



NAPEBT

# HEALTH REPORT

SUMMER 2012



## In Clear Sight

How to protect your vision on and off the job.

**F**rom home repairs and harsh sun to computer time, we put our eyes to the test every day. But many of us don't protect our vision as we should. Here are four tips to do just that:

**REST YOUR EYES REGULARLY,** particularly if you're in front of a monitor or computer screen for many hours at a time. Sit about 25 inches from the screen and take breaks periodically to blink and focus on a point across the room.

**USE SUNGLASSES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.** Bright sunlight can damage your eyes and lead to cataracts, so grab

glasses that are at least 99 percent UV absorbent.

**VISIT THE EYE DOCTOR ONCE A YEAR**—even if your vision has not changed. Talk with your doctor about getting screened for eye diseases when you turn 40.

**ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT SPECIAL EYE EXAMS** to detect retinal damage, glaucoma and cataracts if you have diabetes or high blood pressure. If you start having blurry vision, seeing dark spots or experiencing pain or pressure, make an appointment as soon as possible.

## LOOK OUT FOR LYME DISEASE

There's a lot of confusion about Lyme disease. Maybe that's because its symptoms are so varied and its source is practically invisible.

Lyme is a bacterial infection that's spread by blacklegged—also known as deer—ticks. These ticks are so small that most of their victims don't even know they were bitten. Symptoms may be vague and erratic, making it difficult to diagnose. At the site of the bite, there may be a red rash or spot with a clear center. The first signs of the disease could include muscle pain, stiff neck, headache, fever, chills, itchiness and light-headedness.

You can lower your risk for Lyme disease by being cautious in wooded and grassy areas. Walk in the middle of trails. Tuck your pant legs into your socks. Spray exposed skin as well as your socks, boots and pants with insect repellent. Soon after being outdoors, check yourself for ticks and take a shower. Also, wash your clothes before wearing them again.

Most people who are bitten by a tick won't get the disease. But preventing that bite is key!



## Less Snoring, Better Sleep

**Almost half of adults snore at least occasionally, but it isn't something you (or your partner!) have to live with. You'll likely sleep better if you tackle the problem.**

**The average snore is simply the sound of vibrations created as air flows over relaxed tissues in your throat. The shape of your sinuses and mouth, your weight, allergies and nasal congestion can cause snoring.**

**Often, you can ease snoring by losing a few pounds if you're overweight, avoiding alcohol and sleeping aids before bedtime and sleeping on your side. Over-the-counter nasal strips and short-term use of decongestants may also help.**

**If your snoring is extremely loud—can be heard from another room, for example—or you wake up choking or gasping, it's a good idea to talk with your doctor. These symptoms may signal a more serious condition like sleep apnea.**

**Also, if you notice your child snoring, talk with his or her doctor. It may indicate nose or throat issues.**

# Make an Emergency Plan

Do you know what to do when disaster strikes?

**W**hen it comes to natural disasters and other unexpected events, being prepared is truly the best plan.

Create a basic family emergency plan with these steps:

**Map out safe exits from your home and from your neighborhood.** Choose meeting spots for your family—one that's on your street in case of a nearby emergency, and one that's in your town, at a public facility like a school, in case of a more widespread disaster. Select locations that you can reach without crossing streets, which may be blocked by trees or debris.

**Set up a communication plan.** Designate a person who lives out of state for everybody to check in with. Ask if family members with mobile phones

know how to use text messaging. Program emergency contact information into your phone's contact list under "ICE" ("in case of emergency").

**Pack disaster supplies in a bag you can carry,** in addition to stocking up on water and non-perishable items in your home. Include cash, water, energy bars, batteries, flashlights, a first-aid kit, a can opener, extra prescription medication, a battery-powered or hand crank radio and local maps.

**Review what to do for specific disasters,** like tornadoes, hurricanes, fires and floods.

These steps will get you started. To learn more, visit the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) or the Government of Canada at [www.getprepared.gc.ca](http://www.getprepared.gc.ca).

## CLARIFY CHOLESTEROL NUMBERS

**Do you know your cholesterol numbers?** Here's how to interpret them. In the U.S., cholesterol is measured in milligrams (mg) per deciliter (dL) of blood. Canada and most European countries measure cholesterol in millimoles (mmol) per liter (L) of blood. So what does this mean? In U.S. measurements, you should aim for a total cholesterol number below 200 mg/dL. In Canada, below 5.2 mmol/L is the desirable number. If you have questions, talk to your doctor.

## Building BONES

We used to think that bones stopped growing when people reached their 20s. Now we understand that our bones change and grow throughout our lives—which means good bone health is important at all ages.

Everyone can benefit from taking care of their bones. After all, osteoporosis—weakening of the bones—affects both men and women. Help keep your bones strong by exercising, quitting smoking and getting enough calcium. Adult women up to age 50 should get 1,000 mg of calcium each day. Women over 50 should aim for 1,200 mg. Men who are between 19 and 70 need about 1,000 mg of calcium every day.





# Help Your Heart—Starting Now

Try five small steps for big health improvements.

**S**how your heart some love with these five instant lifestyle changes.

- 1 Go for a brisk, 30-minute walk after your evening meal.** Regular physical activity is a great way to manage your weight and keep your heart in top form.
- 2 Replace your white bread, pasta and rice.** Opt for fiber-rich whole grains. Consuming fiber has been linked to lower cholesterol levels (cholesterol is the gummy substance that can build up and slow down blood flow to your heart).
- 3 If you smoke and you're not quite ready to quit yet, try smoking two fewer cigarettes tomorrow.** While we often link cigarette smoking

with lung and breathing issues, smoking also increases your risk for heart attacks. It damages the cells that line your heart and blood vessels, while also hardening your arteries. Talk with your doctor about a plan to quit for good.

- 4 Retire your salt shaker.** A high-sodium diet increases your blood pressure, which makes your heart work harder than it needs to.
- 5 Set aside two minutes to sit and breathe.** Let yourself do nothing for a few moments every day. You will not only enjoy the calm, but you'll also reduce your stress level—and that means good things for your blood pressure level and heart health.

## Do You Get the Right Exercise?

Maybe your job keeps you moving around more than most people. However, you still need to think about your exercise routine. That's because not all types of activity are equal when it comes to health benefits.

**AEROBIC EXERCISE** is at the heart of a successful fitness program. It's what gets you breathing hard and your heart pumping. It increases the amount of oxygen in your blood and helps your heart, lungs and blood vessels work efficiently. Examples of aerobic, or "cardio," activities include jogging, brisk walking, biking, playing basketball or tennis and swimming. Aim for 150 minutes of aerobic exercise, in periods of 10 minutes or more, every week.

**STRENGTH TRAINING** is the second ingredient in a well-rounded fitness program. It improves your bone strength and helps maintain healthy muscles. Free weights and resistance machines are the classic tools for strength-training exercises. Resistance bands and hand-held weights offer less expensive options. Or, you can use your own body's weight by doing push-ups, leg squats and abdominal crunches. Include strength training in your routine at least twice a week.

## Put Your Back to Work—But Carefully!

One of the keys to protecting your back is practicing good posture. If you stand for long periods of time, occasionally rest one foot on a small stool. While sitting, rest your feet on the floor and keep your knees level with your hips. Remove any

objects from your back pocket, which will ease pressure on your buttocks and lower back.

Lift heavy objects properly, using your knees to rise and tightening your core muscles. Also, keep your weight in check and exercise most days.



## Rosemary Potato Skewers

160  
CALORIES

5g  
TOTAL FAT

5mg  
CHOLESTEROL

### Ingredients:

- 4 (approx. 1-1/3 lb.) medium red potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-1/2 inch chunks
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tsp. butter, melted
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary, or 1 tsp. dried rosemary
- 1 large clove garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper, about 1/4 tsp. each
- 4,12-inch skewers (Soak in warm water for 30 minutes.)

### Directions:

Prepare a charcoal grill or preheat boiler. In a heavy saucepan, cook the potatoes in 2 inches of boiling water until tender (about 15 minutes). Drain potatoes, cool slightly and thread onto skewers. In small bowl, mix together the remaining ingredients. Place potato skewers on the grill about three inches above glowing embers. Brush skewers with the rosemary mix. Baste and turn several times until potatoes are lightly browned.

*Makes four servings. Prep time: 45 minutes.*

Get more recipes at [www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)

## Spice it Up

Looking for ways to add flavor to your summertime meals? Limit the salt in favor of garlic, rosemary and oregano.

A powerful antioxidant, garlic is believed to lower blood pressure. Chop it up for your marinades or dressings. A dash of oregano brings hearty flavor and a dose of fiber, which helps control cholesterol. Sprinkle it on your pizza or add it to your eggs. Rosemary has a pine-like aroma and is rich in antioxidant properties. It complements peas, potatoes and meat.

You can grow garlic in your garden. Rosemary and oregano are hearty perennial herbs and can be grown in containers or beds. Put your homegrown seasonings to work with this recipe.

This *Health Report* is being provided to you by the Northern Arizona Public Employers Benefit Trust and will be posted quarterly to our website. Its purpose is to keep you informed about current health and wellness topics that will help you and your family maintain good health and live healthy lifestyles.

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