

# NEWS

## HealthNet

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## GOOD HEALTH AT ANY AGE

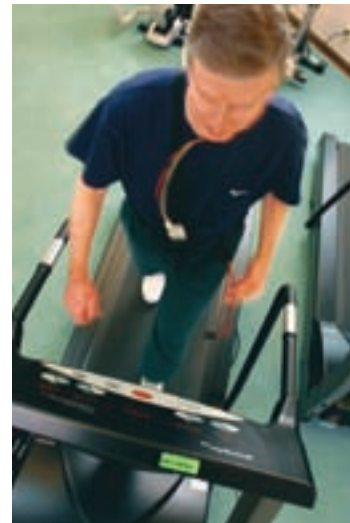
Every decade counts on the road to good health – you can make positive changes now.

**G**ood health can be yours no matter what your age, and we're here to help you find out how you can make changes starting today. Teenagers can develop good habits while they're still young, and adults well into their eighties and even nineties can maintain or improve their health through diet and exercise.

In this issue there's something for everyone in your family. Teens can learn what they should ask their doctors and about good habits they can develop now. We also have articles on important health issues for people in their twenties, thirties, forties, and beyond. Senior health is a big topic as more people in this country are living longer, healthier lives than ever before. We've also included a favorite feature, recipes of the season, as well as health travel tips you'll want to keep handy.

Look inside now – good health news is waiting for you! And for even more ways to make good health a habit, log on to [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com) and select *It's Your Life – Wellsite*.





## FOUR STEPS TO FITNESS

**Health Net gives you special discounts on health and fitness products.**

For the latest offers, go to our website and click on *It's Your Life – Wellsite*.

May is National Physical Fitness Month! Try a new activity and get moving!

As an adult in your thirties and forties, you may have gained some weight since your twenties and have fallen behind in getting enough exercise. But these are some of the most important years to build muscle and improve cardiovascular strength so that you will be strong in your senior years. Experts will tell you there are four main building blocks to overall fitness:

**1 Strength.** Muscles lose mass and strength naturally as we age. But lack of exercise can speed up the process. If we lose too much strength, even lifting a bag of groceries becomes a challenge.

Working your muscles helps build them up. To build muscle, you can lift free weights, use weight machines in a health club, or do wall push-ups and leg raises.

**2 Endurance.** Studies show that jogging, walking and other activities that increase your heart rate and breathing for an extended time help reduce your risk for heart disease, stroke and other serious diseases.

Endurance exercises include activities such as bicycling, walking briskly, playing golf without a cart, or swimming laps. Household chores, such as raking and mowing, and mopping or scrubbing the floor, also count.

**3 Flexibility.** Stretching exercises keep joints and muscles moving freely. They can also help reduce injuries and lessen your risk for falls. Stretch after your muscles are warmed up, such as after strength or endurance exercises.

**4 Balance.** Maintaining balance helps prevent falls that can cause broken hips and other fractures. Climbing stairs, lifting weights with your legs and doing stretching exercises can all help you improve and maintain balance.

### Getting started

Discuss exercise with your physician before you begin any fitness program. Depending on your health, some activities may not be right for you. But some form of physical activity benefits people of all ages.

# Exercise: Your questions answered

Exercise helps everyone, no matter what your age. It is one of the key factors in maintaining a healthy weight, strengthening your heart and reducing your risk for certain diseases.



**Q** Will exercise prevent heart disease?

**A** There's no guarantee that regular physical activity can prevent heart disease, but it can help reduce your risk.

**Q** Do women get the same benefits from exercise as men?

**A** Studies have found that women may benefit from exercise even more than men.

**Q** Should I see a doctor before becoming physically active?

**A** If you are middle-aged or older and at high risk for heart disease, talk to your doctor before starting or increasing your exercise routine. You are considered at high risk if you smoke or if you have high blood pressure, high cholesterol or diabetes. If you are in good health, you should be able to exercise moderately without consulting a doctor.

**Q** How can I make sure my kids get enough exercise?

**A** Set a good example. Encourage your kids to be active, limit TV and video time, plan active family outings and assign active household chores.

You can find additional information about weight management at [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com) by going to *It's Your Life – Wellsite* and choosing *Living Healthy* or *Condition Centers*.



## Make a splash: Water workout improves fitness

Almost everyone loves swimming, whether it's at the beach, the river or in a small backyard pool. And best of all, you're never too old or young to enjoy this great, low-impact form of exercise.

Water exercise is one of the best ways to improve fitness and well-being, the American Physical Therapy Association reports.

Water provides a safe workout, even if you have physical problems, such as arthritis. Because your body is buoyant in water, strain on joints and other supporting body structures is much less.

But water exercise is not for everybody. Some medical problems may prevent you from taking part. They include

uncontrolled blood pressure, uncontrolled seizures, severe osteoporosis, open or unhealed wounds, bladder or bowel incontinence, or severely limited breathing capacity.

If you're not sure whether you should take part in a water exercise program, check with your doctor.

# ALCOHOL AND AGE

He is retired. Maybe he's spending more time socializing with friends. He's traveling, having a good time. He might not realize how much he's drinking.

She's retired and misses her job. Her children live far away. She has some health problems. And she seems to be using alcohol more often.

They could both be headed toward an alcohol problem.

## Older bodies react differently

According to the National Institute on Aging, our bodies become more sensitive to alcohol as we get older. Because water content in body tissues decreases with age, alcohol becomes more concentrated in an older person's bloodstream. As a result, blood alcohol levels in seniors can be 30 to 40 percent higher than in younger people who drink the same amount of alcohol.

Consuming too much alcohol can lead to liver problems, cancer and other diseases. It can also worsen existing health problems, such as high blood pressure or diabetes. And combining alcohol with prescription medicines can create dangerous interactions.

## Signs of abuse

Alcohol abuse in seniors is often overlooked. Some signs, such as falls or confusion, are mistaken for "part of growing older." Or symptoms may be blamed on medications.

Other signs of an alcohol problem can include:

- trying unsuccessfully to cut back or stop drinking
- lying about or trying to hide alcohol use
- becoming irritable when not drinking
- fighting with others about alcohol

## What you can do

Help find treatment options for the person who is abusing alcohol. He or she may benefit from medicines, counseling or both.

For more suggestions about how to help someone who you think may have an alcohol problem, call the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence toll-free at **1-800-622-2255**.

Learn more about possible factors

in alcohol abuse,

such as anxiety

and depression,

at the *Condition*

Center found on the

*It's Your Life – Wellsite*.



# New joints, cause for alarm?

For people who have surgical implants, it's not uncommon for alarms to sound when they go through security. In fact, certain devices almost guarantee that a traveler will set off alarms, a British study says.

For example, replacement hips containing cobalt chrome were always found by the detector.

Airport security workers say scanners are more sensitive now than in the past. So be aware that you may have to go through special screening procedures, and be sure to plan accordingly.



## Tips for staying healthy when you travel

Planning a trip outside the country? Don't forget to plan for anything that may affect your health when traveling. People of all ages need to pay attention to health guidelines and warnings before leaving home, especially when traveling abroad.

Visit the website of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).

The site provides health alert information on four levels:

**1 In the news.** Reports on scattered cases of disease or a disease of public health concern at a travel destination. This level means the health risk is no higher than usual.

**2 Outbreaks.** Information about a disease outbreak in a limited geographic area. The CDC will define the health risk to travelers and suggest safeguards, such as vaccinations.

### Save time and money

If your prescription drug plan is with Health Net, you can order maintenance medication using our Prescriptions-By-Mail program. To get a form, log on to [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com), click on *View My Prescription Coverage*, then *Pharmacy Forms* and choose *Mail Order Forms*, or call the Customer Contact Center at the number on the back of your ID card.

**3 Health precautions.** Information about a significant disease outbreak over a larger area. Travelers receive advice on what to do if they become ill while in the area. The CDC may recommend limiting exposure to certain places, such as poultry farms or health care settings.

**4 Health warnings.** Recommendations against travel to an area unless it is necessary. The warning occurs when a disease expands outside the area or group of people where it first appeared. Limiting travel to the area reduces the risk that it will spread to unaffected areas.

## Diabetes information

To learn more about diabetes and to take a diabetes assessment, log on to [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com), click on *It's Your Life – Wellsite* and select *Condition Centers* and *Diabetes*.



# ARE YOUR KIDS AT RISK?

**Y**ears ago only adults got type 2 diabetes. Today more and more kids are getting it too. Diabetes is more likely if your child is overweight or diabetes runs in your family.

### What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease that makes it hard for the body to use food to make energy. Our bodies break down food into a sugar called glucose. But this sugar is useless unless it gets into the body's cells. For most people, insulin in the body helps transport the sugar.

But people with type 2 diabetes can't use insulin well. Glucose then builds up in the blood. Too much blood sugar means diabetes and raises the risk of blindness, kidney failure, heart attacks, and other problems.

### Preventing diabetes

How do you keep your kids from getting diabetes? One important way is to help them stay at a healthy weight. Try these ideas:

**Get moving.** Aim for 60 minutes of physical activity on most days. There are a lot of ways to stay on the move. Let your kids pick activities they like to do.

**Cut back on TV time.** Too much time watching TV and playing video games can mean weight gain. Set a two-hour limit or less.

**Drink more water and less soda.** Offer your kids water more often than sodas, sports drinks or juice.

**Eat less fast food.** Make fewer trips to fast-food restaurants. And when you go, order smaller portions.

Each member  
of the family  
can take  
the online  
**Health Risk  
Questionnaire**  
on our website  
under **It's Your  
Life – Wellsite**.

# Teens need checkups

Your teen might think seeing a doctor is kid stuff. But that's not true. Doctor visits are just as important once kids get older.

Teens don't need all the shots younger kids do, and they aren't growing as fast. But their health is still important.

A doctor can:

- Give teens advice on how to eat right.
- Answer questions about dating.
- Treat acne.
- Talk about drugs, alcohol and safe sex.
- Do sports physicals.
- Help with emotional problems and stress.
- Give advice about school problems.
- Explain body changes.
- Give young women gynecologic exams.

Between ages 11 and 21, young people should see a doctor every year. Is your teen due for a checkup? Call and make an appointment with your teen's doctor today!

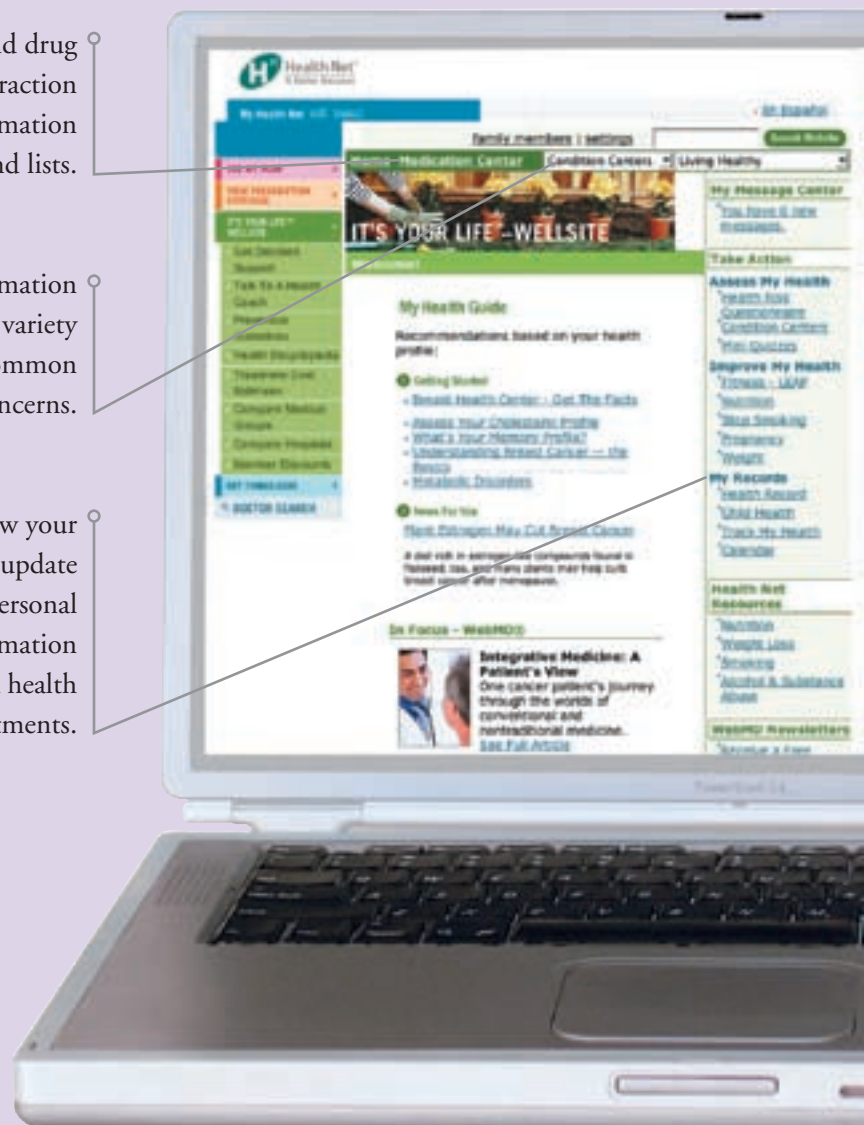
# BOOKMARK IT!

Health tools you need are at your fingertips! Get quick answers online. Add [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com) to your favorites button on your home page.

Find drug interaction information and lists.

Find information about a variety of common health concerns.

View your records, update your personal information and track health appointments.



Check out the drop-down menu on our home page to see if your employer has a custom website.



## SUMMERTIME RECIPE

# Gazpacho

This chilled Spanish soup provides delightful refreshment on a warm day. Knowing that it has no fat will simply add to your delight.



### Ingredients

- 1 medium fresh tomato
- 1 small green bell pepper
- 2 medium cucumbers
- 1 small zucchini
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- ¼ cup chopped green onions, with tops
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 4 cups no-salt-added tomato juice
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice (optional)

### Instructions

Finely chop tomato, green pepper, cucumbers, zucchini, onion, green onions, parsley, and garlic. Place in a large bowl. Add remaining ingredients. Stir to mix well. Cover and refrigerate. Serve cold.

Allow 45 minutes preparation time.

### Nutrition facts

Serving size 1 cup  
Makes 8 servings

#### Amount per serving

Calories 48

Calories from fat 0

% Daily Value\*

Total fat 0g 0%

Saturated fat 0g 0%

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Sodium 29mg 1%

Carbohydrate 12g 4%

Potassium 575mg

Protein 2g

Percent of calories from fat 0

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet.

Source: Rodman D. Starke, M.D., and Mary Winston, Ed.D., R.D., *The American Heart Association Low-Salt Cookbook* (reprinted with permission)

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Van Nuys, California 91409-9103

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