



The Wellness Watch

promoting healthy lifestyles

May 2015

May: National Arthritis Awareness Month

Arthritis is a broad term that covers over 100 diseases involving inflammation of the joints or muscles.

- It can involve just one joint or multiple joints
- The most common symptoms are stiffness, pain and swelling of the joint, as well as redness and loss of range of motion in the joint
- The types of arthritis that occur most often are Osteoarthritis and Rheumatoid arthritis

Osteoarthritis is the most common type:

- It is the result of the daily wear and tear that occurs through our jobs, our play, and other life events
- It affects the smooth, slick cartilage at the ends of our bones
- This cartilage is damaged, causing bone to rub on bone, which results in both pain and a limiting of joint movement
- Osteoarthritis does not happen overnight, but it can develop faster as the result of an injury or an infection of the joint itself
- Knee pain while going up and down stairs may be the first sign of osteoarthritis

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) results from a person's own immune system attacking the inner lining that surrounds the joint.

- This lining becomes inflamed and swollen
- RA also destroys the cartilage and bone of the joint

Risk Factors for Arthritis

- **Age**—Risk for many types of arthritis increase with age
- **Previous Injury**—Any joint that has been injured is more likely to develop arthritis
- **Obesity**—Extra weight puts more stress on the joints – especially hips, knees, and spine – making it more likely that arthritis will develop in those areas
- **Family History**—Some types of arthritis run in families

Cancer-Cutting Habits

A recent study found that those who avoided tobacco, limited alcohol, ate a diet high in fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts and seeds, and were physically active cut their overall cancer risk (women by 19% and men by 10%). Both sexes also cut their risk of dying from cancer by about 25%. By educating your family, teaching children healthy habits and by following them yourself, you can reduce your family's risk for cancer.

Tech Corner



Phone Apps: **ArthritisID** for iPhone

Arthritis Symptoms+Treatment for Android

Are you or someone you know experiencing arthritis symptoms? Find all the information you want, and need, about arthritis with these apps.

- **Screen for arthritis** – with the help of these apps you can identify all the different types of arthritis
- **Understand arthritis better** – learn about the different treatment options and medication types available
- **Stay informed** – the most current information on prevention of arthritis, as well as information about exercise, diet and nutrition to help reduce arthritis pain

Eat Nuts and Flax for Your Heart

Finicky about fish? Getting good-for-you omega-3 fatty acids from flaxseed, walnuts, and other fin-free foods appears to be as beneficial for your heart as eating fatty fish such as salmon.

- EPA and DHA omega-3's from fish have been promoted because they have been linked with lower rates of cardiovascular disease, such as clogged arteries, heart attacks and strokes.
- Less was known about the potential benefits of the plant-based omega-3 ALA. New research suggests that consuming 2 to 3 grams of ALA per day may have cardiovascular benefits. That's the amount in an ounce of walnuts or 1 1/2 tablespoons of ground flaxseed. Other ALA sources include canola oil, chia seeds, and firm tofu.

Ancient Grains Separating Fact from Fiction

Food labels are touting ingredients that sound like they are good for you. One of these is **ancient grains**, but are they as healthful as they seem? The term is used on products made with amaranth, quinoa, spelt, and other grains that have been grown and harvested for thousands of years. In their whole form - as a hot cereal or, say, in a pilaf - they're good sources of protein, fiber, and other nutrients. People who consume more whole grains - ancient or not - may have a lower risk of many chronic diseases.

But ancient-grain breads, cereals, and other packaged foods may not boost your whole-grain intake all that much. Some have only a sprinkling of those grains, and they may contain more sugar, salt, and preservatives than you've bargained for.

Take the new Cheerios + Ancient Grains cereal, for instance. It has seven types of sugars on the ingredients list, which contributes 5 grams per serving. That's fairly low, but original Cheerios, made from oats, has just 1 gram. The original also has 6 grams more of whole grains. So look for foods that have whole grains high on the ingredients list, and don't worry too much about whether they are ancient or not.

Hamstring Stretches

Last month we shared some calf stretches. Let's move on to other leg muscles!

Remember, stretches should not hurt. Hold each stretch for 30 seconds, repeating twice on each leg. Be sure you do not hold your breath.

Hamstrings: Choose one of these three techniques shown in the pictures below.

- If doing the standing or seated stretch, be sure you hinge at the hips, keeping your head up and coming forward with your chest - not slumping over from your lower back.
- Lying on the floor in a doorway is a nice way to stretch the hamstring while supporting the lower back.

