# Healthy People Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2018


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ONEDIGITAL HEALTH AND BENEFITS

This newsletter is interactive! Click a topic to jump directly to the article.

# National Health Observances

## NOVEMBER | 2018

Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month

Diabetes Month

Family Caregivers Month

Healthy Skin Month

Hospice and Palliative Care Month

Lung Cancer Awareness Month

Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

Prematurity Awareness Month

Sexual Health Month

Stomach Cancer Awareness Month

Medical Staff Services Awareness Week (4-10)

Great American Smokeout (15)

# BETTERSAFE

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY



# RED FLAGS!

## *Body Clues & Cues You Shouldn't Ignore*

Aches and pains are a fact of life. Things like headaches, a little heartburn, or a backache are usually harmless annoyances that go away in a matter of hours or a day. But there are specific circumstances when you shouldn't "shake" the pain off. When certain pains occur suddenly, linger longer than usual, or just seem different you should seek medical attention.

Consider the following conditions "red flags" that you should not ignore or simply wait to go away:

**CHEST PAIN WITH THREE SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS.** Not all chest pain is serious or life threating. It can result from overuse or an injury to the chest area from a fall or accident. Viruses can also cause pain in your chest area. However, there are three good indicators that something isn't right:

1. Chest pain that doesn't go away
2. Shortness of breath
3. Any upper body pain that hasn't occurred before.

If you experience any of these symptoms, go to the ER or call 911 immediately.

*Quick tip:* One of the first steps in preventing heart disease and heart attacks is identifying your risk and risk factors. Visit the American Heart Association's website at www.heart.org for online risk assessments and information.

**A SEVERE HEADACHE THAT IS UNIQUE TO ANY OTHER HEADACHE YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED.** Although migraines and headaches rarely indicate a serious illness, there are times when they may point to a serious medical condition like a tumor or aneurysm.

If you have any of the following headache symptoms seek medical care immediately:

» A headache accompanied with nerve symptoms such as weakness, dizziness, sudden loss of balance, numbness or tingling, paralysis, speech difficulties, mental confusion, seizures or vision changes (blurry vision, double vision, or blind spots)

- A severe headache with a fever, shortness of breath or a rash
- Headaches with severe nausea and vomiting
- Headaches that occur after a head injury or accident

**TOOTH PAIN THAT WON'T GO AWAY.** If you have a toothache that lasts longer than one or two days, or have a fever, earache or pain upon opening your mouth wide it's likely that your tooth's nerve has become damaged. If you don't get it treated quickly, bacteria in your mouth can invade the nerve and possibly spread to other parts of the face and skull and possibly even to the bloodstream.

*Quick tip:* Program your dentist's number in your smartphone. Even if you need to call during off-hours, most dentists provide an emergency option for you to choose to receive immediate treatment.

**YOU HAVE A STABBING PAIN IN YOUR SIDE.** Oftentimes, a pain in your side simply indicates bloating and gas, but if you truly feel as if a sharp object is ripping through your right side, and you're also nauseated and running a fever, you could have appendicitis. And if an inflamed appendix isn't removed it can burst. Err on the side of caution if you experience these symptoms and seek immediate medical attention.

*Quick tip:* To help your doc diagnose and treat your pain, be ready to tell him/her exactly where it hurts (i.e., lower right side, under the rib cage). Then, be sure to describe your condition as accurately as you can (i.e., dull, sharp, achy, bloated). When time is of the essence your accurate description can help immensely.

**BACK PAIN ACCOMPANIED BY A STRANGE, TINGLING FEELING IN YOUR TOES.** Most back pain is the result of physical strain and overexertion and can be treated with light stretching and anti-inflammatories. But if your back pain persists and is accompanied by tingling in your toes it could be an indication that one of your discs (the rings that cushion the bones in your spine) is pressing on the spinal nerve. Without professional attention, you could risk permanent nerve damage.

*Quick tip:* Strengthen your core muscles (your back and abdomen) with daily stretching and possibly even a yoga class—it can help prevent back injuries.



DAY IN DAY OUT
WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE



# SORE THROAT?

*Feel Better Fast!*

Painful swallowing, swollen tonsils, scratchiness when you talk—it's likely that you've experienced the annoying symptoms of a sore throat. Most sore throats are the result of cold viruses, bacteria or sinus drainage, and fortunately, most will go away within a few days and can be treated at home with some tried and true remedies.

## SOOTHE YOUR SORE THROAT

If you're experiencing a sore throat consider these strategies:

**Pop an anti-inflammatory medication (like Advil) at the onset of symptoms.** An over-the-counter anti-inflammatory drug will provide pain relief while also reducing swelling associated with a sore throat.



**Try a throat spray or cough syrup.** Over-the-counter cough syrups and throat sprays can help ease soreness and provide temporary pain relief. Just be sure to read the label, as some medications may cause drowsiness.

**Drink water or warm tea throughout the day.** It will help thin sinus mucus which allows for better drainage and decreased stuffiness.

**Gargle with warm salt water (yes, it actually works!).** Researchers have found that gargling with warm salt water can help keep your mouth and throat moist, reduce swelling and loosen mucus, helping to flush out irritants or bacteria. Pour half a teaspoon of salt in one cup of warm water, swish around in your mouth for 10 to 20 seconds and then spit out. Gargling with saltwater can be repeated as often as needed to decrease pain associated with your throat.

**Have some chicken noodle soup.** Studies have shown that this age-old cold remedy really does help. Not only is the warm broth soothing to your throat, but it's thought to have anti-inflammatory properties, which can help fight off your infection.

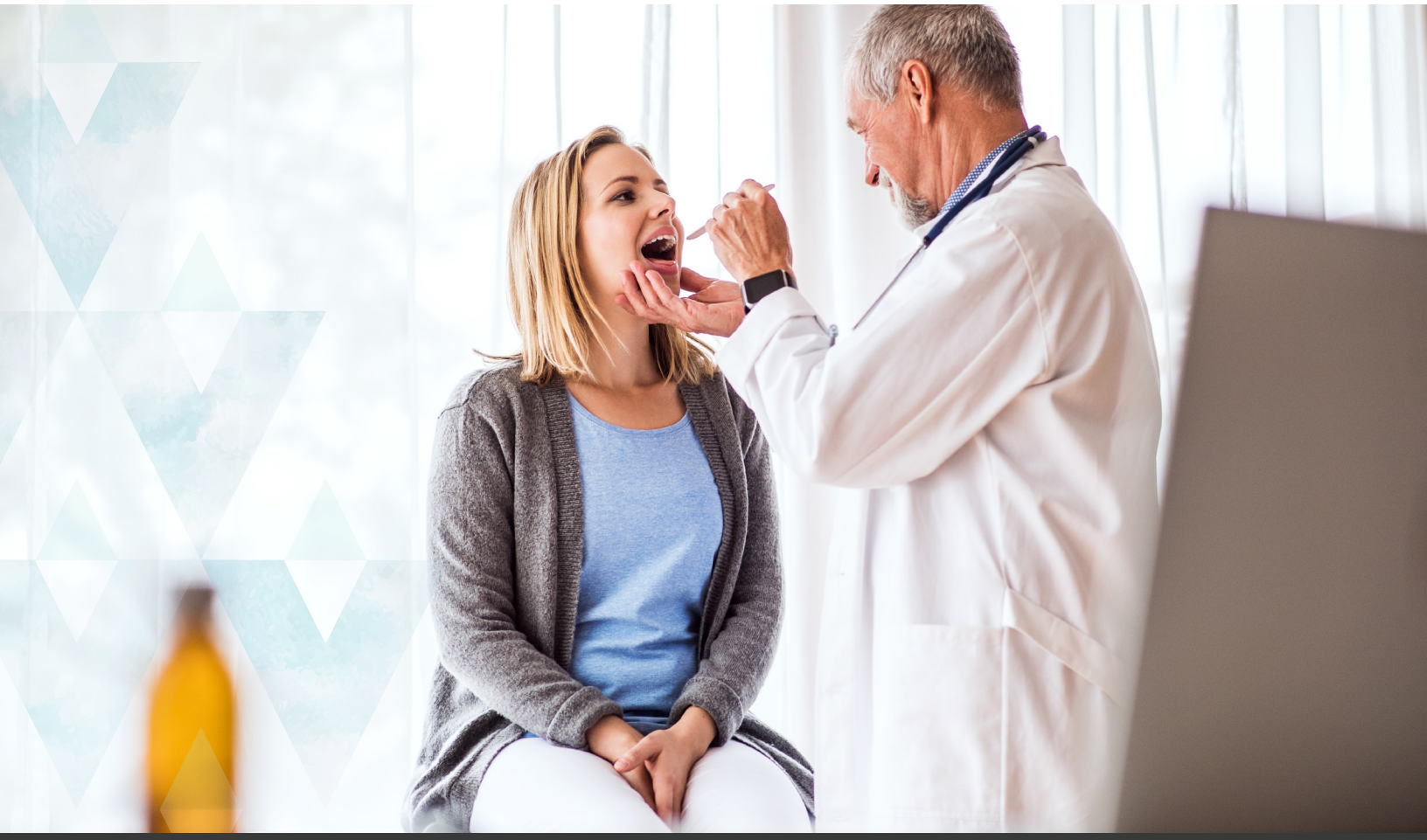
**Get some extra rest.** Most sore throats are caused by cold viruses, which can't be treated with antibiotics. Along with the home remedies just listed, one of the best things you can do is ensure your body is rested so it's better able to fight off the virus.

## WHEN TO SEE YOUR DOC FOR A SORE THROAT

Most sore throats will run their course over a few days to a couple of weeks. However, some sore throats are caused by bacteria (i.e., strep) or other illnesses, which require professional medical attention.

It's time to call or see your doctor if you have a severe sore throat and a fever over 101 degrees that lasts longer than one or two days. If you have difficulty sleeping because your throat is blocked by swollen tonsils or adenoids, or if you experience a rash with your sore throat, see your doctor right away. These symptoms indicate a bacterial infection that your doctor will likely treat with antibiotics.



# TAKECHARGE

WELCOA'S SELF-CARE BULLETIN



# PROTECT YOURSELF FROM

## *Pre-Diabetes*

You look fine, you feel fine, but are you among the one in three adults who has pre-diabetes? It's an unfortunate, but very likely scenario. About 90 percent of those with pre-diabetes have no idea that their blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not (yet) high enough to be classified as type 2 diabetes.

Pre-diabetes puts you at increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes; a serious disease that can increase your risk for heart disease, stroke and vision loss. Fortunately, preventing and reversing pre-diabetes is largely in your control. Here are the simple steps you can take to turn your odds around.

**Make more meals at home.** It's one of the best ways to help you lose weight or maintain a healthy weight. The more fatty tissue you have, the more resistant your cells become to insulin (a hormone that helps your body break down nutrients, especially glucose).

**Get a grip on your liquid calories.** Soda, juice, energy drinks and alcohol—they are often high in calories and sugar, which can cause quick spikes, then drops in your blood sugar. The empty calories can also lead to weight gain, which is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes.

**Aim for sweat sessions every day.** According to the Diabetes Prevention Program, 150 minutes or more of moderate aerobic exercise (i.e., brisk walking, jogging) a week helps reduce your chance of developing diabetes.

**Get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked.** In addition to causing damage to the cardiovascular system, untreated high blood pressure has been linked to the development of diabetes. Abnormal cholesterol and triglyceride levels also increase your risk. See your doctor every year for a well check-up—it's the best way to ensure you're getting cholesterol tests when you need them and your doc will also tell you if your blood pressure is in the normal range.



Get tested. Again, see your doctor every year. Ask your doctor if and when you should get tested—there are a variety of blood sugar tests that can diagnose pre-diabetes and diabetes. Make sure you ask to see the results and discuss them with your doc.

## DID YOU KNOW?

According to the CDC, about 15 to 30 percent of people with pre-diabetes who don't take steps to reduce their risk will progress to type 2 diabetes within five years.

## TYPE 2 DIABETES

### Signs & Symptoms

Most people with pre-diabetes or type 2 diabetes do not experience any symptoms or feel ill. Or they may experience some symptoms, but shrug them off because they don't seem like a big deal. Common symptoms of diabetes include:

- Excessive thirst and appetite
- Increased urination (sometimes as often as every hour)
- Unusual weight loss or gain
- Chronic fatigue
- Nausea, perhaps vomiting
- Blurred vision
- In women, frequent vaginal infections
- Dry mouth
- Slow-healing sores or cuts

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms call your doctor and ask about getting screened for type 2 diabetes. The sooner the disease is diagnosed the better you can successfully manage and treat the condition.

*Source: https://www.cdc.gov/features/diabetesprevention/index.html*

WELCOA
HEALTH BULLETINS

TOYOURHEALTH
WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN



# SOLID STRATEGIES FOR
## *Sound Slumber*

If you're setting aside seven to nine hours a night to sleep—congratulations! You're doing one of the best things you can to give your entire body what it needs to restore and remain healthy. But even if you're getting your seven to nine, are you truly getting the deep sleep your body needs? Believe it or not, there may be some simple (yet fixable) factors that may be causing you to miss out on the restorative sleep you need.

### HERE'S A LOOK AT WHAT MAY BE GETTING IN THE WAY OF RESTFUL SLEEP:

**There's too much light on.** Light is one of the biggest external factors that can affect sleep. Exposure to light in the late evening tends to delay the phase of our internal clock and leads us to prefer later sleep times.

*Try:* Keeping your bedroom as dark as possible and avoid TV and electronics close to bedtime.

**You don't have a regular bedtime.** Getting in sync with your body's natural sleep and wake cycle (your circadian rhythm) is paramount for achieving good sleep. Going to bed and getting up at the same time each day will help you feel much more refreshed and energized than if you sleep the same number of hours at different times (i.e., going to bed very late and sleeping in one day, and then going to bed early and waking up early the next).

*Try:* Staying consistent, even on the weekends. If you want to change your bedtime, start with small increments, such as 15 minutes earlier or later each day—this will help your body adjust.

**You're worried when you go to sleep.** Stress, worry, and anger from your day can make it very difficult to sleep well.

*Try*: Setting aside "worry time" before you go to bed. Write down the thoughts and feelings that are bugging you, and then make a promise to only revisit them until the next day.

**You snore.** Chronic snoring can affect the quantity and quality of your sleep.

*Try*: Exercising every day, and losing a little bit of weight if you're overweight—even a little weight loss can reduce fatty tissue in the back of the throat and decrease or even stop snoring.

## SHOULD YOU SEEK SLEEP HELP?

If you've tried several sleep strategies and practice good "sleep hygiene" but still struggle with sleep problems, you may have a sleep disorder that requires professional treatment. Consider scheduling a visit with a health care professional if you regularly experience these symptoms:

- Persistent daytime sleepiness or fatigue
- Loud snoring accompanied by pauses in breathing
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- Unrefreshing sleep
- Frequent morning headaches
- Crawling sensations in your legs or arms at night
- Inability to move while falling asleep or waking up
- Physically acting out dreams during sleep
- Falling asleep at inappropriate times (i.e., at work, driving)




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