INSIDE:
Winter to spring skincare tips
The magic of magnesium
Pandemic skincare tips
Has the 2020 Pandemic increased less than desirable behaviors?

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Associated Dermatology and Skin Cancer clinic of Helena understands the importance of healthy skin. Our providers are committed to providing the highest quality care.

The American Academy of Dermatology recommends that everyone check their skin regularly for any new or suspicious spots. If you notice any new spots, or spots that have changed, are itching or bleeding, see a dermatologist.

Remember, every time you go outside, your skin is exposed to damaging ultraviolet (UV) rays. Not only does this cause premature skin damage, it also increases your risk of getting skin cancer, the most common form of cancer.

Follow these steps for optimum protection:

~ Don’t skimp on sunscreen. In addition to direct sun, water, sand, snow, and concrete can reflect the sun’s rays, increasing your chance of sunburn. Apply broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen with a SPF of 30 or higher to all skin not covered by clothing, to ears, neck, hands, feet and lips. For children, use a waterproof, mineral based sunscreen (titanium dioxide or zinc oxide) and avoid those with oxybenzone. Associated Dermatology’s Laser Clinic has a wide array of skin care products for purchase including sunscreen.

~ Babies under 6 months of age should be kept out of the sun as their skin is thin and more susceptible to burning. Keep infants in the shade and consider dressing them in UV protective clothing and hats.

~ Since no sunscreen can block 100% of the sun’s rays, wear clothing for added protection. Look for lightweight, long-sleeved shirts and pants. Clothing and sunglasses treated to block UV rays offer extra protection. And don’t forget a hat! A wide-brimmed hat offers the most protection.

Remember to check your skin regularly. When detected early, skin cancer - including melanoma - is highly treatable. Further information is available on the website: associateddermhelena.com with links to the American Academy of Dermatology and the Skin Cancer Foundation.

Patient and staff safety is a paramount concern. Associated Dermatology follows all recommended anti-Covid measures in addition to CDC recommended cleaning protocols and have been since March 2020.

If you have concerns regarding in-person visits or have transportation issues, tele-medicine visits are available. Call our office to make an appointment (406) 442-3534.

Jeffry A. Goldes, M.D.

Board Certified in General Dermatology, Anatomic Pathology, and Dermatopathology

Dr. Goldes enjoys skiing at Great Divide in the winter and water activities in the summer. He can be found exploring Mt. Helena with his devoted lab, Bella, year-round. An Army brat, he spent many years in the U.S. Air Force, Air Force Reserves and the Montana National Guard. A graduate of Boston University School of Medicine, he completed residency programs at the University of Washington and the University of Minnesota. He is a member of the medical honor society Alpha Omega Alpha.

Voted #1 Dermatologist in Helena 2018, 2019 and 2020.
After months of freezing temperatures, snow and slush, spring is finally here! These springtime skincare tips can help you say goodbye to winter and the dry, dull skin that comes with it.

With the changing seasons, temperatures rise, and thankfully, humidity does too! This means our skin holds more moisture during the warmer months like spring and summer. Swap out your heavy, occlusive moisturizers that help prevent moisture loss for something a little lighter.

Winter weather tends to leave skin dry, dull and flakey. Spring is the perfect time to exfoliate all the dry, dead skin cells away. Exfoliation is key to keeping your skin looking bright, fresh and healthy. Incorporate an exfoliating product into your skincare routine and use it two to three times per week. You can use either a manual exfoliator such as a scrub or a chemical exfoliator such as a glycolic acid in a cleanser or toner.

Now for everyone’s favorite part of spring – spring cleaning! While you’re decluttering and cleaning the rest of your house, don’t neglect your skincare products. Check the expiration dates and toss anything that has expired. Skincare products typically expire in about six months. Outdated products can harbor bacteria leading to clogged pores and breakouts. Don’t forget to sanitize the outside of your skincare bottles and always wash your hands before applying product to your skin. While you’re at it, clean your makeup brushes too and wash away any unwanted germs that could be transferred to your skin.

With the warmer weather, you’ll want to be outside soaking up as much sunshine as you can—so don’t forget to load up on SPF. Apply sunscreen in the morning and reapply every two hours of sun exposure. Try adding an antioxidant serum into your daytime skincare routine. This will work with your sunscreen to fight off free radical damage from the sun.

If you want an extra boost to brighten up your skin for spring, try a facial. Facials that include microdermabrasion exfoliation treatment, Vitamin C elements, collagen inducing microneedling treatment or LED light therapy are particularly great for brightening dull skin.

Gina Morigeau is a Medical Aesthetician at the St. Peter’s Health Plastic Surgery and Medical Aesthetics clinic. Gina began her career as an aesthetician when she graduated from the Montana Academy of Salons, after she received her Bachelor of Arts from Carroll College in 2015.
Too much sleep can be harmful

Lack of sufficient sleep is a problem for millions of people across the globe. But what about too much sleep? Though busy men and women might think it’s impossible to get too much sleep, excessive sleep is nothing to joke about.

According to the National Sleep Foundation, most adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep per night (the NSF notes that a small percentage of people may need 10 hours of sleep per night). People who routinely sleep more than seven to nine hours may have an underlying health concern. For example, the NSF notes that a recent study found that routinely sleeping more than 10 hours per night can be linked to metabolic syndrome. The Mayo Clinic says metabolic syndrome refers to a cluster of conditions that occur together and increase a person’s risk for serious health issues, including heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

Obesity, headache and back pain are some additional potential side effects of excessive sleep.

The Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School notes that genetics and age are significant factors in determining the amount of sleep healthy individuals need. However, young adults should resist the notion that they need less than seven hours of sleep per night because they’re young, while older adults should similarly avoid thinking that they need more sleep simply because they’re aging. As the NSF guidelines suggest, the sweet spot for healthy adults is typically between seven and nine hours of sleep per night.

A good night’s rest is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle. But adults must recognize that excessive amounts of sleep can be just as detrimental as inadequate sleep. Individuals can speak with their physicians to determine their specific sleep needs.
MAGIC OF MAGNESIUM
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If I could take only one nutritional supplement, magnesium would be a top contender. I get plenty of it in my food, but for me taking it as a supplement seems to work magic.

Along with calcium, phosphorus and a few others, magnesium is a macromineral, which means it’s needed in more than the trace amounts of microminerals such as iron and zinc. It participates in more than 300 enzyme systems that regulate such basic things as energy production, nerve function, blood pressure and blood sugar levels. You literally can’t leave home without it.

So how do you know you’re getting enough magnesium? And there’s the equally important question: How do you know you’re not getting too much? Because nutrients work together and do so in the context of an endlessly complex system—you—we should aim for optimal, balanced levels of essential nutrients that fit individual needs due to differences in age, gender, lifestyle and much, much more.

In the case of magnesium, the answer is not in just one measure, such as the concentration of magnesium in your blood. That’s because most of your magnesium is in your bones and soft tissues, and the amount in your blood serum is tightly regulated. So something has to be pretty wrong to show up there.

In my case it showed up decades ago on a massage table. I was lying on my front and my toes kept cramping; so I curled them upward. It worked magic. My heart maintained a steady rhythm as long as I kept tweaking the amount of magnesium I took. I saw that it helped with other classical problems related to calcium, like muscle cramps and constipation. Bowel movements and muscle cramps in certain yoga poses became my daily guide.

Muscle spasms can be due to many things, including hydration, electrolyte imbalance, inactivity and overuse. Constipation, insomnia, arrhythmia, high blood sugar, and so on, can all have multiple causes.

So my advice to you is to look at your intake of calcium and magnesium through your diet, supplements and drugs, and get to know your body. As with other nutrients, you can learn to look for signs and symptoms of deficiencies and excesses. But don’t fall into the trap of thinking that every health problem has a nutritional solution.

In particular, there are also factors, such as drinking and various disease conditions, that affect the need for magnesium.

Experts seem to agree that one to two or one to one ratio of calcium to magnesium is long been considered a standard, but some health experts have argued that that ratio should be smaller, or even reversed. Experts seem to agree that people are more likely to have too little rather than too much magnesium. It’s unlikely that someone would overdose on magnesium in foods, but supplements and magnesium-containing drugs would present a different level of risk. Symptoms of magnesium overdose include diarrhea, nausea, weakness, low blood pressure and even an irregular heartbeat.

So my advice to you is to look at your intake of calcium and magnesium through your diet, supplements and drugs, and get to know your body. As with other nutrients, you can learn to look for signs and symptoms of deficiencies and excesses. But don’t fall into the trap of thinking that every health problem has a nutritional solution.

If you want to perform magnesium magic, you have the freedom to vary your diet and supplements. But ideally you need a capable assistant, whether it’s a doctor, naturopath, dietician or other qualified health professional. (In case I have to make it plain, that’s not me, and this is not medical advice!) If you can go to that professional armed with a first-hand knowledge of your symptomatology, you’ll be in good hands and you’ll be way ahead of the game.

Laughing Water is a lifelong yogi, MIT graduate, award-winning online student of introductory philosophy and longtime owner and manager of Helena’s Real Food Market and Deli.
The thyroid gland plays an essential role in the human body. According to the online healthcare publishing company Medicine.net, the thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland in the front of the neck that produces the hormones that regulate metabolism. When the thyroid gland’s ability to do its job is compromised, the effects can be serious and lead to a host of symptoms that don’t go away.

Are all thyroid conditions the same?
Thyroid conditions vary, and as a result, they can produce their own distinct symptoms. The Harvard Medical School notes that the thyroid can be overactive (hyperthyroidism) or underactive (hypothyroidism). An overactive thyroid will produce too much hormones, while an underactive thyroid won’t produce enough. Symptoms of both hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism can overlap, but each condition has its own unique symptoms as well.

What are the symptoms of hyperthyroidism?
Signs of hyperthyroidism include:
- Fatigue
- Fast heartbeat
- Trouble concentrating
- Increased appetite
- Sweating
- Nervousness, restlessness
- Unintentional weight loss

What are the symptoms of hypothyroidism?
Signs of hypothyroidism include:
- Fatigue
- Increased sensitivity to cold
- Muscle weakness
- Brittle nails and hair
- Hoarse voice
- Unintentional weight gain

What can I do to safeguard myself from thyroid conditions?
The online medical resource Healthline notes that most cases of hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism cannot be prevented. For example, hyperthyroidism is often caused by Graves’ disease, an immune system disorder that’s most common among women. Some peoples’ thyroids have become overactive because they consumed too many foods that contained iodine, such as table salt, fish and seaweed. However, Healthline notes that such instances are rare.

While people may not be able to prevent thyroid conditions from developing, they can keep a watchful eye out for any of the aforementioned symptoms of overactive or underactive thyroids. Any such symptoms should be reported to a physician immediately. Medicine.net notes that, in most cases, thyroid disorders can be managed with treatment and are not life-threatening. However, the outlook for people with thyroid conditions is always better when symptoms are reported early. Learn more about thyroid conditions at www.medicine.net.

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Taking care of a baby is no small task. Babies operate on their own schedules, forcing parents to consistently readjust when they eat, work and, of course, sleep. Various factors can make such adjustments especially tiring, and colic might be at the top of that list.

Understanding colic

The American Academy of Family Physicians notes that colic occurs when an otherwise healthy baby cries or fusses frequently for no apparent reason. All babies cry and fuss, and it's important that parents do not misinterpret normal crying and fussing as colic. Colic is defined as crying for more than three hours per day at least three days per week for more than three weeks. Children who have colic also tend to cry around the same times each day, and may turn bright red and cry as if they're in pain. When crying, babies with colic may clench their fists or curl up their legs.

What is the timeline for colic?

The AAFP notes that colic can start within a few weeks of a child's birth. Symptoms of colic tend to be the worst when a child is between four and six weeks old, and many children outgrow it by the time they reach four months of age.

Do doctors know what causes colic?

While researchers have studied colic, there's no definitive answer about what causes it. The AAFP notes that pain or discomfort from gas or indigestion may be a contributing factor. When a baby cries, the child swallows air, which can give the baby gas that makes his or her belly feel tight.

A digestive system that isn't fully developed, overfeeding or underfeeding, sensitivity to breast milk or formula, overstimulation, early forms of childhood migraines, and emotional reactions to being afraid, frustrated or excited are some additional potential contributors to colic.

How can colic be treated?

A colic treatment that alleviates one baby's symptoms will not necessarily be effective for another's. However, the AND notes that avoiding potential colic triggers may help parents as they try to treat their babies.

- Feeding the baby: Breastfeeding mothers can document what they're eating to determine if there's any rhyme or reason behind their babies' colic. Document when the baby exhibits symptoms of colic as well, and then look for patterns. If a child tends to be colicky after breastfeeding mothers eat a certain food, then moms can cut that food out of their diets to see if that's what is triggering the episode. Medicines taken by breastfeeding mothers also may trigger colic episodes, so moms can discuss their medications with their child's pediatrician and their own doctors.

- Formula: The AAFP notes that babies may be sensitive to certain proteins in formula, so treating colic may be as simple as changing brands. Slowing down formula feedings also may work, as it can ensure babies are not eating too much and/or too quickly. Warming formula to body temperature and feeding the baby in an upright position also may help alleviate symptoms of colic.

- Holding the baby: How a baby is held or rocked may help reduce symptoms of colic. Massaging a baby's back while holding the baby across your arm or lap might work. In addition, holding the baby in the evening and while walking also can help. If a baby has gas, holding the child upright might alleviate the pains contributing to colic. Using an infant swing or rocking the baby in your arms also may help.

- Comforting the baby: Parents can speak with their children's pediatrician about the various techniques to comfort their babies. Many parents have successfully reduced instances of colic by employing various movements and stimuli designed to soothe the baby.

Colic can make for some difficult times for babies and their parents. Determining what may be causing colic and trying new ways to soothe babies can help both parents and their children.
In the early days of the pandemic, we quickly learned that COVID-19 had a unique ability to affect not only the body's lungs but also the brain, muscles, and even the body's sense of taste and smell. There was some uncertainty about how the virus would impact the body's first defense system, the skin. Rashes, such as exanthems, vasculitis, and hives, have long been associated with viral infections. But what kind of impact would infection prevention strategies have on other aspects of our health?

In March 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced the importance of frequent handwashing with soap and water to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Shortly after that, hand sanitizer became widely popular. It wasn't before long that we noticed patients coming in with dry, red, itchy hands. The majority of these patients reported a significant increase in the frequency of their handwashing or use of waterless hand sanitizer throughout the day. Add in Montana's cold, dry winter air, and we had the perfect recipe for some impressive hand rashes.

While hand dermatitis is much less of a concern than treating a viral infection like COVID-19, hand dermatitis can turn into a serious skin infection if left untreated. Since the importance and frequency of hand washing in today's world is not likely to fade anytime soon, here are a few tips to help curb the effects of frequent hand washing and sanitizing:

Choose soap over sanitizer. When possible, wash your hands with a gentle soap or cleanser. The leading ingredient in hand sanitizer is alcohol, which can irritate and dry the skin out faster than soap and water.

Keep it simple. Avoid extra ingredients when choosing soaps and moisturizers. Skip the products that boast “anti-itch,” “anti-bacterial,” or “all-natural” when your hands are already irritated. Added ingredients such as fragrances, essential oils, and even colloidal oatmeal can be skin irritants.

Provide a barrier. Apply a moisturizing barrier on your hands EVERY time after washing or sanitizing your hands. Doing so will seal in the natural oils and help minimize the evaporation of water from your skin. Don’t like feeling greasy? Try a lighter barrier in the form of a lotion rather than a heavy cream.

Your hands shouldn’t have to suffer from following the CDC guidelines on proper hand hygiene. Gentle, supportive skincare products are easy to find once you know what to look for. Cerave and Vanicream are two of our favorite brands. If you find that, despite your best efforts, your hands continue to be dry, red, cracked, and itchy, it’s time to reach out to a dermatology provider.

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Wellness is a broad term that can refer to various aspects of daily life. Disciplines like yoga and meditation might be the first things to come to mind when people think of wellness, but focusing on wellness at work can have positive, lasting effects on overall well-being as well.

Occupational wellness is not necessarily a familiar term, but it’s something that most professionals strive for. According to the Student Health and Counseling Services at the University of California, Davis, occupational wellness inspires people to find work from which they will gain personal satisfaction and find enrichment. Occupational wellness promotes the exploration of various career options and the pursuit of those opportunities that most appeal to each individual.

While it may seem like common sense to aspire for an engaging, enjoyable career, the effect that finding such a career can have on overall well-being might not be so apparent. In an analysis of a recent Gallup World Poll, a survey that asks hundreds of thousands of workers across the globe about their jobs and their job satisfaction, Harvard Business Review found there is a correlation between job satisfaction and life evaluations. People who report being satisfied with their jobs seem to be happier overall.

So how can one embrace the concept of occupational wellness? UC Davis offers individuals the following suggestions as they begin their journeys to occupational wellness.

- Consider unpaid work and volunteer opportunities. Even though they don’t pay, unpaid work and volunteer opportunities can still enrich your life and provide personal satisfaction. Such opportunities should not be overlooked.
- Practice open communication and proper conflict management with colleagues. Negative working environments can be stressful, leading to dissatisfaction on the job. Openly communicating with colleagues and resolving conflicts in a proper, professional way can foster a positive working environment, potentially contributing to greater job satisfaction.
- Prioritizing occupational wellness can help people live happier, more fulfilling lives.

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Throughout human history, there have been many ways to preserve food, including pickling, canning and salting. Such efforts became easier with the invention of the refrigerator and freezer, which opened up a whole new way to shop for and stockpile foods.

It’s difficult to imagine life without refrigerators or freezers. For example, frozen foods, which are a mainstay of the modern diet, are only possible thanks to modern refrigeration.

The American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics says that frozen foods are an affordable way for people to get their daily recommended doses of fruits and vegetables. But the benefits do not stop with fruits and vegetables. Many other nutritious foods can be frozen and incorporated into recipes.

Despite their popularity, frozen foods are sometimes mistaken as being less worthy of consumption than fresh alternatives. Food producers Green Isle Foods indicates that very often frozen foods make nutritious additions to a meal. Here are a few reasons why.

- Frozen produce is often more nutritionally reliable than fresh items, as freezing prevents sensitive nutrients and vitamins from being lost during transportation. In a 2013 study sponsored by the University of Georgia, researchers compared various private-label frozen produce items to fresh equivalents upon being purchased and then again after the fresh produce spent five days in a refrigerator. Day-of-purchase fresh and frozen varieties were nutritionally similar. But after five days, the fresh produce lost vitamin content, especially vitamins A and C and folate.
- Frozen foods typically contain no preservatives, as freezing itself is a form of preservation.
- Frozen foods enable people to choose from a variety of items even when they would normally be out of season.
- Frozen foods may help reduce food waste, as individually packaged items help people use only what they need.
- Frozen seafood is often less expensive than fresh fish because the extended shelf life offers year-round price stability and product availability.

Nutrient levels were analyzed in samples of the frozen produce and in the fresh equivalents upon being purchased and then again after the fresh produce spent five days in a refrigerator. Day-of-purchase fresh and frozen varieties were nutritionally similar. But after five days, the fresh produce lost vitamin content, especially vitamins A and C and folate.
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It is important to be picky when buying frozen foods. According to nutrition experts at Tufts University, convenience meals are not always created equal. It is essential to read labels to ensure that healthy ingredients are included and to pay attention to portion sizes to keep fat and calories in check.

Individuals can customize many frozen foods to their needs and can rest assured that the meals they are creating are nutritionally diverse and wholesome.

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Mark F. Ozog M.D. | 1417 9th Street South #100 | Great Falls, MT 59405
Indulging in a morning cup of coffee is a beloved ritual for millions of people across the globe. The rich, bold flavor of coffee has created devotees in all corners of the world, all the while laying the foundation for a lucrative market.

In its recent “Global Coffee Market—By Product: Global Industry Perspective, Comprehensive Analysis and Forecast 2020-2026” report, Zion Market Research estimated that the global coffee market is expected to reach $155.64 billion in annual revenue by 2026. Though the flavor of coffee is what compels many people to pour that morning cup of Joe, others crave coffee in the mornings because of the jolt it can provide at the dawn of a new day. Caffeine is responsible for that jolt, and devoted coffee drinkers, and individuals who prefer other caffeinated beverages, may have come to rely on the boost caffeine provides to kickstart their day.

Researchers have studied the effects of caffeine on the human body to great extent. Many studies have concluded that modest consumption of caffeine is safe for healthy adults. In fact, the Mayo Clinic notes that up to 400 milligrams of caffeine per day, which is just about the amount of caffeine in four cups of brewed coffee, appears to be safe. But adults may want to learn more about the effects of caffeine on their bodies as they try to determine just how much they should consume each day.

- Caffeine and the heart: According to the Heart Foundation NZ, most studies that examined the potential correlation between heart disease and coffee intake found no association between the two. In fact, the Heart Foundation NZ points out that plant sources of caffeine like coffee provide a host of other compounds and nutrients, including antioxidants, that can positively affect heart health. However, the online medical resource Verywell Mind notes that the stimulant effect of caffeine speeds up the heart rate. Healthy adults who drink coffee or other caffeinated beverages in moderation likely won’t have to worry about their heart rates after consuming caffeine, but people who are prone to anxiety may be vulnerable to panic reactions if they consume caffeine.

- Caffeine and sleep: Caffeine consumed during certain times of day may interfere with a person’s ability to get a good night’s rest. The Mayo Clinic notes that even small amounts of sleep loss can disturb daytime alertness and performance.

- Caffeine and medications: Adults currently taking certain medications or supplements should speak with their physicians about any potential interactions between those substances and caffeine. For example, the Mayo Clinic notes that mixing caffeine with the herbal supplement echinacea can increase the concentration of caffeine in the blood, potentially exacerbating the unpleasant effects of caffeine intake.

Adults who consume caffeine should always do so in moderation and only after giving due consideration to the many ways that caffeine can affect their bodies.
How puzzles promote health and wellness

Puzzles are fun and entertaining, but their benefits go beyond simple recreation. In fact, playing and solving puzzles on a regular basis can benefit adults and children in various ways.

Puzzles often stimulate problem-solving centers in the brain and can improve brain health. Researchers have found that, by completing crossword puzzles, playing challenging games or doing other puzzle-related activities, individuals may be less likely to develop brain plaques that have been tied to Alzheimer’s disease. Data published in the Archives of Neurology found a distinct connection between people who exercised their minds with stimulating activities in their early and middle years and brain health. This group had less Beta-amyloid protein uptake in their brains, which is linked to the onset of Alzheimer’s, than those who didn’t engage in puzzles during the same time frame.

Beyond their health benefits, puzzles offer some additional perks.

- **Puzzles boost vocabulary.** Puzzles such as crosswords or codewords/cryptograms introduce people to new words. This helps people expand their vocabulary and can help them improve their spelling.
- **Puzzles teach patience.** Puzzles can be challenging, and such challenges can promote patience in regard to approaching and realizing goals.
- **Puzzles can reinforce lessons.** Teaching through puzzle play is an effective way to tap into memory retention while making lessons fun.
- **Puzzles may improve intelligence.** Engaging in puzzles can force players to think and reason using general knowledge, memory, spatial imagery, and logic. These skills help to sharpen intellect over time. Researchers at the University of Michigan even found that adults could boost their IQs by four points after spending 25 minutes a day doing puzzles.
- **Puzzles reinforce concentration.** Concentration is required to find words hidden in a word search puzzle or to solve a brainteaser. According to data on SelfGrowth.com, puzzles naturally induce a state of creative, focused meditation.
- **Puzzles improve visual-spatial reasoning.** When solving a jigsaw puzzle or working one’s way through a maze, players have to look at different shapes and figure out where they fit within the larger picture. Better visual-spatial skills can help with packing, driving and using a map and can be valuable career tools in fields such as architecture.

Puzzles are a fun recreational activity that also can boost brain health.

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Chronic diseases pose a significant threat to the general public. It can be easy for adults in the prime of their lives to overlook the danger of chronic diseases, especially if they feel good and aren’t exhibiting any symptoms to suggest their health is in jeopardy. But overlooking the potential dangers of chronic disease can prove deadly.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer and diabetes are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. Chronic diseases are costly as well, as recent reports from the Rand Corp. and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services indicate that 90 percent of annual health care expenditures in the United States are for people with chronic and mental health conditions.

While there’s no way to guarantee a person won’t develop a chronic disease, avoiding certain risky behaviors can help adults greatly reduce their risk for various chronic diseases.

**Tobacco use**
The CDC notes that tobacco is the leading cause of preventable disease, and not just among smokers. While 34 million adults in the United States smoke cigarettes, 58 million nonsmokers, including children, are exposed to secondhand smoke, which can cause chronic diseases like stroke, lung cancer and coronary heart disease. Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at increased risk of impaired lung function, acute respiratory infections, middle ear disease, and more frequent and severe asthma attacks.

**Poor nutrition**
The value of fruits and vegetables is well-documented. In spite of that, the CDC reports that fewer than 10 percent of adults and adolescents eat enough fruits and vegetables. In addition, the CDC reports that 60 percent of young people between the ages of two and 19 and half of all adults consume a sugary drink on any given day. Such beverages, as well as processed foods, add unnecessary sodium, saturated fats and sugar to people’s diets, increasing their risk for chronic disease as a result.

**Lack of physical activity**
The Department of Health and Human Services has issued physical activity guidelines designed to help people improve their overall health and reduce their risk for various diseases. But the CDC reports that just 25 percent of adults and 20 percent of adolescents meet the recommended physical activity guidelines. Low levels of physical activity can contribute to heart disease, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer, and obesity.

**Excessive alcohol consumption**
The CDC notes that excessive alcohol consumption can cause heart disease, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, and stroke. In addition, the CDC reports that the less alcohol a person drinks, the lower his or her risk of cancer becomes.

Chronic diseases are a formidable opponent. But people of all ages can reduce their chances of developing such diseases by avoiding a handful of risky behaviors.
There are many reasons to get in shape. Weight loss is a prime motivator, as is reversing a negative health effect, such as high cholesterol or increased diabetes risk. Routine exercise also can improve life expectancy.

WebMD says exercise keeps the body and brain healthy. That's why exercise should be an important component of daily life no matter one's age.

Research published in the journal Immune Aging found that how people age is 75 percent lifestyle and only 25 percent genetics, which underscores the importance of the lifestyle choices people make.

Cardiorespiratory fitness

Many health experts say that cardiorespiratory fitness may be just as valuable a metric to determine overall health as blood pressure and lipid levels. People with a high aerobic capacity can deliver oxygen to tissues and cells efficiently to fuel exercise, according to data published in 2014 in the journal Aging & Disease. In a study involving 11,335 women, researchers compared VO2 max, also known as aerobic capacity, in women with mortality data. Women who were fit from a cardiovascular perspective had a lower death rate from all causes, irrespective of the women's weight.

Manage stress and mood

Exercise has direct stress-busting benefits that can promote longevity. The Mayo Clinic says physical activity can increase the production of endorphins, which are the body's feel-good neurotransmitters. In addition, exercise can imitate the effects of stress, helping the body adjust its flight or fight response accordingly, and help them cope with mildly stressful situations. While engaged in exercise, people may forget about their problems as they are focused on the activity at hand.

Improve bone health

Strength training and physical activity can stave off the effects of frailty and osteoporosis, which affects bone strength. A study published in the Journal of Internal Medicine in 2017 found that hip fractures are associated with diminished quality of life and survival among the elderly. One in three adults aged 50 and over dies within 12 months of suffering a hip fracture, and older adults have a five- to eight-times greater risk of dying within three months following a hip fracture. Building muscle strength, balance and bone density through exercise can reduce falls and frailty, helping to prevent fracture-related health risks.

Addresses sarcopenia

The health and wellness resource Healthline defines sarcopenia as the loss of muscle mass specifically related to aging. Doctors once considered this muscle loss inevitable, and it can affect stamina and lead to weakness. However, new indications suggest that exercise is the main treatment regimen for sarcopenia, particularly resistance training. This is designed to improve muscle strength and help balance hormone levels by turning protein into energy for older adults. These are just some of the ways exercise can help older adults live longer, healthier lives.

How exercise can help you LIVE LONGER
St. Peter’s Health is proud to introduce its Wound Care Center, now offering specialized wound care in Helena for the first time. Medical Director Dr. John Galt and the Wound Care Center team are dedicated to healing chronic wounds using personalized, physician-led treatments. It is the only clinic in the area to offer state-of-the-art Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, a highly effective treatment that increases the blood’s ability to carry oxygen to wound tissue. Learn more at sphealth.org.