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HealthyLiving

The Truth about Kids and Smoking

Every day more than 3,800 children ages 12 to 17 in the United States smoke their first cigarette, according to the 2012 US Surgeon General's report, putting themselves at risk for nicotine addiction and the many diseases associated with smoking.

Among the report's key statistics:

- More than 3 million high school students and 600,000 middle school students smoke.
- One out of 4 high school seniors is a regular cigarette smoker.
- About 80% of high school smokers will continue to smoke into adulthood.
- 88% of adults who smoke daily started smoking by age 18; 99% started by age 26.

The report says if young people can remain free of tobacco until age 18, most will never start smoking. But to do that, they have to resist marketing strategies by tobacco companies.

Tobacco marketing

The Surgeon General's report says tobacco companies spent almost \$10 billion to market cigarettes in 2008 – the latest year for which numbers are available. That effort was primarily aimed at reducing the price of cigarettes, which makes them more attractive to adolescents.

Flavored cigarettes – which appeal to children – are against the law, but flavored cigars aren't. Cigarette-sized cigars are sold in flavors like grape and strawberry, and look like cigarettes. Nearly one-third of high school seniors have tried a cigar.

Many smokeless products like chew, snuff, and dissolvable tobacco come in flavors. So does the tobacco used in hookahs, a type of water pipe. A survey of high school seniors in 2010 found that 17% had used hookahs in the past year.

Anti-tobacco efforts at home

The report says quit-smoking programs are effective when they combine mass media campaigns, price increases, and smoke-free policies in schools and communities. But parents can do a lot, too.

- Set an example by not using tobacco yourself.
- Talk to your children about the dangers of tobacco.
- Tell your children you expect them to never use tobacco – or if they already do – to quit.
- Be aware of what your children are doing and who their friends are.
- Network with other parents who can help you encourage children and teens to refuse tobacco.
- Encourage your children's schools to enforce tobacco-free policies.



CLICK HERE

to learn about the American Cancer Society Great American Smokeout® on November 15.

A Healthy Diet Is No Fad

That latest diet promises to melt away the pounds in record time, and your coworker says she was able to fit into her old jeans in just a week. Sound too good to be true? It probably is.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), diets that severely restrict calories or the types of foods you can eat usually fail in the long run. Most people quickly tire of them and gain back the weight they lost. What's more, fad diets often fail to provide all the nutrients your body needs.

Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight requires more than short-term dietary changes. It requires a lifestyle change that includes developing long-term healthy eating and exercise habits. A healthy diet emphasizes vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. It may include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts. And it's low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

To lose weight, you must use up more calories than you take in. Since 1 pound equals 3,500 calories, you need to cut 500 to 1,000 calories per day to lose about 1 to 2 pounds per week. You can do this by eating fewer calories and increasing your physical activity.

Once you achieve a healthy weight, eating well and getting physical activity most days of the week can help you keep off the weight for good. And that can help you control your cholesterol, blood pressure, and blood sugar, and help you prevent heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and some cancers.



[CLICK HERE](#) for the American Cancer Society Guidelines for Nutrition and Physical Activity.



[CLICK HERE](#) for more tips and recipes to help you and your family make healthy eating choices.

Good to the Last Crumb

The sandwich, star of the brown-bag lunch, is loved for its versatility and portability. Legend has it the name comes from the Earl of Sandwich, who ordered roast beef between two slices of bread one night in 1762, so he could continue gambling while eating.

Today's sandwiches range from the economical peanut butter and jelly to the world's most expensive sandwich – the von Essen Platinum Club. According to Guinness World Records, the von Essen Platinum Club Sandwich, served at Cliveden in Buckinghamshire, England, costs the equivalent of about \$200. Three slices of 24-hour-fermented sourdough bread surround Iberico ham, poulet de Bresse (chicken), white truffles, quail eggs, and semi-dried Italian tomatoes.

For your every-day lunch, consider these ways to add vegetables and fiber to your sandwich while cutting fat.

- Choose whole-grain or pita bread.
- Choose low-fat versions of deli meats and cheeses.
- Top with mustard, relish, ketchup, or low-fat mayonnaise.
- Add flavor and vitamins with roasted sweet peppers, lettuce, tomato, jalapeños, and a little bit of chopped olives.
- To make a healthier version of PB&J, try peanut or almond butter on whole-grain bread with banana slices or raisins.

A Shot of Prevention

You know children need vaccinations to prevent potentially life-threatening illnesses, but what about you? Are you at risk? The truth is, the immunity provided by childhood vaccinations can fade, and new diseases can pop up. So the short answer: even grown-ups need to stay up to date with their vaccinations, not just to prevent their own sickness, but to keep the kids and the elderly adults around them healthy, too.



[CLICK HERE](#) to read about getting the flu shot if you've had cancer.

Which vaccinations do you need? That depends on your age, lifestyle, health, travel, and vaccination history. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says, generally speaking, adults may need vaccinations for:

- Seasonal flu: for all adults, every year
- Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough)
- Shingles (for adults age 60 and older)
- Pneumonia (for adults age 65 and older with certain health conditions)
- Hepatitis B (for adults with diabetes or who are at risk for the disease)
- HPV
- Hepatitis A
- Chickenpox
- Measles, mumps, and rubella

The best course of action is to ask your doctor which vaccines are right for you.

Baby Your Back

How's your back? According to MayoClinic.com, most people in the US will experience low back pain at least once during their lives. Back pain can include muscle aches, shooting or stabbing pain, and pain that travels down your leg.

You may be able to avoid back pain by taking steps to keep your back healthy and strong:

- **Be physically active.** Regular low-impact aerobic activities, like walking and swimming, can increase strength and endurance in your back and allow your muscles to function better.
- **Strengthen your core.** Abdominal and back exercises help condition your muscles so they work together to protect your back. They also increase flexibility in your hips and upper legs to properly align your pelvic bones. (See On the Ball, also on this page.)
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Carrying too much weight puts strain on your back muscles.
- **Quit smoking.** Smokers have diminished oxygen levels in their spinal tissues, which can slow the healing process.
- **Lift with your legs.** When lifting a heavy load, keep it close to your body and bend only at the knees. Keep your back straight and avoid twisting while you lift.
- **Sit properly.** Choose a seat with good lower back support, arm rests, and a swivel base. Keep your knees level with your hips. Consider placing a pillow or rolled towel in the curve of your back.

On the Ball

It looks like a big beach ball, but a fitness ball – also called an exercise ball or a stability ball – is seriously effective in training your core. Core exercises strengthen the muscles in your pelvis, lower back, hips and abdomen to give you better balance and stability in every activity you do, even just bending down to tie your shoes.

You can do many core-strength exercises with a fitness ball, but the ball can help you tone the rest of your body, too. Exercises like squats, shoulder presses, and biceps curls take on an added level of difficulty when done with a ball. Fitness balls come in different sizes. Choose one that allows your knees to bend at a right angle when you sit on it with your feet flat on the floor.

Of course, if you have back problems or any other health concern, get your doctor's OK before starting any ball routine.



The Sweet Potato: How Sweet It Is!

Sweet potatoes pack a powerful vitamin A punch – 1 medium sweet potato provides 5 times your recommended daily allowance!

Americans sometimes call dark-skinned sweet potatoes “yams,” which are actually a different plant species popular in South and Central America, the West Indies, and parts of Asia and Africa. Neither the dark-skinned nor the light-skinned sweet potatoes widely available in the US are yams.

Choose sweet potatoes that are firm and do not have any cracks, bruises, or soft spots. They should be stored in a cool, dark, well-ventilated space – like a pantry – where they will stay fresh for up to 10 days.

They can be boiled, roasted, baked, microwaved, or grilled – eaten plain or tossed with olive oil and herbs. They can be substituted for regular potatoes in recipes or mashed with oranges, pineapples, apples, and pecans or sweetened and spiced with cinnamon, nutmeg, brown sugar, and maple syrup. Our recipe for baked sweet potatoes comes from the American Cancer Society cookbook *Celebrate! Healthy Entertaining for Any Occasion*.

Baked Sweet Potato Wedges

Cooking spray

4 large sweet potatoes, scrubbed, eyes removed, cut lengthwise into ¾-inch wedges

1 teaspoon paprika

1 tablespoon brown sugar

1 teaspoon garlic salt

1 teaspoon cinnamon

Dash of cayenne pepper (optional)



Preheat oven to 400° F. Lightly spray nonstick baking dish or cast-iron skillet with cooking spray. Spray potato wedges with cooking spray and toss with spices in a bowl.

Place potatoes in a single layer in the baking dish or skillet. Bake for 20 minutes. Turn over and bake an additional 20 minutes.

Serves 8.

Approximate per serving: 125 calories, 0 grams of fat.



[CLICK HERE](#) to order this and other great books from the American Cancer Society bookstore.

In the Next Issue: • Stay Active and Eat Healthy While Traveling • Is Your Child Overweight? •
Recipe: Light Orange Cheesecake

Articles contributed by Stacy Simon and Becky Slemons.

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