

August is Immunization Awareness Month

Vaccines: *Not just for kids!*

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Avoiding Sports Injuries

Immunization, also called vaccination or inoculation, protects against disease. It's important that children *and* adults are properly immunized, not only for improving individual well-being, but also overall public health.

Why immunize?

In the past, infectious diseases like whooping cough, measles and polio spread like wildfire, causing serious illness and many deaths, especially in children. Today, vaccines help prevent the spread of certain diseases and without them, many of us would not be here!

How do vaccines work?

Every day, our bodies are attacked with foreign germs called *antigens* that could make us ill. A healthy immune system produces millions of protein substances, or *antibodies*, to defend against these attacks, leaving behind cells that remember and defend against the original antigen, even decades later.

Vaccines contain the same antigens that cause disease, but the antigens are either killed or greatly weakened so they are just strong enough to signal the immune system to produce antibodies against them and leave behind memory cells to protect against future attacks. In essence, vaccination allows a person to develop immunity without suffering the actual disease.

Vaccinations: A Must for Children

Newborn babies are born immune to some diseases because they have antibodies from their mothers. However, this maternal immunity is short-lived and does not protect against some vaccine-preventable diseases. If a young child is not vaccinated and is exposed to a disease, his immune system may not be strong enough to overcome it. Vaccines give children a fighting chance.

There is a lot of confusion and misinformation about childhood immunizations, particularly due to media hype over a single study published 12 years ago that linked childhood vaccines to an increased likelihood for autism. Nearly 20 studies have been released since then, refuting the results and proving **there is no link between vaccination and autism**. The CDC strongly recommends following a standard childhood immunization schedule to protect the child and for public safety.

Talk to your child's doctor about a complete vaccination schedule, as well as to discuss any concerns you have about the benefits, risks or potential side effects of the immunization process.

Vaccinations for Adults

Diseases such as diphtheria, herpes, influenza (flu), pneumococcus and tetanus can also be prevented by immunization. Some of these vaccines are vital for most adults, especially senior citizens, but others are appropriate only for certain people. Discuss the adult immunization schedule with your doctor to find out which vaccines are right for you.

www.cdc.gov
www.webmd.com

Want to find out more about immunizations that protect you and your loved ones? Check out A-Z Health Topics on MyBlueService. Learn more about vaccine benefits and risk factors, childhood immunization and more! Simply visit www.bcbsfl.com and log in to MyBlueService. Go to the Living Healthy tab, access A-Z Health Topics from WebMD and click on Immunization.

Depression:

The Nutrition Factor

Clinical depression is a medical condition that is related to neurotransmitters, chemicals in the brain that are responsible for regulating mood, responses to stimuli, appetite and more. Depression can be mild and may persist for years or it can be moderate or severe, with more disabling symptoms that effect daily life. Major depression may occur as a single episode, or recurring episodes.

Depression takes on many different forms, with different symptoms and varying levels of severity. Some people with depression tend to eat less, sleep more and feel fatigued, while others may experience increases in appetite, insomnia, agitation and anxiousness. Some people also experience significant, unexplained physical pain or other physical ailments.

Treating Depression

Anti-depressants, often prescribed to treat depression, are medications designed to boost serotonin levels. Serotonin acts as a neurotransmitter, regulating mood, sleep and appetite.



Many of us look for "natural" remedies or supplements to treat conditions like depression. While you should work with your doctor to develop a treatment plan, it doesn't get any more natural than the food you eat. Foods contain vitamins, minerals and amino acids that play a significant role in the chemical processes that occur in the brain.

How Some Foods Affect Depression

The foods you eat may not cure depression, but they certainly affect your mood, mental health and energy levels.

Carbohydrates increase the amount of serotonin in the brain, decreasing symptoms of depression. Higher carbohydrate meals also increase the release of insulin, a hormone that helps regulate blood sugar levels and increases the absorption of tryptophan. Tryptophan is an amino acid that gets converted into serotonin. Protein-rich foods like meat and dairy increase the body's amount of tryptophan.

Vitamin B-6 improves the rate in which tryptophan is converted to serotonin. Leafy green vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and meats are good sources of vitamin B-6.

Folic acid (folate) and vitamin B-12 help prevent disorders of the central nervous system, mood disorders and dementia. Beans, lentils, leafy green veggies, fruits and low-fat dairy are good sources of folic acid. Vitamin B-12 is found only in animal products such as meat, fish and dairy.

Omega-3 fatty acids appear to have a role in decreasing depression symptoms. Cold water fish like salmon, mackerel and sardines, walnuts, soybeans and Omega-3 fortified eggs are good sources of Omega-3 fatty acids.

Depression is a daily challenge for many people. The very things that can make you feel better can be difficult to do when you suffer from depression. While eating better and exercising may not rid you of depression, they can go a long way in controlling symptoms when combined with medical treatment. If you suffer from depression, talk to your doctor about the best treatment plan for you.



Fresh & Healthy

Recipe of the Month

Baked Coconut Shrimp



Ingredients:

¼ cup orange marmalade	2 large egg whites
1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice	¾ cup panko (Japanese breadcrumbs)
2 tsp. whole grain mustard	½ cup sweetened flaked coconut
½ tsp. ground red pepper, divided	2 Tbsp. canola oil
¼ cup all-purpose flour	1 ½ lbs. large shrimp (about 24), peeled and deveined
½ tsp. salt	

Preparation

Stir together the first 3 ingredients and ¼ tsp. ground red pepper in a small bowl. Set aside until ready to serve. Combine remaining ¼ tsp. ground red pepper, flour and salt in a large zip top plastic bag. Whisk together egg whites and 2 Tbsp. water in a shallow dish. Combine panko, coconut and oil in a separate shallow dish.

Place shrimp in bag with flour mixture; shake to coat well. Dip shrimp in egg white mixture, and roll in coconut mixture. Place a wire rack inside a large baking pan. Spray baking rack with cooking spray. Arrange shrimp in a single layer on rack, and bake at 375° for 5 to 7 minutes or until golden brown and cooked through. Serve with sauce.

Nutritional information

(6 shrimp and 1 Tbsp. sauce): Calories: 336; Fat: 13g; Saturated fat: 3g; Protein: 22g; Carbohydrate: 32g; Fiber: 1g; Cholesterol: 168mg; Sodium: 613mg

Looking for delicious, healthy recipes the whole family can enjoy? Check out our Healthy Recipes from WebMD! Simply log in to MyBlueService from bcbsfl.com and access the **Living Healthy** tab. Click on **My Health Manager** and under **Healthy Fun**, select **Healthy Recipes**.

Ask the Coach

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Should I work my abs every day?

A The promise of six-pack abs, aesthetically pleasing as they are, can be a strong motivator to pump out 15 minutes of crunches every day – but the abdominal muscles provide a much more significant role. Your abdominals are a part of the core muscles that provide support for your back, allowing you to stand tall and pain free. And they should be trained like the other core muscles, not every day.

As with other muscles, you should increase the intensity of your abdominal exercises by adding resistance, so the muscles are fatigued in 10-15 repetitions. Do abdominal exercises slow and with correct form to get the most out of your routine and remember to allow recovery time between workouts.

www.acefitness.org

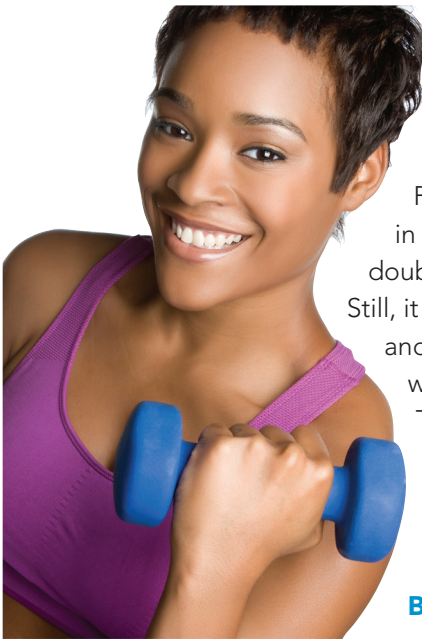
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Gain without Pain:

Avoiding Sports Injuries

Exercising and being active is great for your health, but it can lead to injuries if you're not careful. In one recent



12-month span, sports and recreational injuries landed 4.3 million Americans in the emergency room. Plus, the rates of injuries in men were roughly double those in women. Still, it is possible for men—and women—to exercise without getting hurt. The key lies in easing your body into shape and taking a few safety precautions.

Build Up, Warm Up

One of the most common reasons people get injured during exercise is that they try to do too much too fast, without giving their body a chance to adjust. To avoid injury, don't cram a week's worth of activity into one or two days. Instead, be active throughout the week and don't overdo it.

Most people should get at least 30 minutes of activity almost every day of the week. If that sounds like a lot, remember that "activity" can mean anything from walking to your car, to climbing stairs, to unloading groceries.

When doing more formal exercise, such as jogging or biking, take time to warm up, stretch and cool down. You'll feel more limber, and you'll be less likely to get hurt. Also,

as your body gets used to doing these activities, gradually increase the intensity with which you do them. That way you will build up strength and stamina.

Learn Proper Technique

If you take up a new sport, consider taking lessons or reading up on how it's done. Most sports have a "proper technique." Learning to move your body in just the right way will not only improve your game, it will also reduce your risk of injury. The following tips apply to just about any sport:

- When jumping, land with your knees bent
- When doing knee bends, don't bend your knees more than halfway
- When stretching, do not twist your knees

Use the Right Gear

Choosing the right shoes and protective gear is essential to staying safe. Buy shoes that fit you properly, provide stability and absorb shock. Also, replace your shoes regularly, because they lose their cushioning over time.

Depending on the sport, wearing the appropriate helmets, shin guards, wrist guards and other protective gear is a good idea. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, bicycle helmets alone could prevent more than 150,000 injuries each year.

If you use equipment, such as clubs, rackets or weights, make sure it matches your size, strength and skill level. Most people know to adjust their bicycle seat and handle bars according to their height, but those types of adjustments apply to other equipment, too.

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