

# Staying Healthy

SPRING 2016

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Remember — your body  
has to last a lifetime

## Make a *healthy* *lifestyle* a priority

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

You have one body in this life, so it only makes sense to take care of it. A healthy lifestyle should be a priority: eating a variety of the right foods, making time to exercise and incorporating it into your day and making sure you have the equipment you need, including practical clothes. Evaluate these things to make sure you are on the road to the healthiest lifestyle that is possible for you right now.

### Set goals

Although your goal is a healthy lifestyle, break it down a bit more.

Think of something you can accomplish and go for it. Maybe, sign up for a race. Or, to start easier, make it your goal to swim across the pool without stopping, walk an extra 10 minutes a day or eat more servings of fruits and vegetables.

Goals can include relaxation, like having time for one

leisurely bath a week. Write down your goal where you can see it.

### Hunter, gatherer, food preparer

Nuts, grains, fresh herbs and organic fruits and veggies are easy to find these days. When you prepare food at home, you know it doesn't have extra calories. (As international food enthusiast Anthony Bourdain points out: The reason restaurant food is so good? Butter, butter, butter.)

An evening meal is important to enjoy with your spouse and children, and what better way to start good eating habits than to regularly experiment in the kitchen with old favorites and new recipes. Discover omelets and add power greens (kale, spinach and chard), which come pre-washed and packaged.

Make sure that food you eat on the go is healthy. Keep simple, healthy options in your home, such as raw nuts, cut-up veggies, fruit and homemade granola bars.

Pita can be lathered with hummus, then add greens.

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# Spring is here — and so are allergies

After El Niño winter, sufferers can expect a prolonged season

By MEENA RIJHWANI AND NEEPA MAKIM

Spring has sprung and with it comes seasonal allergies. Allergies are the immune system's reaction to the surrounding environment from exposure to something you inhale or ingest. For some of us, the symptoms of allergies can be minor with itchy, watery eyes, while others may experience more severe symptoms such as painful sinus headaches and shortness of breath.

Spring is a particularly difficult time for allergies as pollen counts are extraordinarily high with the sun out and trees in bloom. Couple that with high winds, and you have the perfect storm for allergies. Especially this year, after the harsh El Niño winter, those suffering from allergies can expect a prolonged allergy season with a much higher pollen count in the air.

So how do you know if you have allergies? Symptoms to be cognizant of are itchy, watery or red eyes, scratchy throat, coughing, runny nose, sneezing and, on the more severe side, sinus headaches and shortness of breath.

Determining what you are allergic to oftentimes follows the seasons. Seasonal allergies have a particular routine with the most common sources of allergies being trees releasing pollen in the spring, grass in the summer and weeds in the late fall. Year-round allergies could be a sign of sensitivity to dust mites, mold or animal dander.

So what can be done to stave off allergies and their symptoms? Actually a lot, but it begins first



and foremost with prevention and early treatment. Prevention is basically avoiding exposure to allergens. There are numerous things that can be done to protect you and your family from exposure to an abundance of pollen and other spring allergens.

Avoid going out on dry, windy days and those days when pollen counts are high. Keep windows closed at night as early morning breezes can bring in a lot of pollen. Also be sure to keep windows closed on windy days.

Keep pets inside and bathe them frequently to remove excess dander and pollen. Have your children shower at night to remove pol-

len before sleeping. If you have to work outside, like mowing the lawn, wear a mask and be sure to change your clothing and shower to remove potential allergens.

Lastly, be sure to clean your carpets and upholstery, vacuum regularly and change your air filter.

If you know you suffer from allergies, start your medication a week or two before the allergies manifest. There are many over-the-counter options that are quite effective such as non-drowsy antihistamines, nasal inhalers, nasal saline sprays and neti pots. If none of those options prove effective, it is best to consult with your doctor to evaluate and provide you with the most effective treatment options available, which may include skin or blood tests to determine the source of your allergies.

Treatment for allergies is a lifelong process. The best measures to counteract their effects is prevention. In addition, there are great resources available on the Internet, such as [www.pollen.com](http://www.pollen.com), which provides up-to-date information and forecasts for allergy sufferers.

If in doubt, it is always recommended that you be evaluated by a medical professional who can assess your symptoms and ensure that what you are experiencing are allergies and not symptomatic of another condition. ■

*Editor's note: Meena Rijhwani and Neepa Makim are physicians at John Muir Health Outpatient Center, Pleasanton: [www.johnmuirhealth.com/locations/outpatient-center-pleasanton.html](http://www.johnmuirhealth.com/locations/outpatient-center-pleasanton.html) or 224-0800.*



This smoothie, which uses milk as a base, is packed with protein.

## Types of milk explained

So many milks in the cooler can cause confusion

Many Americans have milk in their refrigerator, but what types of milk are they drinking?

There are different types of dairy milk to fit every age and lifestyle — whether it's organic, flavored or lactose-free, there are a variety of fat and calorie levels to choose from.

The primary options available are whole milk (3.25%), reduced-fat milk (2%), low-fat milk (1%) and fat-free milk (less than 0.2%). These percentages, which tell how much milk fat is in the milk by weight, are indicated on the label and designated by different cap and label colors.

Every variety of dairy milk, whether low-fat or fat-free, contains nine essential nutrients, including 8 grams of high-quality protein per cup. Measuring milk fat percentages by weight can seem confusing, but the different types of milk only differ in calories and fat grams, not nutrients. Here's more information about the different types of milk:

### Whole milk

Whole milk contains 150 calories with 8 grams of fat per 8-ounce glass and is actually 3.25% milk fat by weight, which is not as much as many people think. Many Americans are concerned about consuming fat, but some research suggests that not

all saturated fats are the same, and there may be health benefits from consuming the saturated fats found in dairy. While more research is needed on the potential benefits of dairy fats, many experts agree on milk's important role in a healthy diet, no matter the kind of dairy milk.

### Reduced-fat milk

Reduced-fat milk, or 2% milk, contains 120 calories and 5 grams of fat, and has the same nine essential nutrients as every other type of dairy milk. The percentage does not mean that the glass of milk contains 2% fat, but that the milk fat is 2% of the total weight of the milk.

### Low-fat milk

Similar to reduced-fat milk, low-fat milk has 1% milk fat of the total weight of the milk. It contains 100 calories and 2.5 grams of fat in an 8-ounce glass.

### Fat-free milk

If you want to get the same nutrients as whole milk while cutting calories and fat, fat-free milk is a good choice. The fat is skimmed, leaving zero grams of fat and 80 calories per cup. Many people believe that fat-free milk is just watered down whole milk, but that is not the case — no water is added and all nine essential nutrients remain intact. ■

— Family Features



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## Y offers parenting education

The Tri-Valley YMCA is continuing its parenting education series April 12 with the topic "Positive Discipline and Effective Consequences." The following month, on May 12, the topic will be "The Importance of Play: Understanding your Child's Natural Language."

The discussions are held at 6:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of the

month. Their purpose is for parents to gain support and learn effective tools for the ups and downs of parenting.

Child care is available with a reservation. Call 354-1392 or email [smancino@ymcaeastbay.org](mailto:smancino@ymcaeastbay.org).

Tri-Valley YMCA is located at 6693 Sierra Lane, Suite F, in Dublin. Call 263-4444. ■

— Dolores Fox Ciardelli

# Study shows men concerned about body image

**BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI**

Body image is not only a concern of women.

A study just published by a Chapman University psychologist examines how men feel about their bodies and their attractiveness. It concludes that body dissatisfaction is a common issue among men as well as women.

"We analyzed reports from 116,356 men across five national studies. Between 20% and 40% of men reported feeling dissatisfied with their overall physical appearance, weight and/or muscle tone and size," said David Frederick, lead author of the study. "The majority of men also felt that they were judged based on their appearance and reported that they compared their appearance to that of others at social events."

Men classified as "normal" weight tended to feel positively about their appearance,

whereas men who were "obese" tended to feel negatively. However, most men who were classified as "overweight" felt satisfied with their appearance.

"Men can feel pressure to appear strong and powerful, so having some additional mass does not necessarily lead to body dissatisfaction," Frederick said. "The fact that most 'overweight' men felt satisfied might seem surprising, but the medical category for overweight does not correlate well to what people consider to be overweight socially."

The research also looked at differences between straight

and gay men. It showed that gay men were much more likely to report feeling pressure from the media to look attractive, to avoid having sex because of how they felt about their bodies, and to desire cosmetic surgery.

Among heterosexual men, 20% of normal weight men reported hiding an aspect of their

body during sex, most often their stomach, and this was true for 29% of the obese men. Only 5% of normal-weight straight men had avoided having sex at least once in the past month because of how they feel about their bodies compared to 10% of obese men.

Some of the other key findings were, with gay men's responses in parentheses:

- 16% were uncomfortable wearing a swimsuit in public (26%)
- 21% were dissatisfied with their physical appearance (29%)
- 30% were dissatisfied with their muscle tone and size (46%)
- 23% reported an interest in cosmetic surgery (51%)
- 12% have considered cosmetic surgery (36%)
- 1% have had cosmetic surgery (7%)
- 29% have been on a diet to lose weight in the past year (37%)
- 55% have exercised to lose weight in the past year (57%)
- 61% say they have felt judged based on their appearance (77%)
- 39% routinely think about how they look (58%)



**More than 60% say they've felt judged based on their appearance**

- 51% compare their appearance to others at social events (68%)
- 29% feel pressure from the media to be attractive (58%)
- 10% feel pressure from a partner to lose weight (6%)

The study, "Male Body Image: The Roles of Sexual Orientation and Body Mass Index Across Five National Studies," included 111,958 straight men and 4,398 gay men. The average ages ranged from 35 to 50. ■



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### LIFESTYLE

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Make whole wheat pasta salad so leftovers will be nutritious. Microwave organic popcorn in a plain paper bag so it won't have additives. If you are in the habit of eating fast food for lunch, break the habit.

#### Rethink your exercise

How can you incorporate exercise into your daily life? Can you walk to work? Park far away from places where you run errands? Early hours might be the best time for a workout, unless of course you have small children. In that case, will your exercise provide entertainment for an observant baby? Can a toddler work out with you in some small, fun way? (See sidebar below for more tips.)

#### Look good, be comfortable

Attractive comfortable exercise clothes come in every price range. Resist the temptation to work out in old clothes you (or others) have discarded, reasoning that since you're going to get sweaty, any old rag will do. If you look good, you feel good, and clothes that fit right and look good can help you sustain your workout efforts, even driving you outside or to the gym.

Tight compression fitted clothes can add comfort as well as fabrics that don't hold moisture to irritate your skin. Outdoors, make sure you are warm enough to get started, dressing in layers that can be removed as you get warmed up. Fleece is handy to begin workouts and to wear afterward.

#### Your foundation: feet

The right shoes are all-important, whether pursuing a gentle stretch, an all-out run or anything in between. Come to think of it, comfy shoes are a plus even when running errands. If you are going to jog, play tennis or basketball or partake in some other activity that can be hard on the feet in certain ways, buy a shoe that is designed for that specific purpose.

### Exercise comes in many guises

Walking is great exercise, as well as easy and cheap. Drinking water at your desk continually not only hydrates you but gets you on to your feet to the restroom.

Get a pedometer to keep track of your steps; then keep increasing them. Many people in Pleasanton find it fun to walk and talk, and a group called World Walk to Wellness enjoys walk 'n' talks every Saturday morning (Walks@WorldWalkToWellness.org). Walk with a buddy, which makes it harder to cancel.

#### Add something new

Try a new activity, like tennis, yoga or martial arts. Try different classes at the gym, such as Zumba, aerobics or cycling. If it is fun, you will find a way to squeeze it in.

It can be reinvigorating to get a fresh outlook by investing in a few good items to assist you in attaining a healthier lifestyle. Buy wrist weights to work out your arms while walking.

For those days when workouts must be captured in free time at home, it is handy to have your own exer-cycle, which also comes in a mini version to be used with your own chair, or a treadmill. To strengthen your upper body, try a doorway trainer.

It might inspire you to use technology to track your calories as well as your steps. Nifty gadgets are available to track your well-being and make it fun to eat better and move more.

#### Making time

If you have trouble finding time to work out, reassess your to-do list. Remove anything that is there just because you feel you "should" do it. Say no to more work or even meaningful volunteer activities that will cause you stress timewise.

Don't be afraid to ask spouses or older children for help with chores. Also, make time to relax. Take weekends off: Must you really check your work email all weekend?

Your body probably has to last a few more decades. What kind of shape do you want it to be in? ■

## Working out with young 'uns

Having children means all the old rules and routines go out the window, so stay adaptable and spontaneous. Exercising builds stamina, which you will need when you have little children. And exercise does energize you.

Do whatever you can do on a given day. While your baby naps or preschooler is busy playing, put on a 10-minute exercise video, walk or jog on a treadmill or jump rope. Try to get in three to four 10-minute workouts per day, which will give you flexibility. Don't rock that fussy baby to sleep — do deep knee bends. While brushing your teeth, do lunges or at least stretch your foot and leg muscles.

When the baby begins to sit up and observe, he will probably be amused to watch your efforts at toning with squats and tricep dips while he sits and teethes on a toy. Babies can double as weights — position them on your body for modified sit-ups. Put your toddler underneath you for pushups and steal a kiss each time you go down.

Put on music. Toddlers love music — and dancing is even more fun when parents join in. Dancing is a good way to get up your heart rate and burn calories.

Walk with your baby, using a back carrier. Their weight makes the workout better. Kids like routines so schedule your joint workouts for a certain time, such as after breakfast. Prepare for walks by packing a variety of snacks or even a new toy when you want your child to stay happily in the stroller.

Jogging strollers allow parents to walk fast, jog or even run or Rollerblade. That

gives you a cardio workout and gives your child an adventure that will probably lead to a good nap.

When older kids enjoy an afternoon at the park, you can too. Run the perimeter of the playground while keeping an eye on them. When they are little and need to be pushed on the swings, every time you give a push, go down in a squat. Monkey bars are a great upper body workout. Swinging is good for your legs. Play ball or take a bike ride.

Don't supervise swimming from the side of the pool — at least walk back and forth in the shallow end. Keep moving briskly in the water while carrying a young child, who will be fascinated by the motion of the water.

Play boot camp with your kids, and let them be the drill sergeant, complete with a whistle. They will undoubtedly be able to think up new killer exercises for you. Little kids are quite active — don't watch them, join them, and you'll get a workout.

Teenagers might agree to register for a fun run or walk and you can train together. Tennis and basketball are great family activities. You might try scheduling a walk together after the family meal — or there is always yard work.

When kids are out of school, it can be harder for parents to find time for themselves. But your workout is important, so schedule it. (It belongs on the calendar as much as your children's softball games.)

Even if you exercise alone, let your children know what you are doing so you set a good example of making physical fitness a way of life.