

MAY
2019

SAY goodbye to bad habits

Experts say that to stop an unhealthy habit, you must replace it with a healthy habit. Here's how to get started.

- **Set a date.** Make a plan for when you intend to quit your bad habit. Put it in your calendar or planner.
- **Stop the triggers.** For instance, don't eat in front of the T.V. if you tend to overeat while watching it. Eat at a table without distractions.
- **Keep track.** Anytime you avoid your unhealthy habit, write down your victory. You'll see how far you've come. This can help you stay motivated.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Promise yourself a healthy reward when you meet a certain milestone. And, don't focus on setbacks or mistakes. Instead, be proud of the things that you did well.

Source: National Institutes of Health



What to know about blood clots

Healthy blood is designed to clot. When blood clots, it prevents heavy bleeding. But, if a clot happens inside a vein, it can be dangerous. This is called a deep vein thrombosis (DVT). Sometimes, the blood clot may move through the body and get stuck in the lungs. This is called a pulmonary embolism (PE).



SIGNS OF A CLOT

Signs of a DVT or PE include:

- Swelling, tenderness, redness or warmth in one area of the body
- Chest heaviness or pain
- Sweating
- Feeling out of breath
- Weakness or fainting
- Fast heart beat
- Feeling of impending doom

KNOW YOUR RISK

Certain things make you more likely to get a blood clot. They include:

- Recent surgery or an injury
- Being in bed for long periods
- Not moving a certain body part, such as a broken leg
- Sitting for a long time, including during travel
- Higher levels of estrogen from birth control pills, pregnancy or hormone replacement therapy
- Medical conditions, such as cancer, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, heart disease, blood clotting disorders or lung disease
- Obesity
- Smoking
- History of atrial fibrillation (A-fib)

REDUCE YOUR RISK

Talk about your risk with your doctor.

You can lower your risk of getting a blood clot by:

- Getting up from sitting at least every two hours
- Moving around after surgery or being in bed for a long time
- Moving legs and feet while on plane trips
- Wearing loose-fitting clothes while sitting for a long time
- Exercising regularly
- Wearing compression stockings if recommended by your doctor

WHAT TO DO?

If you think you or a loved one might have a blood clot, see a doctor right away. A blood clot can be treated if it's caught early. Sometimes, doctors use medicines that dissolve the clot. Other times, doctors will perform surgery to remove the clot.

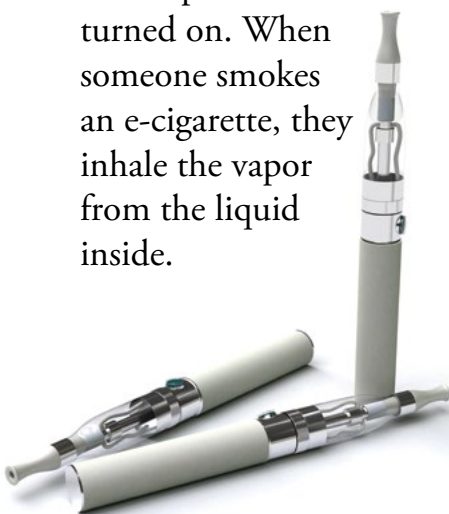
Blood Clot
Forming

Up to 100,000 Americans die from a DVT or PE every year. These clots kill more people than breast cancer, car collisions, and HIV/AIDS combined.

Sources: American Society of Hematology, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

E-cigarettes: *are they safer?*

Electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes, are often advertised as a “safer cigarette.” E-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that contain liquid. The liquid heats up when it’s turned on. When someone smokes an e-cigarette, they inhale the vapor from the liquid inside.



E-cigarettes are also called JUULs, vapes, vape pens, e-pens and e-hookahs. Smoking e-cigarettes is often called “vaping.”

IS VAPING SAFE?

E-cigarettes don’t contain tar or tobacco like regular cigarettes.

But, the liquid inside an e-cigarette contains high levels of nicotine. Nicotine is addictive, so it’s hard to stop using it. It also raises blood pressure and can lead to a heart attack.

The liquid in e-cigarettes also contains other chemicals, which may include:

- Acetaldehyde, acrolein, and formaldehyde, which can cause lung and heart disease
- Acrolein, a weed killer that can cause lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Diacetyl, which can cause serious lung disease
- Benzene, which is found in car exhaust
- Volatile organic compounds, which are chemicals that can cause cancer
- Propylene glycol, which is toxic to cells
- Heavy metals, including nickel, tin and lead

The vapor that a person breathes out of an e-cigarette is called secondhand emissions. It may also contain some of these chemicals. This can make e-cigarettes harmful to people who are nearby, even if they’re not smoking it.



A MAJOR PROBLEM WITH YOUTH

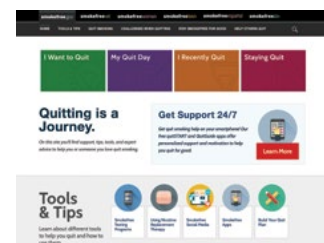
The American Lung Association says e-cigarette use among teens is becoming an epidemic. E-cigarette fruit and candy-like flavorings often appeal to kids and teens. They may think that e-cigarettes are safe. According to the U.S. Institutes of Health, most kids believe the liquid inside is for flavor only.



Nicotine contained in the vaporized liquid is especially harmful to young people. Nicotine can damage a teens’ developing brain. It also makes them more likely to smoke regular cigarettes later.

GET HELP QUITTING

The Food and Drug administration says e-cigarettes are not a safe or effective way to quit smoking. Instead, you may be replacing one unhealthy habit with a different one.



IF YOU WANT TO
QUIT SMOKING OR
VAPING, CALL
1-800-QUIT-NOW
OR GO TO
smokefree.gov

Mediterranean diet: *should you try it?*

You may have heard about the Mediterranean diet and how some people believe it can make you healthy. But, what is this diet, and is it right for you?



The Mediterranean diet isn't a special diet plan or product. Instead, it describes the typical diet of people who live near the Mediterranean Sea. In this region, many people eat a diet that focuses on:

- Plenty of vegetables and fruits
- Moderate amounts of dairy, fish and poultry
- Whole-grain bread and cereals
- Beans and lentils
- Nuts and seeds
- Olive oil
- Wine (low to moderate amounts)
- Very little red meat and sugary desserts
- Fresh, mostly unprocessed foods

When followed properly, the Mediterranean diet is similar to the diet recommended by the American Heart Association (AHA). But, the Mediterranean diet tends to be higher in fat than the AHA recommendations. The AHA believes that this higher amount of fat may be leading to obesity in Mediterranean countries.

ARE MEDITERRANEAN PEOPLE HEALTHIER?

This begs the question: does the Mediterranean diet make you healthier? Mediterranean countries have lower rates of heart disease than the U.S. But, this may not be due to diet alone. Their exercise habits and other factors could also play a role.



FAT'S NOT ALL BAD

The AHA says that the type of fat in the Mediterranean diet is healthier than the typical American diet. This is because the American diet often includes eating too much saturated fat, particularly from red meat. The Mediterranean diet uses healthier unsaturated fats from olive oil and fish. These unsaturated fats are better for the heart because they don't raise unhealthy blood cholesterol levels.

But, this doesn't mean you should eat high amounts of any kind of fat. The AHA still recommends that even the healthy unsaturated fats should be eaten in moderate amounts. Saturated fat should be limited to six percent of a person's total calories each day. Saturated fat is found in meat and dairy products, as well as coconut oil.

Fat has nine calories per gram, which means it packs more calories than carbs and protein. So, consuming too much of it could still lead to unwanted weight gain – even if it's the healthy kind of fat.



WHAT'S THE VERDICT ON THIS DIET?



THE BOTTOM LINE: No large studies have shown that the Mediterranean diet is a magic fix for better health. But, it's a good idea to eat more vegetables, fruits, and whole grains and less red meat. **Always ask a doctor before changing your diet, especially if you have any health conditions.**

Lowering stress with gratitude

Most of us are thankful for certain things in our lives. But, how often do we think about them?

Gratitude doesn't always come naturally. It's easy to get caught up in situations that go wrong, whether big or small. This can lead to higher stress levels. The good news is that we may be able to reverse some of this stress with gratitude. It may improve our overall emotional health, too.



GETTING GOING WITH GRATITUDE



How should you get started with a gratitude habit? You must make it part of your routine. Practicing gratitude every day will have the most benefits and you'll be more likely to stick with it.

Take a few minutes each day, whether in the morning or at night, to think about good things in your life. They can be things that happened today, such as a good day at work. They can also be bigger things, like your overall health or people in your life.

If you find your mind wanders during this activity, don't give up. Try writing things down in a notebook if that's easier for you.

After you've named some things in your life that are good, stop. Take a moment to think about the positive experience or person. Let yourself feel happy about these things. You can even relive them in your head if you like.

Try writing a letter to someone who did something nice for you. You don't even have to send it. The act of writing the letter is a way to feel your gratitude. You can also send a text or email to them explaining why you appreciate them.

During this time, try not to focus on any negative thoughts or situations.



BEING GRATEFUL DURING GOOD & BAD TIMES

This practice is helpful if you're under a lot of stress. But, don't forget about feeling grateful when things are going well. Even when life is great, keep up your gratitude habit. This could make it easier for you to do when things aren't going right.

Of course, when things get challenging in life, you may feel more "down." This is normal and expected. Don't try to force yourself to feel happy all the time. In fact, experts think that hiding your feelings can make you feel worse.

Accept your feelings and talk about them with someone you trust. Go for a walk or exercise to help combat stress. Then, try to focus your thoughts on gratitude once again.

Getting fit in less time

Have you heard of interval training for exercise? You may have assumed this type of exercise is only for athletes. However, people of almost all fitness levels can use it.

Interval training means you add short bursts of more intense activities into your regular exercise routine. How fast and how long you do your intervals is completely up to you. This can be as simple as 10 seconds of running and then 4 minutes of walking. If that's not possible, alternate brisk walking with slower walking.

Intervals don't have to be more than a few seconds. One of the biggest advantages is that you don't need any special equipment to get started!

WHY SHOULD I DO IT?

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) says interval training has several benefits, including:



FOR BEGINNERS

- Choose a distance if you don't want to count or use a stopwatch. For instance, jog or walk briskly to the next tree or driveway.
- If using equipment like an elliptical machine or bike, alternate faster bouts of that exercise with your usual pace.



Interval training can be done at your fitness level. But, don't be too aggressive at first because you could get an injury. While you want to get your heart pumping, you don't want to make it so hard that you can't stick with it.

Studies suggest that interval training can be safe and helpful to most people. Ask your doctor before starting a new exercise plan to be sure it's right for you.

Source: American College of Sports Medicine



4 “D”s

for avoiding fraud

1

DO protect your personal information all the time. Never share your birthday, social security number, credit card number or passwords with others. No one should call or email you asking for this information.

2

DO stand your ground. Scammers may try to scare you by saying if you don't give them money, you'll be arrested or turned into the IRS. Don't believe them. Police and government agencies don't use phone calls to collect money.

3

DON'T trust caller ID. Scammers can change the caller ID to look like an official business or even a government agency.

4

DON'T pay someone with wire transfers or gift cards. Some scammers will tell you to wire them money or may ask you to send them gift cards. Don't do it. A real organization would not ask you to send money this way.



Forget the 'perfect' family

REAL WORLD FAMILIES

Though television shows may portray happy families, every family has disagreements and conflicts. Spouses and partners must work hard to maintain a healthy relationship. This can be difficult, even for happy couples. Disagreements between parents and children are also bound to happen.

Expect problems, obstacles and arguments. The solution is not to avoid these things. Rather, it's to learn how to work through them. If you have ongoing problems with your spouse or kids, talk to your doctor. They may recommend seeing a counselor or family therapist. Remember, there's nothing wrong with asking for help.



CONTROLLING YOUR KIDS

Many parents believe that what their kids do is a direct result of their parenting. This can put a heavy burden on parents. Remember that children are individuals and may do things that you've taught them not to do. This doesn't mean you've failed as a parent.

Your job is to show each child that they are loved and accepted. Help them learn ways they can succeed, teach them respect for others and help them see their place in the world. This is a huge task, and there's no "right way" that works for every child. Although you can influence and shape your children, ultimately you cannot control them.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics