

HEALTHY *You!*

Your Source for a Happy and Healthy Lifestyle

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THIS EDITION FEATURES:

Stride to Better Health

Fueling for Fitness

Portion Control

Healthy Surroundings

Mindful Drinking

Reap the Rewards
of Healthy Behaviors

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AmeriHealth
Administrators





STRIDE TO BETTER HEALTH

April 3rd is National Walking Day. Spring is a beautiful time to get outside to move more, sit less, and soak in the season of change. Physical activity is a powerful tool to boost mood, reduce stress, and lower your risk of heart disease and stroke. Walking is an important first step in improving heart health and mental well-being. Staying active through daily walks can help you feel, think, sleep, and live better.

Start slowly with 5 to 10 minutes a day. Build up to walking at a brisk pace for 30 minutes or more on most days. Here are some ideas to help you commit to daily walking:

- **Consider it self-care.** Think of walking as more than exercise; use it as an opportunity to clear your head, practice gratitude, or increase mindfulness.
- **Walk with someone.** Exercise and socialize by joining a walking club or meeting up with friends.
- **Match your pace to your fitness level.** For a more intense workout, walk faster, longer, or uphill.
- **Change up the scenery.** Most people walk around their neighborhood, but walking on school tracks or nature trails can be energizing and motivational.
- **Have a backup plan.** During inclement weather, walk indoors at a shopping center or on a treadmill or walking pad.

Whether you like to walk alone, in groups, or with a pet, you can build a walking program you're sure to enjoy.

A group of runners are participating in a trail race through a forest. In the foreground, a man with a beard and a white t-shirt is running towards the camera, smiling and holding a white cup of water. He has a race bib with the number 212. Behind him, other runners are visible, including a woman in an orange tank top with bib number 851 and a man in a grey shirt with bib number 253. The path is dirt and covered with fallen leaves. The text "FUELING FOR FITNESS" is overlaid in large white letters on the left side of the image.

FUELING FOR FITNESS

Your body is your vehicle, and you need to fill it with the right foods and fluids to replace what's lost during exercise. Here are some tips to keep your engine running before, during, and after your workout:

- **Energize, then exercise.** An hour before your workout, eat some quick-digesting carbohydrates such as graham crackers, pretzels, dry cereal, applesauce, or a fruit cup.
- **Maximize your recovery.** After your workout, eat a meal or snack containing protein and carbohydrates to repair and rebuild muscle and replenish your energy.
- **Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate.** The amount of water your body needs can vary based on many factors, including the intensity and duration of your workout. To prevent dehydration, drink water regularly with meals, and before, during, and after exercise.

Remember that what you put into your body is as important as what you do with your body.

Sources:

sportsrd.org/

heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/food-as-fuel-before-during-and-after-workouts



RECIPE

Watermelon Lemonade

Ingredients

1 (6 pound) seedless watermelon
¼ cup lime juice
½ cup fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons honey
2 cups cold water
Lemon wedges and mint sprigs for garnish

Directions

Cut the watermelon in half. Scoop out and reserve the pink flesh. Process the watermelon and lime juice in a blender until smooth and frothy, about 30 seconds. Pour the mixture through a fine mesh strainer and into a pitcher, pressing with a spoon to release the juices. Discard solids. Add water, lemon juice, and honey. Stir to mix. To serve, pour in a glass over ice and add garnish.

PORTION CONTROL

To reach or stay at a healthy weight, how much you eat is just as important as what you eat. The key to portion control lies in understanding the difference between a portion and a serving, knowing how much food is enough for you, and having tools and tips to help you make healthier food choices.

Servings vs. portions. A serving is the amount of food or drink identified by the manufacturer on a product's label. Most products have multiple servings in a package. A portion is how much food or drink you choose to eat at one time.

How much is enough for you? The serving size on a label may be more than the amount you should eat. The amount of calories you need every day to maintain or lose weight depends on many factors such as age, current weight and height, metabolism, biological sex, and your physical activity level.

Serving sizes by food group. To ensure you're eating a balanced diet from a variety of food groups, use MyPlate guidelines. Fill half the plate with fruits and vegetables, followed by grains and protein in the remaining two quarters. Include low-fat or fat-free dairy items such as milk, yogurt, and cheese as additions to your meals or as snacks. You can create your own MyPlate Plan at myplate.gov/myplate-plan.

Strategies for managing portions. Eat slowly and mindfully, savoring the flavors of the foods. Use smaller dishes and glasses to avoid super-sizing your portions. Try to eat at the same time every day. Also, avoid eating when you are watching TV or driving; eating when you are distracted makes it difficult to regulate portions.

Sources:
healthline.com/nutrition/portion-control
niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/just-enough-food-portions



Healthy Surroundings

What surrounds you in your home, work, or neighborhood can affect your health. You can't always choose what is in the environment where you live, work, and play, but you can take small steps to increase your safety and limit your exposure to potentially harmful substances. To help improve your environmental health at home:

- **Clean safely.** Reduce potential toxins in your home by using a wet mop to clean floors, choosing non-toxic cleaning products, and vacuuming with a HEPA filter. Open windows or use a fan to improve air circulation when cleaning.
- **Reduce allergens.** Avoid bringing pollen indoors, wash your bedding in hot water once a week, and keep pets clean.
- **Practice tidiness.** A clean home promotes calmness and a sense of control over your day-to-day life. Start small by tidying one area at a time and dedicating 15 – 20 minutes each day toward improving your space.

Sources:

[nih.gov/health-information/environmental-wellness-toolkit](https://www.nih.gov/health-information/environmental-wellness-toolkit)
[mhanational.org/surroundings/healthy-home-environment](https://www.mhanational.org/surroundings/healthy-home-environment)





Mindful Drinking

Knowing why and how much alcohol you drink can lead to a healthier relationship with alcohol. Alcohol sabotages healthy eating because it is often high in calories and has no nutritional value. It also tends to ramp up your appetite. Drinking even small amounts can change brain activity and impact memory, mood, perception, and behavior. Consuming less alcohol can have health benefits like weight loss, better sleep, a stronger immune system, improved energy levels, and clearer thinking.

To practice mindful drinking:

- **Pause.** Bring awareness to your decision before having a drink. This creates a perspective to reflect on changes in the amount, frequency, and motivation relative to drinking over time.
- **Ask.** Are you using alcohol as a coping mechanism to numb feelings or avoid situations? Will this drink improve your well-being?
- **Choose.** Act intentionally, according to your values. Limiting alcohol use empowers you by improving your well-being, increasing your energy, and boosting your self-confidence.

Instead of fighting the urge to drink alcohol, accept the feeling and choose to ride out the craving like a wave that will soon pass.



Sources:

[healthline.com/health-news/what-is-mindful-drinking](https://www.healthline.com/health-news/what-is-mindful-drinking)

[foundationhealth.org/our_community/fhp_healthbreak/mindful_drinking_navigating_alcohol_in_the_new_year](https://www.foundationhealth.org/our_community/fhp_healthbreak/mindful_drinking_navigating_alcohol_in_the_new_year)



REAP THE REWARDS *of* HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

Health and wealth are related in many ways. Changes in one area of life can have positive effects on the other. Start by identifying practices or habits that you can control. Then, calculate the potential weekly and annual financial savings associated with your improved health behaviors. It can really add up. Here are some changes that make good financial sense (and cents):

- **Unhealthy habits** such as smoking, vaping, eating junk food, or drinking alcohol have the immediate costs of purchasing the substance plus the long-term costs from the medical consequences of prolonged use.
- **Financial problems** can affect a person's health and vice versa. Overdue bills can create physical symptoms of stress such as migraines, insomnia, and anxiety. Financial distress can also create affordability barriers to recommended health services, routine check-ups, and eating the suggested 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- **Healthy lifestyle choices**, such as proper diet and exercise, increase the odds of living a long, healthy life. People who live longer have more time to grow their savings whereas poor health can reduce earning ability.
- **Higher health costs** significantly affect those with health issues, and the ongoing cost of prescription drugs, deductibles, copayments, and other medical expenses often eat into retirement savings.

MONTHLY QUIZ

1. Which of the following explains the benefits of walking?

- A. Moving more, sitting less, and soaking in your surroundings
- B. Boosting mood, reducing stress, and lowering the risk of heart disease and stroke
- C. Thinking, feeling, sleeping, and living better
- D. All of the above

2. Which of the following best describes the difference between a serving and a portion?

- A. A serving is the amount of food you choose to eat; a portion is the amount of food on your plate.
- B. A serving is the amount of food on a product's label; a portion is how much food you choose to eat at one time.
- C. A serving is the shape of the food; a portion is the recommended amount of food you should eat.

3. Which of the following are some of the immediate effects of reduced alcohol use?

- A. Weight loss, better sleep, improved energy, and clearer thinking
- B. Increased appetite, poorer sleep, and numbed feelings
- C. Lack of social life and lower self-confidence

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1. D, 2. B, 3. A

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