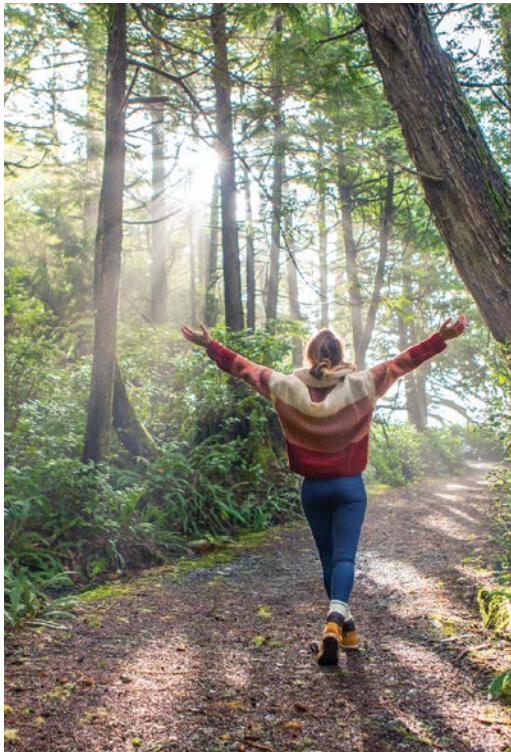




EMPOWERED WELL-BEING

Balancing Health, Happiness, and Community

November 2025



Unplug for a half hour
after work and enjoy the
outdoors.

Secrets of Daily Self-Care

The words *self-care* can seem daunting. After all, who has time to book spa treatments when you've got deadlines? However, self-care doesn't have to be intimidating. You can even incorporate it into your daily routine.

To get started, pick one or two of these health-boosting habits:

- 1 Take a walk — even ten minutes daily can make a positive difference in your physical and mental health.
- 2 Unplug for a half hour after work and enjoy the outdoors or a good book.
- 3 Start your day with meditation, yoga, stretching or walking to center yourself and boost your energy.
- 4 Get seven to nine hours of quality sleep. Begin by going to bed and getting up at relatively the same time every day (even weekends).
- 5 Take time to write down or think about what you are thankful for — it can be anything from a meaningful moment, a beautiful day, a kind gesture or a special person in your life. **Tip:** At the end of the day, write down one thing that made you happy. **Ideas:** found money in your pocket, or a phone call from a friend.
- 6 Compliment someone. Being kind to others can bring you joy, too.
- 7 Eat healthfully and stay hydrated. Bring nutritious snacks and a big water bottle with you so you're less tempted by sugary treats.
- 8 Start a new hobby and dedicate time to it daily — even if it's only 20 minutes.
- 9 Play your favorite song on the way to or from work.
- 10 Give yourself at least ten minutes of **me time** each day. It can be something as simple as sipping a cup of tea on the back porch or visiting a museum.

For days when you have more time, add a few more from this list. You don't have to do everything on this list every day. Remember: Every small step benefits you.

City Events

Accessing Mental Health Support During the Holiday Season

Tuesday, November 4
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

[Register here](#)

Let's Talk Politics: How to Have Impassioned Disagreements Without Damaging Relationships

Wednesday, November 5
11:30 am – 12:30 pm

[Register here](#)

Perimenopause & Menopause: It's More Than a Flash! (4 of 4)

Thursday, November 6
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

[Register here](#)

Quit for Life: Tobacco Cessation Webinar

Wednesday, November 12
10:00 am – 11:00 am

[Join here](#)

Mindset Matters: Fostering a Helpful Approach to Your Wellness Journey

Thursday, November 13
10:00 am – 11:00 am

[Join here](#)

Benefits 101: What is Proactive Health?

Thursday, November 13
11:00 am – 12:00 pm

[Join here](#)

Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace

Friday, November 14
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

[Join here](#)

Eat with Intention: Discovering Mindful Eating Practices

Wednesday, November 17
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

[Join here](#)

[City Events: Continued on page 4>>](#)

How to Quit Vaping

Many people use vaping as a smoking cessation tool when in fact it can be even more addictive. What makes using e-cigarettes more concerning is that people can buy extra-strength cartridges packed with a higher concentration of nicotine or even increase the e-cigarette's voltage to get a stronger hit. That means they're taking in more nicotine than they would with a traditional cigarette. And nicotine is unsafe in any form — it can raise blood pressure and adversely affect your heart rate.

In addition, many vape flavors contain potentially harmful chemicals, and scientists still don't fully know what vaping does to

our bodies in the long term. Studies link it to serious health issues, such as chronic lung disease, asthma and heart conditions — especially for those who vape and smoke.

Since both involve a nicotine addiction, quitting vaping can be just as hard as quitting smoking, but these guidelines can help:

Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for a free, confidential, trained quit coach.

Consider cognitive behavioral therapy and medication to help you with withdrawal symptoms.

Talk to your health care provider about prescribing medications or crafting a quit plan to help you manage nicotine withdrawal.



Make your quit plan:

- ✓ Pick a date to quit.
- ✓ Write down your reasons for quitting: Is it the cost? The effects of withdrawal? Your provider's recommendation? To set a good example? For your family and friends?
- ✓ Know your triggers.
- ✓ Set yourself up for success. Some ideas include finding a quit buddy or distracting yourself with something fun (a new hobby, playing a game).

For a detailed, personalized quit plan, visit smokefree.gov.

Coping with Holiday Stress

November kicks off the holiday season and, for many people, that sparks stress. In fact, the American Psychological Association reports that about nine in ten Americans feel extra stress this time of year. Worries often mount about expenses associated with holiday shopping and Thanksgiving feasts. Jam-packed schedules, family tensions and concerns about overeating and weight gain are common and can spark anxiety, too.

While there's no magic way to make all holiday stress disappear, there are strategies to help you cope and find more calm:

Be kind to yourself. Not up to hosting a big Thanksgiving dinner for your family and friends? Consider eating out or scaling down your holiday meal this year.

Enjoy holiday meals but eat consciously. You'll feel better physically and emotionally if you opt for moderation, especially when it comes to alcohol or high-calorie dishes.

Don't overschedule. Give yourself permission to say no when you need to.

Have a plan for family disagreements. It's not unusual for arguments about politics, religion and other contentious subjects to arise during the holidays, even at Thanksgiving dinner. Instead of participating in heated exchanges, excuse yourself and go for a walk. Or change the subject.

Consider meditation, yoga or other ways to relax. Watch relaxation videos or practice calming deep breathing. Walking



outdoors is a proven mood booster, too.

Plan a realistic budget for gift giving and stick to it. Don't get swept away with holiday sales which aren't always the bargains they seem.

Take ongoing stress seriously. If the holidays trigger ongoing anxiety or depression, contact your health care provider for an evaluation.

Motion sickness

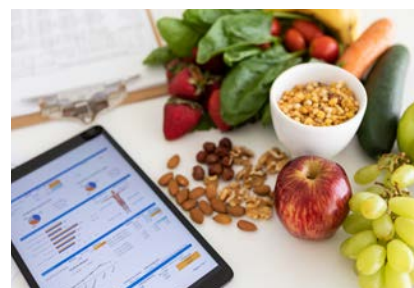
Motion sickness can strike in cars, on trains, planes or amusement park rides — causing nausea, dizziness and sometimes vomiting. It occurs when there's a disconnect between what your eyes perceive and what your inner ear detects. When it's not possible to avoid situations that cause motion sickness, here are a few strategies to help prevent it:

- Sit up front in a car or bus and grab a window seat on a train or plane.
- Limit alcohol and caffeine and stay hydrated.
- Eat small bites of food throughout the day.
- Don't smoke.
- Distract yourself with activities.
- Eat flavored lozenges such as ginger candy.



Nutrition and Chronic Health Conditions

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD



Should dinner be the smallest meal of the day?

Eating more calories earlier in the day (at breakfast and lunch), followed by a smaller dinner, is likely a good strategy for better health and weight control. Research shows that this pattern matches best with the normal internal body clock, known as the circadian rhythm. Scientists are looking at the best ways to align food intake to support the body's natural daily rhythms.

We naturally need more food in the morning to refuel after a night's sleep. Dinner is important, too, but many North Americans designate dinner as the largest meal of the day and follow that with consistent late-night snacking. This pattern may lead to weight gain since evening snack foods are typically high in calories, fat and sugar. That can negatively affect sleep.

A meta-analysis (review) of nine studies found that eating more calories earlier in the day was linked with greater weight control, better blood sugar levels and lower cholesterol.

A recent study found that eating more food earlier in the day may help with weight control and may prevent weight gain. Research is ongoing, but results to-date certainly validate the old adage "eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a pauper."

About 60% of adults in the U.S. have at least one chronic health condition, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, arthritis, cancer or Alzheimer's disease. Nutrition plays an important role in these chronic conditions — for both treatment and potential prevention.

It is smart to work with a dietitian who can customize a nutrition plan to meet your specific nutrition needs. That's even more crucial if you are among the 40% of U.S. adults who have two or more chronic diseases. Dietitians can help you build an evidence-based eating plan while accounting for these factors:

- Medical conditions.
- Preferences.
- Budget.
- Cultural or religious needs.
- Food allergies or intolerances.
- Health goals.
- Lifestyle factors (family, cooking skills, schedules, time constraints, etc.).

The diet plans for many chronic health conditions are remarkably similar. For example, the recommended diet plan for

preventing or treating heart disease, high cholesterol, arthritis and cancer is largely the same. It includes:

- Lots of vegetables and fruit.
- Plant-based proteins (tofu, beans, chickpeas or lentils) a few times a week.
- Fish, poultry or plant proteins more often than red meat.
- Fat from extra-virgin olive oil, nuts and avocado more often than from butter, lard or tallow.

- Whole grains (whole-wheat bread, oats, brown rice) more often than refined grains (white bread and white rice).
- Cutting back on sugary drinks, salty snacks, pastries, candy and fast food.

This food pattern has been thoroughly researched, and many studies show that it can reduce chronic disease risk. It may be called the Mediterranean diet, DASH diet, plant-based diet, etc.



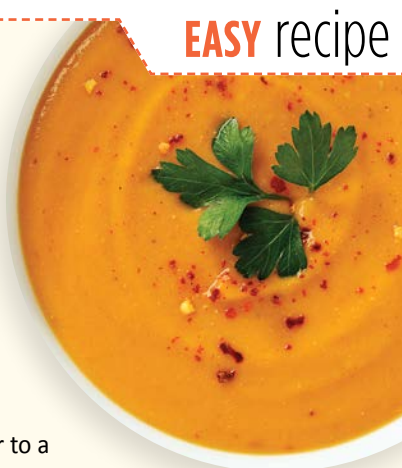
Tip: Steer clear of bad advice from social media influencers without nutrition credentials. They often recommend restrictive diets (only red meat, only fruit, etc.) that are not nutritious or balanced (and may be unsafe). Stick to what works based on evidence from nutrition research.

Carrot Lentil Soup

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2 tsp cumin seeds | 1 cup split red lentils |
| 1 tsp extra-virgin olive oil | 4 cups water |
| 1 onion, chopped | ½ cup milk |
| 6 medium carrots, grated | ½ tsp salt |

In a pot set over medium heat, add cumin seeds. **Stir** until fragrant, about 1 minute. **Remove** to a side plate and set aside. **Add** oil to pot set over medium. **Add** onion, carrots, lentils and water. **Bring** to a boil, then add milk and salt. **Simmer** 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. **Blend** with an immersion blender or transfer to a blender. **Blend** until smooth. **Top** with toasted cumin seeds and serve.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 245 calories | 14g protein | 3g total fat | 0.5g saturated fat | 1g mono fat | 1g poly fat | 42g carbohydrate | 6g sugar (0g added sugar) | 8g fiber | 372mg sodium



News & Notes

FSA Special Enrollment – Save the Dates:

The City of Seattle will hold a Special Enrollment period for 2026 Flexible Spending Account (FSA) plans from **November 10–21, 2025**. The IRS announced increases to FSA contribution limits after the start of the City's Open Enrollment.

- Dependent Care FSA: Increased from \$5,000 to \$7,500
- Healthcare FSA: Increased from \$3,300 to \$3,400

To accommodate this significant change, the City is offering a special opportunity for employees to enroll in an FSA for 2026 and adjust their FSA elections made during the regular Open Enrollment in October. Please watch your U.S. mail in early November for a detailed letter with additional information and instructions.

• **Join the Great American Smokeout:** Are you ready to quit smoking? On November 21, join people across the country for the American Cancer Society's [Great American Smokeout](#). Through Quit for Life, all regular employees and their adult covered family members can get support at no additional cost. You'll have access to: nicotine replacement therapy, coaching, and helpful tools and resources via a mobile app. Take the first step at [quitnow.net](#) or call **1-866-784-8454 (TTY 711)**.

• **Weight Watchers' New Clinical Support:** Did you know WW members can access Registered Dietitians for meal planning and nutrition support? Get personalized guidance within your Points budget and tailored meals for your goals. Registered Dietitian visits are available for as low as an office visit copay for Aetna members or pay out-of-pocket if you are covered on a Kaiser plan. [Sign up for WeightWatchers today!](#) Already a WW member? Access Registered Dietitian visits through your WW app. See the flyer attached to this newsletter.

• **Keep Your Information Up to Date:** Make sure you receive important documents—like your W-2 and benefits information—on time. Please update your mailing address in Workday by logging into your account [here](#).

City Events: Continued from page 1>>

Benefits 101: Why Cancer Screenings Matter

Thursday, November 18
10:00 am – 11:00 am
[Join here](#)

Deferred Compensation

Navigating the Deferred Compensation Website

Wednesday, November 5
12:00 pm – 12:30 pm
[Register here](#)

Distributions From the Deferred Compensation Plan

Wednesday, November 12
12:00 pm – 12:30 pm
[Register here](#)

Introduction to the Deferred Compensation Plan

Thursday, November 20
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm
[Register here](#)

EXPERT advice — Elizabeth Smoots, MD

Q: Why do I get sick in the winter?

A: More people catch colds, influenza, RSV, COVID-19 and other respiratory infections during the cold winter months than the rest of year. The highest incidence occurs in October through March. Several factors increase the likelihood of getting sick this time of year.

Cold weather: Lower temperatures reduce the immune response in the nose to viruses. One study found that a decrease of 9°F inside the nose cuts immunity to infectious diseases by almost half. Lower immunity makes us more susceptible to getting sick from viruses.

Dry air: Indoor heating lowers humidity. Hairlike cells called cilia in the nose normally sweep viruses out of the nose. But cilia don't work as well in the low humidity caused by heated rooms.

More indoor time: Meetings, parties and gatherings — people tend to socialize inside in the winter. As a result of the close contact and enclosed spaces, any infections going around are more likely to spread.

Chimney and Fireplace Basics

There's nothing like the beauty and warmth of a fire in a fireplace. Just make sure it doesn't spark danger. Here are some surefire tips:

- 🔥 Hire a professional to inspect your fireplace and chimney annually.
- 🔥 Clean your chimney, if necessary. Creosote buildup is one of the most common causes of chimney fires.
- 🔥 Ensure your flue or damper is open before starting a fire.
- 🔥 Use dry, fresh wood. Wet or rotted wood can cause explosions once heated up.
- 🔥 Don't burn paper in the fireplace.
- 🔥 Keep a fire extinguisher close by.
- 🔥 Use a fireplace screen to stop sparks from flying.
- 🔥 Keep children away from fires.
- 🔥 Never leave a fire unattended.



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