



Wellness and Healthy Living **Vaccinations: Sorting the Truth**

The human body is designed to fight off disease and illness. But it has its limits. Vaccines help your body defend against illnesses it may otherwise not be able to fight off well enough on its own. They do this by “tricking” your immune system into thinking it’s under attack. This puts your body in defense mode. For example, when you get a flu shot, your body starts building immunity against that strain of flu. And it remembers it. If you ever come in contact with that virus again, your body knows how to defend against it.

This is how all vaccines work. Before their invention, the only way to become immune to a disease was to catch it and hope for survival. Vaccines are a safer and more effective option. It’s much easier to stop a disease before it starts than treat it after it has taken hold.

Adults and children alike should have their vaccines. If you have children, your pediatrician will help guide you through the process. As an adult, you may have had all the shots you need for now. But if you’re not sure, ask your doctor how to find out if you’re up-to-date. Some vaccines last a lifetime. But others have to be updated from time to time. For instance, tetanus boosters are recommended every 10 years. And flu shots are recommended yearly. If you’re traveling to other countries, you may have to get shots that aren’t needed in the United States.

People have always had questions about the safety of vaccines. But the positive impact of vaccines greatly outweighs any known risks. The vaccines in use today are the safest and most carefully tested in history. A very small number of people have had allergic reactions. But the most common side effect is mild soreness near the site of the shot. People with health issues should ask their doctor before having vaccinations.

There have been claims in recent years that vaccine use was linked to autism. This claim was grounded in fear and false data. There is strong evidence to disprove this faulty link. Unfortunately, this myth spread widely and quickly on the Internet.

The truth is, vaccines have been proven time and again to be safe. Their importance cannot be stressed enough. Vaccines have virtually wiped out a number of diseases. Without vaccines, millions of people each year would suffer with smallpox, measles, polio, and more. If you need more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s website at www.cdc.com or talk with your doctor.

Welcome to **HEALTHYROADS!**

In this monthly newsletter, you’ll find a collection of articles on popular health and wellness topics. If you’d like additional support in your quest to lose weight, improve nutrition, develop an exercise plan, reduce stress, or quit smoking, visit us online at www.healthyroads.com. There you can find a collection of tools to help you reach your health goals.

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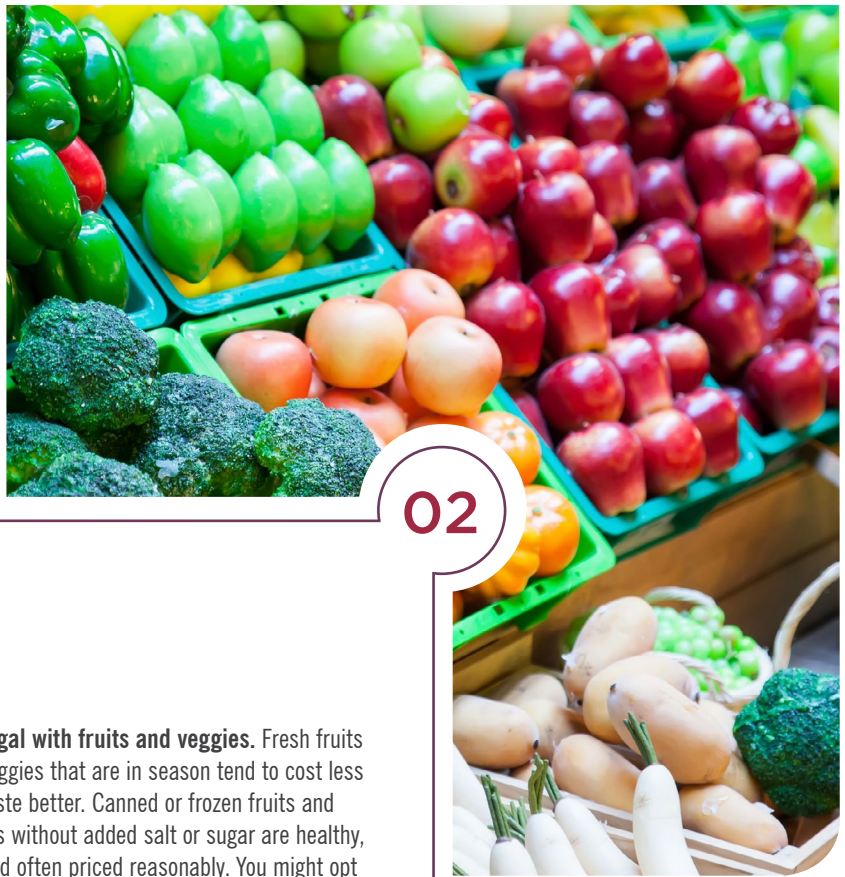
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Nutrition and Weight Management: What Does It Cost to Eat Healthy?

Here's a quick food quiz: Which type of food is more expensive—healthy food or junk food?

If you said healthy food, you might be surprised to learn that people can often eat at least as cheaply if they stick with healthy, whole foods. The idea that healthy foods have to be pricey is a myth. Many of the healthiest foods (think vegetables, fruit, beans, and grains) are also among the least costly. On the other hand, relying on junk food and fast food (think drive-through meals and packaged snacks) can quickly eat up your food budget.

A 2014 study found that consumers tend to spend at least as much for unhealthy foods. And such foods don't offer much nutrition on the dollar. So, when you fill up your shopping cart with whole foods such as fruits, veggies, lean proteins, and whole grains, you win in more ways than one. You eat well—and you get a greater return on your health and dollars spent. Here are some tips to help you eat right and save money:

- * **Plan your meals.** Check what's in your cabinets and what's on sale this week. Then plan your meals for the coming week around these items.
- * **Make a list.** Check your store's website or the newspaper for items on sale each week. Then make a list of low-cost items that you'd like to eat for the week.
- * **Shop smart.** Look for reduced prices along aisle shelves. Opt for store brands, which often cost less than name brands. And look for foods with low unit prices.

- * **Be frugal with fruits and veggies.** Fresh fruits and veggies that are in season tend to cost less and taste better. Canned or frozen fruits and veggies without added salt or sugar are healthy, too, and often priced reasonably. You might opt for a mix of fresh and packaged. Eat the fresh items earlier in the week.
- * **Choose low-cost protein sources.** Peas and beans are nutritious and they cost less than meat. When you do buy lean meats, opt for the larger family value pack. Freeze what you don't use right away. Canned salmon, tuna, and chicken (packed in water) offer healthy, low-cost protein options, too.
- * **Get your grains and beans in bulk.** Buying whole grains and dried beans or peas in bulk costs less than smaller packages. Such items keep well. Store them and only cook what you need.

So what does it cost to eat healthy? A little planning, perhaps, and a bit more cooking. But the payoff can be better health and money saved.

HEALTH TIP:

Fill up your shopping cart with whole foods such as fruits, veggies, lean proteins, and whole grains. You may get more food for your money—and better health, too.



03

SERIOUS ABOUT QUITTING?

We at Healthyroads understand the challenges of quitting smoking. That's why we offer a variety of online tools and articles to help you quit—once and for all.

Our Web-based tools give you every chance to succeed.

For anyone considering quitting smoking, take the first step and visit

www.healthyroads.com.

Active Living Part of the Pack

Let's face it. Humans are social animals. Whether playing, working, or working out, we tend to favor activities that involve others.

As it turns out, being active in groups may be hardwired. Research suggests that the urge to merge movement with socializing may have formed back in our hunter-gatherer days. So, when exercise has a social aspect, people are more likely to take part.

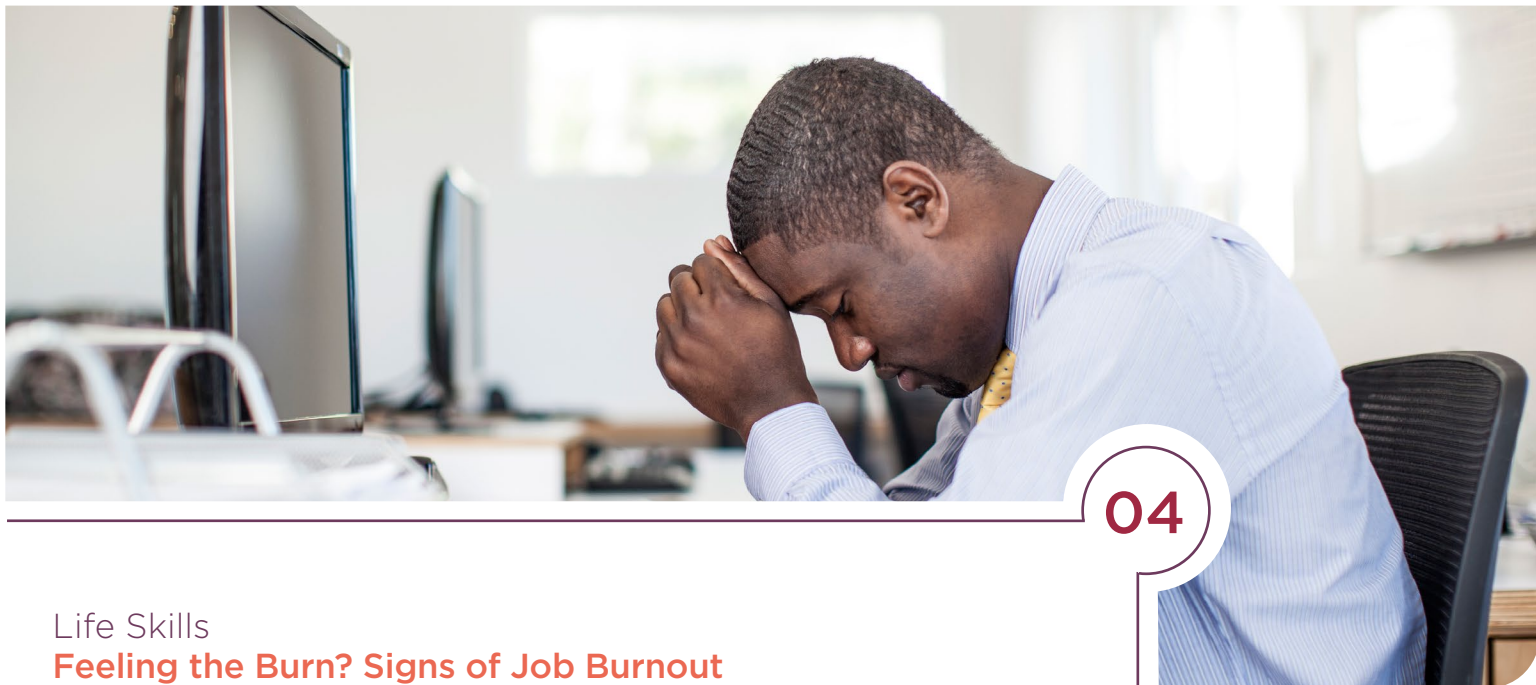
What's more, there are benefits to sweating it out with others. For starters, group workouts:

- * **Amp up the fun.** Working out in a group often has a fun, upbeat vibe. And the choices for group-based fitness activities are almost endless. Dance class, kickboxing, boot camp, basketball, yoga, group hiking ... you name it. Try a few until you find one you love. And try a new one every few months to mix it up and banish boredom from your routine.
- * **Provide structure.** An organized fitness class or other group activity that happens on the same day, and at the same time and place, gives you consistency and structure. And that may help you stick to your routine. Group fitness classes that are well-designed also have a built-in warm-up, workout phase, cooldown, and stretching routine. Working out with proper form and staying safe are vital to all fitness routines.

- * **Have built-in accountability.** Whether you have one workout buddy or a large group, working out with others may help keep you accountable. It's one thing to skip a solo workout. But skipping a scheduled run with a workout buddy or your group class means you might be letting someone other than yourself down. That may be the extra nudge you need to stick with it.

- * **Offer camaraderie.** Laughing and joking with others can add more fun to your workouts. Plus, cheering each other on can lend support. That can make workouts easier and more fun to get through. And you may find that you can push yourself a little harder during your workouts.

Of course, you might think of yourself as more of a "lone wolf" who needs the quiet reflection of solo workouts. But if you often exercise alone and find yourself in need of a boost, try tapping into your social instincts from time to time. After all, you may have been born to run with the pack.



04

Life Skills

Feeling the Burn? Signs of Job Burnout

Many people have some level of stress on the job. But if you have too much stress and it lasts for a prolonged period of time, it may lead to job burnout. Burnout is a state of total exhaustion. You feel drained physically, mentally, and emotionally. You may lose interest in your work. And you may begin to doubt yourself and your value.

Over time, job burnout may lead to fatigue, sleep trouble, and mood swings. It may have a negative effect on your relationships with friends and family. It may make you feel anxious and depressed. And it may raise your risk of a number of health problems. These include high cholesterol, stroke, heart disease, and diabetes.

But not everyone who feels stressed at work will experience burnout. So how do you know if you're at risk? Here are some of the signs to watch out for:

- * A drop in productivity
- * A negative or critical view of work or coworkers
- * Feeling annoyed with coworkers or clients
- * A lack of energy or enthusiasm for your work
- * Less pride in the quality of your work

- * Alcohol or other substance abuse problems
- * Changes in appetite or sleep patterns
- * Headaches, backaches, or other ailments
- * Trouble at home or with relationships outside work

Job burnout can be caused by many factors. Perhaps you feel unappreciated or lack control at work, as if your input isn't valued or you don't have a say in the work you do and how you do it. Maybe you're not sure what your boss expects of you. You may not have the work-life balance you need. Maybe there's a toxic environment in the office. Or it may be that you aren't passionate about the job, or you feel like it's not a good fit for your skill set.

If you feel burned out at work, you may want to talk with your boss about your concerns. Together, you may be able to brainstorm some ways to solve the problem. This may involve shifting roles within your team or your company. Your employee assistance program may also offer services that can help. And you can seek help from a mental health provider if you feel you need more help coping with job stress.

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