

# HEALTH CONNECTION

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

FINDING  
THE ENERGY  
YOU NEED

SODIUM  
OVERLOAD

BENEFITS OF  
*Mental*  
**EXERCISE**

*Want More?*

Visit [ThreeRiversMedicalCenter.com/signup](http://ThreeRiversMedicalCenter.com/signup)  
to sign up for our e-newsletter!

 **Three Rivers**  
MEDICAL CENTER

# Workouts for Your *Brain*

You've heard the many health benefits of exercise routines and sports to keep your body active, but it's also important to keep the mind active. According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, a 2011 study showed that some effects of age-related mental decline may be reversible through cognitive training programs. Try these activities to help keep your brain healthy and functioning well:

- **Learn a foreign language.** This stimulates the areas of the brain that process reading, speaking, listening and memory.
- **Socialize.** Talking with others exercises your ability to concentrate, quickly analyze what's being said and communicate well.
- **Solve puzzles.** Chess, Sudoku and crosswords improve logical reasoning and problem-solving skills.



## E-cigarettes:

### A GRAY AREA

Though e-cigarettes have been promoted as safer alternatives to tobacco cigarettes, they aren't risk-free.

Smokers sometimes use e-cigarettes to try to gradually quit smoking since they don't contain tar and other toxic chemicals found in tobacco cigarettes, but they still have nicotine. Nicotine is highly addictive and raises blood pressure and heart rate. Because e-cigarettes are relatively new, their overall side effects haven't been fully studied. In April 2014, the Food and Drug Administration announced plans to regulate e-cigarettes, ban sales to minors and require manufacturers to put health warnings on the devices, but such measures won't be implemented for several years.

Foregoing nicotine altogether is still the best way to prevent addiction and the health problems associated with the substance.

## LESS MEAT = *Lower Blood Pressure?*

Researchers in Osaka, Japan, published findings in the journal *JAMA Internal Medicine* that indicate a vegetarian diet helps lower blood pressure. The specific reasons for vegetarians' better heart health haven't been fully defined, but several observations have been made.

The vegetarians in the study had lower body mass index numbers and fewer obesity risks than people who ate meat, and both of these

factors contribute to lower blood pressure. Interestingly, vegetarians with higher body weight still had low blood pressure.

Even going vegetarian part time has multiple benefits, including:

- fewer bad fats
- higher daily fiber intake
- more good fats



# YOUR GUIDE TO HEART HEALTH

ACHIEVING HEART-HEALTHY MILESTONES AT EACH STAGE OF LIFE WILL HELP KEEP YOUR HEART FIT.

## at Every Age

### IN YOUR 30s

Develop heart-healthy habits, such as eating a nutritious diet and performing daily physical activity. At this age, most healthy adults need a blood pressure screening at least every two years. Men age 34 and older should also receive a cholesterol screening at least every five years. Investigate your family history for heart disease, and discuss your findings with your doctor to determine if more frequent screenings are appropriate.



### DURING YOUR 40 AND 50s

Healthful lifestyle choices should remain a top priority, and you also need to understand heart attack and stroke warning signs. Biannual blood pressure screenings are often sufficient if you do not have high blood pressure, and your cholesterol levels should be checked at least every five years. Your doctor may advise more frequent blood pressure and cholesterol screenings if you have heart disease, high blood pressure or diabetes. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), you should also have a fasting blood glucose screening by your 45th birthday.



### AGE 65 AND BEYOND

Continue to monitor risk factors you can control, including weight, diet and exercise, and follow your doctor's recommendations for wellness screenings. Generally, healthy adults in this age range need a yearly physical and blood pressure screening, as well as at least one cholesterol screening every three to five years.

Adults older than age 60 also need an ankle-brachial index test every one to two years to check for peripheral artery disease, according to the AHA.



Age-appropriate health screenings and an annual well visit may now be covered free of cost by many insurance plans. Check with your insurer. Need a doctor? Find one at [ThreeRiversMedicalCenter.com](http://ThreeRiversMedicalCenter.com).

### THREE TIPS FOR A STRONGER HEART

The following steps help minimize the effects of several lesser-known heart disease risk factors.

- 1. Cut back at cocktail hour.** According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, consuming more than three alcoholic drinks each day can increase blood pressure and triglyceride levels. For heart health, moderate drinking — defined as two drinks per day for men and one drink for women — is key.
- 2. Spend time with friends.** According to a Cornell University study, loneliness can accelerate cardiovascular aging and increase heart disease risk. Take time to build and maintain friendships.
- 3. Sit less.** A 2012 study published in the *European Heart Journal* found that those who own both a car and television have a 27 percent higher risk for heart disease, presumably because they sit for longer periods of time. Commute short distances on foot and exercise while watching TV.





# Finding ENERGY *Throughout Your Day*

TRY THESE TRICKS TO MAINTAIN ENERGY LEVELS THROUGHOUT THE DAY, AND **GIVE YOURSELF A BOOST** WHEN YOUR GET-UP-AND-GO HAS GONE.

### RISE AND SHINE



Not getting enough quality sleep can start your day off on the wrong foot. One way to ensure you get sufficient shut-eye is to go to bed and wake up at around the same time every day, even on weekends. Establishing a regular sleep cycle helps you fall asleep faster and wake refreshed and ready to face the day.

When the alarm goes off, resist the urge to hit the snooze button. Though you may crave a few more winks, briefly falling back asleep can leave you feeling groggy for hours. Once your feet hit the floor, let plenty of light into the room, which signals your body that it is time to wake up.

### EARLY MORNING EYE-OPENER

Even if you are not particularly hungry, eat a little something to get your metabolism going. Lean protein from foods such as yogurt, veggie or turkey sausage, eggs, or peanut butter provides more long-lasting energy than a carbohydrate-packed pastry. If you drink coffee, pace yourself. Drink a few small cups throughout the morning instead of one large cup all at once. As you head out for your daily activities, listen to some upbeat music to get in a high-energy mindset.

### MIDMORNING PICK-ME-UP

Eating many small meals throughout the day helps keep energy levels steady, so snack away! Instead of foods filled with processed or hidden sugar, choose energy-enhancing goodies, such as almonds or walnuts, low-fat microwave popcorn, whole-grain crackers, yogurt with a sprinkle of granola on top, or fresh fruit.

If you have a desk job, you may already know that sitting for long periods of time can sap your vitality.

When your eyes start to glaze over, perk up with a few simple stretches — extend your legs and then lift and lower them while flexing your toes, or raise your arms over your head and gently lean back. If you are on your feet all day instead of sitting at a desk, try exercises that build abdominal strength to make standing less fatiguing.

Whether standing or sitting, watch your posture. Hunching your back, slouching your shoulders or leaning can make you tense, achy and tired all day long.



### MID-AFTERNOON RECHARGE

Even if you ate a light lunch, you may feel your energy begin to ebb a few hours later. If this happens to you, try closing your eyes for a minute to take a mental mini-vacation. Imagine yourself in a restful scene, envisioning as many details as you can — the sights, scents, sounds and sensations. A break of even five minutes can help you feel refreshed and ready to focus.

**Another tip?** Try breathing deeply. It relieves tension and provides more energizing oxygen to your body's tissues. Count to four as you inhale through your nose, hold your breath and count to seven, then count to eight as you exhale through your mouth.

Avoid coffee or other caffeinated beverages after lunch — you may regret it later when you are still wide-awake in the wee hours. Instead, drink ice-cold water to give your spirits a lift.

### FIVE O'CLOCK REFRESHER

After an exhausting day, you may feel too tired to work out. But rather than making you more tired, moderate aerobic exercise actually helps your body create more energy. To increase your motivation, schedule workouts with a buddy at least three times a week or take your exercise clothes with you to the office and walk, run or hit the gym before heading home.

### PRIME TIME POWER-UP

You've exercised and enjoyed a healthy dinner, so now it's time to kick off your shoes and stretch out on the couch, right? Not so fast! Lying down after dinner tends to make you sleepy, and napping in the early evening could disrupt your normal sleep cycle. Instead, take a short, relaxing stroll. Research shows that walking right after dinner aids digestion and stabilizes blood sugar levels, which keeps energy levels consistent.

### SWEET DREAMS

In the hour or two before bedtime, limit your use of electronic devices. Remember how light wakes you up in the morning? The bluish glow of your computer, tablet or phone screen has the same effect in the evening.

When it's bedtime, skip the nightcap. Alcohol may help you drop off and sleep soundly for a while, but the effect wears off after a few hours, making you more likely to spend the second half of the night tossing and turning. Even if you do not wake before morning, alcohol has been shown to reduce rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, the deepest and most refreshing sleep phase. Instead, unwind with a warm drink, such as milk, cocoa or herbal tea.

Tried these strategies and still dragging? Persistent fatigue may be a sign of a health condition such as a sleep disorder, a heart condition, anemia or depression — see your doctor.



# Be Proactive WITH YOUR HEALTH

EMPOWERED PATIENTS GET MORE OUT OF THEIR MEDICAL CARE AND TEND TO STAY HEALTHIER. HERE'S HOW YOU CAN, TOO.

Whether you have chronic health conditions or rarely get the sniffles, it makes good sense to be an active participant in your healthcare. Experts with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommend a few basic steps for taking charge.

- Learn your family's medical history.
- Make getting an annual physical a priority. Many insurance plans now cover an annual checkup — and regular, age-appropriate preventive screenings — at no additional out-of-pocket charge, so check with your insurer.
- Follow your doctor's instructions carefully.
- Organize your health information, including lab reports, vaccine records and medication lists.

## INTERACT AND RESEARCH

Now that you have the basics down, take your healthcare savvy to the next level.

### 1. Research.

Your annual physical is a great place to start. Ask questions and take notes. If you don't think you'll remember all the topics you want to discuss, bring a short list with you.

Beyond the doctor's office, there's a wealth of health information on the Internet. Check out our hospital website and other reputable sites, including those of government health agencies. Be sure to discuss your questions and the information with your doctors. Even respected sources can offer differing information, and your doctors can help you decide which advice is best for you.

### 2. Be proactive.

Engaged patients practice prevention. They eat well, exercise, get recommended immunizations and are healthier overall.

### 3. Get connected online.

If you spend time in the hospital, register for and use our free, easy-to-use patient portal to review information about your hospital stay and treatment plan. **My Health Home Patient Portal** is designed to help you become a more informed, engaged patient by allowing you to easily access your health information.

Many outpatient healthcare providers also offer patient portals to help you stay informed about your healthcare, medications and treatment plans. Speak with your provider about whether a portal is available and how to sign up.

---

**To get started with the My Health Home Patient Portal, visit [ThreeRiversMedicalCenter.MyHealthHome.com](http://ThreeRiversMedicalCenter.MyHealthHome.com).**



## WHAT IS MY HEALTH HOME?

My Health Home is a secure online patient portal offered by Three Rivers Medical Center to help patients become more informed and engaged in their healthcare. Once you set up a personal account in the portal, you can:

- access information related to your overnight stays at the hospital. Records are typically available in your portal account within one to three days after you are discharged.
- download information for your own reference and choose reports to share with your medical providers
- view lab results, imaging study results, medication lists and other reports from your hospital stay

Setting up an account is easy, and begins with sharing your photo ID and email address at the hospital. The hospital will send you an email to complete the account setup.

The information in your personal My Health Home Patient Portal account will only be accessible to you and those you authorize. My Health Home is convenient and easy to use. You will want to check in regularly, as new features will be added to the portal frequently.

**Learn more about the advantages of setting up a portal account at [ThreeRiversMedicalCenter.com](http://ThreeRiversMedicalCenter.com).**


# Sodium OVERLOAD


DITCHING THE SALTSHAKER IS JUST THE FIRST STEP TOWARD A LOW-SODIUM DIET.

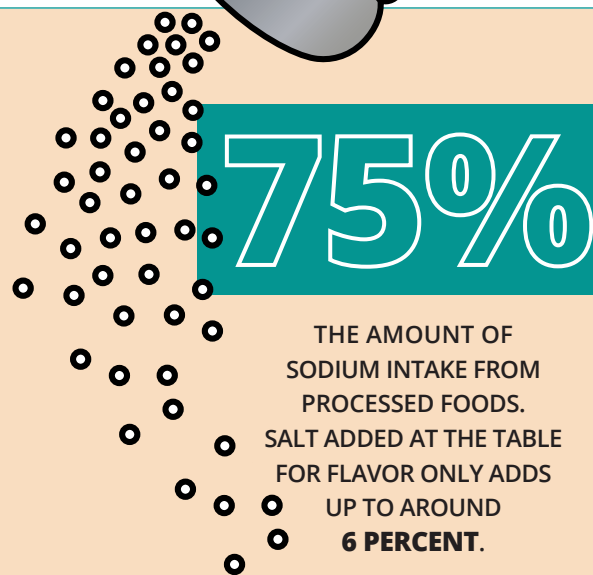
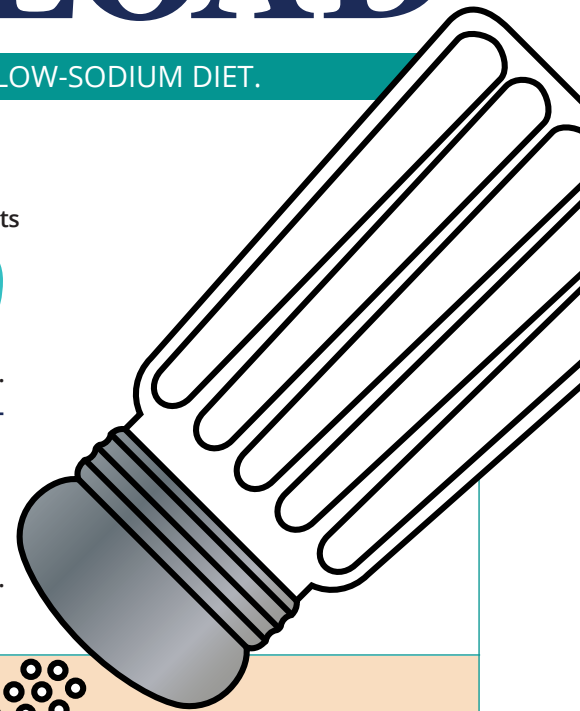
The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends only 1,500 milligrams — slightly more than one-half a teaspoon — of sodium per day. Most Americans consume more than double that amount. Keep an eye on the six most common sources of sneaky sodium identified by the AHA.

- **Bread.** Bread is the top source of sodium for Americans. Look for breads labeled “low-sodium” or “reduced-sodium” for healthier options.
- **Cold cuts.** One serving of deli meat can have up to half of your recommended daily amount of sodium. Try a lower-sodium variety of your favorite lunch meat, or switch to homemade chicken or tuna salad.
- **Pizza.** Stay away from pepperoni and sausage and add a few more veggies. Eliminating pizza altogether cuts out more than 700 milligrams of sodium per slice.
- **Poultry.** Naturally sodium-free, poultry can be loaded with preservatives that add sodium. Stick to healthy ways of cooking your bird while avoiding processed or fried chicken.
- **Soup.** One cup of canned soup packs as much as 940 milligrams of sodium. Look for low-sodium alternatives — or make your own soup!
- **Sandwiches.** A sandwich from your favorite fast-food place can have more than 100 percent of your recommended daily amount of sodium. Try bringing a sandwich from home or ordering a lighter choice from the menu.

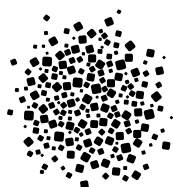
## HOW MUCH EACH DAY?

The body needs **200** milligrams of sodium.  The average person gets **3,400** milligrams of sodium.

The AHA recommends **1,500** milligrams of sodium.  ¾ teaspoon of salt = **1,500** milligrams of sodium.



## Did You Know?



**Kosher salt** and **sea salt** CONTAIN THE SAME AMOUNT of sodium as table salt.



Most foods, including **milk** and **celery**, contain sodium.



Too much sodium intake is one risk factor of **high blood pressure.**





VOLUME 6 · ISSUE 2 | *Want More?* Visit [ThreeRiversMedicalCenter.com/signup](http://ThreeRiversMedicalCenter.com/signup) to sign up for our e-newsletter! | [ThreeRiversMedicalCenter.com](http://ThreeRiversMedicalCenter.com)

This publication in no way seeks to serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Consult your doctor before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.

# Simple Swaps for Healthier Summer Meals

WITH A FEW HEART-SMART INGREDIENT  
SUBSTITUTIONS, YOU CAN KEEP SUMMER COOKOUTS  
AND VACATIONS FROM WREAKING HAVOC ON YOUR DIET.

To cut back on fat in hamburgers, the American Heart Association recommends selecting extra lean beef and draining excess fat after grilling. Instead of cheese and condiments, dress your burger with fresh veggies, and use a whole-wheat hamburger bun. For a healthier alternative to hamburgers, grill chicken or salmon, and swap regular hot dogs for turkey dogs.

For summer salads and sandwiches, consider using a condiment other than mayonnaise. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, one tablespoon of mayonnaise contains 10 grams of fat and 94 calories. When you toss pasta or potato salad with olive oil and herbs, use vinaigrette dressing or substitute reduced-fat mayonnaise made with olive oil, you can save about 40 calories and 4 grams of fat per tablespoon.

## ON-THE-ROAD DINING

Days of “free time” and a wider variety of unhealthy options make vacation the perfect season for overindulgence. Keep from going overboard by packing fruit or trail mix for the plane or car ride. Incorporate exercise into your vacation schedule to burn off extra calories.

Farmers markets offer a variety of in-season fruits and vegetables. Visit [LocalHarvest.org](http://LocalHarvest.org) to find a market near you!

## SUMMER SUPER FOODS

The warm months of summer bring an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables. Take a look at some of summer's most nutritious choices.

**1. Watermelon** — According to the American Council on Exercise, watermelon contains skin-protecting lycopene and vitamin C and is rich in potassium and water, which can help prevent dehydration.

**2. Strawberries** — One of summer's favorite berries, strawberries contain high amounts of vitamin C, which helps repair tissues and aids in collagen production.

**3. Tomatoes** — According to a 2011 study published in the *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*, tomatoes contain more lycopene than any other fruit or vegetable, and eating tomatoes may reduce the likelihood of several chronic conditions, including heart disease, osteoporosis and certain types of cancers.

**4. Blueberries** — A long-haired super food, blueberries are rich in antioxidants. According to [GoRedforWomen.org](http://GoRedforWomen.org), snacking on blueberries can boost cardiovascular and brain health.

