

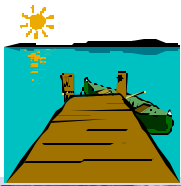
The Leaderboard

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

Proverbs 30:5

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GET ADVENTUROUS!

Summer offers a great time to take advantage of adventurous activities that can help you get fit. Whether you are taking a family vacation or hanging out in the backyard with the kids, the following activities offer great adventure and exercise:

ROLLERBLADING – You may have seen people rollerblading before and thought you could never do it. Once you try it, you may find that rollerblading is not as difficult as it looks. Use a flat paved path, throw on your wrist guards, knee pads and helmet and take it slow. Once you get the hang of it, it provides fun exercise and a different pace than walking or running.



TANDEM BIKING – Hopping on one of these with your favorite partner will provide hours of enjoyment and exercise. Feel the wind in your hair as you use teamwork to get you where you need to go.

SNORKELING – If you live on a beach or you are

traveling to one, take advantage of a snorkeling experience. This all-ages sport will allow you to get up-close and personal with the underwater wildlife while getting your legs kicking!



WHITEWATER RAFTING – Not only will you scream while participating in this fast-paced activity, you will paddle like crazy as well. Your experienced guide will help you through the big rapids giving you a sense of accomplishment at the end.

RUNNING THROUGH THE SPRINKLER – This activity is more adventurous than you first think if you are on the front lawn with your kids in your swimsuit! Be light-hearted and take advantage of this activity that will cool you down and get your legs moving.

RUN A RACE – You may not be a marathoner, but don't forget about the numerous shorter, fun walks or

runs that take place in most every community in the summertime. Help raise money for a good cause, socialize and get your exercise at the same time. Encourage your friends and family to join you on this one.

GO SAILING – Take to the waves with someone who will allow you to get involved in the whole process – your upper body will get a workout and you will enjoy a nice breeze on the water as well.

RIDE A HORSE – Mount one of these friendly animals for a taller view of the world. You will use muscles you never knew you had in your legs and back while riding a horse. Enjoy a ride on the beach or on a mountain trail.



Most importantly, have fun!

YOUR ACHING BACK

If warmer spring and summer weather lures you outside for heavy yard work, now's a good time to learn about how to prevent and treat lower back pain. Four out of every five people have had lower back pain at one time in their lives. With symptoms ranging from a dull ache to absolute agony, lower back pain can put your life on hold. In fact, it's second only to the common cold in causing missed work days for adults under age 45.

Most lower back pain clears up in a short time with a combination of rest, appropriate exercise and over-the-counter pain reliever. But pain that persists for more than three months—chronic back pain—is more difficult to treat, in part because there are many different possible causes.

Back pain can be caused by a number of things, from sports injuries and other damage to simple wear and tear. If muscles are poorly conditioned or overworked, they are more easily strained. Someone who works all week at a desk, for example, can strain their back muscles doing heavy yard work on the weekend. Likewise, if the ligaments that help stabilize the low back are weak from inactivity or stiff from overuse, a sudden wrenching movement can cause a ligament sprain.

Aging can also bring lower back pain. Bones lose strength over time. In someone with osteoporosis, the bones of the lumbar vertebrae can break or compress in a fall or even during some everyday activities. Arthritis can inflame joints, causing pain and stiffness. And “slipped disks,” in which the rubbery cartilage between disks bulge outward, can press against the spinal nerves to cause pain.

Keeping your back healthy is the best way to prevent low back injury. There are several practical things you can do:

- Don't try to lift objects that are too heavy for you. Lift with your knees, not your back; keep your back straight and your head down and in line with your back. Keep the object close to your body, and don't twist when lifting.

- Regular, low-impact exercises like walking, swimming or stationary-bike riding 30 minutes a day can increase muscle strength and flexibility. Always stretch before exercise or physical activity.

- Practice good posture. Your back supports your weight most easily when it is straight. When standing, keep your weight balanced on both feet.

- When sitting, try to use a chair with good lower back support. Make sure your work surfaces, like your keyboard, are at a comfortable height. If you have to sit for a long period of time, rest your feet on a low stool or a stack of books.

- Sleep on a firm surface on your side.

- Eat a healthy diet with enough calcium, phosphorus and vitamin D to help promote new bone growth.

- Keep extra weight off your waistline, where it can strain your lower back.



If

you smoke, quit; smoking reduces blood flow to the lower spine and causes the spinal discs to degenerate.

Since not every back injury can be prevented, researchers are always looking for new ways to treat lower back pain.

For example, NIH's National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) is funding the study of “chiropractic,” an ancient method of adjusting and manipulating body parts, to see if it helps with lower back pain. So far, NCCAM says that studies of chiropractic treatment are not conclusive.

Chiropractic treatment and conventional medical treatments seem to be about equally helpful. NCCAM is continuing to study this and other alternative treatments.

Dr. Jon Levine, director of the NIH Pain Center at the University of California at San Francisco, is particularly interested in the first sensory nerve cell that begins the pain signal to the brain. Many patients with pain, including chronic lower back pain, say that although their medication relieves pain, they don't want to take it because of side effects like cloudy thinking, sleepiness, fatigue or even addiction. Levine explains that many of the side effects from pain medications originate in the brain, not in the outlying areas of the nervous system that reach out to various parts of the body.

“If we can make drugs that target mechanisms outside the brains such as the first sensory nerve cell,” he explains, “we can prevent those side effects.” His continuing work is supported by funds from NIH's National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

Another aspect of pain relief that Levine and his colleagues study is how men and women respond differently to pain medications. They discovered that one medication works at two different sites in the brain, a pain-relieving site and a pain-enhancing site, and that men have more of the pain-enhancing effect than women. They were able to find the pain-enhancing receptor and block it, reducing the pain-causing effect of the drug in men. This receptor-blocking technique also helped relieve pain in women at lower doses of the drug than before. Thanks to this research, a commercial biotechnology company is now doing further studies to see if the new drug proves to be safe and effective against pain.

Levine emphasizes that the cost of lower back pain to society is immense. “Our ability to understand and control this problem—and prevent the recurrence of back pain—would be a major breakthrough for public health in this country,” he says.

<http://www.nih.gov>

NEEDLE FREE INJECTIONS

For the millions of Americans afraid of needles, help may be on the way. A new medical device now available in some hospitals and clinics can inject medicines without the jab of a needle. The device, called SonoPrep, is being used to numb skin for painful procedures such as the insertion of catheters or intravenous tubing.

Traditionally, doctors numb skin by injecting a local anesthetic through a needle. This method can take some time and it hurts, whereas SonoPrep does the job painlessly in just five minutes.

SonoPrep works through ultrasound technology. Developed with NIH funding to Dr. Robert Langer of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the device uses battery power to apply sound waves to skin for 15 seconds. This ultrasonic energy subtly rearranges the fat molecules in skin to create tiny channels that small amounts of liquid can flow through. The skin isn't harmed by the process and within a day it returns to normal. Langer has licensed the technology to a company, Sontra Medical Corp., that plans to test the system for various other medical uses, including vaccination. They are also trying to develop a device that measures blood sugar in people with diabetes that would give them just the right amount of insulin at the right time. www.nih.gov

FUN FRUIT!



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Have you ever heard of Pluots® or Apriums®? Both of these are complex hybrid fruits that are part plum and part apricot. They were originally invented in the late 20th century by Floyd Zaiger and are now grown in parts of Washington and California. They are registered trademarks of Zaiger Genetics in California.

Pluots have a majority of plum parentage and therefore, have smooth skins like plums. Some varieties of pluots are sometimes called interspecific plums, or dinosaur eggs. The pluot is often confused with the aprium which is another plum and apricot hybrid with most apricot heritage. Like apricots, apriums have slightly fuzzy skin. Pluots and apriums are known for their sweetness and flavor; the sugar content of these fruits is much higher than that of a plum or apricot alone.

The season for these fruits runs from May to September. When selecting pluots and apriums, choose ones that are plump and firm. After washed well and dried, they can be eaten fresh or cooked.

There are 20 varieties of pluots. Each variety contains a different percentage of plum and apricot and vary in size, skin color and flesh color.

www.cdc.gov

Report Urges Americans To Reduce Sodium

WASHINGTON (AP) -- A long-awaited nutrition report calls for a major drop in how much salt Americans eat every day, even though the average person already consumes far more than is recommended.

But don't worry about water, the report says; people easily get plenty, so let thirst be your guide instead of counting glasses. If you prefer coffee or soda, all beverages, even those with caffeine, count toward the daily water allotment, says Wednesday's report from the Institute of Medicine.

The institute is an independent scientific organization that sets the nation's recommended levels of nutrients. Its salt conclusion could bring a dramatic change to the sodium content consumers see on the labels of their favorite foods.

The government currently recommends 2,400 milligrams of sodium a day, the equivalent of a heaping teaspoon of salt. The new recommendation is that people get 1,500 milligrams a day. The new report sets a daily upper limit of 2,300 milligrams, but does not recommend exceeding 1,500.

Yet studies show the average person eats more than 4,000 mg a day, three-quarters of it from restaurant meals and common processed foods like spaghetti sauce and frozen dinners.

"We don't have our heads in the sand on this one. We realize where we are is quite a distance from where we should be, ... and there are commercial interests that don't want this to happen," said Dr.

Lawrence Appel, a professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins University, who led the institute panel.

While factors such as weight and exercise play a role, too, salt and blood pressure go hand-in-hand: Eat more, blood pressure rises. Eat less, it drops. Lower blood pressure means less risk of suffering heart attacks, strokes and kidney disease.

"People can cook and prepare Western-style diets that are at that level" even though "it will take work right now," Appel said.

The Food and Drug Administration uses the institute's nutrient levels to calculate food labels' listing of the percentage of the daily allotment of fat, vitamins and other substances occurs in each serving. The FDA wouldn't say how quickly it would update sodium content; changing food labels typically takes several years.

As an example, a popular brand of canned clam chowder that provides 36 percent of daily sodium under today's guidelines would provide 57 percent of the new level. For some chips, sodium content would change from 15 percent under today's guidelines to 23 percent.

The Institute of Medicine report also concluded that:

- ◆ The adage "drink at least eight glasses of water a day" is unnecessary. The average healthy person gets plenty of fluid, from beverages as well as the water content of fruits, vegetables and other fluids. So don't bother counting, just drink when thirsty.
- ◆ Most Americans need to eat a lot more potassium -- 4,700 mg a day, roughly double current consumption. Potassium is found in bananas, spinach, cantaloupe and numerous other fruits and vegetables; food sources are better than supplements. Potassium lowers blood pressure and reduces the risk of kidney stones and bone loss.

The food industry opposes the salt change, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, working with the Salt Institute, is questioning one of the government studies used to derive it.

"Dietary recommendations for all Americans need to be realistic," said Stephanie Childs of the Grocery Manufacturers of America.

Childs said consumers wouldn't buy foods that suddenly drop sodium levels because they would taste different, but companies are hunting new recipes to provide a gradual decline. Some already have: Canned foods today contain 40 percent less sodium than a few years ago, she said.

Blood-pressure specialists welcomed the Institute of Medicine's new recommendation, saying even if consumers don't get down to 1,500 mg of daily sodium, every little decline helps.

"The data's strong," said Dr. Daniel Jones of the American Heart Association. "These are certainly healthy goals. They will be a challenge for individuals to achieve, but they can be achieved."

The American Public Health Association is pushing for the sodium in processed foods to be halved within 10 years. The new guidelines mean "the food industry really has to take this issue much more seriously now," said Dr. Stephen Havas of the University of Maryland, who is leading that call.

The 1,500-mg salt level is the level for healthy younger adults. Because blood pressure rises with age, the new report says people over 50 should strive for 1,300 mg, and 1,200 mg for those over 70.

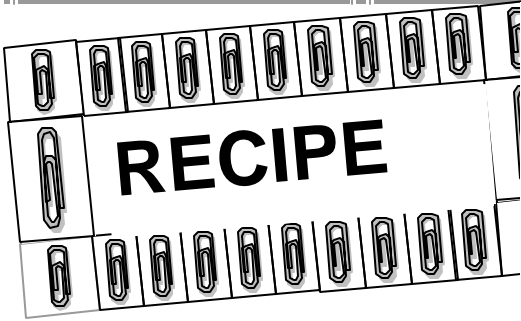
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*Quote of
the Month*

*Summer afternoon . . . the two most beautiful
words in the English language.*

Henry James



Pasta Salad Florentine



Ingredients

- 6 ounces small tube-shaped pasta
- 2 cups (2 ounces) torn fresh spinach
- 2 cups (11 ounces) halved cherry tomatoes
- 1 1/2 cups (10 ounces) frozen peas, placed in sieve and thawed with hot running water
- 1/2 cup shelled California pistachios
- Dressing (recipe in instructions)

Directions

Drop pasta into boiling water; return to boil. Cook 10 to 15 minutes or until tender. Drain. Toss pasta, spinach, tomatoes, peas, pistachios and dressing in a large bowl.

Dressing:

Combine 2 tablespoons honey, 2 1/2 tablespoons Dijon mustard, 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar, 1 egg white, 1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano (crumbled) and 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder. Makes 1/2 cup.

www.cdc.gov Calories 325, Protein 6g, Fat 9g, Calories from Fat 29%,
Cholesterol 0mg, Protein 9g, Fiber 7g, Sodium 165mg