

top fitness

## More Steps for Better Health



**SAFETY TIP**

Crosswalkers and other pedestrians ... make eye contact with oncoming motorists, and take care when crossing or walking near the street's edge.

Walking has become the ideal exercise for people from all “walks” of life. Is it time to step into (or step up) a walking routine of your own? Choose one that suits you:

**Just Starting Out.** Walking should feel good! Keep a natural stride. Start gradually with one 15-minute walk a day, three days a week at an easy pace. In no time, you should feel able to walk a little farther for more minutes.

**Getting to a New Level.** Walking can burn up to 100 calories per mile, depending on your weight and speed. As you get used to walking, challenge yourself by increasing speed, distance or time. Try new courses such as walking uphill or going on a challenging hike.

**Reaching a New Personal Best.** You've gotten used to challenging yourself. It helps to have a race or an upcoming event (or three!) on your calendar so you have something that you're training for — walking really counts!



*Record more steps,  
more distance or  
more time.*

**TRY one THING. Urban Hiking.** If the stairwells at your worksite are safe and accessible, use them for exercise — you'll strengthen your entire lower body while getting a great cardiovascular workout. Some companies even hold stair-climbing challenges for fun and fitness. Look outside for nearby public stairways and hilly streets.

Provided by the American Council on Exercise, [www.acefitness.org](http://www.acefitness.org)

well-being



## 4 Ways to Let Go of Stress

- 1 **CONNECT with nature.** Strolling through a garden, cuddling with a pet and hiking through the woods can all benefit you.
- 2 **INTERRUPT worrying and other unhelpful habits.** Exercise has been shown to ease the burden of stress. The more you worry, the more it becomes an ingrained habit. Redirecting your thoughts allows you to use your mental energy in healthier ways.
- 3 **DO things for others.** Random acts of kindness generate positive energy — when you're not already doing too much.
- 4 **EXPRESS yourself.** Find an outlet, such as conversation or journal writing, for your feelings.

**The bottom line:** If your moods affect your work or home life, or if you're engaging in addictions or other self-destructive behaviors, ask your health care provider or health plan for a mental health referral.



Do you need to drop a few pounds?

Take the quiz inside to find out. ➔

# in and out: september

## FAB or Not?

Some flavored alcoholic beverages (FABs) are now available in colorful, supersized containers that resemble soda containers (“alcopops”). One container may hold the equivalent of five servings of alcohol — making it very easy to overconsume.

**Hazard warning:** These sweetened drinks, looking and tasting like juice or soda, often appeal to underage drinkers.

## Tummy Troubles

**Gastritis** — inflammation or irritation of the stomach lining — has many causes, including infection, injury, radiation, certain medications and immune disorders. A very common form of gastritis involves an infection of *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria, leading to indigestion, pain and discomfort in the upper abdomen (or sometimes no symptoms). Luckily, *H. pylori* is easy to detect and treat with medication — a proton-pump inhibitor to reduce acid and antibiotics to treat the infection.



## Food-Pollen Allergy Connection

About a third of people with pollen allergies experience itching or swelling in their mouths when they eat certain foods, especially during allergy season. This is oral allergy syndrome, when the body reacts to food proteins that are similar to those found in pollen. **An example:** People who react to ragweed might also react to melons or tomatoes. Most cases are mild but can become more serious. If you have symptoms, avoid problematic foods and consult an allergist.

## LONGEVITY CORNER : Get Fresh!



Recent research in the British Medical Journal reconfirms that good food isn't cheap.

When prices go up, many families choose sweetened, fattening processed foods. What's best for your health might cost a bit more. So look for locally grown produce that's in season — it will be fresher and less expensive.

Try out new recipes, too. This approach will benefit your pocketbook and your health.

— Zorba Paster, M.D.

QUIKRISK™  
ASSESSMENT

## Need to slim down?

Studies have shown that people who maintain a healthy weight throughout life do some fundamental things at mealtime that overweight folks don't.

### How many do you practice?

- You usually don't eat unless you're hungry.
- You don't fast or skip meals unless you're just not hungry.
- You stop eating when your hunger is gone.
- You take small portions and bites and savor your food.
- You chew slowly, which helps you feel full sooner and eat less.
- You order sauces and dressings “on the side” when eating out and use only small amounts.
- You nearly always sit down to eat.
- You eat vegetarian meals several times a week.
- You eat nutritious snacks.
- You make high-calorie desserts the exception, not a regular habit.
- You are conscious of what you're eating and the effect it has on your body.
- You think of food as nourishment, not companionship, comfort or love.

## How did you do?

**10-12** — Congratulations! You're aware of how even small changes to your eating habits can help you stay well for life.

**6-9** — You're on your way to managing your weight; work on the steps you didn't check to increase your chances of maintaining a healthy weight.

**1-5** — Consider the steps you left unchecked and try one of them each week. You're more likely to succeed if you make gradual changes.

# Cholesterol Update

**High cholesterol** is considered a major risk factor for heart disease, the nation's No. 1 killer. The National Institutes of Health recommends keeping your total cholesterol below 200, LDL ("bad" cholesterol) under 100 (optimal level), HDL ("good" cholesterol) over 40 and triglycerides under 150.

**Risk factors** for high cholesterol include age, diabetes, family history, poor diet and obesity. While there are factors you can't control (such as your heredity), there are risks you can reduce with these steps:

**Eat right.** Limit saturated fat, trans fats, cholesterol and alcohol. Load up on vegetables, fruits and whole grains. Monounsaturated fats — from nuts, avocados and olive oil, for example — can help improve your cholesterol profile.

**Get moving.** Exercise not only helps you maintain a healthy weight but can also raise your HDL ("good") cholesterol.

**Slim down.** If you are overweight, losing weight may help improve your cholesterol numbers too. Even a 5-to-10-pound reduction can make a difference.

**Quit smoking.** You may raise your "good" cholesterol by about 5 percent. Watch out for secondhand smoke as well.

**Get treatment.** If your cholesterol is high despite these lifestyle changes, medication can be part of a treatment approach to bring it down.

## Need to get your cholesterol in check?

Some TLC may help. The TLC (Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes) Diet is recommended by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. **TLC guidelines:**

- **Reduce saturated fat:** less than 7 percent of calories.
- **Reduce dietary cholesterol:** less than 200 mg/day.
- **Increase soluble fiber:** 10-25 g/day. **Sources:** fruits, oatmeal, some cereals.
- **Increase plant stanols/sterols:** 2 g/day. **Sources:** fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, cereals, legumes, vegetable oils (particularly soybean oil).
- **Consume just enough calories** to achieve or maintain a healthy weight and to reduce your blood cholesterol level.

For more information, check the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's website at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov) (search for TLC Diet).



**September is National Cholesterol Education Month.**

## PRODUCE PICK OF THE MONTH

### Peaches



**Did you know ...** peaches belong to the rose family. Look for fragrant, unblemished, soft peaches in the produce section. **One medium peach has 40 calories;** try using peaches in smoothies, salads and salsa, or for dessert. If you prefer the convenience of canned, select peaches canned in their own juice or with no sugar added.



## Supplement Safety

Each year Americans spend billions "supplementing" their diet in hopes of improved health. Popular products include vitamins, minerals, herbs, amino acids and enzymes. These "natural" substances can have a powerful influence on the body — positive and negative — just like medications. *What to know about supplement safety:*

- 1]** Before a product is marketed, the manufacturer must ensure that it's safe, that claims are supported by evidence and that the label information is accurate. In most cases, however, companies don't need FDA approval nor do they need to share the results of safety or effectiveness studies. After a product is on the market, the FDA monitors product information and takes action on products deemed unsafe.
- 2]** The FDA doesn't keep a list of dietary products. For general information, go to the Office of Dietary Supplements at <http://ods.od.nih.gov/>. For specific information, contact the manufacturer.
- 3]** Before taking any supplement, review its safety with your doctor, health care provider or pharmacist. Some can interfere with medication, cause excess bleeding during surgery or have other adverse effects, especially on pregnant or lactating women, people with health problems, children and seniors.
- 4]** Be careful about products that determine usefulness from a single study. If you do decide to try a well-researched supplement, ask the manufacturer if the product meets the same standards as the ones used in the studies.
- 5]** If you suspect that a supplement has caused an adverse effect, report it to the FDA's MedWatch at 1-800-FDA-1088.

Stay in Touch

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## Arugula With Peaches & Chili Peppers

- 3 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 1 tbsp + 1 tsp honey
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ cup sliced mild chili peppers (such as Anaheim or poblano)

- 1] Toss first four dressing ingredients together in mixing bowl. Slice chili peppers into rings, add to dressing; toss and let stand 30 minutes.
- 2] Meanwhile, wash peaches, rubbing to remove fuzz; slice into wedges and splash with 1 tsp fresh lime juice.



## EASY | RECIPE

from Personal Best®

- 2 medium peaches (ripe but firm)
- 1 tsp fresh lime juice
- 8 cups arugula leaves, loosely packed (about 4 oz.)
- 2 tbsp cilantro leaves

- 3] Divide arugula leaves and peach slices evenly among four salad plates.
- 4] Spoon dressing over each salad and garnish with cilantro leaves.

Tip: Nectarines can stand in when fresh peaches are out of season.

**MAKES 4 SERVINGS. Per 3-cup serving:**

80 calories | 2g protein | 3.7g fat | .4g sat fat | 0mg cholesterol | 11.7g carbs | 8g sugar | 2g fiber | 151mg sodium

top dollar



## Dealing With Medical Debt?

If you find yourself saddled with large debt after a medical procedure and you can't pay immediately, *consider these steps to control medical bills:*

**Review your hospital and provider bills.**

Look for overcharges or mistakes.

**Don't ignore your bills.** Health care providers are more likely to negotiate with you if you contact them about your situation.

**Request a payment plan.** Hospitals and physicians' offices may work out a payment plan.

**Ask for the "negotiated" price.** The hospital billing office may discount your bill to the "negotiated" rate — one that insurance companies or Medicare negotiated for that procedure. Some providers offer a sliding fee scale, which allows you to pay according to income and family size.

**Get financial assistance.** Charitable foundations and other community groups might be able to help. Be prepared to show proof of your income, expenses and savings.

**Apply for Medicaid.** If you are eligible, Medicaid may pay for some of your bills.

**Consider credit counseling.** Make sure you're working with a reputable credit counseling service. Review the Federal Trade Commission's list at [www.ftc.gov/bcp/resources.shtm](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/resources.shtm).

top safety

## Preparedness Checklist

This year's earthquake and tsunami in Japan were devastating and eye-opening all at once. How prepared are you for an emergency? *Use this checklist to find out:*

- ☑️ **Know evacuation routes at work and in your neighborhood.** If instructed, leave immediately and follow the route; don't take shortcuts.
- ☑️ **Keep at least a half tank of gas in your car at all times.** In an emergency, gas stations could be closed.
- ☑️ **Develop an emergency plan** that includes a place for family members to meet in case of disaster, how to contact

one another, a home evacuation plan, "safe" spots in your home and emergency numbers.

☑️ **Create a three-day emergency survival kit** with nonperishable food, water, batteries, a battery-operated radio, medications, flashlights, matches and a blanket.

☑️ **Don't forget your pets.** Stock a kit with food, medications, a leash and bedding. Know what emergency accommodations accept pets.

☑️ **Learn first aid and CPR.** You can help yourself or others in case emergency vehicles can't get to you.