B12 deficiencies, according to the FDA.

Good stomach acidity is needed to absorb minerals like calcium, iron, magnesium, copper, zinc, and B12, as well as vitamins C, K, and B complexes. In a person with good stomach acidity, the upper sphincter of the stomach closes to prevent necessary stomach acid from reaching the esophagus. When there's not enough acid in the stomach, as can be the case for some people taking PPIs, digestion is affected, and a person might experience symptoms, like acid reflux — the very thing they may be taking the PPI for.

All of this is not to say that PPIs are universally unnecessary, but we should exhibit caution when taking medications. **Do not stop taking your PPIs without consulting your doctor**, since he or she will be able to best determine your need for medication, and be sure to discuss any concerns you have about PPIs or other medications with your healthcare professional.

Sources: [Dr. Marlene Merritt](#), [FDA](#), [MedShadow](#), [IFFGD](#)

YOUR WORKOUT NEEDS WORK

You might be making some workout mistakes that make your exercises less effective, or possibly even harmful to your body. Here's how to fix your fitness routine so that it works better for you.

1. DON'T FORGET TO STRETCH — THE RIGHT WAY

You know to stretch before and after your workout, but you still might be doing it incorrectly. Make sure you aren't bouncing while you stretch, since that can cause injury (and doesn't help to stretch you at all). And don't stretch between exercises!

2. DON'T OVER-UTILIZE MOMENTUM

If you swing your arms during curls, you're probably doing more harm than good.

First, you aren't properly exercising the muscle — since you're not in control of your movement. Secondly, you're at a higher risk for injury, which could put you way behind on your exercise goal.

3. DON'T HOLD TIGHT

When you're using the elliptical or the treadmill, where are your hands? Probably holding the bars, right? Well, as it turns out, you may be doing this wrong. You can rest your hand on the bars, but you shouldn't hold a death-grip on them. And if you find yourself pulling the elliptical handles to help out your legs, try to let go. Use only your fingertips to hold on the bars if you need to keep your balance.

4. DON'T FORGET TO MIX IT UP

It's good that you've got a fitness regimen, as you should, but make sure you're doing a variety of different types of exercises — and working out various parts of your body. So don't just work your abs, and don't do the same ab workout each time. Keeping things varied is better for you *and* more fun!

5. DON'T SKIP THE SNACK

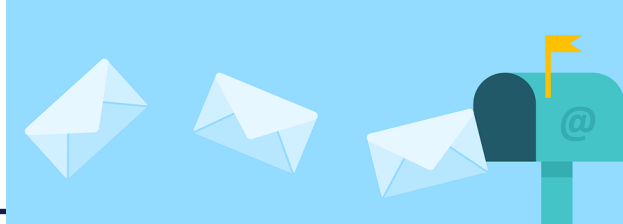
It might seem counterintuitive to eat before and after your workout (especially if you're trying to lose weight), but it's actually really important for your muscles to get pre- and post-workout nutrients. Stick with carbs and proteins, and avoid fibers which could slow your digestion and cause bloating or gas during your workout.

Source: [Health.com](#)

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