

Your Health



Consider Cardio

Cardiovascular routines aren't just helpful for our hearts and lungs. They are also beneficial to our minds, give us more energy, help us manage our weight and reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

The key is starting small, with an exercise regimen that makes sense for your level, allotted time and age. You can always build in additional activity for later, once you've become more experienced with the cardio routine.

THE BENEFITS

Cardio is best understood through four essential categories: endurance, balance, strength and flexibility. Beyond feeling better, there are specific health advantages associated with these exercises, including improved blood pressure and diabetes numbers, better lipid profiles, and healthier outcomes for those suffering from osteoporosis or neurocognitive issues.

MIX IT UP

Switch out the types of movements and which day you do them. Incorporate a blend of strength training, aerobic activities and move-



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ment like walking or running. Efficient regimens with lots of variety can have a direct impact on our health, our moods, our energy levels and, down the road, our morbidity timeline.

MAKE IT SOCIAL

Walking is perhaps the easiest way to make cardiovascular improvements; it's also one of the best exercise routines to do socially. Those

who walk with others have far more accountability, tending to stick with exercise since others depend on their participation. We experience direct social benefits too, since fellowship helps with emotional well being, combats depression and loneliness, and supports general mental health.

MAKE IT FUN

Every-day routines can

become boring over time, so don't forget to have some fun. Listen to your favorite songs; consider taking part in one of the more dance-focused programs that improve cardio health. Treat yourself to gadgets, workout clothes or useful equipment like a stationary exercise machine when you reach a new milestone. Invite friends, family, children or co-workers along; they'll lighten the mood.

YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

Whether you join a gym, or simply exercise at home, give yourself a dedicated period of exercise. And if you find you're still too busy to carve out time? Consider expanding routine activities that can bolster wellness: Park further away at the grocery store. Go faster — or stay out longer — when you're walking the dog. Forget the cart and carry your bags, if you can.

Diet and Your Teeth

When you think of food and oral health, brushing and flossing always come to mind. But what's in the food itself can play a significant role, too.

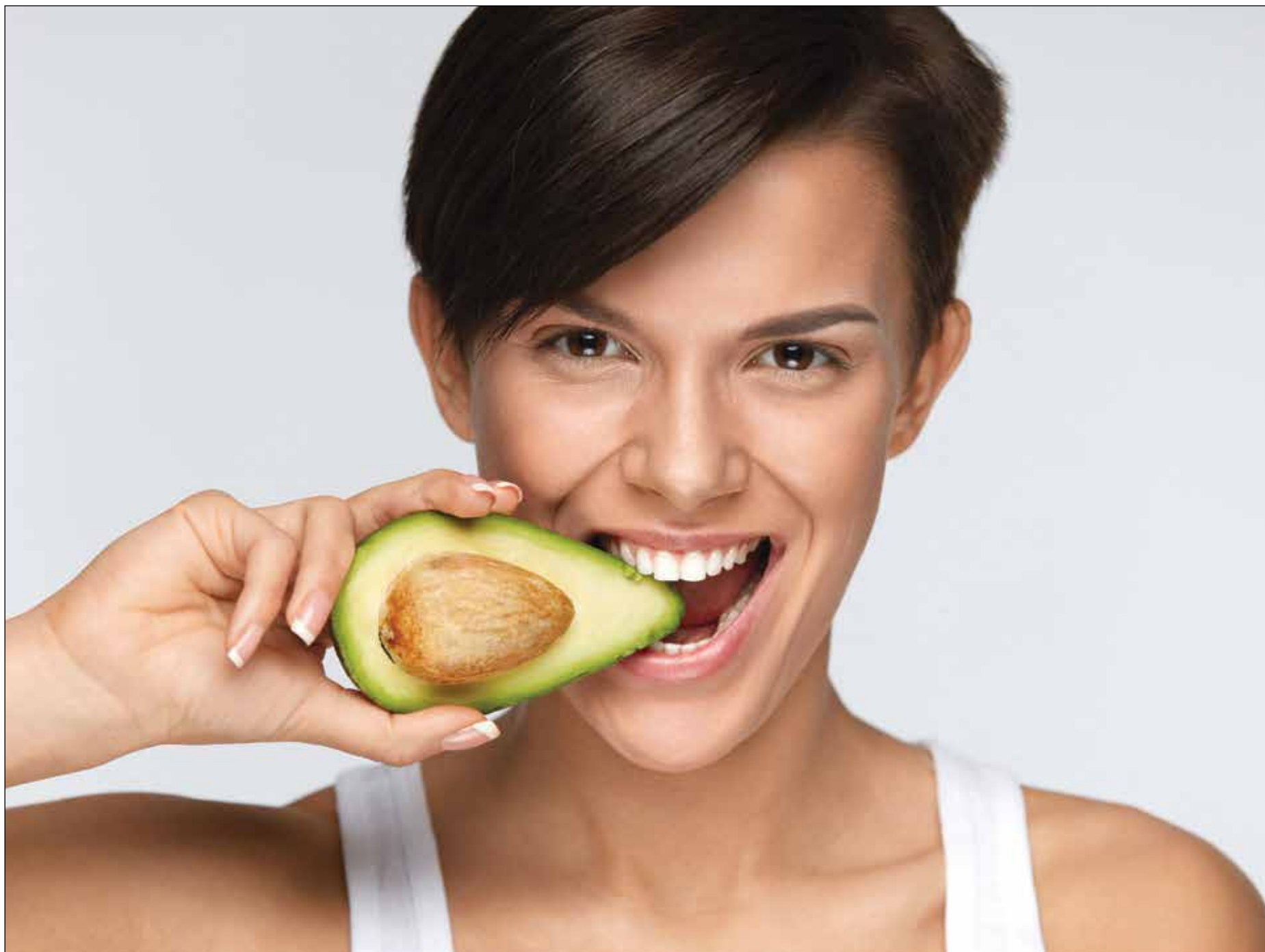
Obviously, food and drinks with high sugar content increase our chances of suffering from gum disease and tooth decay. But there are other dietary tips that can help us all to better oral health. Check out this list of food impacts before making the next grocery list.

PLAN A HEALTHY DIET

Consider eating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein like chicken or fish. Try to avoid snacking, and not just because of the empty calories. Well-balanced meals help with saliva production, deemed the mouth's first line of defense by the American Dental Association.

SALIVA'S ROLE

Saliva helps wash leftover food from our teeth and mouth, and dilutes acids found in food and drinks that can impact our dental health. More saliva is released while eating a full meal than with a quick snack. Also, make sure you drink plenty of water through the course of the day. This helps balance our any bouts with dry mouth when the supply of saliva runs low.



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HOW YOU'RE IMPACTED

Having poor dental hygiene can lead to gingivitis; hardened tartar creates gum inflammation. Periodontal disease is particularly dangerous for those who are or want to become pregnant, since they are far more likely to deliver babies either very early or at a low birth weight.

Both issues can have long-term health issues for the child. Regular brushing, flossing and professional cleanings can help stave off the effects of periodontal disease, which infects the pockets around the roots of our teeth. The gums then pull away from the tooth, causing them to loosen and fall out. But

what you eat can have a notable impact, as well.

WHAT TO EAT

Diet plays a key role in avoiding periodontal disease, a serious issue with the gums that can lead to the loss of your teeth. Foods with vitamin A, like leafy vegetables, eggs and broccoli, help bol-

ster oral wellness. Eating things with lots of vitamin C, including many fruits and vegetables, can also have a positive impact. Studies show that the antioxidant melatonin — found in cereals, but also available as a supplement — is also beneficial for those hoping to improve their periodontal health.

Treating High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure impacts millions of people every day, creating the need for a network of health care professionals, treatments, prescriptive remedies and therapies.

Ultimately, however, you play the biggest role. Here's a look at the risk factors that lead to this increasingly common health issue, and what you can do to combat it.

YOUR HEALTH

Maintain your weight. Pay attention to the doctor's recommendations when it comes to your body mass index, or BMI. This determines if a person is in a healthy weight range. If not, they join millions of other overweight and obese patients who are at risk for heart disease. Avoid smoking. If you already do, talk to your physician about quitting, since cigarette smoking is also risk factor in heart disease. Encourage others to stop smoking, too.

YOUR DIET

Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit, since your diet can play such a huge role in high blood pressure. Don't add salt; there's already lots of it in the foods we eat. Look for foods that are low in saturated and trans fats, and watch your



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cholesterol. Exercise, if only just for a few minutes each day. The recommendation from the surgeon general is at least 30 minutes on most days, but any regular activity can help you lower your blood pressure; it can help you maintain weight, too.

YOUR NUMBERS

Keep a close eye on your

blood-pressure levels. Buy an at-home monitor, and take your reading at local pharmacies and grocery stores between doctor's visits. Also, watch your cholesterol and glucose numbers. Cholesterol should be checked by a simple blood test at least once every five years. Discuss monitoring glucose with your physician, especially if you

have diabetes.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Talk to your doctor, and be honest about where you are with heart wellness — including habits that put you at risk. They'll discuss diet and exercise tips that are shaped by your specific medical and family history. Consider widening your care-giving team

beyond your general practitioner. A multi-faceted approach that also includes a pharmacist, nurse, dietitian and/or a community health worker can help you manage risk factors from a variety of critical angles. Keep a journal, so you can better monitor blood-pressure numbers, medication schedules and future appointments.

Maintaining Healthy Vision

Changes to our eyes can happen so gradually that they are difficult to notice.

These changes can have a huge impact on our lives, impacting our ability to enjoy reading or watching television. If these issues continue to worsen, mobility can be limited. In worst-case scenarios, vision is completely lost. There are options to help, however, as you work at maintaining healthy vision.

KNOW YOUR HISTORY

The best way to predict what might happen with your well being is to understand the challenges family members have faced. Talk about their eye health, in particular if anyone you are related to has been diagnosed with a serious condition or disease. Many of these issues are hereditary, and that will provide a roadmap for health-care decisions down the road. Those at higher risk, for instance, might be scheduled more regular exams.

OUTSIDE FACTORS

Eye health is also impacted by what we eat, and what we weigh. Eating vegetables and fruit — in particular dark leafy greens like spinach, greens and kale — is good for your eyes. So is eating fish high in fatty acids, like tuna, salmon and halibut. Don't smoke, or quit as soon as you can. That can make you susceptible to a



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range of conditions which might lead to blindness. Being overweight increases your risk of diabetes, and that can also threaten your vision.

REGULAR EXAMS

Even if you think your sight is fine, schedule a regular comprehensive exam where your eyes are dilated and then

evaluated. Most people assume that these exams are simply the pathway to seeing better through prescription eye glasses or contact lenses. But doctors are also on the look out for common diseases of the eye such as glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and cataracts, as well as age-related issues like macular degenera-

tion. In some cases, these issues don't present clear warning signs to the average person. An eye-care professional can catch them in their early stages, when options are less limited.

WHAT HAPPENS?

In a comprehensive eye exam, the doctor or his pro-

fessionally trained assistant places special drops in your eyes that widen — or dilate — the pupil. This allows more light to enter the eye, while also giving a broader field of view for the doctor. They'll examine the eyes for early signs of disease or damage, and help you develop a care plan.

Self-Control While Dining Out

It's far easier to eat healthy foods and practice portion control in your own kitchen, but less so in an office setting when everyone is heading out to the hot new lunch spot.

You are bound to be starting a new diet just as someone brings in a dozen donuts to brighten up a Monday or a huge cake to celebrate a co-worker's birthday. The good news is there are steps you can take to get a better handle on what you should — and shouldn't — eat when you're away from home.

BEFORE YOU EAT

We're all tempted by sugary or fatty foods with little nutritional value, but it's far worse if you arrive with an empty stomach. Drink a cup of water or eat something healthy like a small apple before dining out. Portion control is easier when you're not starving. Stick to the first part of any restaurant menu — the appetizers, small plates and salads. The deeper you go, the larger the portions. (Worse: You'll eventually land on the desserts!) Pay attention to the calorie counts included on most menus nowadays. Consider making a pact with someone else to split a meal at the restaurant, or to order some-



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thing smaller and more nutritional. It's always easier when you have someone on your team.

WHILE YOU'RE EATING

Make conversation. You can't eat when you're talking. Take smaller bites while you are eating, and thoroughly

chew your food. It takes time for a message of fullness to travel from your stomach to your brain, and this gives the body a chance to catch up. If the portions are unavoidably large, offer to share your order with a nearby colleague. If no one will take you up on the offer, commit to taking some

of it home to eat another time.

AFTER YOU EAT

If it's possible, tell everyone that you are walking back to the office, rather than riding. Post-meal exercise helps work off some of your just-ingested lunch, while also increasing general wellness. When you

get back, skip the elevator for the stairs. This kind of cardio can help burn even more calories, instead of converting them to fat. Avoid desserts or snacking, two every-day hazards in any workplace. Revert to drinking water. It helps with food digestion and can suppress your appetite.



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The Benefits of Giving Blood

Superheroes walk among us, but you won't find them in capes or masks. Instead, they donate life-saving blood to help others.

According to the American Red Cross, a single blood contribution can save as many as three lives. Donations are allowed five times a year, meaning you could potentially end up impacting hundreds and hundreds of people over the course of your lifetime. Here's more information on how to become a superhero, too.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS

You might not know, but blood donations are seasonal. The numbers plum-

met during the busy travel season each summer; inclement weather plays a role, too. But even on sunny spring days, fewer than 10 percent of those who are eligible actually donate blood, according to the American Red Cross. The non-profit conducts more than 200,000 annual blood drives in an effort to combat this critical shortfall. Some 80 percent of their donations come from mobile sites set up in local communities. The Red Cross provides blood to some 2,700 hospitals across America.

WHY YOU SHOULD

Depending on your blood type, you might be providing a critical resource for patients who don't have ready access to a badly needed transfusion. (For instance, only seven percent of Americans are O-negative, the so-called universal blood type that can be used by anyone.) In times of crisis, these donations are particularly important.

Medical institutions can be overwhelmed by patient emergencies or surgery-related infusions, requiring a large amount of donor blood. But blood is actually always needed. If you don't know your type, helpful technicians at your hometown blood bank can provide a test.

BUILDING TRUST

Hospitals, blood banks and organizations like the Red Cross take precautions when collecting, processing, testing and distributing blood. This ensures your good health through the procedure, but also the safety and effectiveness of the donation once it arrives. Blood is comprehensively analyzed in labs to establish a definitive type, since they can't be mixed, but also to check for infectious diseases. Provided information is kept strictly confidential; none of it can be released without your permission, unless directed by a judge. So whether you're giving blood at in the offices of an area health-care provider or at a Red Cross mobile drive, you can be confident in the process.

Avoid Common Injuries at Home

A uncomfortably large range of injuries can happen outside of our direct control, including car accidents and medical malpractice.

At the same time, however, we all are subject to entirely avoidable, much smaller accidents at home. Who hasn't carelessly stumbled over something in their own living room? That's why slips and falls consistently rank among the most common injuries. Here are some ideas on how stay safer while staying home.

WHAT HAPPENS THE MOST

According to experts, the most common injuries include dog bites, car crashes, health-care mistakes, slips and falls, and assaults and batteries. Negligent doctors, petty criminals and bad drivers are held accountable in a court of law. In some cases, landlords or property owners may be responsible for a loose board on an exterior stairway, or an unleashed dog. But we're typically to blame for the rest of these common injuries, as we're so often injured while thoughtlessly going about our everyday lives. The average tumbles tend to be more embarrassing than necessarily hurtful, but they can also be quite serious.

SAFETY AT HOME

Your home is your castle; it's also ground zero for slips and falls. Because most of them occur there, try to remove as many tripping hazards as possible. Most houses are designed to fit the needs of a young, healthy adult. So, this is especially critical if you are older, prone to mishaps, or

part of a larger family — and, in particular, if there are small children. Kids can be an X factor, leaving behind toys, shoes or other things that can trip a passerby. Those items are particularly hazardous if you, your friends or your family members are seniors, or suffer from a disability or chronic illness.

TOP TIPS

The average home can be made safer at a very reasonable price. Place non-slip rugs in areas where falls may happen near doorways or halls. ("Non-slip" is the key word: Area and throw rugs can buckle, catching your feet.) Pay attention to increasing balance issues relating to aging, medi-

cal conditions or an emerging illness. Almost all hip fractures are caused by a fall; they're also the most common cause of a traumatic brain injury. Consider storage options for children's things. Install rubber mats and handrails in the bathtub or shower. Add more lighting, since we rely so much on our vision for balance.



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