

Your guide to Health & Wellness

Taking an active role in your medications

The American Academy of Family Physicians says that, each week, four out of five adults in the United States uses prescription medications, over-the-counter drugs and/or various supplements. Approximately one-third of adults take five or more medications at the same time.

The potential for adverse drug events is elevated when people are taking multiple medications at one time. For example, mixing

pills has the potential to cause serious injury or even death.

One of the best ways to prevent errors with medications is for patients to take an active role in their health care management.

Know your dose. Children are at an especially high risk for medication errors because they require different doses than adults, offers the Mayo Clinic. Adults of different weights who share medications can run

into trouble as well. It is key to follow the dosing instructions, as even a minor error in regard to dosage can potentially cause a big problem.

Follow up with your doctor. Certain medications can cause side effects that only can be noticed by lab testing, such as an impact to the liver. Doctors also may be under an obligation to follow up with patients taking psychological drugs to ensure

the efficacy of treatment. Make sure you keep all follow-up appointments.

Maintain a current list of meds. It is up to patients to share information with prescribing doctors regarding any and all products being taken to avoid harmful interactions. Using the same pharmacy for all prescriptions also is helpful.

Be honest about height and weight. Medication labeling and package inserts typically use metric units to correlate dose to a person's physical

attributes. Individuals should know their information in metric measurements and be honest with themselves about what they weigh.

Use medications correctly. It is important not to chew nonchewable pills or cut pills unless the pharmacist or doctor has said it is safe to do so. Accurate dosing also requires using the right spoon or syringe, not silverware. Store certain types of medications, such as eye drops and ear drops, separately so they're not mistaken for one another.



Why immunizations are important

Measles is not something that garnered much attention outside the medical community in recent decades. However, in 2019 a series of measles outbreaks put the spotlight back on this highly contagious infectious disease.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, between January 1, 2019, and May 31, 2019, 981 individual cases of measles had been confirmed in 26 states in the United States. That marked the greatest numbers of measles

cases reported in the U.S. since 1992. And the U.S. is not the only country in North America facing a measles problem, as the Public Health Agency of Canada reported that, as of mid-May, 54 cases of measles had been reported in the country in 2019. Perhaps most surprising, measles was declared eliminated in 2001, leading many to wonder what's behind the sudden outbreaks so long after the disease had seemingly vanished.

The CDC reports that the majority of

people who got measles in 2019 were unvaccinated. While measles was declared eliminated nearly 20 years ago in the United States, the CDC notes it's still common in many parts of the world. When unvaccinated travelers visit countries where measles is still common, they can bring the disease with them, ultimately allowing it to spread in communities where large groups of people are unvaccinated.

Regardless of why people choose to avoid vaccinations, it's important to note some of the reasons why health organizations like the CDC and the World Health Organization urge all children and adults to be immunized.

Immunizations save lives. The CDC notes that advancements in medical science have made it possible for humans to protect themselves against more diseases than ever before. Once-fatal diseases have now been eliminated thanks to safe and effective vaccines.

Immunizations protect loved ones.

Some people cannot receive certain immunizations due to allergies, illness, weakened immune systems, or other factors. Such individuals are vulnerable to disease, and especially vulnerable if their loved ones who can be vaccinated do not receive their recommended immunizations.

Immunizations save money. The human toll of failing to be immunized can be fatal, and the financial toll can be heavy, too. Children with vaccine-preventable diseases may not be allowed to enroll in certain schools or daycare facilities, forcing parents to make decisions that can affect their ability to earn a living. In addition, medical bills that result from long-term illnesses can be substantial. The majority of health insurance plans cover vaccines for adults and children at little or no cost, and even uninsured families can receive free or inexpensive vaccines through certain government programs.

Mammogram discomfort tips

The organization Mammography Saves Lives says that, since 1990, mammography has helped reduce breast cancer mortality in the United States by 40 percent. Mammograms usually take around 20 minutes. During a traditional mammogram, a woman's breast is placed between two plates. One plate holds the breast in place, while the other takes images, and the breasts must be compressed to get clear pictures of breast tissue. Many women find the process to be uncomfortable.

Even though mammograms can be essential parts of preventive healthcare, many women avoid them because of pain and other discomfort. However, women should not put off mammograms because they are

worried about discomfort.

- Schedule the mammogram for a week after a menstrual period when hormonal swings are less likely to increase breast sensitivity.
- Caffeine can make the breasts more tender. Reducing caffeine consumption for two weeks before the mammogram can help.
- Keep your feet and trunk facing forward and simply turn your head at the mammogram machine.
- Reduce tension by breathing deeply a few times before the procedure.
- Try a pain reliever before the mammogram.
- Ask the mammography center if it has padding, as cushioning between the breasts and the plates of the mammogram machine can reduce pain.

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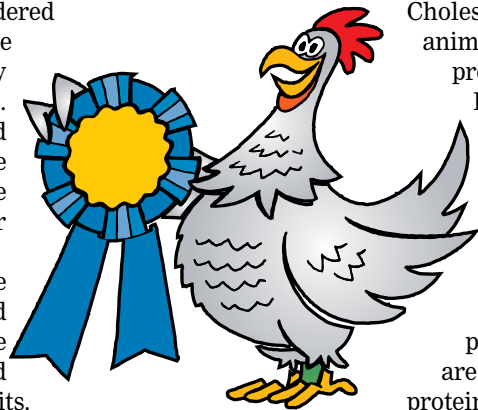
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What the right proteins can do for your body

Mapping out a healthy diet can be tricky. While everyone needs certain vitamins and minerals, no two people are the same, and a diet that's right for one person might not be suitable or palatable for another.

Personal preference must be considered when planning a diet, as people are more likely to stick with a healthy diet if they enjoy the foods they eat. While fruits and vegetables should be a part of everyone's diet, people should not overlook the importance of including lean protein in their diets as well.

Choosing which proteins to include in a diet can be tricky. The United States Department of Agriculture notes that not all proteins are created equal in terms of their health benefits. Proteins include foods such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and nuts, but some can actually lead to negative side effects, including an increased risk for overweight or obesity and heart disease.



beef that is between 75 and 85 percent lean; regular sausages, hot dogs and bacon; lunch meats like bologna and salami; and duck. Limiting, if not avoiding, such foods can help maintain healthy cholesterol levels.

Cholesterol is only found in foods from animal sources, but not all animal-based proteins contribute to high cholesterol.

Lean proteins can be great ways to reap the benefits of protein without suffering the negative side effects of proteins that are high in fat and calories. The online medical resource Healthline® notes that white-fleshed fish, such cod and flounder; skinless, white-meat poultry; and pork loin or pork chops are some examples of lean, animal-based proteins.

help the body release energy and promote nervous system function. In addition, B vitamins found in protein aid in the formation of red blood cells and help build tissues. Iron carries oxygen to the blood, so the iron found in lean protein can help the body perform a vital function that can prevent fatigue and promote a strong immune system. The zinc in lean protein also helps ensure a properly functioning immune system.

· **Healthy bones and muscles:** Proteins are building blocks for bones, muscles, cartilage, skin, and blood. Proteins can help muscles recover after a workout, and low protein intake can make it harder for the body to absorb calcium, which is vital for bone strength. The body uses the magnesium in lean protein sources to build strong bones and release energy from muscles.

What do the right proteins do for the body?

The right proteins are vital to a healthy lifestyle. The USDA notes that the following are some of the many characteristics of lean proteins that make them healthy additions to anyone's diet.

· **Nutrient-rich:** Lean proteins supply the body with various nutrients, including B vitamins, vitamin E, iron, zinc, and magnesium. The B vitamins found in proteins

Why some proteins are troublesome

The USDA notes that some foods from the protein group are high in saturated fat and cholesterol. Such foods include fatty cuts of beef, pork and lamb; ground

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5 ways to protect against hearing loss

A certain degree of hearing loss can be a normal part of the aging process. However, people who take steps to protect their hearing long before Father Time takes his toll can prevent the extreme hearing loss suffered by millions of seniors across the globe.

A certain degree of hearing loss can be a normal part of aging. However, taking steps to protect your hearing long before Father Time takes his toll can prevent the extreme hearing loss suffered by millions of seniors across the globe.

John's Hopkins Medicine states that approximately 15 percent of adults aged 18 years and older report some difficulty hearing and up to 39 percent of adults in their sixties have hearing problems. Lost hearing cannot be restored, though hearing aids and other devices can help people with hearing loss hear better. Hearing aids are not always an accessory people look forward to needing, so it's good to know that a few simple strategies can protect people's hearing over the long haul.

1. **Get a baseline hearing exam.** Speak with an

audiologist, who can test your hearing and establish a baseline level against which future tests will be measured. This way it is easier to see if hearing loss is increasing over time.

2. **Turn down the volume.** Audio devices can contribute to hearing loss. Earbuds are particularly dangerous because they fit directly next to the eardrum. The World Health Organization says that 1.1 billion teens and young adults worldwide are at risk for noise-induced hearing loss from unsafe use of audio devices. Set the maximum volume on audio devices below 60 percent and wear headphones for no more than an hour a day. Keeping music low on other devices is also advisable.

3. **Wear protective gear.** Protective gear includes ear plugs and protective earphones. This gear should be worn whenever you expect to encounter loud noises, such as when you mow the lawn, go hunting or shooting, attend rock concerts, or visit construction sites.

4. **Limit use of cotton swabs.** Ear wax is beneficial to the ears and can stop dust and other particles from entering the ear. Furthermore, using a cotton swab can potentially cause damage to sensitive organs in the ear if they are inserted too far or too roughly, advises the



hearing testing service Ear-Q.

5. **Avoid loud noises.** Steer clear of fireworks, noisy city centers, loud performances, and other situations if you do not have hearing protection.

Remember, hearing loss often doesn't produce immediate symptoms or pain. However, over time, hearing loss can become noticeable. A proactive approach can help people avoid significant hearing loss as they age.



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