Don’t Let Your Health Take a Holiday

The busy season ahead can quickly lead to a hectic schedule. To lessen your stress, maintain energy and avoid getting sick, treat yourself well:

Take time for basic needs. That means 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep and 3 balanced meals every day plus 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise (e.g., brisk walking) weekly — the best Rx for sustaining energy and feeling positive.

Watch for opportune exercise. Park in the back 40 of the shopping mall and walk to it.

You don’t have to do it all. You’re not being a Grinch if you need to say No to family and friends to relieve stress and recharge.

Keep your hands clean. And keep your distance from sick coworkers and family members.

Quiet your mind. Check out meditation apps to create mindfulness and help you to relieve stress or pain or quit smoking.

Snack for energy. Have some fruit, nuts and seeds with you when working or traveling.

Relax in the moment. Open your mind and your eyes to the warmth of your surroundings — listen to music or enjoy a wintry walk followed by a cup of hot tea.

Give encouragement to others. Wear a smile, offer compliments, and be patient with those who appear stressed. When a friend seems upset or blue, lend an ear and just listen. That’s the spirit!

How do I know if I am at risk for diabetes?
Type 2 diabetes has a number of risk factors, some of which we can change and some we cannot. Important risks we cannot change are:
• Age over 45 years
• Family history of diabetes or personal history of gestational diabetes

Some races and ethnicities are at higher risk for type 2 diabetes such as:
• African Americans
• Hispanic/Latin American
• Asian American

How do I get screened for diabetes?
If you believe you are at risk, a simple blood test, HbA1c, can be done.
• A reading of 6.5% or higher is diabetes
• A test result of 5.7% to 6.4% is prediabetes
• Below 5.7% is normal

Are there ways to lower my risk for diabetes?
A healthy lifestyle is the key to success. Often people can reduce their risk dramatically with losing only a few pounds. Some simple steps include eating a healthy diet with fresh fruits and a variety of veggies and avoiding processed foods. Also, trying to move more and incorporating exercise in simple ways, such as walking, is beneficial.
Q: Dear Counselor,
Every year I make a New Year’s resolution, but I can’t ever seem to keep up with it. Do you have any tips for making my changes stick in 2020?

New Start

A: Dear New Start,
First, you are NOT alone in your struggles; most resolutions fall by the wayside within a few months! With a little bit of thought and planning, however, you can set yourself up for a successful start to 2020. Consider these four tips:

1. Get SMART. One MAJOR trap folks often fall into is choosing resolutions that are too broad, vague, or lofty. By thinking Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound, you’re more likely to make sustainable changes.

2. We are all works in progress. If you don’t meet your goal on the first try, don’t give up! Take a systematic look at where, when and why things got off track and then make realistic adjustments to get back on course. Maybe going from 1 to 6 servings of vegetables per day is a little ambitious but going from 1 to 3 is totally doable.

3. Plan ahead. Think about how your resolutions fit in with what your life looks like right now. For example, if you want to make and stick to a budget in 2020, pick a system and a schedule for tracking spending (e.g., an Excel spreadsheet that you update every Sunday at 8 p.m.).

4. Teamwork makes the dream work. Working on resolutions alone can be HARD, but it’s easier if you have someone to keep you accountable. Connecting with a friend, coworker, or family member can provide you both with encouragement when things are tough. Celebrating your wins with someone else is always more fun!

For support in setting and sticking to personal goals, Work/Life Connections-EAP (615-936-1327) offers confidential counseling and coaching for a wide range of concerns.
Winter is “CO”ming: Keep Yourself Safe from Carbon Monoxide!

Lori Rolando, MD, MPH, FACOEM, Director Occupational Health Clinic

It’s that time of year again — when the temperature drops, and the heat is turned up. Remember to protect your family from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless, and tasteless gas, is produced by burning fuels containing carbon monoxide (e.g., wood, coal, gasoline, and natural gases). Potential sources of carbon monoxide build-up in enclosed spaces include furnaces, kerosene space heaters, gas and wood-burning fireplaces, other gas appliances, and car exhaust. Know the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning and how to prevent it to be safe.

Overexposure to carbon monoxide can cause a variety of symptoms. Infants, the elderly, and those with chronic lung or heart problems are at increased risk. Symptoms can include headache, dizziness, confusion, nausea/vomiting, weakness, and loss of consciousness. Severe levels of exposure can cause seizures, irregular heart rhythms, or myocardial ischemia (lack of blood flow and oxygen to the heart muscle). It can even be fatal; recognition of exposure is crucial. As Dr. Donna Seger, Professor of Clinical Medicine and Executive Director of the Tennessee Poison Center, notes: “Carbon monoxide can cause symptoms at the time of exposure and delayed symptoms. If you think you have been exposed, call your doctor.”

It is extremely important to proactively protect yourself and your family. Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), some tips to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning include:

- Proper installation of fuel-burning appliances.
- Annual servicing of gas-, oil- and coal-burning appliances by a certified professional.
- Avoiding running vehicles in enclosed spaces, such as a garage.
- Annual cleaning of fireplaces to keep fuel-burning appliances properly vented.
- Installing and maintaining carbon monoxide detectors.

Dr. Seger reminds us that: “carbon monoxide detectors can be lifesaving. You should have one on each floor of your house.” She also stresses the importance of taking carbon monoxide alarms seriously, with this reminder: “if the alarm goes off, get out of the house and call the fire department.”
Healthy Lifestyle Change: How One Person Made Big Changes Stick

Making healthy lifestyle changes stick is really tough. To learn about what it takes, we turn to Dr. Katherine E. Hartman who has made huge strides in improving and sustaining her health in recent years.

1. What made you decide to make a lifestyle change to include regular fitness activities?
I knew something had to change as I was sliding towards Type 2 diabetes, had a surgical injury projected to cause permanent limitations in mobility, and would soon have limitations in normal daily activities, like carrying groceries, traveling for college tours with our kids, and taking long walks with our dogs.

2. How difficult was it to incorporate regular fitness into your life?
Once I decided I couldn’t accept a steady decline in function and increase in disease risk, change wasn’t difficult, it was required. Creative solutions for regaining functional fitness and for improving our family’s habits became more obvious.

I traded down to an inexpensive car and used the “found money” to work with an experienced trainer. My husband and I began to overhaul how we planned meals — nixing take-out and other conveniences.

I spent early mornings in the gym. As my abilities improved I added activities, like biking, hiking, and running. I got to a healthy body weight and never looked back. By then, I was hooked on the amazing things our bodies can do when we train steadily, prevent injuries, and have specific goals. I found a sport that I love, kettlebell lifting in competition, and a tribe of people with whom I enjoy training and spending time. The whole structure of my life had been overhauled for the good.

3. What motivates you to continue your fitness routine?
Having once been told it would not be safe for me to take stairs or to do exercise other than swimming or non-weight bearing activities, then discovering otherwise, has made me grateful and aware of what we can accomplish through steady investments. I first got fit in my mid-40s. I’m now almost 56 and on a national competition team in my sport. That sense of possibility and achievements that protect my health and longevity make it easy to stay committed. Pairing that with a community of adult athletes who share constant encouragement is powerful protection against losing momentum.


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New Achievements for the Health Plus Diabetes Prevention Program

The Health Plus Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), offered to faculty/staff or spouses who have prediabetes or are at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes, has had a big year! The program recently produced 3 impressive achievements:

1. Publication of original research, “Putting the National Diabetes Prevention Program to Work: Predictors of Achieving Weight-Loss Goals in an Employee Population” in Preventing Chronic Disease.

2. Receiving Full Recognition from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the Distance Learning option.

3. A 5-year NIH R01 grant awarded to Dr. Chakkalakal, Medical Director of Health Plus, to evaluate if adding the Distance Learning option to Health Plus’ DPP can increase the public health impact by improving program reach while maintaining its efficacy.

To learn more about the program, visit [bit.ly/healthplusdpp](http://bit.ly/healthplusdpp).

Hold the Stuffing

Enjoy good health this holiday season:

- Enjoy holiday foods in MODERATION.
- With appropriate PORTION SIZE.
- And engage in regular PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

Final Weigh-In January 6–17.

The human body is designed to move. Yes, even during the winter! Yet, many Americans spend at least half their waking time sitting — in cars, on sofas, and in front of phones, TVs and computers. Sitting too much is now recognized as a health hazard.

What is too much? Sitting for 6 or more hours a day increases your risk of premature death by 19%, compared with people who sit fewer than 3 hours, according to research by the American Cancer Society last year. Those reporting the most leisure time sitting had higher risks of death from numerous medical conditions, including cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes; kidney, lung, liver and digestive diseases; Parkinson’s disease; Alzheimer’s disease; nervous disorders; and musculoskeletal disorders.

Make a habit of standing up and moving as often as possible — as you read, watch TV, or talk or text on your phone. Walk around if you can do so safely. Take breaks at work to refill your water bottle to ensure you’re moving and staying hydrated during the day. Fit in some simple stretches at your desk, such as this example from the Health Plus Desk Yoga Workout:

1. Begin by standing at your desk with feet shoulder width apart.
2. Place both hands on the desk and walk back until your back is straight and your hips are directly over your feet. This stretch will be felt in the back, arms, and legs.
3. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

For more online workouts from Health Plus, visit vumc.org/health-wellness/news-resource-articles/online-workouts.

Quinoa Pilaf Stuffed Acorn Squash

- 1 acorn squash
- 2 tsp olive oil
- Salt & pepper to taste
- ¾ cup quinoa, uncooked
- ½ cup water
- 1 cup yellow onion, chopped
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds
- ¼ cup dried cherries, chopped
- 2 cups baby spinach, chopped
- 1 Tbsp fresh oregano, chopped

**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut acorn squash in half, vertically, and remove the seeds. Drizzle olive oil over the flesh of both pieces of squash, then sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place squash flesh side down on a foil-lined sheet and bake for 30 minutes.

While squash is baking, combine quinoa and water in a medium pot. Bring to a boil, then lower heat and cook until water is absorbed, and quinoa is fluffy, about 15 to 20 minutes.

While quinoa is cooking, heat olive oil in a pan; add onions and cook until translucent. Remove pan from heat and set aside.

When quinoa is done cooking, pour into a medium bowl. Stir in onion mixture, pumpkin seeds, cherries, spinach and oregano. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

When squash is cooked, remove from oven and plate each half. Scoop half of quinoa pilaf mixture into each squash half and serve.

**Serves 2** (Serving Size: ¼ cup quinoa mix in ¼ squash).

**Per serving:** 520 calories | 14g protein | 14g total fat | 5g saturated fat | 99g carbohydrate | 10g sugar | 25g fiber | 57mg sodium

Source: Adapted from Food and Nutrition Magazine
MyHealthWalkin.com
Quick care is faster when you save your spot in line.

When you aren’t feeling well, the last thing you want to do is spend hours in a physician’s office waiting room. With myhealthwalkin.com, you can quickly find a Vanderbilt Health walk-in clinic and even save your spot in line by scheduling an appointment for a specific time. You can search for a clinic by location or you can find a walk-in clinic that can treat your specific condition.

The easy-to-read listing gives you an at-a-glance view of each clinic’s operating hours, address, phone number and driving directions as well as the conditions they treat, the diagnostic equipment available (such as X-ray and EKG) and the type of providers onsite.

You can also see which clinics have appointments available that are most convenient for you. Most clinics are available 7 days a week, and many are open after traditional business hours, and all the Vanderbilt Health walk-in clinics are Tier 1 providers, which means you get maximum savings.

Other Quick Care Options:
The Faculty/Staff Express Care clinic in Suite 112 of the Medical Arts Building is open weekdays, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. — except on days VUMC observes holidays — and treats minor illnesses, such as cold and flu. If Faculty/Staff Express Care is closed, you can go to the Occupational Health Clinic as a walk-in patient. The Occupational Health Clinic in Suite 640 of the Medical Arts Building treats work-related injuries and illnesses and is open Monday–Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Both clinics are free to employees.

If you live or work in Davidson County or Brentwood, Vanderbilt Health OnCall brings a Vanderbilt nurse practitioner to your home, office or any location 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., for non-emergent medical conditions, such as a sore throat, fever, cough, earache or minor injury. Visits are billed at the Tier 1 rate. Download the app from iTunes or the Google Play store or visit www.vanderbilthealth.com/vhoc/ to request a visit.

Get well without leaving your house. Teladoc, a virtual care provider, is staffed by more than 3,000 licensed physicians who can diagnose and treat a wide range of non-emergent medical conditions, from rashes to upper respiratory infections. Teladoc physicians are not members of the VUMC medical staff and do not replace your primary care physician. You can request an on-demand consult, which are available 24/7/365 or schedule a future consult for the current or next day. Consults can be completed over the phone, using a computer web camera or a video conferencing app, such as Skype. To get started, download the Teladoc mobile app from the iTunes or Google Play store or visit www.teladoc.com/aetna to create a Teladoc account using your Aetna member ID.
upcoming events

December

**DECEMBER 5**
Healthier You Presentation  
*Managing Stress at Work*  
Noon to 12:45 p.m.  
Light Hall, Room 202

**DECEMBER 13**
Vandy Cooks  
*Healthy Holiday Appetizers*  
Noon to 1:00 p.m.  
Vanderbilt Rec & Wellness Center Teaching Kitchen

**DECEMBER 19**
Babies & You*  
*Nutrition: Eating for Two*  
Noon to 1:00 p.m.  
Light Hall, Room 411

January

**JANUARY 9**
Healthier You Presentation  
*Cheers to a New Year!*  
Noon to 12:45 p.m.  
Light Hall, Room 202

**JANUARY 16**
Babies & You*  
*Coping with the Stresses and Emotions of Pregnancy*  
Noon to 1:00 p.m.  
Light Hall, Room 407

**JANUARY 24**
Vandy Cooks  
*Kick off 2020 with Chef Aaron Dilts from Campus Dining*  
Noon to 1:00 p.m.  
Vanderbilt Rec & Wellness Center Teaching Kitchen

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*Babies & You is a prenatal health program offered by Health Plus for VU employees, spouses, and dependents. The classes are provided monthly with a $50 incentive for those who register in their first trimester, attend at least three monthly classes, and go to all prenatal provider appointments.

For more information, class location, or to register online, visit [vumc.org/health-wellness/healthplus](http://vumc.org/health-wellness/healthplus).
The Healthy Pulse
FOR FACULTY AND STAFF AT VANDERBILT

Fruit and Vegetable Intake Before Versus After Participation in TASTE

TASTE is an online program that provides participants with practical nutritional information to promote healthy eating habits. The proportion of TASTE participants reporting they ate 3 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day increased by the end of the 10-week program.

“Happiness is not a station you arrive at, but a manner of traveling.”
— Margaret Lee Runbeck