Contents

4  From the Editor
5  Nutritional News
   Fitness
6  Moving Toward a Healthier Body
12  Lifestyle
   The Power of Intention
14  Nutrition
   Micronutrient Density
20  Herbs & Supplements
   Lycopene
22  Family Health
   A Family Plan for Fitness
24  Comfort Food for Your Brain
26  A Healthy Urinary Tract
28  Learning to Eat Right for a Lifetime
31  Ask the Expert

Features
8  Living with Arthritis
16  Menopause
The Importance of the Basics

I realize that many of the articles in our magazine touch on the importance of two things—healthy diet and regular physical activity. At times this may sound somewhat repetitive, but these two aspects of healthy living are brought up over and over again because they are so important. In fact, you could think of them as the cornerstones of the art of growing young.

The body is a remarkable organism capable of so much. When you think about the body’s capability to actually heal itself when it is sick or injured, it’s really quite remarkable. Or the thousands of processes taking place every second of every day—it’s incredible what our bodies are capable of. No matter what aspect of a healthy functioning body we talk about, one thing is constant: The better we take care of our bodies, the better our bodies are able to take care of us.

The two cornerstones to a healthy body are proper diet and regular physical activity. A healthy diet provides the body with all of the nutrients it needs to function optimally. You can think of nutrients as microscopic building blocks that the body uses to build and maintain all of its cells. Some nutrients are used to build muscle and other tissues, others to remove waste and toxins, still others in cleansing processes and supporting body systems such as the immune and endocrine systems. And then there are the carbohydrates, fats, and proteins we use as fuel for all the energy we expend each day. There’s not enough room here to list all the nutrients and all of their uses. Because there are so many of them, you need to eat a wide variety of healthy foods. That’s why we always stress eating a healthy diet that includes a wide variety of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains, as well as lean sources of protein, healthy fats, nuts, seeds, sprouted and fermented foods, and spices.

The other building block, exercise, helps in other ways. A body that is in shape doesn’t need to work as hard to keep its vital processes functioning. Blood circulates easier, transporting oxygen and nutrients. Strong muscles and bones keep us mobile and help prevent accidents. Staying active even prompts the body to release more feel-good chemicals that help promote feelings of happiness and contentment.

I repeat again: Exercise and diet are the two cornerstones of a healthy lifestyle that can never be stressed too much. There is simply no easy way to say just how important they are and no limit to the benefits they produce. That’s why you will notice the articles in this magazine mention them over and over again. I hope the next time you read about them, you learn something new and take it to heart. I know I am constantly finding new benefits and trying to work them into my life. I hope you can too.

“The better we take care of our bodies, the better our bodies are able to take care of us.”
Want to live longer?
Take a vacation. A recent nine-year study of 12,000 middle-aged men showed that men who took at least one vacation per year were nearly 30 percent less likely to die from a heart-related cause than were men who did not take vacations. Regular vacations can help reduce chronic stress, and this can help prevent cardiovascular disease and oxidation caused by stress, anger and other negative emotions.

Cardiovascular exercise
When choosing where to take your next walk, head outside. Researchers have discovered that walkers who get outside for their daily exercise report feeling less angry, stressed and tense. Walking inside provides the body with an excellent cardiovascular exercise, but walking outside can also give you a great mental boost.

Strawberries
Strawberries may help occasional overeaters. After eating a high-calorie, fatty meal, blood fats spike temporarily. But a recent study has shown that eating strawberries after overindulging can make that spike in damaging fats smaller. Specifically, the strawberry puree used in the study reduced blood levels of oxidized LDL cholesterol, which damages arterial walls. Although more studies are needed, doctors currently believe it’s the strawberry’s high polyphenol content that is responsible for the reduction in oxidized LDL levels.

Tomatoes
Tomatoes may be the next super fruit. Tomatoes are an excellent source of lycopene, beta carotene, lutein, potassium, and vitamins C and A. These nutrients are all known for their health-promoting benefits, which include protection against brittle bones and even ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

Nutritional News
Easier way to speed up weight loss
Eat more to lose more. More evidence has come out suggesting that eating four to five smaller meals a day instead of three large meals can help speed up weight loss. When the body digests foods, especially protein, it warms up during a process called thermogenesis. Because the metabolism speeds up during thermogenesis, it burns more calories. Eating several small meals a day will keep the metabolism stoked, resulting in more weight loss.
Moving Toward a Healthier Body
Everyone ages. That’s a part of life that will never change. But what can change is how we age and how we feel while getting older. Many of the health issues that were once thought to come inevitably with age are now known to be largely preventable. We can live an active, healthy lifestyle long into our twilight years by choosing to exercise.

Physical activity may be one of the best ways to prevent age-related health problems. Aerobic exercises that get the heart pumping have long been known to be good for promoting a healthy life at all ages. But now we are finding that exercise may be even more beneficial than we realized.

Exercising puts good stress on the body, especially your muscles, bones and connective tissues. In general, the more intense the workout, the more of this good stress you put on your body. Unlike chronic mental stress that can leave you feeling drained emotionally and physically, exercise will allow your body to build itself back up until it’s in better shape than when you started.

Every time you exercise you are actually wearing on your muscles in very small ways. The process of rebuilding and repairing afterwards is called adaptive micro-trauma and is very beneficial. It signals your body that it needs repair. And here is the wonderful part: the body does more than repair itself; it actually makes itself better. Think about that for a minute—your body builds itself back up to be better than it was before. That’s a powerful concept.

It’s so simple, yet so important. The more you exercise (within reason—there is such a thing as too much exercise), the better you will feel and the healthier you will be. This is true no matter what your age. Exercising for an hour most days of the week will leave you feeling better than you could believe after a remarkably short period of time. Older men and women who have not been involved in regular physical activity in some time are likely to feel years younger just a few months after getting active again.

It doesn’t matter what form of exercise you engage in, as long as you are accomplishing two goals: working your muscles and elevating your heart rate. If you haven’t been active in a while, don’t overdo it at first. Start slow and work up to more aggressive routines. There’s nothing wrong with starting with a simple walk around the block. Once you are comfortable with that, you can pick up the pace. In no time you’ll be jogging around the entire neighborhood and feeling great.

The key is that no matter what exercise you plan on doing, you must stay committed. Remember that every time you go for a walk, swim laps, take a bike ride, ski or do anything else, your body will build itself back a little better than before.

Top Ten Reasons to Move:

1. **Energy**
   The more you sit around, the less energy you will have. Regular physical activity will boost your energy level, improve your sleep quality and help you wake up every morning feeling refreshed and ready to start the day.

2. **Weight Loss**
   Both aerobic and resistance exercise stoke your metabolic fire and burns fat and calories. Dieting alone is seldom enough to control weight. The addition of a regular physical activity to your daily routine is sure to help slim down your figure.

3. **Mood**
   Getting active causes the body to release feel-good chemicals that will boost your mood. On top of that, the satisfaction of knowing you did something good for your body is often enough to put a smile on your face.

4. **Stay Independent**
   Exercise keeps the body healthy, which helps to reduce risk factors for developing chronic health issues that may limit your independence. Keeping your muscles strong is a sure way to keep mobile.

5. **Ward Off Illness**
   Aerobic exercise has been shown to help reduce the risk of many conditions, including heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke. More than that, it also helps keep your immune system functioning at an optimum level.

6. **Live longer**
   Studies have shown that people who engage in regular physical activity most days of the week tend to live longer, healthier lives than people who don’t exercise regularly.

7. **Improve Your Self-Esteem**
   With all the physical and emotional benefits that come from being active, your self-esteem is sure to rise as well. Liking the way you look and feeling good physically are two important parts to your overall self-esteem. Exercise helps with both.

8. **Get Stronger**
   Resistance training such as lifting weights will help build muscle mass. Maintaining muscle mass as we age is a critical component to living a healthy, independent life, as it will help keep you mobile and preserve balance.

9. **Better Sleep**
   Getting active during the day will help you sleep more soundly at night, according to several studies. Just be sure that you are not exercising right before bed, as this may make it harder to fall asleep.

10. **Get Rid of Stress**
    Getting active is a surefire way to get rid of stress accumulated throughout each day. No matter what exercise you choose, pushing yourself to just simply do it, whatever it is, will lower your body’s response to unhealthy stress and leave you feeling relaxed. 

Everyone ages. That’s a part of life that will never change. But what can change is how we age and how we feel while getting older. Many of the health issues that were once thought to come inevitably with age are now known to be largely preventable. We can live an active, healthy lifestyle long into our twilight years by choosing to exercise.
Arthritis is the name most of us use for a group of inflammatory conditions that cause pain, swelling and stiffness in the joints. There are over 100 different types of these diseases, but the two most well known are rheumatoid and osteoarthritis. Of these two, osteoarthritis is the most common.

Living with Arthritis

All forms of arthritis involve the breakdown of cartilage in the joints. This cartilage performs multiple functions and provides strength, lubrication and resiliency in the joints. Cartilage is a shock absorber during activities that stress the joints, such as running. Without healthy amounts of cartilage, bones rub together, causing wear, pain, inflammation and swelling.

While they may produce similar symptoms, the reasons for the painful swelling caused by rheumatoid and osteoarthritis are very different. Osteoarthritis happens when joint cartilage deteriorates and bone overgrows due to damage, and when cartilage becomes stiffened or hardened. Exaggerated amounts of mineral deposits add to this overall problem of joint degeneration. Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease that causes the body’s own immune system to attack body tissues, including the connective tissue in joints. The exact reasons behind rheumatoid arthritis are not fully understood, but it is currently believed that genetics can be involved. Rheumatoid arthritis also appears to affect many more women than men.

Because osteoarthritis is caused by physical damage to the joints, it is much better understood. It’s often associated with aging because, over the course of a person’s life, the normal wear and tear of daily activities can add up. But damage from one-time injuries can also lead to osteoarthritis later in life.

While there is no way to completely prevent rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis, there are lifestyle choices you can make to help reduce the risk. Eating healthy, staying physically active and maintaining healthy weight can all help keep joints healthy. Being out of shape and overweight puts extra stress on the joints. A modest weight gain of ten pounds can increase stress in the knee joints by as much as forty pounds! It’s easy to see how maintaining a healthy weight can help in the management or prevention of arthritis.

When it comes to living with arthritis, the first thing many people do is reach for a bottle of painkillers. While prescription and over the counter pain killers do have their place in arthritis management, they do not have to be the first course of action. There are many lifestyle choices that you can make to help deal with both types of arthritis.

It may seem counterintuitive, but regular exercise can have a positive impact on arthritis—if done correctly. Low-impact exercises such as walking, swimming, lifting weights and stretching will all help keep the body in better shape and avoid some of the stiffness that comes with a sedentary lifestyle. The process of “keeping moving” actually helps keep joints loose and muscles and connective tissue strong and healthy. Several small studies have shown that stretching exercises such as Tai Chi and yoga can help reduce osteoarthritis pain too. Just be sure to go slow at first and be flexible with your routine if you are experiencing a flare-up.
Daily BioBasics™ nutritional drink has just what you need to support overall health. With its balance of vitamins, minerals and fiber, it provides the nutrition you need to stay at your physical and mental best. The innovative and proprietary blending process ensures that you have a smooth, creamy texture with every drink.
Eating a diet with joint-healthy nutrients can also help you manage arthritis. Glucosamine and collagen are two great nutrients because they help protect the cartilage in joints. Methyl-sulfonyl-methane, or MSM, is another nutrient that many people believe has helped with their arthritis. A healthy diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables will help supply these joint-friendly nutrients, but some people with arthritis also find supplementing with extra glucosamine, collagen and MSM to be helpful if they are not getting enough through their normal dietary intake. Spices such as turmeric, cardamom, ginger and cinnamon also have anti-inflammatory effects.

A few other nutrients that may help are the fatty acids found in the seeds of evening primrose, borage and black currant, particularly when combined with omega-3 fats from fish and/or fish oils. These plant oils, rich in gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), are currently being studied for a possible effect on rheumatoid arthritis pain and morning stiffness. Several preliminary studies have also shown that fish oil may help reduce the pain and stiffness from arthritis, and it is very likely that fish oil combined with GLA has the best effects.

One of the best tools we have for dealing with arthritis is a positive attitude. Just about everyone who lives with arthritis is going to have a bad day from time to time. When pain and stiffness flare up, it’s all too easy to give in and decide it’s just not worth the trouble of getting out and exercising. But always remember that the more you get yourself to do, the better off you will be. Of course there will be times when it is better to take it easy and skip a harder workout. And there is nothing wrong with eating the occasional meal without any of the specific nutrients that may help with arthritis.

When these times come along, accept them for what they are and do not be discouraged. Instead, focus on how well you have been doing up to this point, and how well you intend to do tomorrow. You can also talk to your doctor about specific activities for these days, such as hot showers or massage. Letting yourself get bogged down with negative feelings will make it nearly impossible to continue. But a positive outlook will make getting to that next yoga class not just an easy task, but something you really look forward to.

With modern medicine and scientific knowledge, living with arthritis does not mean a sedentary life of pain and stiffness. There are many options available that can help most people with arthritis live an active healthy life well into their later years.

“Low-impact exercises such as swimming will all help keep the body in better shape and avoid some of the stiffness that comes with a sedentary lifestyle.”
Lifestyle

“As you find and meet people, your capacity to accomplish goals will increase dramatically, as will theirs.”
Every action in your life is preceded by intention. Whether it’s eating, sleeping, walking, going to work, writing a novel, sending an email, talking to a friend or anything else, you must intend to act before acting. The intention might be a split second before you act or you may make up your mind years before you get around to it, but everything you do is preceded by intention. If you can harness this intention by staying constantly aware of it, and learn to use it to your advantage, there is no limit to what you can accomplish.

Internationally renowned speaker on self-development Dr. Wayne W. Dyer tells his audiences that intention is a universal force that interacts with our intelligence, creativity and imagination. He believes that activating your personal intention is a process of getting to know your natural self and letting go of your material desires. Then, with discipline, knowledge, love and the ability to let go of your ego’s control and let your intention drive you, there is nothing you cannot do.

Dr. Dyer and many others believe that if you align yourself with your intention, you will do great things. But this doesn’t always come naturally, especially for those of us not used to believing in ourselves. A large part of following your intention is to let go of your ego. In this case ego is a belief that you are defined by your material possessions and the way other people view you, and a belief that you are separate from everything in life.

To overcome your ego and get in touch with your intention, you must first learn to accept yourself and understand that you really can do anything that you intend to do. This also requires that you respect yourself for who you are at all times and live your life with real purpose. What purpose must you have? Anything you desire. Open your heart and look for opportunities to serve others.

Harnessing the power of intention requires a conscious shift in the way you think. For example, somebody who is not following his intention may think, “I don’t have enough money.” However, a person who learned to follow her intention would think, “I intend to attract great wealth into my life.” There is an important difference in these two thoughts. The first person intends to do nothing about the situation, and will therefore attract more financial problems into his life. But the person who understands intention will attract the ways and means she needs to get ahead.

While using the power of intention, you want to attract other like-minded people into your life. As you find and meet these people, your capacity to accomplish goals will increase dramatically, as will theirs. But you have to do more than just want to meet new people; you must intend to meet them. Have a clear idea of the kinds of new people you would like in your life—people who keep a generally positive attitude, people who are driven to accomplish good things in their lives, people who make you feel good about yourself. Focus on these and other attributes and pretty soon you will start to notice people just like this everywhere you go! What’s more, they will begin to notice you as well.

One of the most wonderful aspects of intention is that for it to really work in your life, you must first appreciate how wonderful of a person you really are. All of us are gifted individuals and there is so much joy in realizing our own personal worth—and more joy still in helping others realize their own worth.

Intention is a force that can drive you to do great things with your life. With the right outlook and a true desire to make a positive difference with your life, there is absolutely nothing you can’t accomplish.
Diets that are high in calories but low in nutritional content have an adverse effect on the body. To feel your best every day and to avoid problems such as weight gain and chronic unwellness, you need to avoid high-fat, high-sugar, high-salt and high-cholesterol diets.

It is important to eat diets that are high in micro nutrients and at the same time on the lower side of caloric content. This is because a large part of your overall health depends on how many nutrients you take in per calorie. In other words, the micronutrient-per-calorie density of your diet. The healthiest diets are almost always very micronutrient dense. Micronutrients refers to compounds such as vitamins, minerals, polyphenols, isoflavones, carotenoids and antioxidant compounds. Macronutrients are carbohydrates, proteins and fats, which have more caloric value and fewer micronutrients.

The micronutrient-rich foods are predominately fruits, vegetables, beans and other legumes. Green vegetables such as mustard greens, kale, Brussels sprouts and broccoli all have a very high micronutrient-per-calorie density, but many plant-based foods are rich in micronutrients.

In an ideal micronutrient-dense diet, 30 to 70 percent of your daily calories will come from fresh vegetables, as they are the most micronutrient-dense options. Next, 25 to 50 percent of your calories will come from fresh fruits. Calories from beans and legumes should make up between 10 and 30 percent of your calories. The rest of the diet should consist of smaller amounts of whole grains, eggs, fish and fat-free dairy; and very small amounts of oils, sweets and fatty meats. You'll notice that percentages are given in a range, rather than as a strict number. This is because your daily diet should be comprised of a variety of different foods and each meal will have slightly different proportions of the groups of food.

Unfortunately, the average Western diet does not have a very high micronutrient density. In fact, it’s quite the opposite because fast food restaurants, sugary snacks, fatty meals and junk foods have taken the place of wholesome, home-cooked meals. Often, the largest percentage of calories each day comes from refined and processed foods. Not only do these not contain the vital micronutrients your body needs, but they are also often full of artificial ingredients that wouldn’t even have been considered food a hundred years ago.

It should be no surprise that these diets tend to cause obesity, diabetes, heart disease and other chronic illnesses. Micronutrient-lacking diets don’t just raise the risk for developing heart problems—they also don’t supply the body with everything it needs to simply feel good and be healthy.

A nutrient-dense diet contains countless micronutrients, macronutrients, phytoneutrients and other compounds that the body needs for optimum health. These microscopic compounds in food are used by the body for everything it does. From healing a cut to moving oxygen through the blood and moving muscles so you can walk, everything your body is capable of doing is related to the nutrients you eat. For optimum health, consider eating a diet with a high micronutrient density.

There are countless nutrients in food that are necessary for a healthy life. Our bodies are designed to use all of them together in concert. When some of these nutrients are missing for a time, the body can adapt because it is remarkably resilient. In some cases it can even transform certain nutrients into others that are needed. However, for optimum health throughout your entire lifespan, consuming a wide range of foods to supply your body with as many nutrients as possible is vitally important.
Menopause is a natural biological process that all women go through as they age, marking the end of menstruation and fertility. Menopause is not a medical illness, but a natural stage of life. However, for many women, the physical and emotional symptoms that can drain energy, trigger negative feelings, interrupt sleep and cause other symptoms certainly may feel like a disease.

Many of the symptoms that can have a dramatic impact on lifestyle can be eased through a wide range of options. From hormone therapy to dietary changes to stress-reduction exercises, there are options to help every woman through this sometimes difficult time of life.

Mistaken beliefs, lack of communication with women who have already undergone menopause and misunderstanding of what is happening are partially to blame for how women view menopause. While the hormonal and physical changes that happen can be difficult, menopause does not mean the end is near or that sexuality and femininity are going to be lost. It can be very beneficial to speak with women on the other side of menopause who found not having to worry about pregnancy and periods to be a very liberating experience.

Menopause Explained:
Beginning in a woman’s late 30s, her body starts to reduce the amount of reproductive hormones that it puts out. Ovaries begin to make less estrogen and progesterone and fewer potential eggs are ripened each month. Ovulation becomes less predictable and the surge in progesterone that comes after ovulation lessens. Essentially, these hormonal changes will cause fertility to decline. As a woman enters her 40s, these changes often become more dramatic and may continue into her 50s. Menstrual periods often change, lengthening or shortening, becoming heavier or lighter and more or less frequent. Irregular periods are common during this time. Eventually the ovaries will stop producing eggs and menstrual periods will cease.

Menopause is often broken into two stages, perimenopause and postmenopause. Perimenopause spans the time between a woman’s first menopausal symptoms and the time she has her last period. This is the time when women experience most of the hormonal changes. Postmenopause begins twelve months after a woman’s last period. It marks the time after the body has reduced the amount of estrogen it produces and has completely stopped ripening and releasing eggs.

Coping With Menopause:
Even though it is a normal and natural phase of life for women, menopause can be troublesome for some. There are many ways to help get through this difficult time. A lot of women benefit from befriending an older woman who has already been through the process. While doctors can certainly help explain what is happening in clinical detail, there is no substitute for being able to listen to someone who has already been through it and understands exactly how you feel. This type of relationship is becoming more common. In generations past, bodily changes such as menopause were seen as too personal to talk about. But this is changing as more and more women realize how beneficial it is to have someone to talk with.

Staying physically active and eating a healthy diet can also help make this time of transition easier. Quite simply, a healthy body is more equipped to deal with natural changes such as menopause. So making time for regular physical activity and eating a healthy, low-fat diet rich in fresh fruits, vegetables
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and whole grains will help a great deal. There are also some specific foods, herbs and nutrients that can help during this time of changes.

There is a species of small, woody shrub called Eleutherococcus senticosus that may help with menopause. The herb contains eleutherosides, which are triterpenoid saponins that are lipophilic and that can fit into hormone receptors. Supporters of Eleutherococcus senticosus believe that it can help with the fatigue and loss of cognitive function associated with menopause. This herb is native to East Asia, China, Japan and Russia. As such, it is not as common in Western regions and is often easiest to find as a supplement.

Turmeric is a spice that many women believe to be beneficial in helping with menopause symptoms. Initial studies have suggested that curcumin (a major component of turmeric) may have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties—both of which can help during menopause.

Menopause marks a time of significant change in a woman’s life. It is always a good idea to visit a doctor regularly during this time, especially for women who feel that the hormonal and physical changes are disrupting their lives. Finding another woman to talk with and confide in, as well as living a healthy lifestyle, will also help make this time of life changes go as smoothly as possible.
Lycopene is one of 600 carotenoids, a group of organic pigments compounds that occur naturally in plants and give them their characteristic color. Studies suggest that people who regularly eat carotenoid-rich fruits and vegetables tend to be healthier and have fewer chronic illnesses.

It’s easy to spot fruits and vegetables that are rich in lycopene because of the nutrient’s characteristic bright red coloring. Lycopene is responsible for the color of tomatoes, watermelon, guavas, and other red fruits and vegetables. As a general rule, the more red a fruit or vegetable appears, the higher the concentration of lycopene it contains. Tomatoes, for example, are very rich in lycopene. Interestingly, cooking tomatoes can actually increase the amount of lycopene that is absorbed when you eat them. This benefit to cooking sets lycopene apart from many other nutrients such as vitamin C. Lycopene in tomato paste, sauce and juice can be up to four times more bioavailable than it is in raw tomatoes. However, fresh tomatoes are still a great source of nutrients and should not be ignored.

The human body can’t synthesize lycopene or other carotenoids, which means it must consume them. Once inside the body, lycopene tends to concentrate in the eye, liver, kidney, testes, prostate and ovary tissue. In these areas, it acts as an antioxidant, scavenging free radicals and helping to protect the body from oxidation.

According to some researchers, lycopene may be the most powerful carotenoid quencher of a specific form of free radical called singlet oxygen. In test tube studies, lycopene has been shown to be 100 times more efficient at quenching singlet oxygen than vitamin E, which is well-known for its antioxidant capabilities. If lycopene is such a strong antioxidant, it may help keep skin young and healthy, since singlet oxygen produced during exposure to ultraviolet light has been shown to be one of the primary causes of skin aging.

Because of lycopene’s apparent antioxidant properties, a large amount of research has been done already and continues to look into a possible correlation between lycopene consumption and general health. Early research is suggesting that a diet rich in the entire carotenoid complex of nutrients may be a useful tool in helping reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and macular degeneration.

It’s also important to remember that many of the studies done so far have looked at tomato consumption, not consumption of a supplement of the red carotenoid by itself. Although further research is needed before we fully understand the complex relationship between the human body and lycopene, the positive effects of lycopene could be in part due to interactions it has in the body with other nutrients found in tomatoes as well as other foods.

This is true with many nutrients for two major reasons. The first is simply that nutritional science is still in its infancy relative to other branches of science. There is still much to be learned. The second reason is that most if not all nutrients perform best when in the presence of other synergistic nutrients, often members of the same category. When consumed together from a fresh source, many nutrients are able to work together synergistically, dramatically multiplying their protective benefits. This is why it’s so often recommended that people include a wide variety of fruits and vegetables in their diets. After all, lycopene is just one of 600 related carotenoids. Doesn’t it just make sense that it would work better if it were able to interact with its relatives? Add to that nutrients from other brightly colored fruits and vegetables and there is no telling how great an impact it might have on your life.
Children who grow up in families with parents that make regular physical activity a priority are much more likely to avoid weight problems and grow into healthy adults. The secret to a good family plan for fitness is simple: active parents make active children. Here are a few tips for helping the whole family stay active.

Make it simple
Children are naturally full of energy, and when given an opportunity to release that energy, they will. Kids don’t need a gym membership or exercise class to get active. Nor do they need a complex regimen that balances aerobic, strength and flexibility exercises. These things can come later in life if necessary. For most families, playing in the park, riding bikes around the neighborhood, hiking in the woods or any other activities that get everyone’s body in motion will help. Don’t forget that no matter what the activity, when parents join in the whole family gets a good workout. And the time spent together during the activity will strengthen the family emotionally while creating lasting memories.

Make it fun
Regardless of age, the easiest way to spoil a good workout is to pick an activity that just isn’t enjoyable. Find out what kinds of activities your children enjoy and work them into your schedule. Most younger kids will thrive on simple games such as tag or hide-and-seek. Older children and teenagers will be more interested in sports such as basketball or football. As long as everyone can be active and have fun doing it together, the actual activity doesn’t matter. If everyone in the family cannot agree on the same activity, compromise by doing one activity one day and another the next. If your child loses interest in the day’s activity, remind him that tomorrow he will get to do the one he picked out, and everyone else will be participating in that one.

Make it a happy experience
This tip is much like the one above, but with an important difference. Even if you find a fun activity that everyone enjoys, it is possible to end up with an unhappy experience if your focus is in the wrong place. Family exercise time should be a time of health and happiness. If you are playing a game, don’t get so wrapped up in the rules that the children don’t enjoy it. If you are going for a bike ride, don’t get so focused on keeping a calorie-burning pace that nobody can keep up. Instead, focus on the fun being had and let the physical workout come naturally. You may have to pedal a little slower, but that just means you can take the time to enjoy your surroundings with the people you love.

Make it regular
No matter what physical activities your family enjoys together, just be sure to make active time a regular occurrence. Most doctors now agree that some form of physical exercise should be done most days of the week. So try to make your favorite physical activities a daily habit. It’s a fact of life that today’s modern lifestyles will not always allow time for family exercise. But if you make it a priority, you may be surprised at how easy it is to let some other activities go in order to keep the family physical playtime happening regularly. The more time you spend together being active, the more your bodies will crave that time. This happens for two reasons: The first is that whenever you get active, your body releases endorphins, which are essentially feel-good hormones. The second is that whether everyone is aware of it or not, your family will be bonding during these times and that emotional bond will feel great too.

Make an example out of yourself
Children see and imitate everything around them, especially their parents. They are constantly observing and mimicking your behavior—for better or worse. If your children see you put off exercise and spend time by yourself watching television, they will grow up doing the same thing. However, if they see you taking an interest in your health and enjoying the company of family members, they will live their lives in the same healthy way.
The foods you choose to eat can have a dramatic impact on your mood. Whether you choose complex “slow” carbohydrates that help regulate blood sugar or eat fresh fish for its brain-healthy omega-3 fatty acids, you can boost your mood with food. Just think about the last time you went a long time without eating. There’s a good chance you felt sluggish or irritable. The next time you feel a little down, reach for one of these great comfort foods for your brain.

What is normally referred to as vitamin B is actually made up of several different vitamins, often referred to as vitamin B complex. The various vitamin Bs have been shown in multiple clinical trials to have a positive effect on mood and brain function. For instance, a major Finnish study following 115 outpatients who were being treated for depression found that higher levels of vitamin B in the bloodstream was correlated with patients feeling better. Other studies have shown that insufficient blood levels of folate, one of the B vitamin family, increases the risk of depression.

One great source of vitamin B complex is lentils. A member of the legume family, lentils are very rich in folate. In fact, one cup of cooked lentils provides up to 90 percent of the recommended daily allowance for folic acid. Lentils also contain protein and fiber, which promote stable blood sugar levels. Other good sources of vitamin B include leafy green vegetables, bananas, beans, liver, egg yolks, and bakers or brewers yeast.

Foods that contain omega-3 fatty acids are excellent for promoting a good mood. Brain cells and neurotransmitters require omega-3 fatty acids to work properly, especially the specific omega-3 DHA (docosahexaenoic acid). At least one study has shown that some severely depressed people have a DHA deficiency in their cerebral cortex. Because omega-3 fatty acids are so necessary to the brain, it only makes sense that they can help boost mood.

The most common source of omega-3 fatty acids is fresh cold-water fish such as salmon, sardine, herring and mackerel. However, many seeds, such as flax, are also rich in a type of this important nutrient class. And it’s easy to grind a tablespoon of flax seeds to sprinkle over yogurt, cereal or applesauce as part of a healthy breakfast, or as a snack later in the day. Some nuts, such as walnuts, also provide some omega-3 fat—they are energy dense and full of protein, vitamin E and other important nutrients. A few walnuts can help overcome the afternoon energy slump many of us are familiar with. With their ability to help your brain and boost energy when you need it, walnuts are a perfect comfort food for your brain.

How about a comfort drink for your mood too? Tea can help boost your mood in two ways. First, a light herbal or rich chai tea can help boost your mood by easing stress and relaxing your mind. Green tea also provides a unique amino acid called L-theanine, which promotes both concentration and relaxation. Other teas rely on higher caffeine content to help boost mood, as caffeine is an energizing stimulant. However, be aware that too much caffeine can make you feel jittery and irritated.

An often overlooked food for boosting mood is fiber. Foods such as oatmeal that are rich in soluble fiber help to slow the absorption of sugar into the bloodstream. A slower, steadier supply of blood sugar helps to avoid mood-altering highs and lows. Soluble fiber also slows the emptying of the stomach, which helps prevent overeating.

Iron-rich foods such as lean cuts of red meat, oysters and enriched cereals can help boost mood too, because iron is essential for transporting oxygen throughout the body. Low iron levels in the blood can mean a reduced amount of oxygen, which in turn can leave you feeling down.

How you eat can affect mood just as much as what you eat. Avoid eating too much or too little—or too fast. Eating too much of anything can leave you feeling overstuffed and unhappy. Not eating enough will leave your body craving more, which is often accompanied by irritability. As with anything else in life, balance is the key.
A Healthy Urinary Tract

The urinary system plays an important role in removing waste from the body. A healthy urinary tract will keep this process functioning optimally. Because women are at greater risk of developing urinary tract infections than are men, they may need to take extra care to ensure a healthy urinary tract.

The urinary system is composed of the kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra. Any part of this system can become infected, but when women experience urinary tract infections they often involve the urethra and bladder. These infections can be painful and annoying, with symptoms including a strong and persistent urge to urinate, a burning sensation when urinating, and pelvic pain. But there are more serious consequences if the infection spreads to your kidneys.

To keep urine flowing normally and avoid infections from blockages, it is important to drink plenty of fluids—especially water. We lose sight of how important fresh, pure water is because, for most of us, we simply turn on the tap and there it is. But the reality is that without regularly drinking clean water, we wouldn’t survive. Drinking eight 8-ounce glasses of water throughout the day will help keep your body feeling well and can help protect against urinary tract infections. If you are exercising regularly or out in the hot sun, try to drink even more water to replace what is lost through sweat. And some people actually need a bit of extra salt (such as unrefined sea salt) to help their body hold onto the water (avoid this if you have high blood pressure).

Drinking cranberry juice may also help prevent urinary tract infections, according to some researchers. One possible reason behind the drink’s beneficial properties is that certain compounds in cranberries (the same compounds are also found in blueberries) may prevent bacteria from adhering to cell walls. These compounds are in the OPC family and help to prevent the bacteria from colonizing in the urethra, thereby preventing an infection. Interestingly, studies have shown that this protective benefit seems to affect women much more than men. Similarly, antioxidant-rich foods such as brightly colored fruits and vegetables may also help protect the urinary system.

While you are drinking adequate amounts of water and cranberry juice throughout the day, be sure you get enough, but not too much, salt in your diet. Too much salt will cause your body to retain water, which will slow your urine output. It will also throw off the balance of salt, water and minerals in your kidneys, which can contribute to urinary tract problems and kidney stones. A proper sodium diet (with plenty of magnesium, potassium and calcium as well) can also help control blood pressure and prevent excess bloating due to water retention.

Sexually active women can also help prevent urinary tract infections by urinating shortly after sex. Bacteria can easily travel into the urinary tract during intercourse. This is especially true for women because they have a much shorter urethra than men, which makes it easier for bacteria to get into the urinary tract.

One of the best ways to avoid urinary tract infections is to simply develop good personal hygiene habits. The groin (inguinal region) is a major source of bacteria; regularly bathing with warm soap and water can help reduce the amount of bacteria in the area. Washing the groin after sex is particularly important for women.

Any woman who has experienced a urinary tract infection knows how painful and disrupting they can be. Protect your urinary system and safeguard against infections with these three simple steps: drink plenty of water, eat a healthy diet and practice good hygiene.
Family Health

Learning to Eat Right for a Lifetime
Eating right for a lifetime starts with developing healthy eating habits as a child, and continues with maintaining them throughout life. It also entails adapting your diet to your current lifestyle and age, because eating right in your 20s can mean a vastly different menu than eating right in your 80s.

On the other hand, there are many nutritional needs that stay more or less constant no matter what age you are. Beginning at a young age, everyone will benefit from a diet that is rich in fresh fruits and vegetables; low-fat sources of protein such as chicken, fish and lean cuts of grass-fed beef; fat-free dairy foods such as milk; and cheese; nuts, seeds, sprouted and fermented foods, and many spices; and plenty of fresh, pure water. When eaten in the right amounts, these basic foods will supply anyone’s body with the right vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and other nutrients it needs to be healthy. However, at certain times in life, it may be beneficial to eat more of some foods and less of others.

It’s obvious that caloric intake needs vary at different phases of life. An older person usually does not need to consume as many calories in a day as does a younger adult, and a teenager needs to eat more than an elderly person. This makes sense because of the vastly different levels of activity and growth at these stages of life. What is not so evident is how our other nutritional needs change throughout life, such as when we need more calcium, magnesium, iron, zinc, omega-3 fatty acids or B vitamins. Educating ourselves about changing nutritional requirements as we age and as our activity levels vary is an important part of eating right for a lifetime.

Growing boys and girls generally require a little more protein, iron and zinc in their diets because these nutrients are necessary for healthy muscle growth and blood circulation. Teenage boys will see a dramatic increase in muscle mass and teenage girls may experience a slight reduction in iron levels when they begin menstruation.

Omega-3 fatty acids are important at every stage of life, but they can become even more important for senior citizens because of the healthy effect they may have on the brain. One particular omega-3 fatty acid, DHA, has recently become popular due to its ability to positively affect cognitive function and mood. This isn’t surprising, as a significant portion of brain and nerve tissue is actually comprised of DHA. Many doctors and nutritionists are now urging their older patients to start including more fatty cold-water fish in their diets in order to up their omega-3 intake, in the hopes that it will help prevent the cognitive decline that was once thought an inevitable side effect of aging.

Requirements for certain minerals may also increase with age, as elderly people sometimes experience a greater need for some minerals such as zinc due to specific health conditions that cause deficiencies.

Another time in life that nutritional needs change is during pregnancy. Women who are or are planning to become pregnant are often urged to take vitamin B complex. Vitamin B6 helps the body metabolize food and form new red blood cells, antibodies and neurotransmitters—all of which are vital to a developing baby. Folic acid has been shown to prevent a serious set of birth defects known as neural tube defects (one example is spina bifida). Some research has also shown that vitamin B6 may also help relieve the nausea and vomiting women often experience in the early months of pregnancy.

While nutritional needs such as these change throughout life, so do portion needs. As the body ages, the metabolism tends to slow down, which means the body doesn’t need to consume as many calories. This means that while a teenager can eat a diet with more fatty foods in it and not gain weight, the older we are the more important a balanced diet becomes for weight control. Regardless of age, the majority of a healthy meal should be made up of a variety of vegetables, whole grains and fruits. The meal’s meat portion should be no more than three to four ounces, which is about the size of a deck of playing cards. Western eating habits have virtually switched these. We tend to eat large pieces of meat and only small amounts of vegetables. If this is already the case at your dinner table, it’s not too late to start eating the correct portions, no matter how old you are.

One nutritional requirement that remains constant throughout your whole life is the need for pure water. The human body is comprised of anywhere from 55% to 78% water, depending on body size. Water is instrumental in countless processes throughout the body. Whether you are young or old, drinking eight 8-ounce glasses of fresh, clean water every day will help you feel young and vibrant.

These are just a few of the many nutritional changes your body goes through during life. There are far too many to list in one article, but if you take an interest in your own health, follow a commonsense approach to your diet and listen to the messages your body sends, you will have no problems at all eating right for a lifetime. And remember, it’s never too late to start eating right and it’s never too late to retrain yourself to eat healthy portions.
Evening Primrose Oil is one of the most precious and valuable oils in nature. Especially appreciated by tribal medicine men of the North American Indians, it contains a large amount of gamma-linoleic acid and linoleic acid in essential fatty acids. The oil plays a part in the healthy production of ‘prostaglandin’ in males.

The precious oil of Evening Primrose provides rich support for improved bodily functions. Women notice that Evening Primrose Oil works pleasantly with a harmonizing effect for women especially on ‘critical days’.
Can diet affect stress?

Absolutely. Diet can play a big role in stress management. When the mind is stressed emotionally, it takes a physical toll on the body, thus increasing the need for nutritional support. Antioxidants and B-complex vitamins are great for helping combat some of the negative side effects of stress. Stress causes an increase in the secretion of adrenal hormones such as cortisol, which can be lifesaving in the short term but can lead to problems in the long term. A healthy diet helps prevent the damage associated with these hormones. A healthy diet can also help you feel better in general—and feeling good will always help lower your stress. When stressed out, people frequently turn to unhealthy habits such as the consumption of tobacco, alcohol, prescription and nonprescription drugs, or turn to comfort foods. These habits put additional stress on the body, which in turn makes eating a healthy diet even more important.

Ask The Expert

What is good cholesterol and how can I raise it?

Despite the common belief that all cholesterol is bad, there are actually two types: high density lipoprotein, or HDL (good), and low density lipoprotein, or LDL (bad). Good cholesterol helps to decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease, while bad cholesterol raises the risk. In addition, there is mounting research and clinical evidence that oxidized LDL may be one of the most important contributing factors to the development of arterial atherosclerotic plaques (which lead to heart attacks and strokes). It’s possible to raise HDL levels by maintaining a healthy lifestyle that includes regular physical activity most days of the week with a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables and low in fats, sugars and refined foods. It may also be possible to minimize oxidized LDL by maintaining an intake of antioxidant rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices.

Are women at risk for heart disease?

Traditionally, heart disease has been seen mainly as a problem for men. Old-fashioned stoic attitudes and a lack of stress outlets, combined with high-fat diets, have contributed to a high risk for developing heart disease in men. However, The American Heart Association concluded that since 1984, heart disease has killed more women than men each year and is now the number one killer of women. Believe it or not, more women die from heart disease than from breast cancer. Fortunately, in most cases heart disease is largely preventable. A healthy lifestyle that includes regular physical activity most days of the week with a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables and low in fats, sugars and refined foods can help greatly reduce the risk of developing heart disease.
Proanthenols contains antioxidant protection based upon 50 years of research by Jack Masquelier, Ph.D in Southern France. Proanthenols is not a pine bark or grape seed product that you can find on a retail shelf but is built upon Real OPCs™, which are concentrated extracts from special grape seeds and certain types of pine bark found in Southern France.