



HEALTH & FITNESS



- Utilize Diet
- Mental Health
- Blood pressure

Exercising when you have high blood pressure

Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, is a serious medical condition and a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. The National Library of Medicine National Center for Biotechnology Information offers that hypertension is responsible for the majority of cardiovascular mortality.

The condition is associated with an inactive lifestyle, so becoming more active can prevent or even reverse a hypertension diagnosis.

Hypertension is blood pressure that is 140 or higher on the systolic (upper) number and 90 or higher on the diastolic (lower) number. Exercise can help lower high blood pressure and may provide an energy boost and relieve stress.

For people adopting a more active lifestyle after a hypertension diagnosis, it is preferential to start off gradually. WebMD says in the event of hypertension, any activity that enables one to breathe harder and make the heart beat a little faster can be sufficient; it is not necessary to purchase a gym membership, but doing so may provide the motivation some need to commit to a workout regimen. Activities like swimming, jogging, brisk walking, biking, or doing rigorous yard work also can help lower blood pressure.

The American Heart Association says for most people, 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity physical activity is recommended. This amount of exercise can be broken up any way a person desires, like 30 minutes per day, though the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services advises exercising over the course of several days each week.

People should make time for stretching and muscle-strengthening as well. Regular physical activity can lower blood pressure by anywhere from five to eight mm Hg. By keeping active, a person can prevent blood pressure from creeping up again.

Exercise is a vital component of addressing hypertension. After receiving such a diagnosis, individuals can work with their physicians to devise a safe and effective fitness regimen.

(METRO CREATIVE)



Hypertension is associated with an inactive lifestyle, so becoming more active can prevent or even reverse a hypertension diagnosis.

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Did you know?

Frozen foods can be convenient ingredients to use in everyday cooking. Frozen food also is an affordable way to get the daily recommendations of vegetables and fruits a person needs in their diets.

There is a prevailing myth that frozen produce is perhaps less healthy than fresh counterparts. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics says this is simply not the case.

Generally speaking, frozen foods will retain all of their

vitamins and minerals during the blast freezing process. Also, freezing will not change the carbohydrate, protein or fat content.

In fact, in some cases, frozen foods have more vitamins and minerals compared to fresh produce because the latter lose minerals and vitamins over time. Freezing will lock a food item in time, thus ensuring the food retains its nutritional value at the peak of freshness.

Keep in mind that it's best to choose frozen produce that has not been modified by added salts, fats or sugars for the most healthy options.

(METRO CREATIVE)





Strategies to protect long-term mental health

Mental health has always been important, but the need for people to prioritize their emotional, psychological and social well-being gained greater attention during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing restrictions designed to reduce the number of cases contributed to feelings of isolation, depression and anxiety in millions of individuals across the globe, sparking a heightened sense of curiosity about what people can do to safeguard their mental health in the short-term but also over the course of their lives. Pandemic-related restrictions have long since been lifted throughout much of the world. But the need to prioritize mental health remains. The National Institute of Mental Health notes that self-care can play a vital role in

maintaining mental health. With that in mind, individuals can consider these strategies as they look to safeguard their mental health over the long haul.

Exercise regularly

Exercise benefits the body in myriad ways, and those benefits extend to mental health. The NIMH reports that a 30-minute daily walk can boost mood. In addition, the United Kingdom-based Mental Health Foundation reports that regular physical activity positively affects self-esteem and can even lead to a reduction in stress and anxiety. That's important to note, as the online medical resource Healthline reports that chronic anxiety can adversely affect the

body's nervous, cardiovascular, digestive, immune, and respiratory systems.

Maintain social connections

The NIMH also touts the benefits of maintaining social connections, including relying on friends and family for emotional support and practical help. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that people who are socially connected and maintain stable and supportive relationships are more likely to have better mental health outcomes than those who don't.

Eat a nutritious, balanced diet

The American Society for Nutrition notes that diet can be an important ally for

people looking to improve and preserve their mental health. Numerous studies have examined the relationship between diet and mental health, and the ASN notes a growing body of research suggests a strong connection between a healthy diet and mental health. The most recent review published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that increased consumption of fruits and vegetables positively affects psychological health. That same review also indicated daily vegetable consumption provides a therapeutic effect that can help to reduce symptoms among people with clinical depression.

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above: Individuals can consider several strategies – such as eating a nutritious, balanced diet, exercising regularly, reading more and maintaining social connections – as they look to safeguard their mental health over the long haul.

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HOW TO UTILIZE DIET TO STAY HEALTHY

It's easy to underestimate the power of food in personal health. You are what you eat has never been more relevant.

The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada says eating a healthy diet is one of the essential ways to protect health, as up to 80 percent of premature heart disease and stroke can be prevented through healthy habits. And since heart disease is a major concern for women, healthy eating should be a priority.

The World Health Organization says a healthy diet protects against many chronic conditions, such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease. A nutritious diet also helps keep people active throughout the day by providing energy.

What does healthy eating look like?

Eating healthy is a matter of balance. Individuals should choose foods that will offer the nutrients they need without much of the ingredients that can be detrimental to their overall health.

This occurs by consuming less salt, trans fats, sugars, and saturated fats, and opting for vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and lean protein sources.

Both the United States and Canada offer dietary guidelines for making smart food choices that utilize a plate to demonstrate what healthy eating looks like.

They share similar concepts, which include the following:

- Make half of your plate full of fruits



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How to begin the day in a positive frame of mind

Each new day brings the potential for change, even amid the routine of the daily grind.

When people start the day with positive thoughts, it can affect how they behave and see themselves throughout the day and may even benefit their overall health.

The Mayo Clinic says some studies suggest personality traits such as optimism and pessimism can affect many areas of a person's health and well-being.

Positive thinking that is pronounced in optimistic people is associated with effective stress management, which translates into many different health benefits.

Some people abide by the "Law of Attraction," which states that what a person gives attention to and thinks about throughout the day is what will be predominant in their life.

Whether this is true or not, many aspire to have more positive thoughts and be in a generally optimistic mindset.

The following tips can put people on a positive path at the start of each day.

Begin the night before

Certain mental health experts suggest clearing the mind in the evening to reduce stressful thinking and create the mental capacity to wind down and relax.

Keep a notepad handy and jot down any

invasive thoughts or concerns. Removing these thoughts from the mind and putting them on paper can help you rest more readily.

Being well-rested can improve mood.

Know your weaknesses

Recognize where you may need some help as you strive to be more optimistic. Map out the behaviors you want to change, and then be intentional about how you want your day to go and which actions will get you there.

The Mayo Clinic suggests figuring out what you usually think negatively about (such as work, commuting and life changes) and then approach each aspect in a more positive way.

Take a technology pause

Do not check email or text messages right after opening your eyes. Similarly, avoid reading the news or watching news programs on television too early.

Negative or scandalous stories often get the most clicks or views, and coming across upsetting information at the outset of the day can adversely affect your mood.

Rather, spend time meditating, praying, reading, or just being in the moment until you are awake.

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There are some easy-to-follow tips that can put people on a positive path at the start of each day, including focusing on gratitude, taking a technology pause and recognizing the good people are doing.

STOCK PHOTOS Health & Fitness



A health care guide for young women

Health and wellness may not be foremost on the minds of most girls and young women. This time in their lives is full of big emotions and significant changes. As a result, health is not often prioritized, or might be a cause of embarrassment for those who are seeking answers.

An analysis of a recent KFF Women’s Health Survey data, which studied women between the ages of 18 and 35 with a clinical visit in the previous two years, found that more than 45 percent report experiencing a negative interaction during those visits.

Common complaints include personnel who are dismissive of patients’ concerns. As a result, many women, and particularly young women, often go online to address common concerns rather than making a health care appointment.

Although no advice can replace the expertise of a qualified and caring doctor, nurse practitioner or physician’s assistant, young women can be mindful of these health issues.

• **Anxiety and depression:** Feelings of sadness or nervousness are experienced by just about everyone at some point. When these feelings become chronic or are negatively affecting a woman’s life, they may be a byproduct of anxiety or depression.

These conditions tend to be different sides of the same coin. Mental health experts have determined that women tend to have higher rates of these common mental issues than men.

The good news is that these conditions are highly treatable.

• **Sweating and body odor:** As hormones fluctuate, the body changes in different ways. Excessive sweating and/or the development of stronger body odor may be a symptom.

Body odor occurs when sweat mixes with natural bacteria on the skin.

Taking showers regularly, wearing

cotton or natural fabrics, using an antiperspirant/deodorant, and drinking plenty of water may help.

• **Irregular periods:** It is normal to experience irregular periods for the first few years of menstruation, and sometimes even longer, says Nemours Health.

The average menstrual cycle will last between 21 and 35 days. Excessive exercise, failure to eat enough calories, certain medicines, stress, and other conditions may lead to irregularity. The only way to know what is going on is to visit a provider.

• **Breast health:** Breast development differs for girls. Some will develop early, while others, such as those heavy into sports, may see a delay in puberty and breast development. Stretch marks may form from rapid growth of the breasts.

Young women should be mindful of any changes in the breasts, including discharge, skin redness or lumps. Breast care that starts early on can lead to a routine that continues later in life.

• **Healthy diet and exercise:** Cardiovascular disease is the leading killer of women, indicates the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Young women should keep this in mind and develop healthy eating and exercise habits that can promote good heart health throughout life.

• **Energy drinks:** In October 2023, a college student with a heart condition perished after consuming a caffeine-enhanced lemonade at a popular franchise food chain. She did not realize the drink contained more caffeine than many energy drinks.

The Center for Women’s Health advises that energy drinks are not recommended for teens, and that combining energy drinks with alcohol can be extremely dangerous.

Women’s health advocacy should begin early on to set the course for a lifetime of good habits.

(METRO CREATIVE)



No advice can replace the expertise of a qualified and caring doctor, nurse practitioner or physician’s assistant, but young women can be mindful of some basic health issues.

METRO CREATIVE PHOTO Health & Fitness

MENTAL HEALTH • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Resolve to read more

Much like exercise, reading has been linked to a host of positive health outcomes, including mental health benefits.

A study from researchers at the University of Sussex found that reading can reduce stress by as much as 68 percent.

Escapism is another potentially potent benefit of reading, as a recent report in Psychology Today noted that researchers

believe narrative absorption, which refers to the experience of being immersed or engaged while reading a story, provides an escape or opportunity for mental reflection.

Self-care can go a long way toward promoting long-term mental health. Various strategies and activities fall under the umbrella of self-care, and each can have a profound and lasting effect on mental health.

(METRO CREATIVE)

POSITIVE FRAME OF MIND • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Recognize the good people are doing

When you open your eyes and focus on the positives, you’ll see all the good that other people are doing around you.

Offering compliments or acknowledging others’ actions, whether large or small, puts positivity out there.

Focus on gratitude

Take a few moments at the start of each

day to mentally list all the things you are grateful for. This may be that you have a cozy home or that you are healthy.

Even stressful situations or people can be means for gratitude. Boisterous toddlers may be a handful, but you can be grateful for the ability to have had children when so many are not able.

Starting the day with a positive mindset is easier than one might think. It may take a little practice, but also can begin to pay positive dividends sooner than later.

(METRO CREATIVE)

DIET • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

and vegetables, focusing on whole fruits and not juices. Vary the produce to take in an array of different colors.

• Fill a quarter of your plate with whole grain foods, like brown or wild rice, quinoa, oatmeal, and hulled barley. Whole grains contain fiber, protein and B vitamins.

• The remaining quarter of the plate can be dedicated to protein, like legumes, nuts, seeds, tofu, fish, eggs, poultry, and lean meats. Try to choose plant-based foods more often.

• Switch to low-fat or fat-free dairy, such as milk, yogurt and cheeses. Dairy is important because it provides vitamins A and D as well as calcium.

Benefits of healthy eating

Eating a healthy mix of foods pays dividends. Here are some of the positive side effects.

• **Weight loss:** Focusing more on food choices can help you keep tabs on calorie consumption. In order to lose weight, you need to consume less energy than you are

expending.

• **Avoid chronic conditions:** A nutritious diet can lower an individual’s risk for many chronic health issues, like cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

• **Strengthen bones and the body:** Calcium-rich foods help boost bone health. While dairy notably contains calcium, it’s also found in sardines, dark green vegetables and other calcium-fortified foods.

• **Improve mood:** The insurance experts at Aetna note that studies have shown that nutrition directly affects mental and emotional well-being. Eating nutritionally dense food promotes the growth of “good” bacteria in the gut that influence the production of chemical receptors in the brain related to how a person feels. Sugar is a culprit in poor health because it feeds the “bad” bacteria in the GI tract and is a major culprit in inflammation.

Making smart choices with regard to diet can help people live longer, healthier lives.

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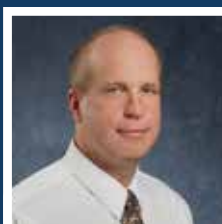
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