



**HEALTH & WELLNESS
NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER 2019**

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HIGHLIGHTS for the December 2019 Newsletter

Deck the Halls with Avocados to Lower Cholesterol

How about the giving yourself the gift of good health this year? Instead of decking the halls with more cookies, sweets, and desserts, there's something you can eat every day to lower cholesterol and your risk for a heart attack or stroke. Learn more.

It's a Wonderful Workout: 5 Smart Ways to Be More Active

Thinking about being more active, exercising, and improving your health? Why wait until New Year's? Now is always the best time to get started. Check out these popular ways to workout, burn calories, and improve your health.

The 'Star Wars' Strategy to Prevent Chronic Disease

Darth Vader and his estranged son and Jedi Knight Luke Skywalker didn't exactly have the best relationship in Star Wars. But something happened before Vader died that may have helped Skywalker feel better, live longer, and be healthier. Use this same Star Wars strategy to prevent chronic disease.

Y-Axis: The 10-Second Secret to Prevent Weight Gain

Lose weight in 10 seconds a day. No it's not another gimmicky supplement, workout program, or made-for-TV exercise equipment. But it works. Ready to change the way you think about food and fitness? Here's what you need to know.

Recipe: Avocado Salsa

Here's a festive and colorful way to eat healthy during the holiday season. Make your own avocado salsa. Give this easy-to-make recipe a try.

Ask the Wellness Doctor

Dr. Brittany Carter answers this month's Ask the Wellness Doctor question: Why do my joints hurt when it's cold outside?

Health Challenge

Take the month-long Health Challenge: Fall-Proof Your House: Reduce the risk for falls and injuries at home.

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THE Y AXIS



The 10-Second Secret to Prevent Weight Gain

What if you could lose weight or prevent weight gain in just 10 seconds a day?

Sounds like a late-night infomercial. But wait...there's more.

Got holiday-weight gain on your mind? All you need is 10 seconds a day.



That's about how long it takes to step on a scale and weigh yourself. New research shows that a daily weigh-in can help you lose weight or maintain your weight.¹

Why? You're more likely to make better food choices and be more active when you see the scale.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor: well@wellsources.com

Deck the Halls with Avocados

An avocado a day helps lower bad cholesterol levels

Setting out a Christmas Eve snack for Santa? It's no wonder the Jolly Old Elf is obese. There isn't enough holiday magic to turn a plate of cookies and glass of whole milk into health foods.

In fact, dairy products, animal fats, and foods made with butter and cream are high in saturated fat. Too much of them raises LDL (bad) cholesterol levels. Over time, this can block blood vessels and limit blood flow to the heart and brain. Bad cholesterol raises the risk for a heart attack or stroke.

What's a heart healthy holiday snack? It's good. It's green. And it contains healthy fats that help lower bad cholesterol. The answer: Deck the halls and your plate with avocados.

A recent study showed just how healthy avocados can be. Eating one a day for five weeks helped obese people lower bad cholesterol.² In the United States, about 72 percent of adults are overweight or obese.³

Healthy fats and antioxidants in avocados can also help:

- Prevent plaque build-up on artery walls
- Reduce the risk for heart attack or stroke
- Lower the risk for certain types of cancer
- Improve blood pressure
- Lower triglycerides
- Support brain function
- Control hunger and aid in weight management

MORE

Try these avocado recipes tinyurl.com/ajh3yav

Spread avocado on whole-grain toast. Try veggie dip made with avocado. Add avocado to a salad or sandwich. And leave a healthy snack for Santa: carrot sticks and guacamole. His reindeer will thank you. @

It's a Wonderful Workout: 5 Smart Ways to Be More Active

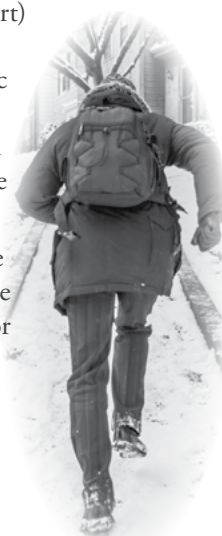
Improve your life with 30 minutes of exercise a day

George Bailey (played by Jimmy Stewart) thought his life was anything but wonderful. But by the end of the classic movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, he had a plan. He said: "I know what I'm gonna do tomorrow, and the next day, and the next year, and the year after that."

Here's one way to improve your life: Be active at least 30 minutes a day. Exercise does more than help you get in shape or lose a few pounds. It can also improve your mood, something Bailey needed.

'Now' is Always the Best Time

You might be thinking about starting a new fitness routine after the holidays. But why wait?



Here are five ideas for a wonderful workout:⁴

- 1. Go for a walk.** It's the easiest way to get started.
- 2. Use a fitness tracking device, smart watch, or mobile app.** Set a daily goal for steps, calories burned, heart rate, and more. Keep track. Try to improve a little each week.
- 3. Do high-intensity interval training (HIIT).** Raise your heart rate and burn more calories with short workouts. Try jumping jacks, burpees, and curl-ups. Perform an exercise for 1 minute. Rest 30 seconds. Then move on to the next exercise. Repeat.
- 4. Workout with a group.** You're more likely to exercise when you know others are counting on you. Take a group fitness class at the gym. Join a walking club. Or find a workout partner.



RECIPE Avocado Salsa

How about adding a little green to your plate this holiday season? Try this healthy, easy-to-make recipe for avocado salsa:⁶

Ingredients

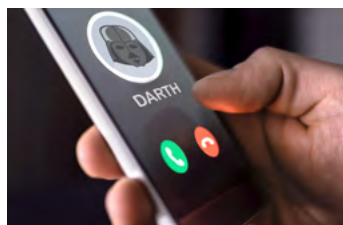
- 6 avocados, peel and core
- 2 green-husk tomatoes, peel and wash
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded
- ¼ C fresh-cut cilantro
- ½ garlic clove, minced
- ¼ C onion, diced
- ½ C water
- ½ Lemon or lime, juice only
- ¼ tsp salt

Directions

1. Add all ingredients to a blender.
2. Pulse until desired consistency is reached.
3. Pour into serving bowls.
4. Serve with fresh-cut vegetables or whole-grain crackers.

Serves 6. 120 calories per serving.

The 'Star Wars' Strategy to Prevent Chronic Disease



Positive family relationships linked to better health

Health benefits of strong relationships
tinyurl.com/okgjwzg

When *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* opens in theaters this month, Luke Skywalker's legacy and the Force is bound to continue. But it might not have turned out that way.

Something happened that helped Skywalker achieve Jedi status years earlier. His father, Darth Vader, mended their relationship when he said: "I am your father... Search your feelings. You know it to be true."

How are your family relationships? Research shows strained family relationships may increase the risk for chronic disease, stroke, headaches, stomach problems, and even early death.⁷ But you can take steps to improve relationships and your health.

The holidays can be a good time to strengthen family bonds. Pick up the phone. Send a text, e-mail, card or letter. Plan a get-together. You'll feel better and be healthier. Here are some things you can do:

Keep promises. If you say you're going to do something, make it happen. If you don't think you can keep a promise, say so. Just be honest.

Apologize. Stuff happens. People make mistakes. You can't make it to your kid's soccer game. You miss a family event. If you make a mistake, apologize. Let people know you're sorry.

Listen. Pay attention when someone is talking. Ask questions. Restate to make sure you know what the other person said.

Be supportive. When someone you care about is facing a challenge, step in and help out when you can. Offer encouragement. Let them know you care. @

It's a Wonderful Workout: 5 Smart Ways to Be More Active (continued from page 1)

5. Build strength. It's not just for bodybuilders and athletes. Strength training builds muscle and makes your bones strong. You can lift weights or do exercises

MORE

10 reasons to get moving...today!
tinyurl.com/ul9o3o7

that use your body weight, like push-ups and squats. Want to live a wonderful life? Make exercise part of your daily routine. @

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Take the December Health Challenge!

[Fall Proof Your Home: Reduce the risk for falls and injuries at home](#)

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Brittany Carter answers the question:

[Why do my joints hurt when it's cold outside?](#)



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STAYIN' ALIVE
Talking about safety isn't enough.

WELLNESS CHALLENGE

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Fall-Proof Your House

CHALLENGE

Reduce the risk for falls and injuries at home

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Fall-Proof Your House.”
2. Create a plan to make your home safer to prevent falls.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



Time to take the dogs out. That’s how it all started for country-music star Carrie Underwood.

She put a leash on her two dogs, Ace and Penny. Then she stepped outside her home near Nashville, Tennessee. It was part of the nightly routine before heading to bed.

But that night in November 2017, was anything but routine. Underwood missed a step and tripped. Clinging to the dog leashes in one hand, she reached out to break the fall with her other hand. And that’s when it happened.

The fall broke her wrist and injured her face. She needed surgery and a metal plate to repair her wrist. Cuts on her face required more than 40 stitches around her mouth. Underwood took an extended break from performing after that to recover. She warned her fans she might not look the same even after she fully recovered.

Yet, the fall didn’t keep her down. Five months later, she sang *Cry Pretty* at the Academy of Country Music Awards. She received a standing ovation.

“It’s crazy how a freak random accident can change your life,” Underwood wrote on her blog after the fall.

Ever taken a fall at home? It happens. When you’re young and healthy, you might bounce back from a fall-related injury like Underwood. A fall when you’re older can cause serious injuries that take longer to heal. Not every fall can be prevented. But there are many things you can do to make your home safer.

How much do you know about the risks of falling? Take the quiz to find out:

T F

1. More than 800,000 people a year end up in the hospital because of a fall.
2. About 1 in 5 falls result in a serious injury like a broken bone.
3. Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injury.
4. About 40 percent of all nursing home admissions occur after a fall.
5. Half of all accidental deaths at home are caused by a fall.

How did you do? If you answered any of these statements incorrectly, you could benefit from learning more about how to fall-proof your home. An estimated 8 million people a year end up in the hospital because of a fall.⁴ Not all falls are preventable, but taking action to make your home safer will reduce your risk for a fall or injury.

Answers: 1. False. 2. True. 3. True. 4. True. 5. True



Watch Your Step

Nobody plans to lose their balance and fall. It just happens.

One minute you’re carrying groceries up the stairs, and the next minute you’re sprawled out on the ground.

You get in a hurry. Something catches you off balance, and you stumble your way to the floor. It can happen anywhere.

You might not even realize it, but your home may have potential hazards that increase the risk for falling such as:

- A slick or wet floor
- Clutter (toys, clothes, tools, etc.)
- An uneven driveway
- Furniture, rugs, or electrical cords
- Missing or broken handrails on stairs
- Poor lighting for halls, rooms, or walkways
- Pets or children playing
- A slippery tub or shower floor
- Tripping hazards in the yard (potholes, yard debris, mud, ice, etc.)

There’s all kinds of things in and around your home that could be a fall risk, so watch your step. Fall risk is greatest for older people.¹ But Underwood’s recent fall is a reminder that it can happen to anybody.

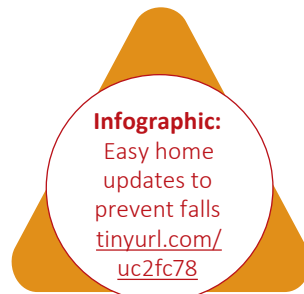


9 Ways to Fall-Proof Your Home

The good news is that making simple changes at home can cut your risk of falling. In one recent study, researchers found that small changes to fall-proof homes could prevent an estimated 400,000 falls per year.² That could be you or someone you care about.

Take a look around your house and yard. What's in the way that could cause a fall? Is there something you can change or modify to prevent tripping? Research shows that taking steps to make your home safer can make a difference.³ Here are some things you can do to fall-proof your home:

- 1. Clean up clutter.** Instead of walking around that pile of toys or stack of mail, clean them up. Recycle. Organize. Donate. Hire a professional if you need help to organize and get rid of clutter.
- 2. Rearrange.** Take a look at where you walk in your home. Halls, bedrooms, kitchen, doorways, garage, and other living spaces. You may need to rearrange furniture or electronic devices and cords. Maybe you need to put your pet's food bowl, kennel, or other supplies in another area. Or you may want to tape down or remove throw rugs. Rearrange to clear a path for walking safely.
- 3. Improve bathroom safety.** Here's a simple way to fall-proof your bathroom. Add grab bars on the walls above the tub or in the shower, and next to the toilet. Slip-proof mats for the tub and bathroom floor can help, too.
- 4. Make stairs safer.** Every flight of stairs should have a secure handrail and good lighting. Make repairs to any steps that are loose, weak, or have loose carpeting.
- 5. Brighten up.** Low or dim lighting can lead to falls, so brighten things up. Make sure the primary areas where you walk are well lit. Install night lights. Use lamps. And keep flashlights handy to find your way in the dark without falling.



- 6. Maintain outdoor areas.** Take care of your yard. Keep sidewalks and driveways clear. Be prepared to remove snow and ice. If your driveway or sidewalk is damaged or uneven, repair it.
- 7. Repair damaged flooring.** Don't wait for that creaky board, frayed carpeting, or loose floorboard to become a problem. Repair it as soon as possible. Always clean up spills right away.
- 8. Use a step ladder.** Need something on a shelf too high to reach? Don't stand on a pile of boxes or overextend your reach because it's faster. Use a step ladder. Or rearrange those items so they're not so hard to reach.
- 9. Wear shoes with a rubber sole.** Slippers, socks, or shoes with a slick-flat sole increase your risk for a fall, especially on slick surfaces like bathroom tiles or wood floors.

Taking steps to fall-proof your home will help prevent accidents that could cause serious injury or worse. If you're at risk for falling, using a walker or cane and doing balance exercises can help, too. It's worth a little bit of time and effort to stay safe and on your feet.

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Fall-Proof Your House

CHALLENGE
Reduce the risk for falls and injuries at home

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Create your own plan to fall-proof your house.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to reduce the risk of falls and injuries at home. You must do this on at least 22 days this month to complete this challenge. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
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_____ Number of days this month I took action to reduce the risk of falls and injuries at home
 _____ Number of days this month I was physically active for at least 30 minutes



Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____

ASK THE DOCTOR

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Q. Why do my joints hurt when it's cold outside?

A. You know Old Man Winter is on the way because your knee hurts. Maybe you've predicted the next cold front based on joint-pain flare-ups. Or maybe every time you have aches and pains, the weather changes. Sound familiar? If you think aching joints can predict the weather, you're not alone.

More than a hundred million people living in the United States have pain, including joint pain.¹ Some research shows that sunny days with low humidity can help ease joint pain.² But when the weather changes, there's a spike in online searches about how to manage muscle aches and pains.³ So what's going on when you wake up on a cold and rainy day with joint pain?

Weather-related joint pain: Here's what's happening...

One group of researchers looked at 12 studies about weather and joint pain.⁴ They found that when there's a drop in barometric pressure and the air gets damp, people report more joint pain and swelling. The common thought is that this change in weather can cause tendons, muscles, and tissues to expand. This can lead to joint pain that limits how you move.

But there are still some unknowns about why your joints ache when it's cold outside.

Another group of researchers compared 11 million primary care office visits with rainy days vs. non-rainy days.⁵ The result? There was no link between weather and doctor visits for joint or back pain.



The forecast of joint pain: Fact or fiction?

The idea that weather changes can lead to joint pain has been around for centuries. It may be a myth—at least at the clinical level. So why do so many people feel weather and pain go together? One idea is that the mind is more likely to lump unhappy events, like cold weather and joint pain, together, which is what researchers suggested in the rainy day vs. non-rainy day study. On the other hand, they might be related.

Some studies have found that weather can affect the body. For example, cold weather can raise blood pressure. And people may feel more pain when air pressure drops or when it's humid right after they've had surgery on their bones or muscles. A 2019 study, *Cloudy with a Chance of Pain*, saw a clear link between pain and wind, moisture, and pressure.

More studies are needed to know for sure if weather causes joint pain—and if so, why. Some health problems increase the risk of joint pain, such as high blood sugar, heart disease, arthritis, and being overweight.

ASK THE Wellness DOCTOR

If you do have joint pain and swelling, here are some things you can do:

- ✓ **Talk to your doctor.** You may have a health condition linked to joint pain. Medicine, physical therapy, and other treatment options can help.
- ✓ **Manage your weight.** Being overweight or obese raises the risk for developing joint pain in your knees. Maintain a healthy weight or lose weight if you need to.
- ✓ **Be active.** Aim for 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity. Even a little exercise can make a difference. Walk. Bike. Swim. Climb stairs. Being active can help prevent joint pain and stiffness.

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STAYIN' ALIVE

Talking about safety isn't enough.



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