



BENEFITS INSIDER

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Move Your Way to a Healthier You

Summer and fall are the perfect seasons for you and your family to get outside for some exercise. Studies show that physical activity has an array of great benefits. It can boost your mood, sharpen your focus, reduce stress and improve your sleep. Plus, it can be a great way for your family to spend time together while improving your health.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services developed a fun campaign to help adults and kids get more exercise. "Move Your Way" helps promote recommendations from the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. The campaign offers tools, videos, fact sheets and tips that make it easier to get more active. Small changes can add up to big health benefits!

So, no matter who you are, you can find safe, fun ways to get active — to move your way.

Recommendations for Adults

The guidelines recommend that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity every week. This can be anything that gets your heart beating faster, like walking, running, riding a bike, playing basketball or swimming. You can carry on a conversation during moderate activity, however, you can only say a few words during vigorous activity. You should also aim for two days of muscle-strengthening activities, like lifting weights, doing pushups or anything that works your muscles.

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5 Ways to Socialize Without Derailing Your Weight-Loss Goals

You want to go to your neighbor’s pool party—you really, really do—but the thought of cheeseburgers, chips and cocktails has you adding imaginary calories up so quickly you can’t handle the pressure. So you cancel (again), too scared that you won’t be able to resist the temptation to derail your weight-loss goals.

If you’ve ever turned down a social invitation for fear of wrecking your efforts, rest easy knowing that you are not alone.

I have coached many individuals who confided in me that there were times they skipped a party or social event because they did not want to be tempted by the indulgent foods they knew would be available. I understand the thought process—most social gatherings include an abundance of goodies we would never bring into our own homes, especially while trying to lose weight. And if we’ve successfully taken off pounds, there is the worry that we’ll slip up and regain the weight. The challenge of resisting what we know, if not good for us, is often too great when we socialize outside of our own homes.

Understandable as it may be, the logic is flawed. Denying ourselves the enjoyable aspects of social gatherings is not a good strategy for permanent weight loss. If anything, missing out on the fun might very well make us feel resentful, sad or deprived, emotions that will eventually drive us straight to the kitchen searching for comfort foods.

Why not shift focus, change your mindset and discover ways to enjoy social occasions without excessive worry about overeating? It could be as simple as reminding yourself that the purpose of these events is to reconnect with friends and family and appreciate our relationships, rather than fixating on the food.



When faced with these social situations, it is possible to avert the potential problem of overeating. You just need to plan and become proactive, rather than reactive, when surrounded by tempting foods and drinks.

1. Don’t Show Up Hungry

First and foremost, make sure that you don’t show up to a gathering famished. Typical behavior is assuming that you will “save up” your calories for the party or event—meaning you will forego lunch or eat very light meals or snacks throughout the day—and rationalize that that behavior will “balance out” your total caloric intake. This plan backfires, though, when you walk into the get-together nearly ravenous, see all of the temptations and end up consuming far more calories than you “saved up” during the day.

Often at social events, the choices available are higher in calories, sugar and fat than the foods you usually consume. Arriving hungry leaves you in a state where it is nearly impossible to curb your appetite, no matter how many unhealthy items you consume.

Rather than let your stomach do the decision making after not eating all day, aim to consume regular meals throughout the day and have a healthy snack before leaving for the event. By doing so, you will feel much more in control and make wiser choices.

2. Focus on Socializing, Not Eating

Once you arrive at the affair, spend your time greeting other guests, getting involved in lively conversations and simply enjoying the company of your friends and family. With your focus on the people rather than the food, you may even meet someone new and exciting.

3. Be Strategic About Where You Gather

Whenever possible, avoid standing or sitting near a display of food. While it may be where the majority of guests gather, consider suggesting to whomever you are chatting with that moving to a different spot will allow you to hear one another better. If you still find yourself situated near food scattered throughout the party or event, then it is time to tap into your mindfulness skills. Tell yourself, “Just because that food is there, doesn’t mean I need to eat it.” Successful weight losers learn to eat when hungry, not just because food is available. Practice this skill at all social gatherings, and you will get better and better at managing your consumption no matter if you’re at a birthday party, happy hour or wedding.

4. When It Is Time to Eat, Choose and Act Judiciously

When it is time to eat or you are truly feeling hungry, take a quick perusal of the available fare. Choose the foods you eat based on what you love or what you know are your host’s specialties. No rule states that you must sample every single dish offered. Donna from down the street will not be offended if you skip her triple chocolate brownies, we promise. Research shows that the greater the variety of food, the greater the number of calories we consume. Employing awareness of yourself, your environment and your current circumstances will make for better self-control.

If possible, sit down to eat. Continue your practice of mindfulness by shifting your attention to the food on your plate. Taste, appreciate and savor each bite. Put your fork down in between bites. Take a short break from eating and look at your companion rather than the food, and try not to converse while you chew. By slowing down, you not only take pleasure in the socialization and the cuisine, but you will also notice when you’ve had enough.

With a buffet-style meal, excuse yourself and discard your plate and utensils after eating to signal to your brain that the meal is over. If seated at a dining table, slightly push your plate away from you and put your napkin on top of it; an indication to both yourself and your host that you are sated.

5. Decide How to Handle Drinking in Advance

I would be remiss if I didn’t mention the concern many have regarding the flow of alcohol that usually occurs at social gatherings. Worrying about the excessive calories from alcoholic drinks or the discomfort of not partaking may be enough to tempt you to forgo the event. Rather than taking that approach, strategize in advance on how you will handle drinking (or not).

There are two drawbacks to drinking alcoholic beverages when attempting weight loss. For starters, many mixed drinks include high-sugar, calorie-laden juices or syrups. Even if you choose wine, beer or a shot worth of liquor with club soda, you very well may end up drinking excessive calories above your food calories. Also, alcohol tends to lower our inhibitions, which could lead to a slip in motivation and your focus on weight loss.

Thus, planning how you manage this dilemma is important. If you opt not to drink at all, then stick to your guns and don’t apologize if asked why you are not imbibing. Just state you prefer not to drink alcohol at this time. Or, if that is too uncomfortable for you, carry a glass of club soda with a lime or lemon. No one will know the difference.

If you do decide you would like to partake in a few drinks, stick to lower-calorie fare, as mentioned above, and balance those extra calories with your food intake. For example, if you want a few drinks, decide you will skip dessert. Try a full glass of water or seltzer in between each alcoholic drink to stay hydrated, keep feeling satiated and slow down the number of drinks you have over the course of the event.

The process of losing weight does not have to bring about feelings of deprivation. You’re not “on a diet”—you are just changing your habits, and the more you practice, the easier it gets. So, the next time you are invited to a social event you would like to attend, say yes! Show up with confidence knowing you have the tools and mindfulness needed to enjoy everything about the event, including the food. Return home knowing that you can have fun socializing without sabotaging your weight-loss efforts along the way.



The link between oral and overall health

Regular dental visits are important to keeping your smile healthy, but did you know that more than 120 signs and symptoms of nondental disease can be detected in a routine oral exam? During routine checkups, dentists not only look for cavities and gum disease, but also monitor symptoms that may point to overall health concerns. If certain signs are detected, dentists can urge patients to seek medical attention to better manage their oral and overall health.



BRAIN — People with severe gum disease have 4.3 times higher risk for cerebral ischemia stroke than those with mild or no gum disease.



MOUTH — Many everyday medications can affect your oral health. A common side effect is dry mouth, which could increase your risk for tooth decay. Those who use inhalers are also at risk for a fungal infection called oral candidiasis (thrush). This appears as white spots in your mouth and can be painful.



HEART — Gum disease and heart disease have similar underlying causes, including the buildup of dental plaque over time. When left untreated, plaque can spread below the gum line, allowing bacteria to enter the bloodstream and increase the risk for systemic diseases such as heart disease. It's important for those with high-risk medical conditions to keep bacteria in their mouths as low as possible to prevent infections in the heart.



PANCREAS — Research shows a strong connection between periodontal (gum) disease and diabetes. People with diabetes not only are more likely to have gum disease, but can have a more advanced stage of the condition compared to those without diabetes. Gum disease can also make it more difficult to control blood sugar, making the body more resistant to the insulin produced by the pancreas.



BONES — Those with osteoporosis often take drugs called bisphosphonates for treatment and reduced risk of bone fractures. However, the drug can cause a rare but serious side effect called bisphosphonate related osteonecrosis of the jaw (BONJ). Gum disease can increase the risk of BONJ, as well as certain dental procedures, like extractions.



REPRODUCTIVE TRACT — Oral health is especially important for women who are pregnant. Hormone changes during pregnancy can affect oral health, and as many as 40 percent of pregnant women experience gum disease. By delaying important dental treatment, expectant mothers may put themselves and their baby at risk. In fact, high maternal levels of the bacteria that cause cavities may contribute to low infant birth weight.

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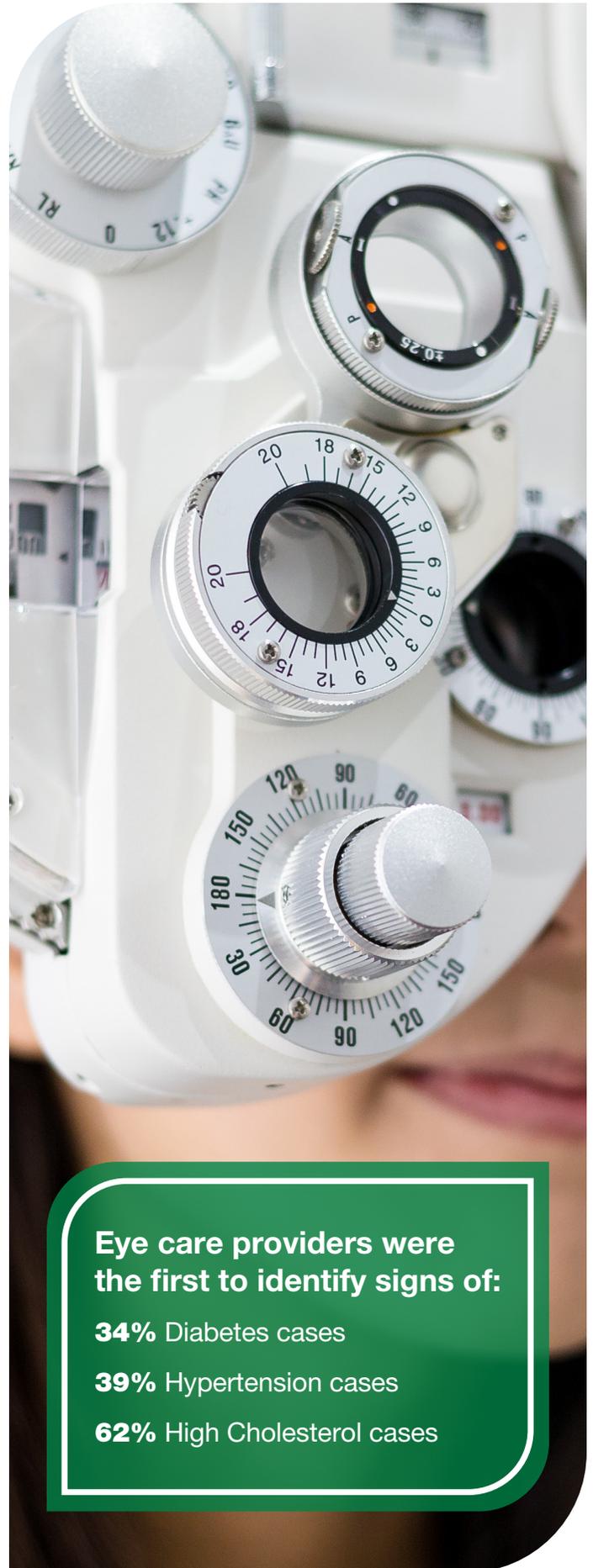
There's more value in your vision benefit than meets the eye.

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CONTINUED

Move Your Way to a Healthier You

Recommendations for Kids and Teens

Encourage your preschoolers to be physically active throughout the day. Your school-age kids should try to get at least 60 minutes of exercise per day. Riding a bike, dancing, jogging, swimming, skateboarding, jumping jacks and jump roping are all great ways to get their hearts pumping. They should also work on strengthening their muscles and bones three days per week by climbing, swinging on monkey bars, playing a sport or any activity that's at least mildly strenuous.

Note: Before you begin any fitness or nutrition program, it's important to talk to your primary care provider (PCP). If you don't have a PCP, you can use the Find a Provider tool here on My Health Plan. An annual visit with your PCP is part of your covered benefits so there's no cost to you.

Getting Active as a Family

The best part about this campaign is that there are so many ways your family can get active together. You can take many of the above-mentioned ideas and adapt them so you can all participate and make it fun. Some other great ideas include:

- Get moving by dancing together.
- Create an obstacle course inside or in the backyard.
- Do active house work like sweeping and vacuuming.
- For younger children, find active movement apps like GoNoodle.
- For older children, incorporate video games that include continuous movement.
- Make an evening walk with your family a routine.
- Explore new trails and go for a hike in your local park.
- Challenge yourself to go further and further on a weekly bicycle ride.
- Play catch or kickball in your yard.

The possibilities are endless. Find out what motivates your family to get active and then create a reward structure you can all receive when you reach certain goals. But most importantly, have fun!

HEALTHY LIVING RECIPE:

Low-Sugar Chocolate-Cheesecake Protein Pudding

INTRODUCTION

This dessert is to die for and can be made with so many different flavors. Try chocolate, vanilla, pistachio—the sky’s the limit! Plus, it has 19 grams of protein in just one serving!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup skim milk
- 1 cup cold water
- 3 scoops Pure Protein® Natural Whey Protein Powder, Rich Chocolate Flavor
- 1 package Jell-o Sugar-Free Instant Pudding, Cheesecake flavor

DIRECTIONS

Mix ingredients together in blender until well mixed, and portion out into small cups. Chill.



Nutritional Info

Servings Per Recipe: 4
Amount Per Serving
Calories: 143.3
Total Fat: 1.6 g
Cholesterol: 31.3 mg
Sodium: 367.0 mg
Total Carbs: 12.8 g
Dietary Fiber: 0.8 g
Protein: 19.3 g

Minutes to Prepare: 4
Number of Servings: 4