Healthy People Newsletter

MAY 2019

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ONEDIGITAL
HEALTH AND BENEFITS

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

National Health Observances

MAY | 2019

ALS Awareness Month

Better Sleep Month

Employee Health and Fitness Month

Healthy Vision Month

Huntington's Disease Awareness Month

Lupus Awareness Month

Skin Cancer Awareness Month

Mental Health Month

Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month

Stroke Awareness Month

Trauma Awareness Month

Melanoma Monday (6)

Asthma Day (7)

Fibromyalgia Awareness Day (12)

Women's Lung Health Week (12-18)

Food Allergy Awareness Week (12-18)

Employee Health and Fitness Day (15)

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BETTERSAFE

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY



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SAFE SLEEPING FOR YOUR BABY

Learn the Risk Factors for SIDS

Each year in the U.S., about 3,500 infants die suddenly and unexpectedly in their sleep. In about half of these deaths, doctors can't find a medical reason to explain why, even after a complete review. When the doctor doesn't have answers, the death is called sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Experts say that all babies are at risk, especially those under 1 year of age. Babies are most vulnerable to SIDS up to 4 months old. One of the critical pieces to SIDS risk reduction is how the baby sleeps. Babies who are sleeping should be on their back. Research has revealed many risk factors for sudden infant death, and sleep position is the most important one. A baby shouldn't sleep on their belly or side.

Why does sleep position matter? Sleeping on the belly lowers an infant's blood pressure and reduces their ability to get oxygen to the brain. Between 2 and 4 months old, especially, the reflex to breathe to get more oxygen is repressed when an infant sleeps on their belly.

Researchers also suspect that a brain condition may be a cause of SIDS. They have been studying the part of the brain that controls breathing and heart rate during sleep. They think these babies may not have the reflex to awaken when breathing becomes impaired.

OTHER RISK FACTORS

What causes SIDS may not be known, but several things raise the risk. In addition to sleep position, research shows that soft bedding above or below your infant is a danger. There is no need to have a blanket. Instead, dress your baby in sleep clothing, such as a onesie, that's designed to keep them warm. This keeps them safer. Make sure they're dressed appropriately for the environment. But don't overbundle. Check for signs that they're too hot, like sweating or if their chest is hot to the touch.

It's important to prevent your baby's nose and mouth from becoming covered. The area around them should not have any clutter—no toys, no bumpers.

Experts also advise that you keep your baby in the same room, but not in your bed with you. When you're done feeding, place your baby in their safe area, such as a cradle next to your bed.

HELP PROTECT YOUR BABY FROM SIDS

- Always place babies on their back to sleep, for naps and at night.
- Use a firm and flat sleep surface, such as a mattress in a crib. Cover the surface with a fitted sheet.
- Do not use any blankets, bumpers, toys, or other soft items in the sleep area.
- Breastfeed your baby if you can.
- Share your room with your baby. Keep your baby close to your bed in a crib or other surface made for infants for the first year, or at least the first 6 months.
- Don't smoke or let others smoke around your baby or in your baby's environment.
- Get regular health checkups and recommended vaccinations for your baby.

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



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GREEN SPACES

for Good Health

Studies show that green spaces, such as parks or woods, seem to affect your health for the better. In fact one recent study revealed that those who lived near green spaces were less likely to die over an 8-year period.

No one knows exactly why living close to green space has this effect. The plants themselves may be part of the reason. Plants pull pollutants out of the air and cool the neighborhood. Or it may be that green space creates a place to meet other people and help build social connections. Strong social ties have been linked to a longer life.

Simply being exposed to nature has been shown to improve mood, reduce anxiety, and enhance self-esteem. People who see greenery every day may have better mental health and be less stressed. Stress increases your risk of heart disease, diabetes, and other diseases.

In one study, researchers cleaned up vacant city lots and planted grass and trees. Other vacant lots in the same city were left alone. People who lived near the newly green lots said they felt less depressed and better about themselves after the change. In poorer neighborhoods, crime also fell near the green lots.

Living near a busy road can affect your health, too. Roads and highways are noisy to live near. Studies have found that noise can increase the risk of heart disease and depression. That may be because noise can cause stress or interrupt your sleep. People who live near a busy road may also breathe in more air pollution, which increases the risk of lung cancer, heart disease, and other conditions.

GETTING ACTIVE

Your neighborhood can also affect how easy it is for you to exercise. People in urban and suburban areas can often walk to a coffee shop, school, or work. People in rural areas are more likely to have to drive to these places.

People who don't exercise are more likely to be overweight or obese and have diabetes, high blood pressure, and many other health problems. People in rural areas may also live along roads with no sidewalks. These factors may be part of why people who live in rural areas are more likely to be obese than people who live in urban areas.

If you want to exercise more, figure out what kind of physical activity you enjoy and would be willing to stick with. Then look for opportunities. If you're interested in walking but there's nowhere safe to walk in your area, get together with other people and talk about how to bring about change.

Experts note that there are many ways to make walking in your neighborhood safer and easier. For example, a walking trail could be built around a playground so that children could play while parents walked on the trail. Churches might donate land, or a trail could go around a ball field or along a creek.

EATING HEALTHY

In some neighborhoods, it's not easy to get healthy food. The U.S. Department of Agriculture calls low-income communities without full-service supermarkets "food deserts."

Food deserts can occur in both urban and rural areas. Food deserts not only lack grocery stores. They are likely to have stores selling cheap snacks that aren't very nutritious.

Farmers markets are one way to bring fruits and vegetables into neighborhoods without grocery stores. If you want to set up a farmers market in your community, ask if others would be interested. You may be able to get help from a community organization or from a local or state government. If people can get to them easily by foot, then even better; that's an opportunity to get in some physical activity.

CREATING CHANGE

Changing your neighborhood can be tough. It may mean getting together with neighbors and talking to local officials about making more walking paths, sidewalks, and bike lanes. You might reach out to local institutions, such as churches and schools, with land that could be used. You might talk to convenience store owners about offering more healthy foods.



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TAKECHARGE
WELCOA'S SELF-CARE BULLETIN



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GERMS THAT ATTACK THE BRAIN

How to Protect Yourself from Encephalitis & Meningitis

Did you know that certain germs can attack your brain? When you get sick, some germs can attack the brain or the protective lining that surrounds the brain. This can cause swelling and lead to severe illness, or even death. It's important to recognize the symptoms so you can get medical help as quickly as possible.

When the brain swells, it's called encephalitis. When the lining of the brain, or meninges, becomes inflamed, it's called meningitis. The symptoms can be similar for both.

At first, you might get a fever, feel tired, and sometimes have a rash. Those things can last a day or two, or a little bit longer. Then, you may have a headache, along with fever, neck stiffness, and you can get sensitivity to light.

Other symptoms include nausea or vomiting, double vision, drowsiness, and confusion. More severe illnesses can cause speech, hearing, or vision problems. If it's left untreated, you could develop cognitive difficulties with progressive loss of consciousness, seizures, or muscle weakness.

You need to get immediate medical help if you have symptoms of encephalitis or meningitis. Early treatment is important for the best recovery. Treatment will depend on the cause. Viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi can all cause encephalitis and meningitis. The most common causes can be different depending on where you live.

Worldwide, the most common cause of meningitis is bacterial meningitis. In the United States, however, we don't see a lot of bacterial meningitis because we have certain vaccines. So, the most common cause of meningitis is viral meningitis.

TREATMENT & PREVENTION

Early treatment for bacterial causes may be antibiotics and other medicines to treat swelling and other symptoms of the illness. There aren't any specific anti-viral treatments for most viral causes. But treating the symptoms can affect the course of the illness. More severe illnesses may require hospitalization.

Anyone can get these conditions. Protecting yourself and your family from germs and staying up-to-date on vaccines is the best way to guard against both encephalitis and meningitis. Vaccines are available to prevent some bacterial causes of meningitis, including *Haemophilus influenzae*, pneumococcal pneumonia, and meningococcal disease.

Researchers are looking for other ways to prevent or treat encephalitis and meningitis. Some are studying how to stop germs from infecting the brain or its lining.

Many scientists are trying to develop broad antivirals. "Broad" means the antiviral would stop many viruses rather than just one. This would be helpful, since doctors wouldn't have to know which virus is causing the problem before starting treatment.

Until we have better treatments, prevention is still the best medicine. Children, older adults, and those with weakened immune systems are most at risk for infections.

PROTECT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

You can guard against meningitis and encephalitis if you:

- Wash your hands with soap and water often.
- Avoid people who are coughing or showing other signs of sickness.
- Stay up-to-date on your vaccines.
- Protect yourself from mosquito and tick bites. Use insect repellents and wear full-sleeve shirts and pants when you're outside. Keep insects out of your home. Use screens on windows and doors or use air conditioning instead. Empty all standing water from your yard.



TO YOUR HEALTH
WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN



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THE PATH TO A *Healthy Plate*

Healthy eating is one of the best ways to prevent or delay health problems. Eating well, along with getting enough physical activity, can help you lower your risk of health problems like heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and more. To reach your goals, experts advise making small, gradual changes.

Experts note that the best diet to follow is one that is science-based, that allows you to meet your nutritional requirements, and that you can stick to in the long run. The main source of science-based nutrition advice is the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These guidelines describe which nutrients you need and how much. They also point out which ones to limit or avoid. Every five years an expert panel reviews all available scientific evidence regarding nutrition and health and uses that to develop the dietary guidelines.

The guidelines are regularly updated because our scientific understanding of what's healthy is continuously evolving. These changes can be confusing, but the key recommendations have been consistent over time. In general, healthy eating means getting a variety of foods, limiting certain kinds of carbs and fats, watching out for salt, and being aware of your portion sizes.

KEY GUIDELINES

Limit Added Sugars

Added sugar is the extra sugar added to foods and drinks during preparation. Corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, brown sugar, and honey are examples of sweeteners added to foods and drinks, especially regular sodas.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans suggest a daily limit on added sugar of no more than 10% of calories. That's about the amount in 16 ounces of regular soda (190

calories). You can find information about added sugars on most Nutrition Facts labels now.

Keep an Eye on Fats

Fat is high in calories and can increase your chances of developing obesity, heart disease, and other health problems. But there are different kinds of fats.

Fats that are liquid at room temperature, or oils, are considered to be healthier than those that are solid. Solid fats are found in high amounts in beef, chicken, pork, cheese, butter, and whole milk. Solid fats have more saturated fats than liquid oils. Liquid oils—such as canola, corn, olive, or peanut oil—have mostly unsaturated or polyunsaturated fats.

The dietary guidelines encourage consuming liquid oils rather than solid fats. You should examine the fat content on the Nutrition Facts label. The label shows how much saturated fat a product contains. Experts suggest that you aim for getting less than 10% of your calories from saturated fats.

Read the Labels

The Nutrition Facts label also shows salt, or sodium. Experts advise you to limit salt, which tends to be very high in processed foods.

If you eat salty, highly processed food, you can quickly go over the daily limit of one teaspoon of salt (2,300 milligrams of sodium). Two hot dogs might have 900 milligrams of sodium. A can of ravioli might have 1400 milligrams. Other examples of salty, highly processed foods are bacon, frozen pizzas, and salad dressings.

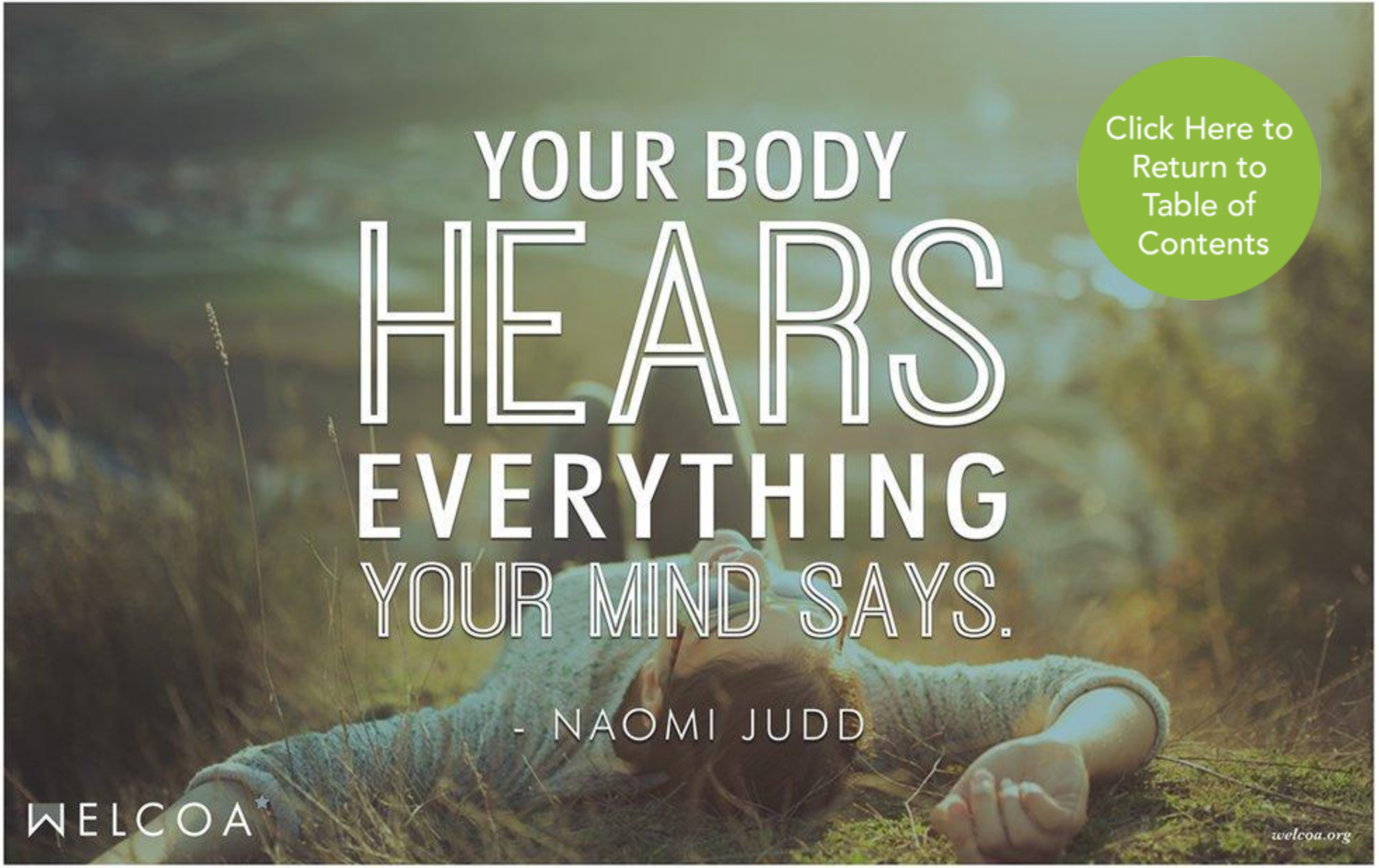
Along with a lot of added salt, processed foods might have preservatives, sweeteners, and other substances added during preparation.

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HEALTHY EATING DO'S & DON'TS

- Eat a variety of foods—vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts, seeds, lean meat, seafood, eggs, milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- Limit foods that are low in vitamins and minerals.
- Avoid foods with added sugar.
- Replace foods containing saturated fats (like butter or lard) with healthier unsaturated fat options.
- Watch out for foods high in salt



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