

Wellness matters

CHOICES FOR HEALTHY LIVING health • fitness • nutrition • well-being

10 FAST FACTS

- 1. Green bell peppers** have twice as much vitamin C as oranges, while red and yellow bell peppers have four times as much.
- 2. Being physically fit** may reduce the risk and severity of colds.
- 3. Health Canada advises** not to use teeth-whitening products for more than 14 days without consulting a dental professional.
- 4. Artichokes act as a blood purifier** and can lower cholesterol, triglyceride (a type of fat) levels and other metabolic waste products.
- 5. Physical activity** is the best bone builder; the more weight and stress applied to bones, the more they grow.
- 6. Twenty per cent** of Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their lifetime.
- 7. Switching from a 12-inch plate** to a 10-inch plate can result in a weight loss of almost one kilogram per month.
- 8. Eating breakfast** can control appetite all day.
- 9. You should consume** no more than 2,300 mg of sodium (about 1 teaspoon/5 mL of table salt) a day in food preparation and at the table.
- 10. Heat and cold can help** relieve osteoarthritis. If pain is the main problem, heat will help. If swelling is the main problem, cold will help.



Understanding Testosterone Deficiency

Male hypogonadism, more commonly referred to as testosterone deficiency, is a condition where your body does not produce enough testosterone. While it can begin at any stage in life and will directly affect masculine growth and development, it tends to be more common in men over 45. According to Dr. Jeff Stein, a B.C.-based doctor and former Canadian Freestyle Ski Team physician, the first step in treating the syndrome is to understand that the symptoms can be medically treated.

"While many women are used to going to the doctor for regular checkups, men are not programmed that way," says Dr. Stein. "It's only when men find that their lifestyle is being impacted that they reach out to the experts."

The symptoms of testosterone deficiency vary and can creep up gradually, according to Dr. Stein. Symptoms include feeling constantly tired and grumpy, having a low libido, decreased erections, difficulty in building muscle mass despite weight training, poor memory and concentration and a tendency to put on weight.

To determine whether a man is suffering from testosterone deficiency requires a simple blood test, along with a thorough review of symptoms and medical and genetic history.

Once a thorough check has been completed, there are a number of ways to increase testosterone levels. While stress reduction and better sleep can help, testosterone replacements such as gels, creams and injections are other options. However, you should seek advice before using these as there could be risks associated with taking them.

Following any testosterone supplement program, the doctor will schedule regular visits with the patient to check his overall well-being, libido, memory and muscle mass.

Dr. Stein says the good news is that the safety profile of testosterone replacement looks promising but warns that a man should not be taking testosterone if trying to conceive. He recommends that anyone experiencing symptoms of testosterone deficiency should seek medical advice from a physician.

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Protein Supplements – Friend or Foe?

Advertising claims on the wide variety of protein supplements would have us believe that if we use them we will lose weight, feel, look and sleep better, build muscle mass and prevent and treat illnesses. In reality, the research to support these claims is insubstantial.

While it's true that proteins (assembled from amino acids) are the building blocks for our body, too much protein can result in extra work for your kidneys, and may give you an upset stomach. Extra protein will not be stored as muscle and instead be converted into glycogen and stored as fat.

Experts advise to read the ingredients on the protein bar or supplement, and to check how many calories you will be consuming. In addition, check for ingredients you may be allergic to as it is common for them to be made from whey or casein (both dairy products), soy or egg, all good sources of protein and well-known allergens. To get the 1.5 to 2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight your body requires, it's probably safer, easier and cheaper to consume protein-rich lean meats and alternatives.



The 411 on Whole Foods

The term “whole food” refers to foods that are minimally processed or not processed at all. Examples include whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and legumes. When purchasing breads, look for “whole grains” but don't be misled by the term “multi-grain.” These foods contain many grains but they may not necessarily be whole. Whole grains contain an outer bran layer, which is lost, along with most of the nutrients, when processed into refined flour. With fruits and vegetables, note that “whole” doesn't mean it is “organic.” Eating organic will reduce exposure to pesticides or other chemicals used in growing conventional produce. The benefit of consuming whole



foods is to enhance the amount of overall nutrients consumed – in particular, fibre, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Fibre helps lower total cholesterol, decreasing the risk of heart disease. Some seasonal whole foods to look forward to at this time of year include blueberries, raspberries, arugula, corn, Swiss chard, tomatoes and summer squash.

Juice Cleansing

The idea of juice cleansing – drinking fresh vegetable juices, fruit juices and water for anything from a few days to several weeks – has been around for some time. While it's a great way to add servings of fruit and vegetables to your diet, there are some significant drawbacks.

Even if made from the purest quality fruits and vegetables, the fibre is broken down in juice. Juice doesn't break down slowly in your body and sustain energy the same way the whole fruit or vegetable would.

Juice is not a well-balanced meal or snack on its own as it is 100% carbohydrate energy and doesn't offer any quality protein or fat. Although most people need five to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables per day, that doesn't mean 20 servings is better.

If you enjoy fresh juice blends of fruits and vegetables, limit portions to 4-8 ounces. Accompany them with a handful of nuts, yogurt or other sources of protein for some staying power. People who have diabetes, or issues where tight blood sugar control is ideal, should be cautious about juice intake. In adults concerned about weight management, juice should be kept to a minimum due to the high number of calories that can be consumed without realizing it.



Wrinkles should merely indicate where the smiles have been.

Mark Twain, Author

The Scoop

Ice cream . . . the perfect summertime treat. Unfortunately, most ice cream is high in saturated fat and sugar and a 1/2 cup serving (4 oz) supplies about 150 calories. It's not all bad news, though. Some ice creams provide 4% of your daily calcium, 8% of vitamin A and sometimes up to 10% of your daily iron needs.

Most ice creams have around 5 grams of fat per 1/2 cup, while premium ice creams

have 10 grams. Fortunately, there's an expanded offering of reduced fat, fat-free or no-added sugar products. Sorbets, gelato and fruit bars are alternatives with far less fat, but can have up to 20 grams of sugar per small serving. Frozen yogurt may be a healthier option, but read labels closely as it may contain only slightly less fat and sugar than regular ice cream.



Time to BBQ

It's barbecue season. Here are some helpful tips to ensure you have the best BBQ experience.

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw meat.
- Marinate meat in the refrigerator, not on the counter.
- Remember not to put cooked food on the same plate that held raw meat. This prevents it from being re-contaminated by raw juices.
- Raw meat should always be stored in a refrigerator or cooler at 4°C (40°F) or below.
- Wash the thermometer in hot, soapy water between temperature readings.



Feeling HOT, HOT, HOT

Not sure what temperatures you should be cooking your food at? Here's a quick guide. Use a digital food thermometer to be sure!

Food temperature for beef, veal and lamb
(pieces and whole cuts)
Medium-rare 63°C (145°F)
Medium 71°C (160°F)
Well done 77°C (170°F)

Pork (pieces and whole cuts)
71°C (160°F)

Poultry (e.g., chicken, turkey, duck)
Pieces 74°C (165°F)
Whole 85°C (185°F)

Ground meat and meat mixtures
(e.g., burgers, sausages, meatballs, meatloaf, casseroles)
Beef, veal, lamb and pork 71°C (160°F)
Poultry 74°C (165°F)
Egg dishes 74°C (165°F)

Information courtesy of Health Canada

Happiness is nothing more than good health and a bad memory.
Albert Schweitzer, Theologian

Bosom Buddies – Breast Cancer in Women Under 40

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer deaths in Canadian women. While many of us think about breast cancer as a disease of older women, around 1,500 cases (7%) of breast cancers diagnosed each year are in women aged 40 and younger.

The Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation recently announced new investments in research targeting breast cancer in women in this age bracket. Breast cancer in women 40 and younger tends to be more advanced at the time of diagnosis and also more aggressive and resistant to treatment.

Younger women are not eligible for provincial breast cancer screening mammography. However, the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation has these tips for *Wellness Matters* readers:

Reduce your risk By living well – being a healthier body weight, eating a more balanced diet, getting regular physical activity, limiting your alcohol consumption and quitting smoking – you can help reduce your risk of breast cancer.

Talk to your health care provider about your personal risk If you have a family history of breast or ovarian cancer, family members



with a genetic mutation such as BRCA1 or BRCA2, or a personal history of cancer speak to a health care provider about your breast cancer risk and your options for breast cancer screening.

Be breast aware! Know how your breasts normally look and feel. There's no right way to check your breasts. Find a way that is

comfortable for you. If you find any breast changes, talk to a health-care provider.

Learn more about breast health at www.cbcf.org



Don't Cry, Baby

Summertime usually brings to mind lazy days and warm breezes, not watery eyes and ongoing sneezes. But for many Canadians, it's allergy season.

Just as in the spring, pollen is the most common allergy trigger. It can travel hundreds of kilometres in the wind, and when it gets into the nose it can trigger characteristic symptoms such as a runny nose, coughing, itchy eyes and dark circles under the eyes.

The pollen is not from trees but from grasses and weeds. Ragweed, sagebrush and tumbleweed, as well as timothy, bermuda and sweet-vernal grasses are among the worst offenders.

Allergies can be treated with antihistamines, corticosteroids or decongestants. These may interfere with other medicines, so be sure to consult your physician or your pharmacist first. There are other ways to reduce symptoms or avoid them altogether. Try to stay inside when pollen counts are high (check *The Weather Network's* pollen forecast). Keep doors and windows closed if possible to keep allergens out and consider using an air purifier. It helps to clean home air filters regularly. If you're mowing your lawn, wear a mask. And change your clothes after being outside since they may have pollen on them.

The first time I see a jogger smiling, I'll consider it.
Joan Rivers, Comedian

Anxiety Over Health Isn't Healthy

At some point, we've all felt a twinge, cough or unfamiliar ache and wondered if it is serious.

In most cases, the concern passes with the symptoms. But for some, physical sensations can trigger chronic and debilitating mental distress. Health anxiety, also referred to as hypochondria, is known to encompass a broad range of conditions, including panic and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD).

Dr. Martin M. Antony, co-author of *Overcoming Health*

Anxiety, says that when worry and obsessive research over symptoms begin to interfere with work, home life or relationships, it's time to seek help.

Treatments may include antidepressant medication or cognitive behavioural therapy, which can help you identify and challenge anxiety-causing beliefs and examine them in a more realistic light. Always remember to see a counsellor or your physician if you are concerned about health anxiety.



A Prescription for Laughter

Therapeutic laughter isn't well researched, but a few recent studies show what chuckle fans everywhere suspect: laughter does you good.

Researchers at the University of Oxford in the U.K. found that 15 minutes of watching comedy with others can increase pain thresholds by 10% – possibly through stress-relieving endorphins triggered by abdominal contractions. Other preliminary studies have linked mirthful laughter to enhanced memory, reduced levels of stress hormones, improved blood flow and even, to a small degree, an increase in the number of calories we burn.

Sadly, as we hit our working years our tendency to laugh drops away – in one study, 30% of children observed in public settings

made merry, compared to only 17% of those between 31 and 60.

Here are three tips to jump-start your jolly:

Be social: Laughter is contagious and we laugh 30 times more when we're around others.

Look for the funny: What hits your funny bone? Which friends crack you up? Keep track of these things and seek them out when you haven't laughed in a while.

Fake it to make it: Tests by the Laughter Research Network in Spain (Organización Mundial de la Risa) show that laughter may not need to be real to be beneficial. The popularity of laughter clubs and laughter yoga is proof that forcing a laugh can lead to genuine hilarity.

To eat is a necessity, but to eat intelligently is an art.
Francois de La Rochefoucauld, Author



Mental health in the workplace

In November 2012, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) published a set of strategies aimed at better understanding mental health in the workplace.

The goal is to meet the needs of people of all ages living with mental health problems and illnesses and their families, and to leave the social stigma of mental health behind.

Margaret Tebbutt, a senior consultant at the Canadian Mental Health Association's B.C. division told *Wellness Matters* that the new strategies are a big leap forward in showing a greater understanding of mental health illnesses in the workplace.

"Between the ages of 18 and 65 we spend a lot of our waking hours at work. Previously there has been a lot of focus on making sure we are supported physically through such changes as ergonomic workstations and healthy eating support. Today we are seeing an awareness about the need to promote mental health for all," says Tebbutt.

She adds that, with increasing stressors, the workplace can be a place to either add to those stresses or support the individuals, and she believes that the new national standard will help map a new world of work for Canadians.

For information on mental health in the workplace visit www.cmha.ca.

Tic Talk

Tics can be a veritable grenade in the social minefield, but this neurobiological disorder is more common than you think. Montreal's Tic Disorder Studies Centre says that up to 20% of people have experienced a tic or habit disorder.

Tics can be vocal or muscular, and both types can be alienating and embarrassing, and a source of social anxiety, poor self-image and depression. Some people may attempt to conceal a tic with gestures or coughing; others may avoid social interaction altogether. With ongoing focus and behavioural training, many find they can reduce or delay tics. However, strong emotions like anger, anxiety, boredom or frustration can be a trigger.

If you are troubled by a co-worker's tic, approach the situation with compassion. Accept distraction as part of office life, and use earplugs, headphones or white-noise generators to mask outside sound.

If you have a tic yourself, inform human resources so they can educate on your behalf. Examine your environment for potential triggers, making changes where you can, and find a private place for "tic breaks" if needed. If someone approaches you directly, try not to be defensive. Explaining your condition with openness and good humour can ease tension. Most of all, always remember that you have a right to a workplace that is free from discrimination.



Types of Tics

Simple Tics

Blinking or grimacing
Joint-cracking
Coughing
Yelping or clucking

Complex Tics

Drumming fingers
Knee-bends
Compulsive statements
Adjusting clothes or hair

Redefining Asperger's Syndrome



The term "Asperger's Syndrome"

has been removed from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* and replaced with the broader definition of "autism spectrum disorder."

Asperger Manitoba Inc. describes Asperger's Syndrome as a neurodevelopmental disorder. It shares many of the same characteristics as autism, including difficulty within the realm of social interaction, communication and understanding, and displaying appropriate emotions. Sometimes people with Asperger's Syndrome also experience anxiety, depression and various learning disabilities.

According to the Asperger's Society of Ontario, it is believed that as many as one in 165 individuals in Canada have some form of Asperger's Syndrome.

You can never get a cup of tea large enough or a book long enough to suit me.

C.S. Lewis, Author



Swimming Tips

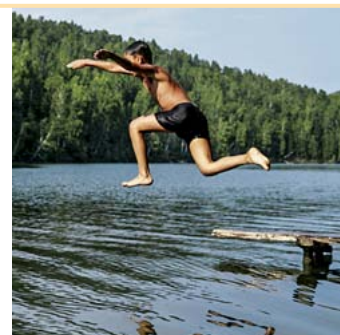
- Avoid wasting energy when you do the front crawl. Keep elbows high, but hands close to the water surface as you bring each arm out of the water to prepare for a new stroke.
- The muscles in the shoulder area (particularly the rotator cuff muscles) are highly prone to injury. Poor technique and overuse can damage the shoulder area.
- Most swimmers concentrate on efficiently moving the arms through

the water and forget to move other parts of the body. It's necessary to rotate all the way from your hips up to your head so that the shoulders rotate as much as 45 to 60 degrees. This enables an increased stroke length and reduces water resistance, reducing strain on the shoulders and increasing the speed of the swim.

- Take a refresher lesson at your local recreation centre to improve your technique.

Swim Safe: Check Water Quality

Canada has over 30,000 lakes where you can enjoy outdoor swimming. Each province follows its own standards for testing water quality. Contact the city's public health department, or the provincial ministry of the environment to see the reports for lakes you'd like to visit. Alternatively, visit www.swimguide.org for a list of Canadian beaches and water quality ratings.



Health Benefits of Cold-Water Swimming **Chill Factor**

Hit the beach this summer! Studies show swimming in colder water burns more calories, increases metabolism, strengthens the immune system, boosts circulation and even improves sex life.

Whether you choose to swim in a lake, an ocean, or your community pool, water activity promises many health and fitness benefits. If the exercise is vigorous, swimming can increase aerobic fitness levels by challenging the heart and lungs. It can also improve strength because water adds resistance against moving limbs. Water can support up to an estimated 90% of your body weight, making water activity a shock-free workout that cushions the joints.

Swimming in colder water has additional benefits. Your body works harder to keep you warm, therefore boosting circulation and burning more calories. Your immune system gets a boost too as it reacts to the sudden change in temperature by increasing its white blood cell production. The endorphin rush when you hit the colder water creates a natural high that elevates your mood.

In addition, colder water has been attributed to boosting libido. In a study where participants took daily cold baths, there was an increased production of testosterone in men and estrogen in women. Just remember to see your physician or chat to a personal trainer before swimming in colder water.



I cook with wine, sometimes I even add it to the food.
W.C. Fields, Comedian and Actor

Time for some Zzzzzzz's

During sleep the body repairs itself

from physical and mental stress. After a good workout, sleep loss will interfere with the recuperation and rebuilding process. In addition, lack of sleep can affect reflexes, so you won't be operating at peak performance during your workout or sport.

It was once believed that six hours of sleep was enough to repair the wear and tear on the brain and the body. Research has found that sleeping only four hours nightly for two weeks shows impairment equal to two days

without sleep. However, those who slept for six hours had impairment equal to one night without sleep. Surprisingly, the study participants reported feeling only slightly sleepy, despite the drastic decline in their mind and body performances.

Lack of sleep can also cause muscle loss and impact attempts to lose weight. Sleep deprivation lowers the level of leptin, a protein that suppresses appetite and increases the hormone ghrelin, which stimulates appetite.

During the deepest stage of



sleep, your body gets most of its daily dose of human growth hormone (HGH). This is responsible for the growth, maintenance and repair of muscle. The body needs sleep to release HGH to facilitate these processes. With sleep loss, the body lacks the exposure to HGH to keep muscles healthy. Muscle tissue becomes weak, which will

affect muscle development and tone. Muscle is the key to a faster metabolic rate. The more muscle you have, the more efficiently you'll burn body fat.

Our bodies need to rest and recuperate and a good night's sleep is necessary for everyone. The average amount of sleep needed by an adult is about seven or eight hours.

Music on the Brain

If you listen to music while exercising, your brain will probably work better too. That's according to a Canadian study entitled *The Rewarding Aspects of Music Listening Are Related to Degree of Emotional Arousal*. Here is a list of 10 workout songs to keep your body and mind stimulated. Remember, if you are training outdoors you should always be alert.



I Want it All - Queen
Jump Around - House of Pain
Start Me Up - Rolling Stones
Carmina Burana - Carl Orff
Beautiful Day - U2
Lose Yourself - Eminem
Rebel Yell - Billy Idol
Wake Up - Rage Against the Machine
Born to Run - Bruce Springsteen
The Heat Is On - Glenn Frey

Wake Up Willpower!

A new study has found it may be possible to increase your willpower to help kick-start your exercise regime.

Researchers at The Miriam Hospital's Weight Control and Diabetes Research Center in the U.S. found that self-control is potentially malleable, much like a muscle, and that inhibiting impulses may help people lose weight, eat healthier and increase their physical activity.

Participants of the study found that they experienced increased self-control by forcing themselves to do physical activity when they would rather stay home. Time to get off the sofa, even if your body and mind are trying to tell you otherwise!



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