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Wellness Matters

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Your Healthy Body

Protect Your Health: Shoo the Flu

The flu is an infection of the respiratory tract that is caused by the influenza virus, spread mainly through airborne transmission when an infected person sneezes, coughs, or speaks. Most people experience several bouts of flu throughout their lifetime. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), even otherwise healthy people can get sick enough to require hospitalization. So how can you avoid the flu this year?

The Best Prevention

The flu vaccine is your best chance of preventing the illness. The CDC recommends all over 6 months of age should receive an annual flu shot. Nasal sprays and egg-free vaccines are also available. While there are many types of flu virus, the shot protects you against the viruses that experts believe will be most common each year. Doctors recommend that those at high risk for flu complications—young children, pregnant women, people with certain chronic conditions (asthma, diabetes, etc.), and those 65 years or older—should get the vaccine each year.

Other Prevention Tips

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and avoid others when you feel under the weather.
- Cover your mouth and nose or sneeze into the inside of your elbow to avoid infecting your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water to protect against germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that may be contaminated with germs (counter tops, shared phones at work, etc.).
- Get plenty of sleep and physical activity, and drink water regularly to boost your immune system.
- Manage your stress and eat a nutritious diet rich in healthy grains, fruits, vegetables, and fiber.



Watch for more information about the flu, prevention, and vaccines coming soon.

Foodborne Illness on the Rise

You've likely seen the news reports this year, announcing recall after recall of produce, eggs, and other foods. According to the CDC, the overall number of diagnosed cases of listeria and salmonella, among others, increased 96 percent in 2017 alone.

Foodborne illness is no joke—one in six Americans get sick and 3,000 die every year from one of 31 known pathogens. Globally, this number increases drastically.

To avoid contracting a foodborne illness, be sure to prepare your food safely and monitor the CDC's [outbreak webpage](#).

If an outbreak is reported or a recall is issued, don't risk it! Follow the CDC's advice so you don't get sick.

New High Blood Pressure Guidelines

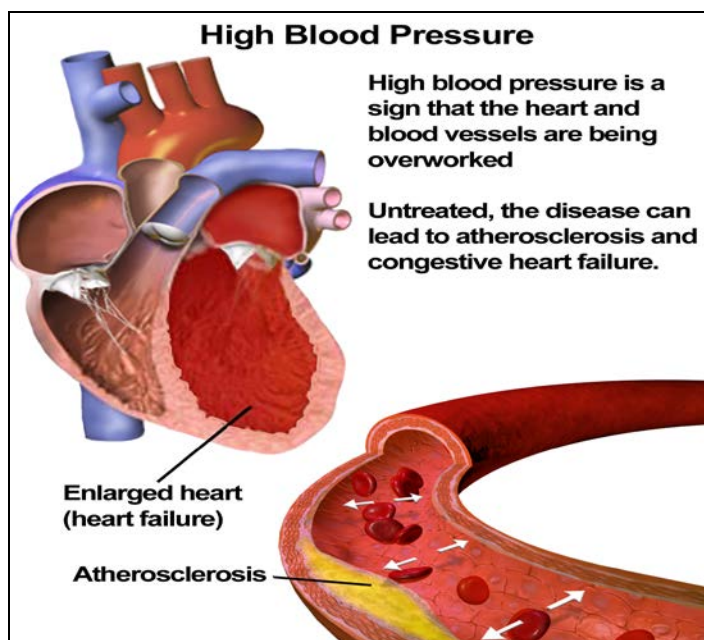
The American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology redefined what is considered high blood pressure (HBP) in November 2017, based on new evidence suggesting a lower threshold. Now, *Stage 1 high blood pressure*, also known as *hypertension 1*, is consistently measured at 130 over 80 or greater; the previous threshold was 140 over 90.

If left untreated, HBP can lead to coronary heart disease, heart failure, stroke, kidney failure, and other health problems. These new guidelines indicate nearly 46 percent of American adults have high blood pressure, while over one-third would be recommended for appropriate medication.

HBP is referred to as the “silent killer” because those who have it don’t typically experience symptoms. The best way to find out if you have HBP is to get your blood pressure checked every two years and speak with your doctor.

In some cases, HBP can be prevented by living a healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise, a healthy diet low in salt, fat, and alcohol, avoiding smoking, and managing stress.

Talk with your doctor for more information.



Healthy & Delicious

How Much Is Enough?

If you’re like the majority of Americans, you’re most likely not eating enough fruits and vegetables. [Fruits & Veggies—More Matters](#), a national health observance that occurs every September, wants to change that.

Fruits and vegetables contain essential vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other naturally occurring substances that may help prevent chronic diseases.

According to [MyPlate](#), the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s symbol for healthy eating, the recommended adult daily serving for fruits and vegetables are:

- Fruits:
 - Women: 2 cups (ages 19-30); 1-1/2 cups (ages 31+)
 - Men: 2 cups (ages 19+)
- Vegetables:
 - Women: 2-1/2 cups (ages 19-50); 2 cups (ages 51+)
 - Men: 3 cups (ages 19-50); 2-1/2 cups (ages 50+)