



Wellness Works

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Give the Nod to Better Sleep

Do you feel sleepy and often nod off during the day? You may have obstructive sleep apnea, a sleep disorder that disturbs your breathing and may cause loud snoring. Being male, weighing too much or having a small airway raises your chances of having this problem.

Sleep apnea can cause mood and behavior changes and health problems such as heart disease and stroke. Talk to your doctor if you have signs of this condition. Studies show that getting the right amount of sleep may lower your chances of heart disease and other health problems. Adults need about seven to eight hours of sleep each day.

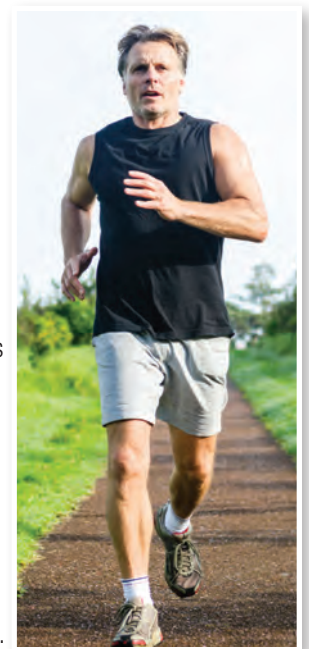
Sources: National Institutes of Health; National Heart, Blood and Lung Institute



Sharpen Your Chill Skills

Stress is a fact of life, whether you face a hectic day, job loss, sickness or hear about scary world events. It may seem hard to chill out when worry strikes. But handling stress can help protect your health and well-being. Take these steps to calm stress:

- Take part in mood-boosting exercise daily, such as a brisk 30-minute walk.
- Stay connected with supportive family, friends and community or religious groups.
- Make time for fun, calming pursuits.
- Get regular care for any health problems.
- Eat healthy, balanced meals.
- Relax through yoga, stretching or other programs.
- Seek professional help if you can't cope, are abusing substances or have suicidal thoughts.



Dwelling on problems can make them seem even bigger. Try replacing negative thoughts with positive ones to help keep stress at bay. Signs of stress may include unusual fatigue, a quick temper, feeling sad or down, sleep problems or coping by using drugs, alcohol or other substances.

Sources: National Institute of Mental Health



BlueCross BlueShield
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Q&A: Noroviruses — Don't Ignore These Bugs

Q. What are noroviruses?

A. Noroviruses spur a whole host of unpleasant symptoms — including diarrhea and vomiting. Norovirus is sometimes called “stomach flu,” even though it’s not related to influenza. It’s also a cause of food poisoning.

Q. How do they spread?

A. Contaminated food and drinks are often to blame. However, noroviruses can lurk on computers and other objects. They also can spread quickly from person to person, especially in close quarters, such as on cruise ships. Although those outbreaks receive a lot of attention, the virus can occur anywhere.

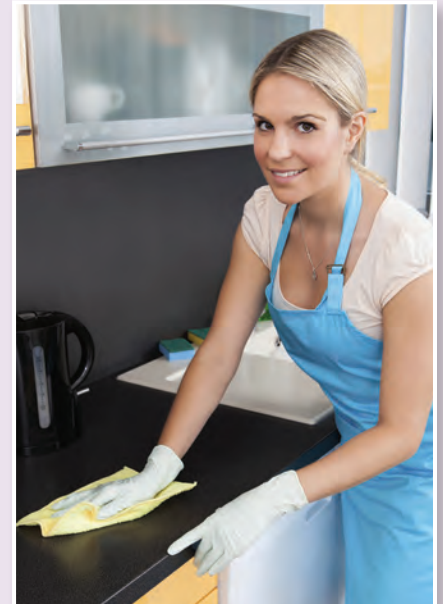
Q. How are noroviruses treated?

A. Although noroviruses can make you feel very sick, symptoms usually go away after a day or two without special treatment. Getting rest and drinking plenty of fluids will help.

Q. What can I do to protect against noroviruses?

A. Here are some hints to keep your family safe. Avoid eating raw shellfish such as oysters. Wash fresh fruits and veggies before eating. Disinfect surfaces with a cleaner containing bleach. Wipe down “germ magnets” such as computer keyboards, faucets and doorknobs. Wash your hands frequently, especially after using the bathroom and before eating. Use a hand gel containing more than 60 percent alcohol to help wipe out germs.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Hands-Free Doesn't Mean Risk-Free?

Using a cell phone while driving may quadruple your odds of having a crash that sends you to the hospital. Plus, hands-free models aren't any safer, say experts. So, think twice before placing that call on the road.

Other safe-driving tips: Give yourself plenty of time to get from point A to point B, especially if the weather is bad. Keep your car well maintained. Replace wiper blades when needed, for example. And, of course, always use your seatbelt while driving.

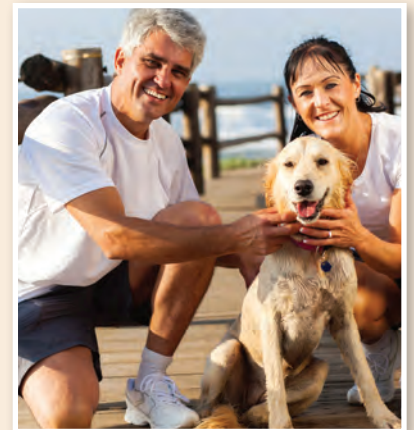
Source: National Institutes of Health

Pets May Enhance Mental and Physical Well-Being

If you have a pet, you probably already know that animal companions can lift your mood. But did you know that they might even boost your physical health? Consider these findings:

- Dog owners were less likely than non-dog owners to die within the first year after a heart attack.
- One study measured the negative physical effects of stress in women who owned dogs. They were tested alone, while accompanied by a friend or while accompanied by their dog. Women with their dog at their side fared best.
- Among older adults, physical health was less likely to decline over the course of a year in pet owners than in non-pet owners.

Source: National Institutes of Health



De-Mold Your Home and Stop Sneezing

Mold can cause allergic reactions and asthma attacks in sensitive people. That's why it's important to get rid of any mold growing in your home. Here's how:

- Avoid inhaling mold by using an N95 respirator. They are available at hardware stores.
- Scrub mold off walls and other hard surfaces with detergent and water or a weak bleach solution. Wear long gloves and goggles. Dry thoroughly.
- Ceiling tiles, carpets, upholstered furniture and other absorbent materials that cannot be cleaned should be discarded.

Remove the moisture mold needs to grow. First, fix any water leaks. Keep humidity in your home low. Dehumidifiers, air conditioners and fans can help.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency