

HealthConnection

GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY

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THIS MONTH'S
Featured Article

TAKING YOUR MEDICATIONS

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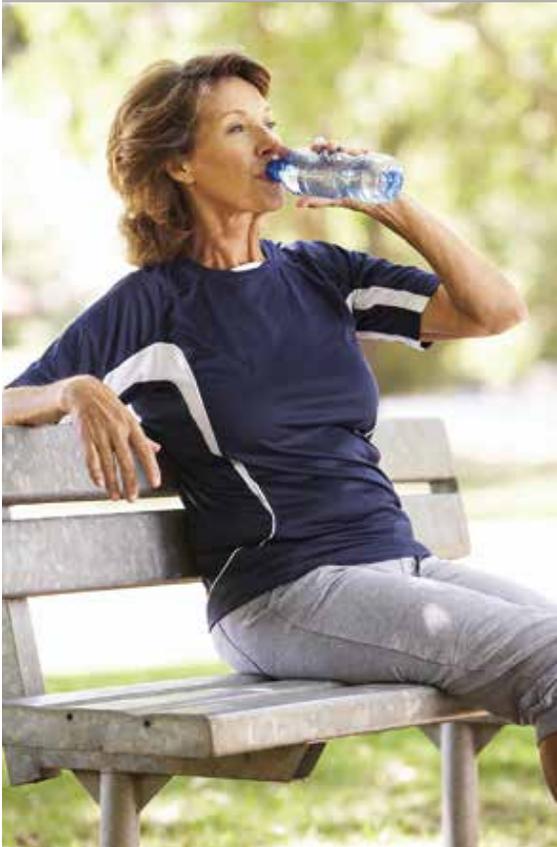
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Hot Topics

Practicing Mindfulness

The practice of mindfulness is about being present in a given moment, and it's something we can use in our daily lives. According to the National Institutes of Health, studies suggest that mindfulness practices may help people manage stress, cope better with serious illness and reduce anxiety and depression. Many people who practice mindfulness report an increased ability to relax, a greater enthusiasm for life and improved self-esteem.

One large benefit of mindfulness is that it encourages you to pay attention to your thoughts, your actions and your body. You can practice mindfulness throughout the day, even while answering emails, sitting in traffic or waiting in line. All you have to do is become more aware—of your breath, of your feet on the ground, of your fingers typing, of the people and voices around you.

As we start to learn how to be more mindful, it's common and normal to realize how much

our mind races and focuses on the past and the future. You can just notice those thoughts and then return to the present moment. It is these little, regular steps that add up and start to create a more mindful, healthy life.

The concept is simple, but becoming a more mindful person requires commitment and practice. Here are some tips:

Take some deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose to a count of four, hold for one second and then exhale through the mouth to a count of five. Repeat often.

Enjoy a stroll. As you walk, notice your breath and the sights and sounds around you. As thoughts and worries enter your mind, note them but then return to the present.

Look for mindfulness resources online or in your community, including yoga, meditation classes and mindfulness-based stress-reduction programs.

Senior Health Update

Preventing Dehydration

Seniors can be more at risk for dehydration because they naturally have a lower volume of water in their bodies, compared with younger adults, and they may have conditions or take medications that increase their risk of dehydration, according to the Mayo Clinic. This means that even minor illnesses, such as infections affecting the lungs or bladder, can result in dehydration in older adults.

Many people, particularly older adults, don't feel thirsty until they're already dehydrated. To prevent dehydration, it's important to increase water intake during hot weather or when you're ill. Signs of dehydration can include:

- Extreme thirst
- Less-frequent urination
- Dark-colored urine
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Confusion

Seek medical care for possible dehydration if you or a loved one has had diarrhea for 24 hours or more, is irritable or disoriented and much sleepier or less active than usual, can't keep fluids down, or has bloody or black stool.





Taking Your Medications

Stay Smart, Stay Organized

About 30 to 50 percent of those who take medicines at home do not use them as directed, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Office of Women's Health. This leads to more doctor visits, hospital stays, lost wages and changed prescriptions. All this costs Americans more than \$100 billion each year.

As adults, we often take care of medicines for the whole family as well as ourselves. So we need to read the label, avoid problems, ask questions and keep good records.

- **Read the label.** The label should show the list of ingredients. If you know you are allergic to anything in the medicine, don't use it. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for a different medicine. Read all warnings carefully. Note the expiration date and don't use a medicine after the date on the bottle. Ask your pharmacist about any questions you may have.
- **Avoid problems.** Medicines can cause problems such as sleepiness, vomiting, bleeding, headaches or rashes. Ask in advance about any possible side effects from each medication you take. Don't skip taking your medication without checking with your doctor. Do not share medications with others. Don't take medications in the

dark. Always make sure you can read the label clearly.

- **Organize your medicines.** Keep an updated list of all medications you use, including prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications and supplements. Include on your list the date when it was last updated. You may want to create a spreadsheet listing the name of the medication, dosage, when to take it, what it's for and the prescribing doctor's name. Bring your medication list to every doctor appointment.
- **Ask questions.** When a new medication is prescribed, ask your doctor: What is the medication's name? Is there a generic version available? Why am I taking this medication? When should I take it? Should I take it on an empty stomach or with food? Is it safe to drink alcohol while taking this medication? If I forget to take it, what should I do? How much should I take? How long should I continue to take it? What problems or side effects should I watch for? NOTE: If you are pregnant or nursing a baby, seek the advice of your doctor before taking any medication or supplement.

To-Do List

Help Prevent Prescription Drug Abuse in Your Home

Are you the parent of a teenager? You've likely spoken to your child about illegal drugs. But legally prescribed medicines are also cause for concern. An alarming number of teens are more likely to have abused prescription and over-the-counter drugs than some illegal drugs, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The easiest way for teens to obtain prescription medicines is from the medicine cabinet at home or at a friend's house.

Here are some things parents can do:

- Speak to your teen about prescription medicines and remind him that taking someone else's prescription, or sharing theirs with others, is illegal.
- Alert your family physician that you are concerned, and ask her to speak to your teen about the importance of proper use of prescription medicines.
- Keep prescription medicines in a safe place and avoid stockpiling them.
- Promptly and properly dispose of any unused prescription medicines.
- Provide a safe and open environment for your teen to talk about abuse issues.
- Monitor your teen's use of the Internet, especially for any illegal online purchases.



Moms' Corner

Work-Life Balance Tips for (Happy!) Working Moms

More mothers than ever are working fulltime outside the home these days. In 2017, 79 percent of employed mothers with children 6 to 17 years old, and 74.5 percent of mothers with children under 6 years old, worked fulltime, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Try these mom-tested tips for better work-life balance:

- **Be "all in" at work (and at home).** Easier said than done? Yes. But try to develop the ability to efficiently focus on the tasks at hand while you're at work. When you get home, truly be with your family. Nix the cell phone. No checking emails.
- **Create a family calendar.** You can use the calendar as a chore chart and also record sports practices and family events. With older kids and your partner, try Google calendars, which can be shared and synched on everyone's phones.
- **Rely on other working moms.** Create a network of other mothers that you can call on for trading rides to soccer practice, last-minute pick-up at school and playdates. It really does take a village.



Kids' Health

Treating Swimmer's Ear

Swimmer's ear is a painful condition of the outer ear resulting from inflammation, irritation or infection. Symptoms often occur after water gets trapped in the ear, with subsequent spread of bacteria or fungal organisms, according to the American Academy of Otolaryngology. The infection can begin with increased moisture trapped in the ear canal from baths, showers, swimming or moist environments. The most common symptoms of swimmer's ear are itching inside the ear and pain that gets worse when you tug on the outer ear. Other symptoms may include:

- Sensation that the ear is blocked or full
- Drainage
- Fever
- Decreased hearing
- Intense pain that may spread to the neck, face or side of the head
- Swollen lymph nodes around the ear or in the upper neck. Redness and swelling of the skin around the ear

Treatment includes careful cleaning of the ear canal and use of eardrops that inhibit bacterial or fungal growth and reduce inflammation.

Mildly acidic solutions containing boric or acetic acid are effective for early infections.

- Drops are more easily administered if done by someone other than the patient.
- The patient should lie down with the affected ear facing upwards.
- Drops should be placed in the ear as prescribed.
- After drops are administered, the patient should remain lying down for a few minutes so the drops can be absorbed.

To help prevent swimmer's ear, try to keep the ears free of moisture during swimming or bathing. Use ear plugs when swimming. Use a dry towel or hair dryer (on cool or warm, not hot) to dry the ears. Have your child's ears cleaned periodically by an otolaryngologist if she has itchy, flaky or scaly ears, or extensive ear wax. Don't use cotton swabs to remove ear wax. They may pack wax and dirt deeper into the ear canal, remove the layer of ear wax that protects the ear and irritate the thin skin of the ear canal. This creates an ideal environment for infection.

For additional articles on your child's health and safety, visit MyGNP.com.



Your Healthy Pet

Protect Your Pet From Fireworks Anxiety

The Fourth of July is a great day to celebrate with friends, family – and pets. Fireworks are a longstanding tradition for this summer holiday, but for some pets, they are a reason to panic.

On and around the Fourth of July, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) sees an increase in calls concerning pets who are having issues due to the loud noises fireworks make. However, with a little planning, you can ensure that your pets enjoy the holiday as much as you do.

If your pet has a fear of loud noises associated with fireworks:

- Something as simple as turning on some soft music and moving your pet into an interior room with no windows can be helpful.

- An anxiety vest may work in some cases. If you don't have one, try a snugly fitting t-shirt.
- If you and your veterinarian do decide that anti-anxiety medication is appropriate, there are a few things to remember. First, give a practice dose of the medication before the big night to see how your pet responds to the medication. Second, never share the medication with another pet or give more than the recommended amount. If you do, you may end up spending the holiday at your local veterinary emergency clinic.
- While noise phobias are not as common in cats as they are in dogs, they can and do happen. Fortunately, cats tend to hide when frightened. Checking in on your cats, having some quiet music on and keeping them indoors during the height of the fireworks is smart.

*Health Q&A*

Understanding UV Safety

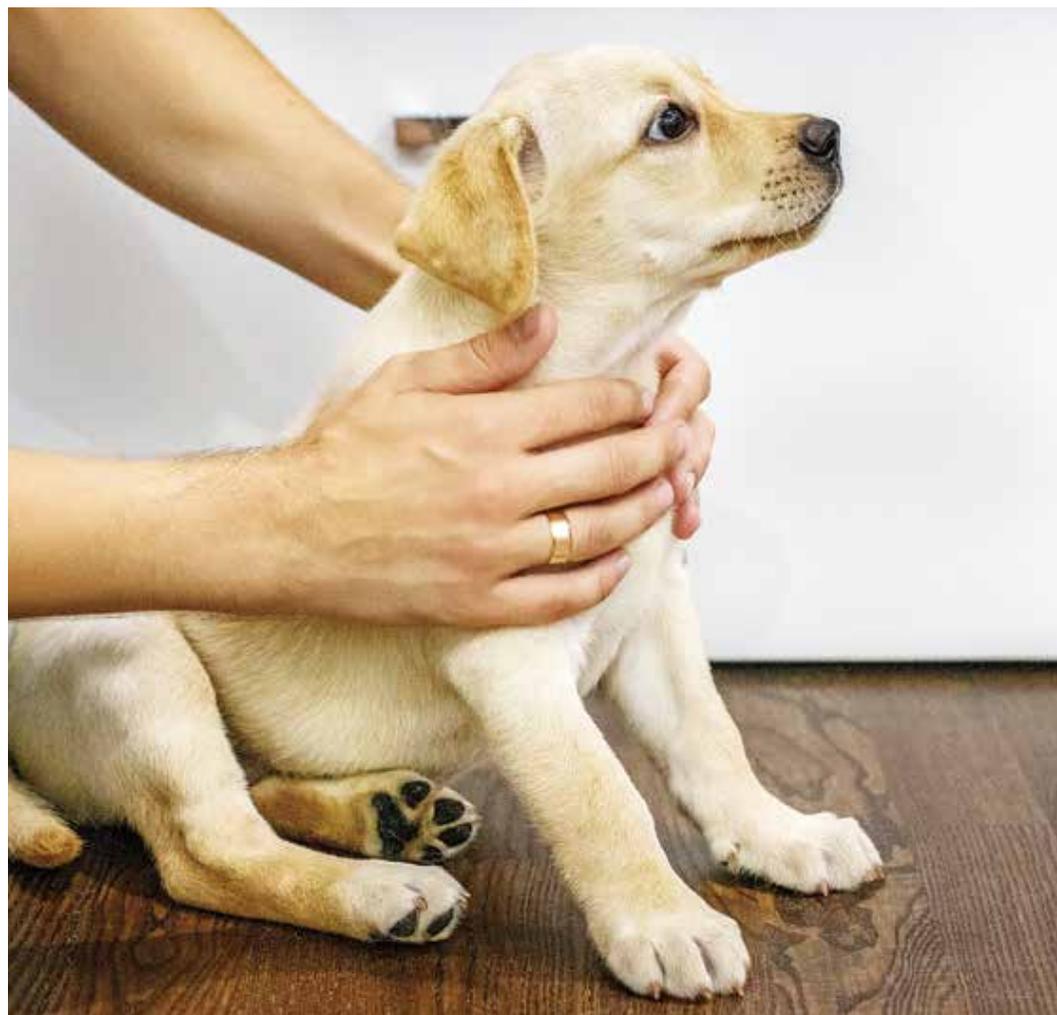
Q: I read that skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the U.S. How can I protect myself and my family from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays?

A: It's true that skin cancer, while largely preventable, is the most common form of cancer in the U.S., according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Overexposure to UV radiation from the sun also can result in a painful sunburn, premature aging of the skin, cataracts and other eye damage, and immune-system suppression. Children are particularly at risk. The EPA recommends these action steps:

- **Don't burn.** Sunburns significantly increase one's lifetime risk of developing skin cancer, especially for children.
- **Avoid sun tanning and tanning beds.** UV light from tanning beds and the sun causes skin cancer and wrinkling.
- **Generously apply sunscreen.** Use about one ounce to cover all exposed skin 20 minutes before going outside. Sunscreen should have a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15 and should provide protection from both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays. Reapply every two hours, even on cloudy days, and after swimming or sweating.
- **Wear protective clothing.** Wear a long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, when possible.

Do you have more questions? Our website has the answers.

Visit MyGNP.com for more information.



Eat Smart

Artificial Sweeteners: What You Need to Know

Artificial sweeteners are many times sweeter than sugar but contribute few to no calories. These sweeteners are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA):

- **Saccharin** (brand name: Sweet'n Low) is 200 to 700 times sweeter than sugar. In the 1970s, it was linked with bladder cancer in lab rats, which led Congress to mandate additional studies and a warning label. Since then, more than 30 human studies have demonstrated that the results found in rats were not relevant to humans, and that saccharin is safe for human consumption.
- **Acesulfame potassium** (brand name: Sweet One) is about 200 times sweeter than sugar. In 2003, the FDA approved it as a general-purpose sweetener.
- **Sucralose** (brand name: Splenda) is about 600 times sweeter than sugar. More than 110 safety studies were reviewed by the FDA in approving its use as a sweetener.
- **Stevia** (brand name: Truvia) is 200 to 400 times sweeter than sugar. The plant contains steviol glycosides, which may be lawfully marketed and added to food products sold in the U.S. However, stevia leaf and crude stevia extracts do not have FDA approval for use in food.
- **Aspartame** (brand names: NutraSweet; Equal; Sugar Twin) is about 200 times sweeter than sugar. It's one of the most exhaustively studied substances in the human food supply, the FDA reports. (NOTE: People with a rare hereditary disease known as phenylketonuria have a difficult time metabolizing phenylalanine, a component of aspartame, and should control their intake.)





Living with Diabetes

You *Can* Handle Summer's Diabetes Challenges

People who have diabetes — both type 1 and type 2 — tend to feel the summer heat more than people who don't have diabetes, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Certain diabetes complications, such as damage to blood vessels and nerves, can affect your sweat glands so your body can't cool as effectively. That can lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

People with diabetes get dehydrated more quickly. Not drinking enough liquids can raise blood sugar, and high blood sugar can make you urinate more, causing dehydration. Some commonly used medicines such as diuretics ("water pills" to treat high blood pressure) can dehydrate you, too.

High temperatures can change how your body uses insulin. You may need to test your blood sugar more often and adjust your insulin dose and what you eat and drink. This checklist can help make sure you handle summer heat while taking care of your diabetes:

- Drink plenty of water.
- Test your blood sugar often.
- Keep medicines, supplies and equipment out of the heat.
- Stay inside in air-conditioning when it's hottest.
- Wear loose, light clothing.
- Get medical attention for heat-related illness.
- Make a plan in case you lose power.
- Have a go-bag ready for emergencies.
- Avoid alcohol and drinks with caffeine, such as coffee and energy or sports drinks.
- Check your blood sugar before, during and after you're active. You may need to change how much insulin you use. Ask your doctor if you would like help in adjusting your dosage.
- Wear sunscreen and a hat when you're outside. Sunburn can raise your blood-sugar levels.
- Don't go barefoot, even on the beach or at the pool.

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