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ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
HAMILTON

About Health

WINTER 2011

Habits to Break

5 ways you might be
hurting your bone health

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Small Grain, Big Gains

Whether you're battling high blood pressure and heart disease, or trying to prevent them, brown rice is on your side. The whole grain contains loads of fiber, which binds to cholesterol and sends it packing, and, according to a recent study by Temple University School of Medicine, brown rice also appears to block a protein in our bodies that can lead to high blood pressure and clogged blood vessels—precursors to heart disease.

As if that wasn't enough, the fiber in brown rice and other whole grains may lower blood glucose in people with type 2 diabetes by slowing digestion and increasing the feeling of fullness. That means fewer calories will be consumed. Because people with diabetes are at greater risk for heart disease and high blood pressure, maintaining a healthy weight is important.

Not a fan of brown rice? Start slowly by mixing in just a little with white rice, gradually increasing the amount of brown rice over time.

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(get new recipes) To help manage your diabetes, attend “Dining Healthy with Diabetes” on Tuesday, January 11, February 8 or March 8, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. \$10 per session. Please visit rwjhamilton.org/education to register or call **609.584.5900**.

Grandma Knows Best

Despite some of the physical challenges that come with age, it seems seniors have something to smile about: less stress. Men and women in their 70s and 80s surprisingly reported reduced stress, less worry and better emotional well-being than younger people, according to a recent survey published in the online edition of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

To decrease your stress no matter your age, follow these tips from the National Mental Health Association:

- **Get plenty of rest.** Sleeping can calm the mind and give you more energy.
- **Spend time with others.** Invite a friend to join you for everyday activities or errands.
- **Make the most of leisure time.** Whatever you choose, make sure it's enjoyable and satisfying.
- **Indulge yourself.** Relax in a hot bubble bath or curl up in a warm blanket.
- **Take things one at a time.** Break up large projects into smaller tasks. As you complete them, it will encourage you to do even more.



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ACTIVE, HEALTHY SENIORS

Join RWJ Hamilton's **FREE 50+ CLUB** for information on health screenings and social activities! To join, call **609.584.5900**.

ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
HAMILTON

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Muscle Matters

“Strength training” can evoke images of muscle-bound bodybuilders, but its health and fitness benefits far outweigh any intimidation factor. Reduced weight, improved stamina and stronger bones can be yours with strength training. Take this quiz to see whether you know the facts and fiction about strength training.

- 1 Strength training requires a gym membership or a lot of heavy weights.
- 2 Women shouldn't strength-train because it will make them look bulky.
- 3 To see results from strength training, you have to spend hours a day working out.
- 4 You can prevent injury by incorporating strength training into your exercise routine.



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ANSWERS:

- False.** Although weight machines and free weights can be part of a strength-training regimen, plenty of exercises can be done by using your own body weight.
- False.** Strength training helps the body burn calories more efficiently. And women will gain strength—not necessarily muscle mass.
- False.** Just 20 to 30 minutes of strength training two or three times a week can produce significant results over time.
- True.** Muscle protects joints from injury and improves flexibility and balance—keys to preventing falls and other injuries. Also, weight-bearing exercises strengthen bones, which makes them less susceptible to fractures.

(safe stretching) Learn the effects of exercise on your muscles and bones by attending this class on Tuesday, January 25, at 6:30 p.m. To register, visit rwjhamilton.org/education or call **609.584.5900**.



33% less

Since a 2001 public smoking ban went into effect in Toronto, there have been 33 percent fewer hospital admissions related to respiratory conditions such as asthma, emphysema, pneumonia and bronchitis. The 10-year review by Canadian researchers found an even steeper decline (39 percent) in hospital admissions for heart problems. Find advice, tips and encouragement at smokefree.gov.



Baby, I Love Your Smile



Your little one might be all gums right now, but teething will start before you know it. Here are some suggestions from the American Dental Association for getting and keeping your child's smile healthy from day one.

- To ward off tooth decay, wipe your baby's gums gently with a damp washcloth or gauze pad after each feeding.
- Schedule your baby's first dental appointment within six months of his or her first tooth and definitely no later than the first birthday.
- Avoid letting your baby breastfeed for extended periods, including while sleeping.
- By age 1, teach your child to drink from a cup.
- When your child enjoys sports or other physical activities, encourage use of a mouth protector.
- If your child's tooth is knocked out, go to the dentist immediately. If the root is dirty, you can rinse it but don't scrub. Gently place the tooth in its socket or in a cup of milk.



5 Foods to STOP Avoiding



Wendi Silver,
registered dietitian

You pass them in the grocery store every week, but it's time to give these healthful, delicious foods a try

NOT EVERYONE IS ADVENTUROUS when it comes to food, but some foods are worth a try—not only for their flavors but also for their health benefits. “People are afraid of some foods because they don’t know what to do with

them,” says Wendi Silver, registered dietitian with RWJ Hamilton. Removing the fear of the unknown can open a whole new world of menu choices. Here are five foods you should give a chance.

BEETS



Don't let the rough exterior fool you. When washed, sliced and roasted, beets have a natural sweetness and a heartiness that will satisfy, Silver says. Beets are high in folate and fiber as well as potassium, which can help lower blood pressure. Eaten solo or added to salads, beets bring a lot of flavor—and color—to your plate.

CABBAGE



Cabbage is a member of the cruciferous family of vegetables, which may help fight certain cancers. When grated or chopped, cabbage adds excellent texture and crunch to salads, which keeps things interesting. As for a potentially embarrassing side effect—gas—Silver recommends starting slow and drinking lots of water. “The body will adjust,” she says.

KALE



With its curly, thick, dark green leaves, kale can appear intimidating. But with gentle steaming or stir-frying, it becomes tender, providing a hearty, delicious, slightly nutty flavor. It also can be added to soups and stews. It's an excellent source of calcium and vitamin A, and good for your waistline. “The best diet secret is more vegetables,” Silver says.

SARDINES



These tiny fish come whole in a can, and that can be reason enough for some to say “no, thanks.” But as an inexpensive source of omega-3s, sardines are a great way to be heart-healthy without breaking the bank. Sardines also are rich in calcium, iron, magnesium, B vitamins and a host of other nutrients. Silver suggests chopping them and adding them to tomato sauce with pasta to get used to the flavor.

FIGS



With 2 grams of fiber in one little fig, you can improve your health without a lot of volume. Also packed with iron and potassium, figs are a sweet treat by themselves, or added to recipes. “Figs are perfect with pork or chicken,” Silver says, who likes to stuff figs and other dried fruits into pork tenderloin. They also add sweetness to cooked vegetables. “Mother Nature will never steer you wrong when it comes to fruits and vegetables,” Silver says.



(get FREE healthy recipes) Do you know what you're eating for dinner tonight? Get access to dozens of good-for-you recipes by visiting rwjhamilton.org/abouthealth.

5 Foods to Start Avoiding

Now that you know which foods to try, find out which ones to pass up more often:

Full-fat cheese

The cheese on that burger has more saturated fat than the meat itself, says Wendi Silver, registered dietitian with RWJ Hamilton. Silver suggests reduced-fat cheese as an alternative.

Energy drinks

They are loaded not only with mystery ingredients (taurine, anyone?) but also with sugar. “People know soda has added sugar, but [these] drinks are touted as healthy without added health benefits,” Silver says.

Bacon

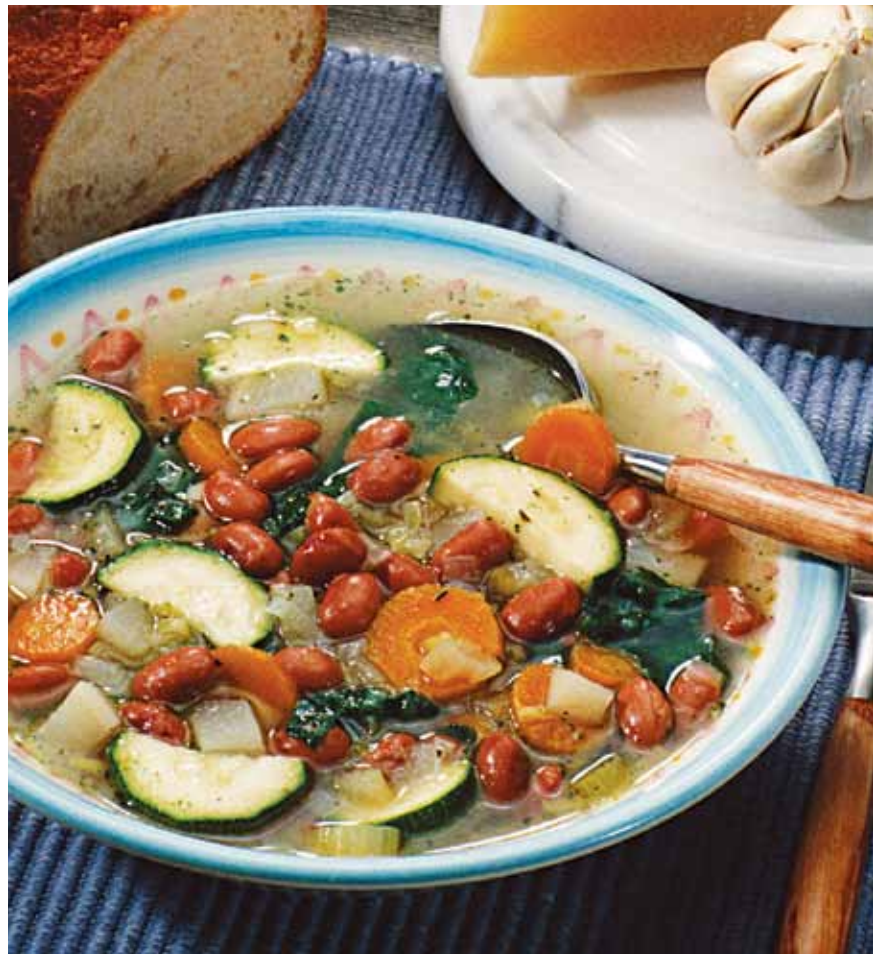
Silver suggests switching to Canadian bacon or turkey bacon, which is leaner and has less saturated fat.

Fatty cuts of meat

If you can see the fat streaked through the meat, you should probably eat less of it, Silver says. Also, poultry skin is an unnecessary source of fat, she adds.

Processed meats

Put down that hot dog. The saturated fat and sodium in processed meats—even cold cuts—pull a “double whammy” on blood pressure and cardiovascular health, Silver says.



Quick Vegetable Minestrone

In less than 20 minutes, you can make this light yet filling soup, which is a good source of vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron. If you can wait for a day to serve it, the herbs will infuse the vegetables, and it will taste even more flavorful.

INGREDIENTS

¼ c. olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
4 garlic cloves, crushed
1 lb. kale (2–3 c.),
prewashed, chopped
1 (1-lb.) bag frozen mixed
Italian vegetables
(zucchini, green beans,
cauliflower and broccoli)
5¼ c. (42 fl. oz.)
reduced-sodium
chicken broth
1 c. water
¼ c. fresh basil
½ tsp. black pepper
1 can (19 oz.) kidney beans,
rinsed and drained

PREPARATION

Heat oil in a large pot over moderately high heat. Sauté onion and garlic in oil, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 3 minutes. Add kale and sauté, stirring, 1 minute. Add frozen vegetables, broth and water, basil and pepper and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, place half of beans in a shallow bowl and coarsely mash with a fork or potato masher. Stir mashed and whole beans into soup and simmer, stirring occasionally, until soup is slightly thickened, about 5 minutes.

Makes about 7, 1¼ c. servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 406 calories; 10.2 g fat (1.6 g saturated); 0 mg cholesterol; 58.1 g carbohydrates; 24.2 g protein; 14 g fiber; 618 mg sodium

(let's cook vegetarian!)

Learn how to maintain a nutritionally balanced vegetarian diet. Tuesday, January 18 and 25, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. To register, call **609.584.5900**.



Habits to Break

Get hip to some unhealthy behaviors that could be bad for your bones



BE GOOD TO YOUR BONES and they'll be good to go for years to come. Sounds easy enough, right? Actually, you could be damaging your bones without even knowing it. Here are five harmful behaviors—from super-bad to not-so-terrible—along with tips for doing the right thing.



Joshua Hornstein, MD

BEING SEDENTARY

HOW BAD? **5**

Leading an inactive lifestyle is the worst thing you can do to your bones, says Joshua Hornstein, MD, board certified orthopaedic surgeon at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton. “Like your muscles, if you don’t use your bones they start to become weaker,” he explains.

To keep ‘em strong, get moving. Aerobic activity like walking, biking or gardening is good exercise. Strength-training activities are important, too, but you don’t have to be a bodybuilder. Try push-ups, sit-ups, squats or simply walking up and down stairs.

“The more active you can be, the stronger your bones will get and, hopefully, you can avoid the risk of injury down the road,” Dr. Hornstein says. Be sure to check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

POOR NUTRITION

HOW BAD? **4**

Eating an unhealthy diet isn’t good for any part of your body. If you don’t eat well, you may gain weight, which can lead to type 2 diabetes. And diabetes makes it harder to recover from fractures, according to Dr. Hornstein.

Many folks don’t get enough of the nutrients, primarily calcium and vitamin D, that promote strong bones. To boost your calcium intake, eat more dairy products, kale, broccoli and calcium-enriched products such as cereal and orange juice. Foods high in vitamin D include milk, eggs, salmon and shrimp. Five to 10 minutes of sun exposure each day helps your body produce vitamin D, too.

“People don’t realize how important these nutrients are to bone health,” Dr. Hornstein says. “Supplements can be helpful, too, but you absorb the nutrients from natural sources better than you do from a pill.”

No Bones About It

If you suffer an injury, how can you tell the difference between a broken bone and something less serious?

According to Joshua Hornstein, MD, board certified orthopaedic surgeon at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, in many cases you can take a wait-and-see approach. For example, if your injured ankle hurts but you can still walk on it, you're not going to do too much damage by waiting a day or two to see whether it dramatically improves. If it doesn't improve, see a doctor.

But getting an X-ray sooner rather than later might be a good idea. "Even if your ankle isn't broken, you might have a significant tendon or ligament injury," Dr. Hornstein says. "Anytime you're in doubt, it's safer to get it looked at."

"The more active you can be, the stronger your bones will get ..."



SMOKING

HOW BAD? 4

Cigarette smoking is bad for your blood vessels, which supply nutrients to your bones (along with other organs in your body). As fewer nutrients get through, bones become weaker and, if you break one, healing is more difficult, Dr. Hornstein explains. Plus, smoking increases the rate of bone loss.

(join us! dinner and a lecture)

Learn how to prepare for a successful joint replacement and find out if you're a candidate for total joint surgery. Wednesday, March 30, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. To register, call **609.584.5900**.



NOT GETTING REGULAR CHECKUPS

HOW BAD? 3

Without routine visits to your doctor, you might have an undiagnosed health condition, such as low calcium levels, that contributes to poor bone health. If you are older than 65, it's important to ask your doctor about a bone density test. If you've broken a bone in your lifetime, you may need one sooner. If your bones are losing density, your healthcare professional can help halt or even reverse that trend with lifestyle recommendations and medication.

"Thinking you're fine if you don't do anything is a bad habit," Dr. Hornstein says. "Be proactive about taking good care of yourself."

DRINKING SODA

HOW BAD? 1

One thing's for sure—drinking soda offers almost zero health benefits. But is it bad for your bones? There had been some concern that phosphoric acid, an ingredient in many kinds of soda, would decrease the amount of calcium available to your bones. "Some recent studies have come out that show that's really not the case," Dr. Hornstein says.

Regardless, soda has a lot of empty calories. Drinking too much of it can lead to obesity, which is hard on your bones.

"A healthy lifestyle can make a big difference in the future of your health, including the health of your bones," Dr. Hornstein concludes. "A lot of the control is in your hands." ■



Pauline Lerma, MD,
medical director,
breast consultation
program, CINJ
Hamilton



Mammogram Makeover

With these tips to take care of yourself, your exam doesn't have to be a bummer

A FRESH HAIRCUT AND A PAIR OF CUTE NEW SHOES can uplift you instantly. You walk a little taller, smile a little wider. Put that feel-good makeover mentality into action when you think about your annual mammogram. You may not look forward to these screenings as much as your mani-pedi, but they can save your life.

"The probability that a woman is diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in her lifetime is one in eight," says Pauline Lerma, MD, board certified oncologist with the Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) Hamilton. "Fortunately, the chance of dying from breast cancer is reduced by getting a mammogram every year."

You shouldn't skip the big M, but there are some ways to transform the way you think about the screening test.

BEFORE:

"Mammograms are a pain and I just don't have time."

AFTER:

The X-rays themselves take only a few minutes, and it could save your life.

Cut down on wait time by asking for the first appointment of the day or the

first after lunch. Don't schedule your appointment during weeks you're more likely to have breast tenderness. And take an over-the-counter pain reliever before your appointment to reduce sensitivity—any time of the month.

BEFORE:

"I feel uncomfortable when I get a mammogram."

AFTER:

Talk to the tech during the exam.

"If you feel discomfort, can't get into a certain position or the machine is too cold, speak up," Dr. Lerma says. "A good tech will know tricks to get things done right." Breathe deeply or let that catchy tune that's stuck in your head play at full volume. And remember, even if the compression hurts, it won't last long. To

reduce anxiety, schedule your mammogram at the same time as a gal pal. That way, if the tech sees anything unusual and asks you to stay for follow-up tests, you won't be alone.

BEFORE:

"The whole experience makes me stressed and anxious."

AFTER:

Turn "mammogram day" into "me day."

Take the day off so you aren't pressured about going back to work. "Many women schedule their appointments on their birthday so they remember," Dr. Lerma says. "Then go out and buy yourself a gift or have lunch with friends." Even if it's not your birthday, reward yourself with a treat, such as a pretty new bra. ■

(mammograms save lives) To schedule your digital mammogram, call **609.584.6400**. If you're still not convinced, visit **rwjhamilton.org/abouthealth** to watch a video about the staggering statistics that support mammography and early detection.

