

# HEALTHY ADVANTAGE

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

## Winter Health GUIDE

MAKING SENSE  
OF LABELS

DANGERS OF  
DISTRACTED  
DRIVING

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## DON'T BE BLUE: *Frozen Is Fine*



Love blueberries and want to eat them year-round, but you're worried that frozen fruit may pack less of an antioxidant punch? Don't be. A recent study found freezing preserves the fruit's healthy qualities, while water leaching out into ice crystals actually increases the concentration of antioxidants.

Anthocyanin — the antioxidant that gives blueberries their color — helps your body reduce cell damage. So mix a handful of fresh or frozen blueberries into your cereal, smoothie or pancakes.



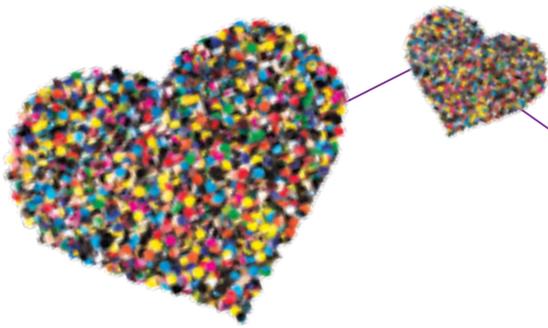
Have you noticed that your favorite foods are beginning to have words such as “whole grain” or “organic” on their packaging? Just because the packaging contains health-related wording doesn't mean the food inside is good for you. Researchers at the University of Houston found that consumers receive a “false sense of health” from nutritional claims featured on product labels. You can trust the nutrition facts label and ingredient list on the back panel to help you make an informed choice. Select items that contain a small number of familiar ingredients and those low in fat, calories, sugar and salt.

## Have Joint Pain and Stiffness?



# Eat Fish!

Recent research found that omega-3 fatty acids, found in several species of fish, such as salmon, trout and tuna, can help reduce joint pain and stiffness. Omega-3 fatty acids also increase the effectiveness of anti-inflammatory medications, which are used to ease discomfort. Your body does not produce these fatty acids on its own. To up your intake of essential fatty acids, add fish into your diet two or three times a week. One helpful tip: Choose wild salmon, which contains higher levels of omega-3 than the farmed variety. Not a fan of fish? Sprinkle walnuts or flaxseed on your salad or add them into a smoothie.



# TAKE YOUR RISK FACTORS TO Heart

CERTAIN HEART DISEASE RISK FACTORS AFFECT WOMEN MORE SERIOUSLY THAN MEN, AND SOME ARE UNIQUE TO WOMEN.

You know diabetes increases your risk for cardiac problems, but you might not know the whole story. Women with diabetes are more likely to develop heart disease than men with the condition. A 2014 study conducted by an international team of researchers, including one from Johns Hopkins University, found women with Type 2 diabetes had a 44 percent higher risk of heart disease than men with diabetes.

Other risk factors with a gender gap include:

- **C-reactive protein** — High blood levels of this substance produced by the liver may be a more accurate predictor of heart disease in women than men, according to the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions.
- **Metabolic syndrome** — Research indicates this collection of risk factors, including waist size, high blood pressure and low levels of “good” cholesterol, may be more hazardous to women’s heart health than men’s.
- **Smoking** — Female smokers’ risk of suffering a heart attack is twice that of men who light up, according to Harvard Medical School.

## MEN CAN’T RELATE

Two conditions exclusive to women — pregnancy and menopause — can significantly influence heart disease risk. If you had elevated blood pressure or diabetes during pregnancy, you are more likely to develop heart disease. After menopause, blood pressure, iron levels, triglycerides and “bad” cholesterol levels increase, and cardiovascular disease risk follows suit.

It might seem like the deck is stacked against you when it comes to your heart’s future, but in fact, you hold the trump card — the ability to reduce many risk factors by exercising regularly and eating a heart-healthy diet.

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Visit [HeartlandRegional.com/physicians](http://HeartlandRegional.com/physicians) to find an expert who can help you understand your unique risk factors for heart disease.

## HE FEELS, SHE FEELS

Your brother thought he’d pulled a muscle in his back. Your aunt assumed she had food poisoning. They were both wrong — a heart attack was the culprit.

Men and women often experience heart attack differently. Chest discomfort, the most common symptom for both genders, may feel like a weight on the chest to men, but women are more likely to report aching or a squeezing sensation.

Other heart attack warning signs both men and women may experience include:

- arm, back, neck, jaw or abdominal discomfort
- feelings of faintness
- nausea
- shortness of breath, even if your chest feels fine
- sudden perspiration

Women are more likely than men to have difficulty breathing, feel nauseated and have back pain. They may also have symptoms most people wouldn’t immediately associate with a heart attack, such as extreme fatigue, weeks of fitful sleep, and vomiting.

Whatever your symptoms, take them seriously. A false alarm investigated is better than a heart attack ignored.



# STAYING AT YOUR **BEST** *During the Winter*



WITH FEWER HOURS  
OF SUNLIGHT,  
STAYING POSITIVE IN  
THE WINTER CAN BE  
CHALLENGING FOR  
MANY PEOPLE. THESE  
**THREE STEPS**  
CAN HELP KEEP YOU  
ON TOP OF YOUR  
GAME THIS SEASON.

## *Step 1:* BOOST YOUR OVERALL IMMUNITY.

Keeping your immune system healthy is your best defense against colds, influenza (flu) and other respiratory infections common during the winter months. A strong immune system can also help you recover faster if you do become sick.

As you age, your immunity can waver, so keep it at optimal levels by looking for ways to balance your life. Adults need seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Try going to bed earlier if you've been skimping on sleep.

The stress of holiday plans and gatherings can leave you overwhelmed and under the weather. Make time for the events that matter the most, but schedule some time to relax and reflect, too.

Eating well is also an important part of maintaining a healthy immune system. Add yogurt or kefir, which contain good forms of bacteria, to your diet to reduce infections while improving digestion. Rely on whole foods, such

as fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy, lean proteins, and whole-grain carbohydrates, to nourish your body. Stay away from processed foods whenever possible. Other ways to keep your immune system happy include:

- **Enjoy tea time.** Whether you prefer Earl Grey or chamomile, tea's natural antioxidants can give your immune system an extra kick. Wind down after a busy day with decaffeinated tea — just limit your sugar and cream intake.
- **Start your meal with a bowl of soup.** A broth- or veggie-based soup can help keep your respiratory system running well and banish bad bacteria. If your soup contains tomato, you get the added benefit of lycopene, an antioxidant that has been shown to lower risk of certain types of cancer.

## THE BASICS OF A HEALTHY WINTER GETAWAY

If travel is on your agenda, protect your health with these simple tips.

- 1. Keep germs at bay** — Two weeks before you embark on your winter adventure or business trip, get your flu vaccination if you haven't already. While traveling, avoid touching your face, and wash your hands before meals and after contact with frequently shared surfaces. Use hand sanitizer to keep your hands clean in crowded airports and on flights.
- 2. Fit in exercise** — Long periods of sitting during travel can sap your energy and even contribute to blood clots. Once you arrive at your hotel, make use of the fitness center or perform a few stretches and jumping jacks in your room. Combine physical activity and sightseeing by exploring your destination on foot or strolling through an indoor local attraction if it's too cold for outdoor exercise.

**3. Stop SAD before it starts** — Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a form of depression that typically affects people during the fall and winter months when shorter days equal less sunlight. Even those who live in areas with ample year-round sunshine may travel to regions where colder, shorter days leave you feeling a little blue. Talk with your doctor if you develop SAD symptoms, such as anxiety, sadness, or feelings of emptiness or guilt.

**4. Manage jet lag** — According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, jet lag, which often occurs when you change time zones during travel, can cause fatigue, nausea, irritability, poor concentration and insomnia. Help prevent jet lag by gradually adjusting your sleep schedule before leaving for your trip. En route, drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration — a common side effect of flying that can worsen jet lag symptoms — and limit caffeine and alcohol both on the plane and during your stay to improve sleep quality.



## Step 2: DO THE NECK CHECK.

Feeling under the weather before a workout? Do a neck check. When you have a regular exercise routine, skipping out when you're feeling sick could actually make you feel worse in the long run. If your symptoms are above the neck — runny nose or sore throat — feel free to head to the gym, but take the intensity down a notch or two. Moderate exercise, such as walking, can help loosen sinus congestion and increase energy levels.

Experts suggest skipping a workout and resting if you have any digestive issues, chest congestion or a fever. If you have a fever, physical activity can lead to a dangerous spike in body temperature.

Once you're feeling better, gradually work your way into your exercise routine. Depending on the severity of your illness, you may need to work out for a shorter time or at a lower intensity for a few days.

## Step 3: STAY ACTIVE INDOORS AND OUT.

Changes in weather and temperature can affect how you exercise during the winter. Dress appropriately in layers. The layers closest to your skin — including your socks — should be made of moisture-wicking materials to keep skin dry, while exterior layers should be wind- and water-resistant. Apply sunscreen to your face and neck before heading outdoors. Don't think you need sunscreen in winter? According to the American Melanoma Foundation, 80 percent of the sun's ultraviolet rays pass through even on cloudy, cooler days. Also, put on sunglasses that protect against 99 to 100 percent of UV rays.

Don't discount non-exercise physical activity (NEPA), typically defined as a physical activity that doesn't involve raising the heart rate. A recent study published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* found that when people older than age 60 stay active — whether or not they make time for cardiovascular exercise — they tend to have better heart health. So what counts as NEPA? Performing light yard work, hunting, washing the car or doing small repairs around the house are a few examples. If you're having trouble making time for regular exercise, have a set schedule of chores or activities that keep you moving.

# CUT BACK ON SUGAR TO *Sweeten Health*

LIFE MAY BE A LITTLE TOO SWEET FOR MANY AMERICANS, WHO CONSUME MORE THAN TWICE THE DAILY AMOUNT OF SUGAR RECOMMENDED BY THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION.

## NATURAL VS. NOT

Sugars that make food taste sweet are classified into two categories: naturally occurring and added. The former refers to sugars found in certain grains, milk, and fruits and vegetables. The latter refers to sugar that has been added to items to sweeten or preserve them.

Natural sugar is a healthy way to satisfy sweet cravings, and comes in lactose and fructose forms.

Lactose is found in dairy, including milk, cheese and yogurt, while fructose is contained in honey and plant-based foods such as fruits, corn and asparagus.

## CHOOSING WISELY

When grocery shopping, avoid items that contain the following ingredients, which are all considered added sugars:

- corn sweetener
- fruit juice concentrate
- high-fructose corn syrup
- invert sugar
- malt sugar
- molasses
- syrup

A teaspoon in your coffee, a sprinkle on top of dessert — sugar is ingrained in the daily diet of almost every American. Consuming too much of the sweet substance can result in weight gain, low energy and, according to a new study published by *JAMA Internal Medicine*, a higher risk of developing heart disease.

How much sugar is too much? According to the American Heart Association, women should limit their daily sugar intake to six teaspoons (24 grams) or 100 calories per day, while men should consume a maximum of nine teaspoons (36 grams) or 150 calories.

To put these numbers in perspective, the U.S. Department of Agriculture compiled a list of common American dietary staples and an average of corresponding calories from added sugar per serving. The list includes:

- carbonated soda (12-ounce can) — 132.5 calories from added sugar
- cinnamon raisin bagel (4-inch diameter) — 12.8 calories
- nonfat yogurt (6-ounce container) — 77.5 calories

## 4 WAYS TO CUT THE SUGAR

There are many ways to add sweetness to your favorite treats without adding sugar. Try these tips:

1. Choose fresh or frozen fruits or canned options stored in water or juice rather than syrup.
2. Cut the sugar you add to recipes by one-third. Odds are the food will probably taste just as delicious.
3. Spice up morning meals such as oatmeal and toast with cinnamon and nutmeg rather than sugar.
4. Trade in your soda for a low- or no-calorie soda. Better yet, choose a carbonated, flavored water with no calories to enjoy that familiar fizz without added sugar.

**Me? Eat healthy? Yes, you can! Call (618) 998-7050 to make an appointment with a nutrition expert.**

# Distracted Driving = DANGER



WHEN DRIVERS ARE PREOCCUPIED, EVERYONE ON THE ROAD IS IN JEOPARDY.

## 3,328

people in 2012 were killed in accidents related to distracted driving.

## 50%

of high schoolers age 16 or older text or email while driving.

## 660,000

drivers at any given moment are using a cell phone while driving.

# 10 percent

OF ALL DRIVERS

**YOUNGER THAN AGE 20**

WHO WERE INVOLVED IN A FATAL CRASH WERE DISTRACTED AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT.



**The average text is read in 4.6 seconds. Driving at 55 miles per hour, five seconds of driving is equal to 100 yards, nearly the length of a football field.**

You may already know the danger of using cell phones and other electronic devices while driving, but distracted driving is defined as anything that takes your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel or your mind off driving.

Other common driving distractions include:

- adjusting the music
- eating and drinking
- grooming or putting on makeup
- interacting with other passengers
- texting

Young and inexperienced drivers are the most likely to be involved in a distracted driving accident, but no drivers are immune to the dangers. Studies have shown that texting while driving impairs your

ability to drive as much as — or even worse than — being drunk behind the wheel.

### STAYING FOCUSED, STAYING SAFE

Thankfully, distracted driving accidents are completely preventable. If you have a new driver in your family, talk about the risks of all forms of distracted driving, not just texting or talking on the phone. Encourage everyone in your family to leave their smartphones in the glove compartment or another inaccessible place to avoid the temptation to check while on the road.

Don't be afraid to call out distracted drivers who are putting you and others danger. Offer to read or send a text for him, or suggest she pull over to make a phone call.

\* Statistics from [distraction.gov](http://distraction.gov) (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)

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