



Sleep On It

It's after midnight. You're watching infomercials and TV

reruns when you know you should be asleep. If you're like most people, there aren't enough hours in the day for relaxation and everything else you would like to do.

While it may be tempting to stay up late, research shows that adults need 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night for optimal health.

If you're sleep-deprived, you're at greater risk for weight gain, high blood pressure, diabetes, and accidents. You might want to take a closer look at your sleep habits if you're feeling sluggish throughout the day.

Currently, one-third of U.S. adults sleep less than 7 hours a night. The most common side effects for the

sleep-deprived are difficulty concentrating and memory problems. In a recent study, five percent of the people surveyed said they nodded off or fell asleep while driving in the past 30 days. In addition, drowsy drivers cause over 40,000 accidents and 1,550 fatalities in the United States every year.

Before you grab the TV remote long after bedtime, consider these recommendations for a healthy night's sleep:

- Keep a regular sleep schedule. Aim for 7-9 hours daily.
- Avoid exercise within two hours of bedtime.
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol in the evening.
- Avoid going to bed on a full stomach.
- Sleep in a dark, quiet, room with a cool, comfortable temperature.

For more tips on a good night's sleep, visit www.wellsourc.info/wn/sleep.pdf

*Journal of the American Medical Association
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

Thumbs down on texting while driving

Your cell phone: It's an evolutionary appendage. You check your calendar, text a friend, or get directions – all with that thumb-friendly keypad. It's fast and convenient. But alarmingly, many of the 110 billion text messages sent every month in the United States come from behind the steering wheel.

Drivers spend at least five seconds at a time texting and looking away from the road, according to a recent study. At highway speeds, you could travel the length of a football field in five seconds. Researchers also found that using a cell phone while driving delays reaction time as much as driving drunk. You're 23 times more



likely to get in an accident while texting than keeping your thumbs wrapped around the steering wheel.

If you're guilty of texting while driving, resist the urge. Pull over to respond, turn your phone off, or hand it to a passenger in the car to reply.

Drews, Frank A. Text messaging during simulated driving. The Journal of Human Factors and Ergonomics Society.

Lenhart A, Ling R, Campbell S, Purcell K Teens and mobile phones. Pew Research Center.

National Highway Transportation Safety Administration.

Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association.

An Apple a Day

It's snack time. Do you drop in a few quarters for a candy bar, or choose one of the freshly polished apples? Try the apple! October is National Apple Month, and this delicious fruit delivers a host of health benefits.

Adding apples to your diet will lower your risk of heart and bone disease. In a recent study,

researchers found that apples lowered cholesterol levels and aided in reducing plaque and inflammation of the heart's artery walls. In addition, apples contain nutrients that help the body absorb calcium and lower the risk for osteoporosis.

An apple-rich diet can also help you maintain your weight. Apples are naturally low in calories, and researchers believe the fruit's pectin helps satisfy hunger. Apples are also rich in fiber, which helps regulate bowels and possibly reduce your risk of colon cancer.

Eaten right from the tree, sliced, or baked, apples are a great alternative to your candy bar craving.

*Florida State University in Tallahassee
American Journal of Clinical Nutrition
Cornell University.*



For apple-based snacks, desserts, and dishes, visit www.usapple.org/recipes

Four Ways to Reduce Your Breast Cancer Risk

Healthy living pays off when it comes to preventing breast cancer. The disease impacts 280,000 U.S. women each year, according to the American Cancer Institute. You can fight off your risk factors with these healthy lifestyle choices.



- 1. Check the Scale.** Step on the scale, take a close look at your weight, and be honest. Could you stand to lose a little weight? Managing weight is the most important thing women can do to minimize their risk of breast cancer, according to the Harvard School of Public Health. Studies show that being overweight by just 20 pounds can increase a woman's risk for breast cancer two to three times later in life. If you need to lose a few pounds, figure out a plan that will help you reach – and maintain – your goal weight.
- 2. Avoid Taking Hormones.** Hot flashes, night sweats, anxiety. They're the classic menopausal symptoms. Some women choose hormone replacement therapy to deal with the discomfort. However, in a 2002 study by the National Institute of Health, women who took hormones were 26 percent more at risk for breast

cancer than those who didn't. Fortunately, risk factors decrease two to three years after HRT is stopped. Talk to your doctor about alternatives to HRT, or about reducing the length of treatment.

- 3. Exercise.** Run, bike, walk or swim. Being active will lower your risk of breast cancer. In a study of 72,000 women by the American Cancer Institute, the most active women had a 29 percent lower risk of breast cancer than those who exercised the least. Set a goal to exercise at least 30 minutes a day.
- 4. Go Easy on the Alcohol.** After a long day, you may be tempted to pour yourself a glass of wine. However, even one drink a day raises your risk of breast cancer, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. In a seven-year British study of 1.28 million post-menopausal women, researchers found that each alcoholic drink consumed per day raised a woman's breast cancer risk by 12 percent. Go easy on the alcohol. Better yet, choose a non-alcoholic alternative.

Journal of the National Cancer Institute, National Institute of Health, American Cancer Society

Food and Exercise – Parts of the Puzzle for Diabetes Prevention

Did you know that 25.8 million people in the U.S. have diabetes? Another 79 million have prediabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association. Diabetes (having a fasting blood sugar level of 126 mg/dl or higher) can lead to blindness, kidney disease, heart disease, and other complications. Fortunately, eating right and being active are two big pieces of the puzzle that can help prevent diabetes. Here's what you can do:

- **Get more exercise.** Walk, jog, ride a bike, swim, or dance. Or do something else active that you enjoy. The goal is 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity daily.
- **Count your calories,** and watch your portions. Pay special attention to how many empty calories you eat in a day. (Empty calories are in sodas, candy, and other foods that supply little or no nutrition to your diet.) Use a food diary, online calorie counter, or smart phone app to track your calories. Go to [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) to learn about healthy food portions.

- **Choose healthy fats.**

The fats found in vegetable oils, nuts, nut butters, and trans-fat-free margarines can actually help you prevent diabetes. Use these in place of unhealthy saturated fats and trans fats in stick margarine, shortening, and deep-fried and baked goods.

- **Focus on fiber.** Foods that are high in fiber can protect against diabetes. Eat the recommended amount of fruit (2 cups daily), vegetables (2-3 cups daily), legumes and nuts (1-2 servings per day), and whole grains (at least 3 servings daily).

- **Eat unrefined foods.** When you eat whole, unrefined foods, your blood sugar level will likely be more stable. You're also not as likely to get hungry so soon. Eat brown rice, beans, peas, apples, oranges, salads, lentils, sprouted-wheat bread, steel-cut oats, nuts, and other whole foods.

Try these simple food substitutions that can save you calories.
www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/cutting_calories.html

Before someone has diabetes, he or she almost always has pre-diabetes – a condition where the blood sugar level is higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. Take action now to control your blood sugar!

It can be lifesaving.

ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

Q: I don't like giving out unhealthy candy or things that kids don't like for Halloween. What healthy Halloween treats would you suggest?

A: Go to <http://www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-halloween.pdf> to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: evan@wellsource.com, subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

Health Challenge: "Eat Plenty of Plant-based Foods" available at: www.wellsource.info/wn/hc-plant-based-foods.pdf.

A plant-based diet is rich in essential nutrients and promotes good health.