

APRIL 4, 2014

STAYING HEALTHY

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Allergies: nothing to sneeze at

April's showers bring May flowers, but they also bring on sneezing, runny noses and watery eyes for some of the 50 million Americans with allergies. The spring allergy began in Pleasanton as early as February and will last into the summer months.

The most common spring allergy culprits are pollens from a variety of trees and grasses, as well as mold, according to the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI).

"Because there can be millions of pollen particles and mold spores in the air, finding allergy relief can seem nearly impossible for some," said allergist Dr. Michael Foggs, ACAAI president. "But by knowing what triggers your allergy symptoms and how to avoid these allergens, you can be on your way to a sneeze-free season."

Knowing more about the spring allergy season can also help people fight symptoms. ACAAI allergists have put together a list of the five things everyone should know about spring allergies.

Allergies are on the rise.

Every year more adults and children are diagnosed with allergies. There are several speculations about this increase, including climate changes and increased allergy awareness. Studies have also shown pollen counts are gradually increasing. Even if you've never had allergies in

Five things to know about spring allergies



The most common spring allergy culprits are pollens from various plants.

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the past, you can develop them at any time. That lingering cold may be allergies, and you should see an allergist for testing and treatment.

It matters when you medicate.

If you fall victim to spring allergies annually, you should begin taking your medication two weeks before symptoms typically begin. Keep an eye on the pollen counts in your area. Even if the temperature doesn't feel like spring, there could already be pollen circulating in the air. To be better prepared, you can track your symptoms with MyNasalAllergyJournal.org.

There isn't a cure, but there is something close.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for spring allergies. However, immunotherapy (allergy shots) provides symptom relief while modifying and preventing disease progression. Immunotherapy can also be tailored for an individual's needs. So if you're allergic to pollens, dust

and pets, allergy shots can provide you with relief from these allergens.

Symptoms can be severe.

Runny noses, itchy eyes and sneezing aren't the only symptoms of spring allergies. If you are coughing, wheezing and have trouble breathing, asthma might be one of your allergy symptoms. In fact, an estimated 75-85% of asthma sufferers have at least one allergy.

Asthma attacks can be life-threatening. Aside from avoiding allergens, you should also be under the regular care of an allergist and use medications as prescribed.

When in doubt, get checked out.

Not every cough is due to a respiratory infection. And colds shouldn't be blamed for every runny nose. If you find yourself battling unwanted symptoms for more than two weeks, it is likely time to see an allergist to get tested, diagnosed and treated.

Allergies and asthma are serious diseases and that's "nothing to sneeze at." Misdiagnosis and inappropriate treatment can be dangerous.

—Brandpoint

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Five easy exercises

No gym necessary for great results

Most people don't think that exercise can be easy, but it can be — you just need to utilize the right exercises for the best results. Here is a list of five easy exercises that can yield great results, as compiled by fitness experts at bistroMD.

Squats

"If you are just a beginner, or if you aren't quite ready for weights, you can still do a simple beginner squat," said Sean Wells, a certified strength and conditioning specialist. "Squats are a great exercise because it is a simple activity that can really sculpt your leg muscles."

Use two sturdy chairs as support. With your feet shoulder-width apart, squat down by bending at the knee and keeping your back straight, and your chest up. Follow through with a count of 10 seconds, holding for two seconds at the maximum tension point and then returning to the starting position. Repeat this exercise three times in a row for better results.

Side planks

"Side planks are great for strengthening your abdominals, your back and your shoulders," Wells said. "It's a beneficial exercise that you can do almost anywhere."

The proper technique is to start out by lying on your side, with your legs extended and with your left arm resting in front of you. Lift up your body by firmly placing your right forearm against the floor. Make sure to breathe, and exhale as you lift your hips off the floor, balancing your body weight on your forearm.

Hold for 30 seconds, and then switch sides.

Abdominal crunches

"If you just want to focus on getting your abdominals into shape, abdominal crunches are one of the easiest, most effective ways to do this," according to Wells.

Start out by lying on your back with your knees up and your arms against your sides, with your feet planted flat on the ground. Slowly lift your head and then your shoulder blades, contracting your abdominal muscles. Pull forward until you are halfway to your knees.

Hold this position for about five seconds, and then release. Repeat four times.

Leg lifts

"Leg lifts are a very easy exercise, and a great way to tone your abdominals and to

work your front and inner thighs," Wells said.

Start out by lying on your back with your palms down and with your hands under your behind. Lift up your legs from the ground -- about 2 inches. Continue to lift, and keep your abs tight so that your shoulder blades are off the ground. Be sure to keep your abs tight with your chin up, and make sure to breathe slowly and in a good rhythm as you lift through for a count of about 10 seconds.

Repeat this exercise three times.

Toe reaches

"If you want to firm and tone your abdominal muscles, toe reaches are also another great exercise," Wells said. "Toe reaches

can also help increase core muscle strength, but if you've had previous back problems, you need to check with your physician first before doing this activity."

To do a leg fit, begin by lying on your back with your legs crossed and your feet flexed. Raise your legs to a 90-degree angle (as best as you can), and then extend your arms while keeping your chin up.

Make sure to breathe slowly as you crunch up, and reach toward your toes through a count of 10 seconds. Hold yourself at the maximum tension point for a minimum of two seconds, and then lower your legs back down.

Repeat three times.

—bistroMD



Add your health to your spring cleaning to-do list

Spring is a season for dusting, washing and polishing the home, cleaning up the yard of any winter debris and even cleaning the storage on the computer or laptop. Spring also should be a time to clean up your health — adding small habits to your lifestyle that can result in big changes to your well-being.

From making simple changes to your oral care routine to finding a way to make exercise fun, the following small lifestyle changes are courtesy of Dr. Natalie Strand, the director of integrative medicine at Freedom Pain Hospital in Scottsdale, Ariz. She has worked closely with the Juvenile Diabetes

Research Foundation, American Diabetes Association and dLife to promote exercise and healthy living among people living with diabetes.

- Relax, don't just rest

Stress is a huge contributor to poor health, but many people don't know how to manage it. People often mistake resting for relaxing, but it's not the same. Learn some stress-reducing techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation or meditation.

- Focus on mouth health

You may already be brushing your teeth once or twice a day, but consider switching to a more in-depth oral-care regimen that

features more consistent brushing, flossing and mouthwash use. Such changes could help eliminate 15 times more bacteria than a non-bacterial control regimen as well as fight germs, fortify enamel and improve gum health.

- Make exercise fun

Spring is the perfect time of year to combine exercise with social activities. Be creative to get endorphins pumping and think of things to do with friends such as taking a salsa class, archery lessons or an evening walk around the neighborhood.

- Get a spring tune-up

Doctor's appointments are im-



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Spring can be a good time to refocus time and energy on mouth health.

portant, but often pushed to the wayside. Make a list and schedule all your appointments at once: yearly check-ups, dental exams and cleanings, eye exams and the like.

- Get seasonal

Check out your local farmers market. Buy seasonal foods

and try to incorporate them in your meals every day. Seasonal produce is more flavorful and densely packed with nutrients.

With these small lifestyle, you can upgrade your health and help make a better you this spring, and beyond.

—Brandpoint

Teens need annual checkups, too

Regular exams allow for discussions on weight, vaccines, stress



During cold, flu and allergy seasons, sick teens and their parents are more likely to make time to see the doctor. However, these visits tend to focus on a specific illness rather than the teen's general health and well-being.

Annual checkups, on the other hand, can provide an opportunity for teens and their doctors to discuss important health topics, such as weight, sexual health, vaccines and stress-related conditions.

Statistics show that as children get older, they are less likely to get an annual checkup. As many as 25-30% of teens may not be getting an annual checkup, despite the fact that they are recommended for adolescents by the American Medical Association and other professional societies.

In a national online survey conducted by the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases and Pfizer, 85% of parents surveyed believe that annual checkups are important for children before age 5, while 61% of parents believed the same is true for teens. The survey included 504 teens aged 13 to 17 years, 500 parents of teens aged 13 to 17 years and 1,325 healthcare professionals, and was fielded by Harris Interactive between Dec. 27, 2012 and Jan. 23, 2013.

Many parents may not even realize how important staying healthy is to teens. The same national online survey found that more than six out of 10 teens surveyed say they worry a lot or a great deal about staying healthy, but only three out of 10 parents surveyed think their teens worry about it.

Teens who do not get annual checkups and forgo the opportunity for preventive care may be at increased risk for short- and long-term health problems.

The teen years are also an important time of physical and emotional development. Even if teens look or feel healthy, they are going through many changes, and an annual checkup can give them the opportunity to ask questions and have a confidential conversation with a doctor about topics such as height and weight, alcohol and drug use, recommended vaccines and sexual health, including screening for sexually transmitted infections.

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Examining health myths

Research facts before buying into hype

For as long as there have been urban legends, there have been health myths bogging our minds and adding confusion to the already confusing world of healthy eating.

"Diet, health and exercise can be scary enough," said Christy Shatlock, one of the lead dietitians for bistroMD. "When you add in myths that predict doom and gloom if you eat certain foods or do certain things, getting healthy just gets more confusing, which leads to more frustration."

To help people avoid the pitfalls of flinging themselves into despair over detrimental diet claims, Shatlock is aiming to put to rest some of the biggest health myths out there, and offering tips on what to know to avoid being tricked by the all of the misinformation.

You crave certain foods because your body needs them.

"This is definitely a myth," Shatlock said. "Cravings are associated more with emotional feelings rather than with what your body actually needs. In fact, many times, cravings are caused by eating too much of the wrong foods. We develop a dependence on

these foods, and when we change our eating habits to exclude them, we feel an emotional detachment. This is why so many people are unsuccessful at dieting."

Rather than giving into the health myth craze of cravings, Shatlock recommends slowly incorporating some of the foods you neglect when you diet into your current weight loss plan.

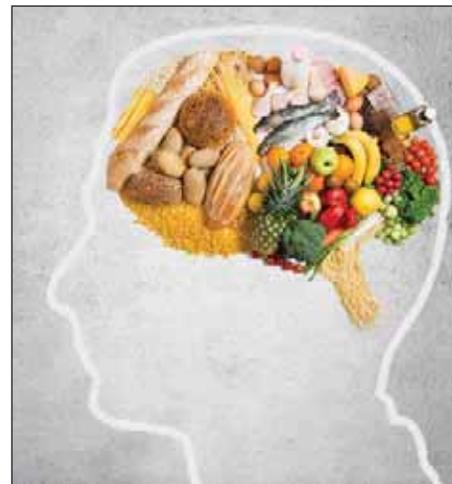
The next time you get a food craving, just remember: It's all in your head.

Eating smaller meals throughout the day is better than eating fewer, larger meals.

"As long as your body is getting the proper amount of nutrients and calories to promote effective weight loss, it doesn't really matter if you eat larger meals, or smaller, mini-meals throughout the day," Shatlock said. "Ideally, you need to make sure that all of your meals contain an essential balance of protein, carbohydrates, and healthy fats to stimulate your metabolism."

If you choose to eat larger meals and are worried about cravings during the day, eat snacks that contain protein in between each meal. These snacks will provide your body with needed energy, and will also keep you feeling fuller for a longer period of time.

Eating calories at night is more fattening than eating calories during the day.



Part of this myth is true, according to Shatlock

"There is a reason why many health experts say that you shouldn't eat right before you go to sleep," she said. "During sleep, our bodies rest after supplying needed nutrients to the rest of our body all day, so digestion slows down. If you eat right before you go to sleep, your body will have a hard time distributing the nutrients from your food to the rest of the body, causing acid reflux and heartburn. This slowdown in digestion also makes it easier for your body to turn this food into excess stored fat."

The bottom line: Know your bedtime, and eat your last meal at least three hours before you wander off into dreamland.

More protein means larger muscles.

"People should realize that protein actually gets stored in muscle, but doesn't develop your muscles naturally on its own," Shatlock said. "In order to get big muscles, you have to specifically perform muscle and strength-training exercises. High-protein foods and

protein supplements don't do this for you alone. It requires a lot of effort through exercise."

While protein is essential for maintaining a stable weight, it won't help your muscles get big on their own. Only specific exercises can do that.

Carbohydrates make you fat.

The important thing to remember when it comes to this myth is that there are two different types of carbohydrates. There are bad carbohydrates, and then there are good carbohydrates.

"Bad carbohydrates are found in foods that contain a ton of sugar, like pastries and cakes, and also foods like french fries and cheeseburgers," Shatlock said. "These are the foods that you should avoid, and these are carbohydrates that will cause you to gain weight."

On the other hand, she added, "Good carbohydrates are actually needed to stimulate your metabolism to burn fat, and they provide your body with needed energy."

Also known as complex carbohydrates, they don't contain simple sugars, and provide your body with long-lasting energy. These "good" carbohydrates can be found in foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Healthy weight loss cannot be achieved without carbohydrate intake, according to Shatlock. Low carb diets, and those that suggest removing them altogether, are potentially damaging to your health and should be avoided at all costs. Similar weight loss results can be achieved using a more healthy and sustainable diet of balanced nutrition.

The next time you are faced with a nutrition fact, do your research before buying into the hype.

—bistroMD



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Callippe Preserve selects Saito as head golf pro

By JEREMY WALSH

Pleasanton's Callippe Preserve Golf Course recently named local resident Jake Saito as its new head golf professional.

Saito, who has worked at Callippe Preserve for nearly a decade, had previously served as the course's assistant golf pro.

"Jake's commitment to customer service and his specific knowledge of the local golf market is invaluable to Callippe," general manager Mike Ash said.

Saito grew up in Fremont, where he attended Washington High School and played football in addition to golf. He went on to play four years of college golf, beginning at Chabot community college before finishing his collegiate run at California State University, East Bay.

Since joining the Callippe Preserve team in 2005, Saito has gained the reputation of being one of Northern California's top left-handed golf instructors, according to Ash.

"I am so grateful and excited to be taking over the golf operations," Saito said. "I look forward to making a positive impact on the facility and taking Callippe to the next level for our local golfers." ■



CALLIPPE PRESERVE

Jake Saito was recently named the new head golf professional at Callippe Preserve Golf Course in Pleasanton.



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