

Spirit of OPTIMUM HEALTH

THE SECOND IN A FIVE-
PART HEALTH SERIES



by Andrea Kahn

We can all afford to improve our health and sense of well-being, whether that means losing weight or getting a better night's sleep. Sometimes it's just hard to know where to start. Here are some steps you can take, both simple and dramatic, that can set you on course for a longer, healthier life.



STRENGTHEN YOUR SKELETON

Maintaining strong bones is arguably one of the most important things both men and women can do to guarantee a robust old age.

Seventy-five percent of skeletal bone mass is formed during adolescence and peaks by the time you're about 20. If you did not get proper nutrition—particularly calcium—as a youngster, it's nearly impossible to reverse the damage. "Osteoporosis is not only a geriatric problem," says Aurelia Nattiv, M.D., director of the UCLA Osteoporosis Center in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at UCLA. "It's a pediatric problem." By 30, many people start losing bone mass. Those with poor bone mass are at risk for osteoporosis, a disease characterized by weak, brittle bones that are highly susceptible to fracture.

Genetics is the main determinate

of bone mass; if your parents have osteoporosis, you have a higher risk of developing the disease, explains Andrea Klemes, D.O., F.A.C.E., an endocrinologist and medical director of MDVIP, a national network of physicians that offers an alternative to traditional health care, focusing on personalized preventive care and long-term wellness care. Others at risk include those who are or who have been extremely underweight, post-menopausal women, and those with a thin frame and light skin. The risks increase as you age; one in every two women over 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture, and one in every four men. And while you can't control your genes, and you can't completely stop the process of bone loss due to age, there's a lot you can do to make yourself less susceptible to osteoporosis.

"Weight-bearing exercise—any activity that works bones and muscles against gravity, which



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It's a whole new approach to healthcare

is nearly everything except swimming—is particularly important to bone health,” says Klemes; indeed, a 2010 Medical College of Georgia study showed that those who exercised more than three hours a week retained greater bone density.

Vitamin D and calcium are also critical to bone health. “Vitamin D helps absorb calcium, which strengthens bones, and at least half the population is vitamin D deficient,” notes Klemes. Vitamin D can also actually decrease the number of bone-resorbing cells (cells that cause bone loss) and increase the number of bone-forming cells.

Osteoporosis doesn’t just make you stoop; it can ruin lives. Of those who fracture their hip, 20 to 25 percent die within a year due to complications, and 40 percent never regain full movement.

“With the right care and prevention,” says Klemes, “you can make sure your bones are as strong as possible so you never have to get to that point.”

SLEEP TIGHT

Nothing can compare to a good night’s sleep. And yet so few of us get one on a regular basis.

Insufficient sleep, a public health epidemic according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is linked to car and occupational accidents, as well as chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, depression and obesity. It’s also associated with cancer, not to mention reduced productivity.

Sleeping well, therefore, is no luxury—it’s a health and quality-of-life necessity.

Where to begin? First the basics: Set a regular bedtime and wake up at the same time every day—even on weekends. If you’re tired during the day, a short nap is fine (it’s better than sleeping in), but limit it to 30 minutes in the early afternoon. Create a sleep-conducive environment: dark, quiet and cool, with a comfortable mattress and pillows, and sheets that keep your body at an ideal temperature. Traditional cotton sheets, even those of the highest thread counts,



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trap heat and can cause you to get uncomfortably warm. Sheex (available online and at Bed Bath & Beyond), a new performance sheet developed by former NCAA women's basketball coaches, are made with the same fabric competitive athletes wear and actually regulate body temperature.

"We realized that this fabric, which works so well for athletes, also optimizes thermal conditions for a better quality of sleep," says co-CEO Susan Walvius.

A less-easily remedied obstacle to good sleep is snoring, which causes not only individual suffering, but suffering to relationships—25 percent of couples sleep apart because of it. Snoring interrupted by episodes of obstructed breathing that includes gasping or choking is known as sleep apnea. Sleep apnea not only makes you tired, it reduces blood oxygen levels, causing the heart to pump harder and often resulting in elevated blood pressure and heart enlargement.

"Snoring and sleep apnea can be incredibly destructive to a person's life," notes Craig Schwimmer, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.S., a board-certified otolaryngologist and founder and

director of The Snoring Center, the nation's leading provider of minimally invasive, office-based treatment for snoring and sleep apnea. "The good news is that today's treatment options work better, are more patient-friendly and provide results that can be quite remarkable."

New technologies include the Pillar Procedure, an FDA-approved treatment for snoring and mild to moderate sleep apnea that can provide relief in one 20-minute office visit, plus a number of other techniques that can also be completed in a single, brief office visit.

PRESERVE YOUR TEETH

Flashing those pearly whites can do wonders for your life: it boosts your mood, relieves stress, lowers blood pressure, reduces pain, gives you more confidence and makes you look younger. Smilers are even more likely to get promoted.

The first step to a great smile is good oral hygiene—regular brushing, flossing and cleaning—exactly what your dentist has been telling you for years. And taking good care of your teeth and gums is critical to more



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than just your smile. Poor oral hygiene can result in periodontal disease, which has been linked to pneumonia, prostate cancer, stroke, heart disease and diabetes. A study published in the journal *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment* found that women with chronic periodontal disease—which was indicated by missing molars—had a higher incidence of breast cancer. And according to new research from Harvard Medical School, men who had reported periodontal disease had a 64 percent higher risk of pancreatic cancer, as compared to those who didn't have periodontal disease.

Even when periodontal disease doesn't lead to other major health problems, it causes overall misery: bad breath, tooth loss, severe pain.

"I've had patients who were in so much pain that they were reduced to eating wet cereal for years," says Dr. Rick Kline of Smile Texas in Houston, a dental practice devoted entirely to cosmetic and implant dentistry.

In years past, the only solution to these extreme dental conditions was a denture or multiple surgeries over a year or more. Dramatic improvements in both implant design and the utilization of CT scan technology now allow Kline and his associates to place dental implants and attach replacement teeth in just one in-office procedure, with minimal discomfort and recovery time.

"I've witnessed amazing improvements in dentistry in my 20 years of practice," says Kline. "And any one of my patients would tell you that being able to bite, chew, laugh and smile again has been truly life-changing."

PROTECT YOUR SKIN

Some sun is necessary for our basic health. Too much, however, is deadly.

Skin cancer, the most common form of cancer in the United States, is generally caused by excessive sun exposure, and it's on the rise. Melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, is usually curable when found and treated early. Once it has spread to other organs, however, it is fatal. In March the FDA approved the first new drug proven to extend overall survival for metastatic melanoma patients in two decades, Yervoy. Rather than targeting the cancer itself, Yervoy harnesses the power of a patient's own immune system.

"In the past, treatments were very toxic—now people can live longer and better-quality lives, with minimal side effects," says Simeon Jaggernauth, D.O., a board-certified medical oncologist at the Cancer Treatment Centers



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DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR SNORING.

Yes, it really can be that simple.

Snoring can really get in the way of a good relationship. Years of lost sleep and frequent bickering are enough to drive a wedge between any couple. And that's not the end of it – nearly 1 in 4 couples sleep apart because of snoring. You deserve better and fortunately a solution has never been easier to obtain.

THE SNORING CENTER CAN HELP. We specialize in office based snoring treatment. We offer minimally invasive solutions that are convenient, affordable and essentially pain free. Our experience and expertise are unique – which is why people from across the country and around the world have come to trust The Snoring Center. Since 2004 our board certified Ear, Nose and Throat physicians have helped thousands of couples put

their snoring problems to bed. We'd like to help you, too.

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HELP FOR MILD SNORERS

If you suffer from mild or occasional snoring, try these self-help remedies:

- Avoid tranquilizers, sleeping pills and antihistamines before bedtime.
- Avoid alcohol for at least four hours and heavy meals or snacks for three hours before retiring.
- Establish regular sleeping patterns.
- Sleep on your side rather than your back.
- Tilt the head of your bed upward four inches.
- Adopt a healthy and athletic lifestyle to develop good muscle tone and lose weight.

of America at Southwestern Regional Medical Center in Tulsa, Okla., the first facility in Oklahoma to use Yervoy, according to the pharmaceutical distributor.

Of course, the goal is to detect melanoma before it turns fatal. For early detection, scan your body for moles that have changed recently in size or appearance; whose borders are irregular or are bleeding; or are bluish-black in appearance—and see your doctor immediately if you find anything questionable. Fair-skinned people are at higher risk, as are those who have had a sunburn before age 18. Contrary to popular belief, dark-skinned people also get melanoma skin cancer and are actually at risk for acral lentiginous melanoma, the deadliest from of the disease.

What can you do to protect yourself? Avoid excessive exposure to the sun and wear sunscreen, at least SPF 15—the higher the better, Jaggernauth says; the most important ingredients are zinc oxide and

vitamin E. Sunscreen is also necessary even on overcast days, because ultraviolet light can penetrate the clouds.

That said, some unprotected sun is vital, Jaggernauth emphasizes. “All your internal mechanisms are regulated by the sun, plus it’s the primary source of vitamin D, it increases endorphins, strengthens your immune system and is necessary for good mental health. Seasonal Affective Disorder is an actual form of depression caused by lack of sunlight,” he says. Jaggernauth recommends that fair-complexioned people get 15 minutes of unprotected sun each day, dark-skinned people, 30 minutes; 40 percent of your body must be exposed to get adequate levels. Noon is the best time for sunning, while 4 p.m. is the worst, because you get a double dose both from the sky and the sun’s reflection off the ground.

“Sun is not the enemy,” says Jaggernauth. “Just practice moderation.”



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LOSE THE LOVE HANDLES

Obesity is the second-leading cause of preventable death in the United States, behind only smoking. The more overweight you are, the greater your risk of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure and sleep apnea. In fact, the size of your waist alone is a major indicator of potential heart problems. A new study in the *Journal of American College of Cardiology* found that those with large waists—women greater than 35 inches, and men greater than 40 inches—were more likely to die from heart disease and stroke than those with smaller waists. The combination of a large

waist and a high body mass index (BMI)—the ratio of height to weight used to define obesity—upped the risk of death even more. Normal BMI is between 18.5 and 25; those with a BMI 30 and over are considered obese. (You can calculate your BMI at TrueResults.com.)

For most people struggling with excess pounds, the obvious solution is to simply eat less and exercise more. For some, however, that's just not enough. For those who have tried everything and yet still cannot keep the weight off, another solution is bariatric (weight loss) surgery. Of the options available, the Lap-Band system is the only FDA-approved device for bariatric surgery in patients with a BMI of 30 to 35. In fact, a recent study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* found that the Lap-Band system was significantly more effective than non-surgical intervention in reducing weight and improving quality of life over 24 months.

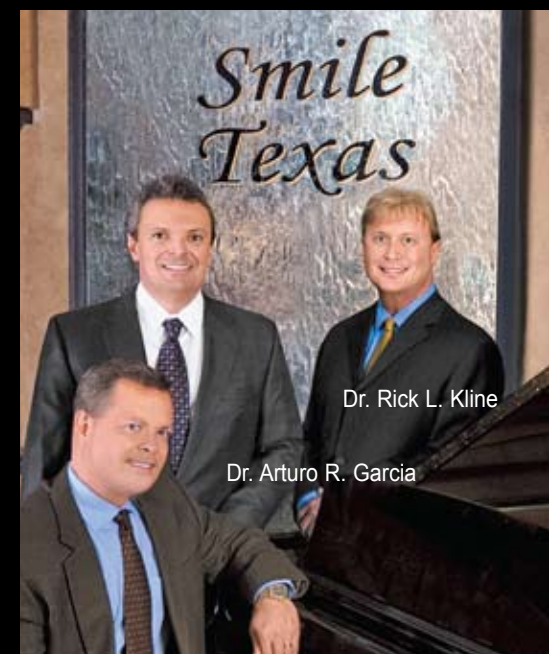
"We understand that being overweight is a disease, and that people can be unsuccessful despite their best efforts," says Peter R. Gottlieb, executive chairman and founder of True Results, the first facility in the country dedicated to the Lap-Band procedure. "All our success stories have failed using other methods many times." Without stomach cutting or stapling, the Lap-Band system reduces the stomach's capacity, restricting the amount of food you are able to eat at one time. Unlike traditional bariatric surgery, it is minimally invasive and can usually be performed on an outpatient basis; many people have the procedure on a Friday and are back at work on Monday.

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GET (A) PHYSICAL

Getting a thorough physical is one of the most important steps you can do to preserve your health. And thanks to today's medical advancements, problems can be found earlier than ever before.

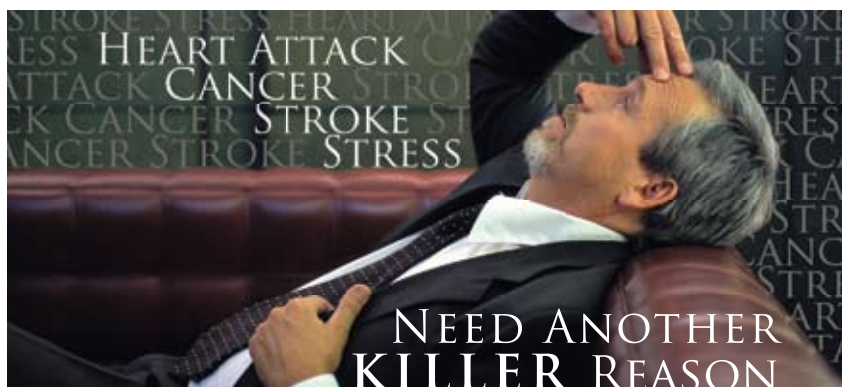
One life-saving innovation is the screening for hypertension. Blood pressure is traditionally measured with a stethoscope and blood pressure cuff over the top of the brachial artery in the arm. But studies have found that measuring the aortic blood pressure is a much more reliable indicator of cardiovascular health than peripheral arm pressure. Until recently, measuring the central aortic pressure was complicated, requiring a catheter inserted into the heart.

"We now have new technology that allows us to measure a person's aortic blood pressure through a simple device that measures pulse waves on the wrist," explains James Tuck, manager of Scripps Center for Executive Health in Scripps Memorial Hospital La Jolla, Calif., which offers a comprehensive, one-day WholePerson Examination focused on detection and prevention. "The new technology means we can better identify those who will most likely benefit from treatment."

Every physical should include:

- A review of your risk factors and looking at the big picture of your health, taking into account heredity, lifestyle, medical history, age and gender
- Cholesterol screening every three to five years unless you are at high risk for heart disease
- Blood pressure (aortic, if possible)
- Cancer screening tests: Pap smears and mammograms for women, prostate screening for men, and colon cancer screening for everyone over 50
- Immunizations against tetanus, shingles, pneumonia and other diseases according to recommended guidelines

Look for September's Men's Health Section, the third in our five-part health series.



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