A Plant-Based Diet Promotes Liver Health

You can’t live without your liver, so keeping it healthy is obviously an important priority. Most people know that drinking a lot of alcohol is a primary cause of liver disease; so is hepatitis. You may not know, however, that your diet may be another important and modifiable cause of liver disease.

An 18-year study on liver health found that people who ate a lot of high-cholesterol foods had more than twice the risk of chronic liver disease than those who ate very little. Researchers also found that eating a lot of protein increased the risk. On the other hand, people who ate a higher amount of carbohydrates had a 58% lower risk of developing liver disease during the 18-year study.


Protect Your Vision

It’s a fact of life that eyes change with age. Baby boomers – Americans born between 1946 and 1964 – are at the stage when many are affected by vision problems. More than 2 million Americans have impaired vision caused by serious eye conditions such as macular degeneration or glaucoma, or medical conditions like diabetes or brain tumors.

Adding certain nutrients to your diet every day can help preserve vision and prevent age-related eye diseases. The American Optometric Association recommends the following eye-healthy nutrients and foods:

- **Lutein and zeaxanthin** – found in colorful fruits and vegetables, such as broccoli, spinach, kale, corn, green beans, peas, oranges, and tangerines.
- **Essential fatty acids** – found in vegetable oils, nuts, soy and soy flour, seeds, flax meal, whole grains, fatty fish (including tuna, salmon, and herring), chicken, and eggs.
- **Vitamin C** – found in fruits and vegetables, including oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, papaya, green peppers, and tomatoes.
- **Vitamin E** – found in vegetable oils (including safflower and corn oil), almonds, pecans, filberts (hazelnuts), sunflower seeds, and sweet potatoes.
- **Zinc** – found in poultry, shellfish, milk, baked beans, and whole grains.

Do you have a vision problem? Having difficulty telling whether your socks match your slacks and not being able to clearly see a car in the street could be warning signs of impaired vision. Other symptoms include:

- Holding reading materials close to your face or at an angle
- Difficulty writing on the line or writing clearly
- Changes in the way you drive or walk
- Difficulty identifying faces or objects
- Difficulty working or reading with ordinary lighting
- Difficulty getting food onto a fork or pouring liquids into a cup without spilling
- More pronounced hearing loss as visual cues are lost

If you experience any of these symptoms, make an appointment for a comprehensive eye exam with an eye doctor right away.

How to Develop Friendships

Having a close relationship with another person – whether it is a friend, spouse, or relative – can improve your health. Research shows that friendship can help reduce your risk of heart attack and depression, help you sleep better, lower your blood pressure, and help you live longer. People who work together and are friends are more productive than work groups where friendship is not involved.

- Reaching out to establish a friendship sometimes happens simply and casually. At other times, it takes special effort.
- Go to community activities that you are interested in, such as poetry readings, art shows, or concerts.
- Join a sports team.
- Ask someone to join you at a cafe for lunch or go for a walk during your lunch break.
- Send a short, friendly e-mail to encourage a co-worker.

What’s the Secret to Beautiful Skin?

Beautiful skin isn’t so much a result of genes, according to a recent study. To a large degree, your lifestyle determines how smooth and beautiful your complexion will be as you age. Researchers examined the skin of 65 pairs of twins for coarse wrinkles, brown or pink spots, and dilated blood vessels. Each twin also filled out a survey on lifestyle habits. From the data, researchers concluded that spending too much time in the sun, smoking, and being overweight increased the chances that your skin would make you look older than you are.

For beautiful, healthy skin:

- **Use sunscreen or a makeup base with UV protection.**
- **Limit sun exposure.** While a few minutes in the sun each day is important for getting adequate vitamin D, you should limit it to 15-30 minutes. And skip the tanning salons.
- **Get enough sleep.** Not enough of it leads to puffy, baggy eyes.
- **Eat lots of fruits and vegetables** – aim for 5-9 servings a day.
- **Avoid dehydration.** Drink lots of water rather than caffeinated or alcoholic drinks.
- **Wear sunglasses.** You won’t squint as much. Over time a lot of squinting will lead to lines and wrinkles.
- **Don’t smoke.** Smoking breaks down the natural proteins in the skin – collagen and elastin.
- **Exercise!** (at least 30 minutes a day) to help maintain a healthy glow and keep your weight in check.


The American Academy of Dermatology offers skin care tips specific to your skin type: www.aad.org/media/background/news/Releases/Saving_Face_101_How_to_Customize_Your_Skin_Care_Ro/

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Form a kindness club

There are plenty of things you can do for others on your own. But sometimes it’s nice to be part of a group that practices kindness. If you like planning small or large projects and enjoy working with a group, you might want to form a kindness club. The club can be made up of neighbors, coworkers, friends, or acquaintances. It can meet in your home, a community center, coffee house, library, church, or conference room where you work. The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation has produced a projects planning guide with helpful resources. Start small, and have fun!


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Ask the Wellness Doctor

Q: Is there a difference between celiac sprue and gluten intolerance?

A: Go to www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-celiac.pdf to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: well@wellsource.com, subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

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Walking is good for your health. Find out how you can easily walk 10,000 steps each day.
Celiac has several names, including: celiac disease, celiac sprue, ceolic, non-tropical sprue, endemic sprue, gluten enteropathy, gluten-sensitive enteropathy, gluten-induced enteropathy, and gluten intolerance. It is a chronic disease of the digestive tract that interferes with the digestion and absorption of nutrients from food.

Recent findings estimate about 2 million people in the United States have celiac disease, or about 1 in 133 people. Symptoms include abdominal bloating and pain, gas, chronic diarrhea, weight loss, joint pain, skin eruptions and more. People with celiac disease cannot tolerate gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. When people with celiac disease eat foods with gluten in them their immune system attacks the small intestine causing damage and destruction to the small villi lining of the intestine. The villi are important for absorbing nutrients so when damaged, nutritional absorption problems occur.

Celiac disease affects each person differently. Symptoms may occur in the digestive system, or in other parts of the body. One person might have diarrhea and abdominal pain, while another person may be irritable or depressed. Irritability is one of the most common symptoms in children. Some people have no apparent symptoms.

Gluten sensitivity, on the other hand, describes the collection of medical conditions in which the body responds favorably, either directly or indirectly, to the removal of gluten from the diet.

Celiac disease is caused by a reaction to a gluten protein found in wheat and similar proteins such as barley and rye. Oats are generally OK, except if oats are grown in a field used the prior year to grow wheat, barley, or rye. Gluten may also be in other products like medicines, vitamins, and even the glue on stamps and envelopes. The only effective treatment is a lifelong gluten-free diet.

According to the American Celiac Disease Alliance, there are important differences between celiac disease, wheat allergy, and gluten sensitivity (which they call gluten intolerance). Celiac disease is an autoimmune condition, where the body’s immune system starts attacking normal tissue, such as intestinal tissue, in response to eating gluten. The changes in the bowel make it less able to absorb nutrients, minerals and the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K.

Celiac disease increases the risk for other autoimmune conditions, such as thyroid disease, type 1 diabetes, joint diseases, and liver diseases. Since wheat allergy and gluten sensitivity are not autoimmune conditions, they do not increase the risk.

While celiac disease requires a completely new approach to eating, you can still enjoy many delicious foods. Gluten free grains include corn, rice, quinoa, millet, amaranth, and teff. Find gluten-free recipes at: www.csaceliacs.org/recipes.php.

Source: http://americanceliac.org/cd.htm
Walk 6,000 to 10,000 Steps Daily

Requirements to Complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Use a pedometer over a 3-day period to determine the average number of steps you normally take each day. Increase that number by 1,000 to 2,000 steps for the first week. Each consecutive week, increase your steps by 1,000 to 2,000 until you reach the goal of 8,000 to 10,000 steps most days of the week (aim for at least 5 days weekly).

2. On your monthly Health Challenge Calendar, record the number of steps you take each day.

3. Read “How walking helps,” “How to count steps,” and “How to get more steps.”

4. To complete the Challenge, you must walk 6,000 steps on at least 17 days and 8,000 to 10,000 steps a day on a minimum of 5 days this month.

5. Keep records of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

How walking helps

Physical fitness is a key component in living a long and healthy life. It reduces the risk of dying of coronary heart disease and decreases the risk for certain cancers, diabetes, and high blood pressure. It can also be your solution to feeling tired, bored, and out of shape.

Regular physical activity can help you:

- Build muscle strength
- Feel more energetic
- Develop aerobic or cardiovascular fitness
- Lose weight and control your appetite
- Sleep better
- Lower your risk of diabetes
- Lower your blood pressure
- Improve your blood cholesterol levels
- Lower your risk of heart disease and stroke
- Protect your bones against osteoporosis
- Decrease the risk for colon, breast, and other cancers
- Relieve stress
- Reduce anxiety and depression
- Relieve arthritis and back pain
- Lower your risk for gallstones
- Lower the risk of impotence
- Help delay the effects of aging, and live longer!

You don’t need to join an expensive gym or commit to a rigorous exercise or training routine. You can incorporate physical activity habits into your life step by step.

Walking is often something people do for leisure or social reasons. Because of this, some people have a hard time thinking of walking as exercise. But it is! A study of middle-aged women found that taking at least 10,000 steps a day can help keep weight under control and decrease your risk of overweight-related diseases such as type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.

10,000 steps might seem like a lot of walking. If you are sedentary, making a small, achievable goal – such as, “I will increase my steps by 1,000 to 2,000 this week” – may be easier for you to attain. Once you accomplish 2,000, increase your goal by another 1,000 to 2,000. Before you know it, you’ll be walking 8,000 to 10,000 steps a day.

If you are already active, 10,000 steps may not be challenging enough. You may want to aim for 12,000 to 15,000 steps – or more!

How to count steps

A pedometer is a device that will count the number of steps you take, whether you are walking or running. It clips to your waistband or belt. When you first get your pedometer, wear it for a day or two to find out how many steps you are currently taking. Then, increase your steps by 1,000 to 2,000 each week until you are taking 8,000 to 10,000 steps daily.
While a pedometer is a convenient way to keep track of your steps, you can estimate your steps by knowing that 30 minutes of brisk walking might add up to anywhere from 3,000 to 4,000 steps depending on your height, stride, and pace. Twenty minutes of walking is equal to about 2,000 steps. When running, you cover 2,000 steps every 10 minutes or so.

If you have a sedentary job, you might need to walk for 60 minutes to reach your goal of 8,000 to 10,000 steps. But you don’t have to do it all at once. You can break the minutes into as little as 10-minute sessions – or exercise 30 to 60 minutes all at once.

**Comfortable shoes**

The only special equipment you really need for this Health Challenge (other than possibly a pedometer) is a good pair of shoes. Any shoes that are comfortable, provide support, and don’t cause blisters will do, but here are some suggestions to help you make your selection:

- Training-model running shoes (with cushioning soles) are good walking shoes. So are some of the light-weight trail and hiking boots, or any casual shoes with flexible, cushioning soles.
- Make sure your walking shoes have good arch supports. You can buy quality insoles at a running shoe store to give you more arch support and cushion.
- If one or both feet excessively roll inward or outward (called pronation), get shoes with an anti-pronation design.
- Look for a low, supportive heel that rounds (or bevels) in. A thick heel or one that flairs out will cause your foot to slap down rather than roll.
- Buy shoes with uppers made of materials that breathe, such as mesh or air holes.
- Measure both feet while standing. If one foot is larger than the other, try on a pair that fits your larger foot.
- Your shoes should be snug, but not tight. If you’re a woman with wide feet, try men’s or boys’ shoes. They are cut a bit wider through the heel and ball of the foot.
- Exercise may make your feet swell; so does being on your feet throughout the day. Go shopping for shoes in the evening, when your feet are larger.
- Go shoe shopping in a pair of socks you’ll be wearing during your walks.
- Walk in the shoes before buying them. They should feel comfortable right away.
- Make sure your heel fits snugly in each shoe and doesn’t slip as you walk.

**How to get more steps**

- Use the stairs instead of the elevator
- Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning and go for a short walk
- Walk to the bus or train stop
- Walk to each end of the mall when you go shopping
- Park your car a few blocks away from the store
- Plan a “walking” meeting
- Walk around the block during your lunchtime or break
- Walk after work
- Walk 10 minutes after dinner to settle your meal
- Take your dog for a walk
- Jog in place
- Workout with an exercise video

**Expand the Challenge!**

You might be interested in carrying this challenge into the next month or year. As you keep track of your steps (or minutes), you might also want to log your weight, or keep notes on how you feel (mentally or physically) or how your body is looking. You should notice that you feel better, look better, and have more endurance.

Shape Up America! 2009.
The Walking Site. 2009.

Learn more about getting 10,000 steps, from Shape Up America!
www.shapeup.org/shape/steps.php
### Instructions

1. Post this record sheet where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the average number of steps you take each day.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you took 1,000 to 2,000 more steps than your average. You must take 6,000 steps on at least 17 days and 8,000 to 10,000 steps on at least 5 days during the month to complete the Challenge. Then keep up this healthy practice for a lifetime of good health.
4. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

### Health Challenge™ Calendar

#### Walk 6,000 to 10,000 Steps Daily

Use a pedometer to track your daily steps this month.

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Number of days this month I walked 6,000 to 7,999 steps    Number of days this month I walked 8,000+ steps

Number of days I was physically active for at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

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_____________________________________________________________________________________________

Signature_________________________________________ Date________________________

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