City of Seattle

TAKE CHARGE!







It's Playtime!

Play isn't just for kids. It's good for grown-ups, too. Sports, bike riding, hide-and-seek and a host of other games and activities in childhood were fun and let your imagination soar. You could enjoy time alone, too, with crayons, puzzles or building blocks.

But in adulthood, work and family commitments can make playtime for adults seem impossible and silly. However, research shows grown-up playtime can boost mental and physical health.



Benefits of adult play:

- Play triggers the release of endorphins. These natural, feel-good chemicals boost your mood.
- The social interaction of playing games with family and friends can relieve stress and depression.
- Play stimulates imagination and that can improve problem-solving abilities.
- Playing any type of sports as an adult can benefit physical and mental health.
- Research shows taking time for adult play can promote a sense of humor and a positive outlook on life.
- Play can boost social skills, improving relationships.

Ready to play? Stuart Brown, MD, psychiatrist, researcher and founder of the non-profit National Institute for Play, defines play as a "state of mind that one has when absorbed in an activity that provides enjoyment and a suspension of sense of time."

Be open to exploring different ways to play. Ask neighbors if they'd like to shoot some baskets at a local park, or play an impromptu ball game just for the fun of it. Enjoy painting or playing with clay as a kid? Devote time to making art just for the fun of it; join a local art group. Loved playing make-believe once upon a time? Visit local theatre productions and act out make-believe scenes with your children or grandchildren.

The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, 3 Exercise Claims You Can Ignore, is at personalbest.com/extras/24V4tools.

city events

Communication Skills for the Workplace

Thursday, April 4

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Register here

Curiosity at Work

Wednesday, April 10

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm Register here

Eating for High Energy

Friday, April 12

11:30 am - 12:30 pm Register here

Mobile Mammography Event

Tuesday, April 16 and Wednesday, April 17

7:40 am - 3:20 pm Register here

Managing the Difficult Interaction

Tuesday, April 16

11:30 am - 12:30 pm

Register here

Compassionate Leadership

Thursday, April 18

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Register here

Approaches to Decision-Making

Thursday, April 25

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Register here

Deferred Compensation Webinars

Investment Education Funds and Fees

Tuesday, April 9

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Register here

Thursday, April 11

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Register here

Introduction to Deferred Compensation

Wednesday, April 17

12:00 pm - 12:45 pm

Register here

Thursday, April 25

12:00 pm - 12:45 pm

Register here

ALCOHOL: What You Need to Know

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

From the occasional sip to binge drinking, recognizing the risks and understanding when alcohol may be interfering with your life is pivotal for maintaining optimal health.

There are no essential nutrients in drinking alcohol, meaning it's not a required component in the diet. If you don't drink alcohol, don't start. If you do drink, the CDC says that moderate drinking is defined as:

- One standard drink or less in a day for
- Two standard drinks or fewer in a day for men.
- → A standard drink is 14 grams of pure alcohol, roughly equivalent to 5 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer or 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits.

Heavy drinking means you regularly exceed moderate alcohol consumption. Heavy drinking is:

- → Consuming 8 or more drinks per week for women.
- → Consuming 15 or more drinks per week for men.

The most common form of excessive drinking is binge drinking. It involves drinking large amounts of alcohol in a short period, typically bringing blood alcohol concentration to 0.08 grams percent or higher (above the legal limit). Binge drinking is defined as:

- → For women, consuming 4 or more drinks during a single occasion.
- → For men, consuming 5 or more drinks during a single occasion.

Both short- and long-term risks can result from heavy

or binge drinking. Short-term risks include car accidents, violence, risky sexual behavior, alcohol poisoning or hangovers.

fatty buildup in the artery walls and an increased risk of a heart attack or stroke. Alcohol abuse can also contribute to high blood pressure levels.

Alcohol intake raises the risk of several types of cancer, including breast, esophageal, liver and colon cancer. The risk starts increasing with less than one drink per day, and the more you drink, the greater

Excessive alcohol consumption is a leading cause of liver diseases, including fatty liver, alcoholic

hepatitis and cirrhosis. The liver's ability to metabolize alcohol can be overwhelmed, resulting in inflammation and scarring.

Depression and anxiety can be both a reason to drink alcohol, and a symptom of overuse.

Alcohol is a natural depressant that affects the central nervous system, and it can exacerbate anxiety and depression.

Alcohol interferes with nutrient absorption and can lead to malnutrition. Chronic alcohol abuse can result in deficiencies in essential vitamins and minerals, affecting overall health.

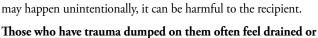
Long-term health risks:

Drinking too much alcohol can raise triglycerides (a type of fat in the blood), which is associated with

the cancer risk.

Trauma Dumping By Eric Endlich, PhD

Trauma dumping occurs when someone shares details of a distressing story with others who haven't asked about it or are not emotionally prepared for the conversation. It can also happen through sharing disturbing images or information via social media or other online means. While this



overwhelmed. Trauma dumping is a one-way street, with one person sharing and the other person listening. Listeners often feel helpless and unsure how to respond.

Here are some ways to avoid trauma dumping: about your situation?

- Onsider your audience. Is the person you are talking to ready to hear
- → Start by sharing a brief overview. If the person wants to hear more, they
- Avoid sharing graphic or disturbing details.
- → Monitor your tone and body language, especially around intense
- → If the other person seems overwhelmed or uncomfortable, change the

If someone is trauma dumping on you, there are a few things you can do to help:

- → If it is too much for you, respectfully ask them to stop.
- Listen without judgment.
- → Let them know you support them.
- → Encourage them to seek professional help if needed.

More than 14 million American adults have alcohol use disorder. Knowing whether alcohol is interfering with your life requires self-reflection and awareness. Signs of a potential problem include: An increasing tolerance to alcohol. Cravings to drink. Inability to cut down or quit. Neglecting responsibilities at home or work due to drinking. Continued alcohol use despite knowing its negative effects. Using alcohol to manage stress. Continuing to drink even though it causes depression or anxiety. Health problems caused by alcohol. Therapy, behavioral treatment, support groups and medications can help treat alcohol use disorder. Learn more at alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov.

Are You at Risk?

PB4.U® 4.2024: Live Well, Be Well

Ultra-processed foods can be as addictive as smoking.

They are manufactured with preservatives, hydrogenated fats, starches, sugars, and other additives to give them a long shelf life and extra flavor. According to research from an international team of scientists, eating these foods regularly can cause brain changes associated with addiction, which can explain why many people keep eating these foods despite health problems, including obesity. The findings are another reason to focus on diets rich in fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and minimally processed foods.



TIP of the MONTH

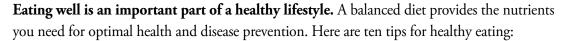
Aspartame

The International Agency for Research on Cancer found limited evidence that the artificial sweetener aspartame causes cancer.

Limited evidence means that there was not enough evidence to strongly link aspartame to cancer, and experts say it's acceptable to consume 0 milligrams to 40 milligrams per kilogram of body weight of aspartame per day. That's the equivalent of between nine and 14 cans of diet soda per day, assuming no other intake from other sources. Of course, that's not a suggestion to consume that much diet soda. It's still best to make water your beverage of choice.

TOP 10 Eating Habits

By Cara Rosenbloom, RI



- **1)** Balance your plate: Half of your meal should be vegetables and fruits, and a quarter should be whole grains. The remaining quarter should be protein-rich foods, such as fish, poultry or legumes.
- 2 Incorporate healthy fats: Choose avocados, fatty fish, nuts, seeds and olive oil. These fats support brain health and aid in nutrient absorption.
- 3 Hydration matters: Choose water most often and cut back on sugarsweetened beverages, such as soda.
- 4 Listen to your body: Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues. Eat when you're hungry and stop when you're satisfied, not stuffed.
- Ortion control: Practice mindful eating by paying attention to portion sizes. Eat snacks in a single-serve bowl rather than from a family-size box or bag.
- Oclorful choices: Opt for a vibrant array of fruits and vegetables. Different colors represent various nutrients, providing a broad spectrum of health benefits.
- 2 Limit ultra-processed foods: Minimize your intake of foods with lots of added sugars, salt, additives and preservatives, such as baked goods, candy and chips.
- 8 Add some indulgence: Completely avoiding ultra-processed food is unnecessary. Deprivation never works. Choose occasional treats and enjoy every bite.
- Onsider timing: Maintain a consistent eating schedule with regular meals and snacks. This helps stabilize blood sugar levels and prevents overindulging at mealtimes.
- Ocok at home: Homemade meals are a great option over take-out.

Adopting these eating habits contributes to overall well-being. Consistency is key, and small, sustainable changes can lead to a lifetime of healthy habits.

Turkey Tacos

- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 lb lean ground turkey
- 2 tsp cumin
- 2 tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp oregano flakes
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 4 tbsp salsa, divided
- ¼ tsp salt
- 8 small tortilla shells
- 4 cups romaine lettuce
- 1 tomato, diced
- 1 red pepper, seeded and sliced
- 2 tbsp sour cream



eatingsmar

Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. **Add** turkey and cook until browned, breaking it up with a spatula and stirring for 5-7 minutes. **Add** cumin, chili powder, oregano, garlic, 2 tbsp salsa and salt. **Stir** to combine. **Thin** with 2-3 tablespoons of water and cook 3-5 minutes. **Divide** turkey mixture onto tortillas and serve topped with lettuce, tomato, red pepper, sour cream and remaining salsa.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 519 calories | 32 protein | 20 total fat | 5g saturated fat 8g mono fat | 6g poly fat | 55g carbohydrate | 5g sugar (0g added sugar) | 4g fiber | 516mg sodium

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Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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News & Notes

- Joint, Muscle, and Pelvic Health Care: Hinge Health helps employees and their dependents with back or joint pain or pelvic health issues. Support is offered digitally and at your own pace. This coach and physical therapist-led program is free to those on a "Most" Aetna or Kaiser Permanente plan. Download the digital app or enroll here.
- Save with VSP: You and your covered dependents have access to savings through the City's vision plan. Receive up to \$1,200 off your LASIK procedure. Save up to \$300 or more on your annual supply of contacts and thousands on hearing aids and batteries. You can also save big with discounts on travel and entertainment throughout the year for you and your whole family. Create your online account at VSP.com to find additional exclusive member deals, search for an in-network doctor, or check out your coverage.

EXPERT advice

- Eric Endlich, PhD

Q: Signs of stress in children?

We all experience stress at times, but children face different challenges and usually have fewer coping strategies. Stress in children may be a result of feeling overwhelmed by school demands, bullied by peers or anxious about situations at home.

Common signs of stress in children include:

- Return of old habits (e.g., bedwetting, thumb sucking).
- ✓ Difficulty sleeping.
- ✓ Nightmares.
- ✓ Withdrawal or clinginess.
- ✓ Appetite changes.
- ✓ Head or stomach pain.
- ✓ Worsening school performance.
- ✓ Aggression or outbursts.

Here are some ways to help your children manage their stress:

- ✓ Maintain or resume routines.
- ✓ Laugh and play together.
- ✓ Give them space to talk and listen without judging.
- ✓ Remain calm, even if they're acting out.
- Give them opportunities to make their own choices.
- ✓ Check in with their teachers.
- Consult with their health care provider, who can provide referrals to mental health professionals.
- Check their online activities and for any sign of cyberbullying.

* Dog Walking Hazards

Walking your dog daily can provide health benefits for canine and human, a routine that is increasing in popularity. But take some practical safety steps on your walks. A study reported online in April 2023 by Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise ties walking to a sharp rise in injuries among people holding the leash of a frisky, fun-loving pup.

Researchers analyzed input from a national health database from 2001 to 2020 that suggests nearly 423,000 people, average age 53, who visited emergency units after being pulled or tripped by their dogs' leashes.

As dog walking for exercise has continued to grow in popularity, the annual number of injuries has increased by more than four times during the study period from about 7,200 in 2001 to about 32,000 in 2020. Common injuries included broken fingers, shoulder sprains and traumatic brain injuries.

Take Precautions:

Talk to your pet's vet. Not all dogs are up for long walks. Ask your vet when it's time to start walking your puppy; whether your senior dog can still keep up with a workout; or if there are health conditions that might make regular walking risky for your pooch or you.

Consider a dog harness. It may be a smart option for walking dogs that tend to pull as it can help reduce pressure on their throats. Find the right fit for your dog.

Consider weather. Winter safeguards can include booties for pet paws. On warm summer days dogs can overheat and feel heat exhaustion or heat stroke, so be watchful.

Be aware of nearby surroundings, especially in busy areas that might inspire your leashed pooch to take off running. Stay in control. And enjoy.

Adaptive Sports

Adaptive sports — games with special rules, equipment and assistance — make it possible for many people with disabilities to play a variety of sports. They include wheelchair basketball,

tennis, volleyball, archery, biking, golf, fly-fishing and other sports. Participating in an adaptive sport builds teamwork, confidence, boosts social contact and increases quality of life. Research shows adaptive sport participation can strengthen the body, improve endurance and flexibility, reduce body fat and increase bone density. Talk to your health care provider and your local parks and recreation department to find programs for your disability. Special equipment is often needed, such as three-wheeler bikes, which rely on upper body movement, and wheelchairs adapted for sports with larger wheels and other features, such as anti-roll wheels in the back.



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