

APRIL 2008

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## Add FUN to Walking

**W**e take it for granted, but the simple act of walking is one of life's basic pleasures – and our most natural form of exercise.

Walking can ease mental and physical tension, boost energy and make you feel just plain good.

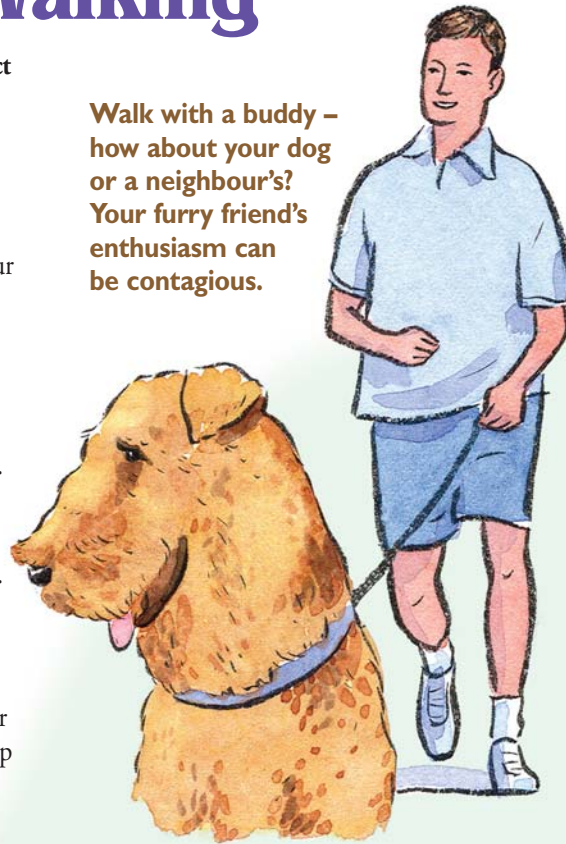
A walking routine can lead to many health improvements. It tones your muscles, protects your bones and helps you shed extra pounds. It also lowers your risk of heart disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

The best part about walking for exercise is you can do it almost anywhere. People of all ages and fitness levels can walk for health and pleasure.

**Exceptions:** If you have arthritis, back, knee or feet problems or other physical limitations, see your provider before starting a walking program.

**Getting started:** Walk for a few minutes each day, and gradually increase your tempo and distance. Healthy individuals should eventually aim for 30-60 minutes of brisk walking (or other exercise) most days of the week. Be sure to warm up before walking; cool down and stretch afterwards.

**Walk with a buddy – how about your dog or a neighbour's? Your furry friend's enthusiasm can be contagious.**



### Keep it fun and engaging:

- ❖ Schedule regular walks with family or friends. Walking and talking together make a lively combination.
- ❖ Choose different destinations, such as parks, walking trails or scenic areas around your community (keep personal safety in mind).
- ❖ When travelling, enjoy new sights on foot.
- ❖ Add a lightweight backpack and take a day hike.
- ❖ In bad weather, try walking at shopping malls, indoor tracks, or on treadmills.

Walking is so much more than exercise – it's time you've set aside for yourself. *Enjoy it.*

*Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FFAFP*

### HEALTH Notes

■ **Careless smoking is a leading cause of death by home fires**, says the Canada Safety Council. Here are preventive tips: • Never smoke in bed. • Don't put ashtrays on unstable surfaces, such as the arm of a chair. • Use large ashtrays with wide lips to hold cigarettes securely. • Put out all smoking materials before leaving them. • If you start to feel drowsy while smoking, put out the cigarette (or cigar or pipe).

■ **Pick produce over pills to fight cardiovascular disease**, say the authors of the Women's Antioxidant Cardiovascular Study, which followed 8,000 middle-aged women for 9 years. Women who took vitamins C and E and beta carotene supplements showed no statistical benefit in reducing the risk of cardiovascular problems, though stroke incidence was somewhat lower. So why don't supplements help as much as food? Researchers believe single antioxidants may not match the more complex effect of vitamins and nutrients in foods.

■ **Bands of Resistance:** If you don't like fumbling with free weights and strength-training machines here's an option: Consider a resistance workout using stretch bands to simulate exercises usually done in a weight room – like squats, curls and leg pulls. Bands give you an inexpensive full-body strengthening workout. You can use them at home or your workplace and when travelling. Bands come in light, medium and heavy resistance; as you gain strength and add repetitions you can graduate to a more resistant band. If you have joint or muscle limitations, check with your provider before trying a band workout. Follow instructions for band use carefully.

### Kids Can Help Too

**Children can start very young** to take some responsibility for taking care of themselves and their space. For example, toddlers can pick up their toys, a 4-year-old can make a bed (maybe not picture perfect), and a 5-year-old can set the dinner table. Suggestions:

- Assign tasks based on ability.
- Show what's expected and discuss the task together.
- You can help but make sure your child owns the task. The point is to raise your child's confidence and sense of cooperation.
- Keep a chart of each task to show your child's progress – maybe use stars or smiley faces?



**Q: Is organic better?**

**A:** With many variables involved in growing our foods, the ability to judge nutritional quality and purity of one product over another is difficult. Scientists have yet to report conclusive evidence that any method, organic or otherwise, produces nutritionally superior food. Yet organic products are growing in popularity, even though they cost more than conventionally grown food.

**Organic defined:** It is a method of growing crops without most conventional pesticides, synthetic or sewage-based fertilizers, biotechnology, and ionizing radiation. In addition, organic meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products must come from animals that receive no antibiotics or growth hormones.

Many consumers buy organic because they want to minimize their exposure to pesticides; one U.S. government study found that organic produce showed less pesticide residue than conventionally grown equivalents. Others buy them because they also want to support organic methods, which are designed to reduce environmental damage.

**Product labelling:**

The Canada Organic label is slated to begin appearing in early 2009. This label means that the product is at least 95% organic and has been grown, handled and processed according to Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) organic standards.



**Note:** Provincial regulation of organic products in British Columbia and Quebec covers trade within those provinces but does not regulate movement of organic products between provinces or internationally, while the CFIA does.

Remember to always wash fresh food to remove dirt and bacteria. All produce is at risk for contamination, regardless of growing method.

# On Your Feet

**C**heck your feet lately? Given such a heavy burden, it's no wonder feet are more prone to injury and sores than the rest of the body. Take these self-care steps to relieve common foot ailments:

**Blisters** – Cover the blister with an adhesive bandage until it heals. Never pop a blister, but if it breaks, wash and apply an antiseptic and re-bandage.

**Bunions** – Wear low-heeled shoes that have a wide toe box and instep. Try shoe inserts or pads to cushion the bunion.

**Corns/calluses** – Relieve pressure with padding or moleskin. Never cut the affected area and don't use medicated pads without consulting your provider.

**Fungal infections** – Non-prescription anti-fungal products can help control athlete's foot, which can lead to nail fungus. Always keep feet clean and dry. If symptoms don't improve in 2-4 weeks, see your provider.



**A good fit is key to happy feet. Foot relief starts at the shoe store. Remember, your feet grow slightly in width and length as you age. Always try on shoes before you buy them and do so late in the day, when feet tend to be swollen. Avoid high-heeled shoes.**

**If you have diabetes, stay on top of foot health.**

Diabetes can lead to nerve damage and reduced circulation to your feet, which slows healing.

- Get regular foot exams and see a podiatrist at least once a year.
- Check your feet daily for blisters, breaks in the skin, redness or swelling.
- See your provider if foot problems continue or sores don't heal promptly.

# Facing Financial Shortfalls

**F**rom major home and car repairs to sudden illness or loss of income, an emergency fund can get you through unexpected financial burdens – and provide peace of mind. This financial buffer will help keep your budget on track by avoiding the use of assets planned for other future needs, such as college, buying a home or retirement.

**Emergency fund guidelines:**

**Plan ahead.** Examine your household finances to learn what resources are available in the event of large unplanned expenses. People easily ignore this need until faced with it.

**Stash some cash.** Save enough in your fund to cover at least 3 to 6 months' worth of necessary expenses. This amount depends on your individual needs and the financial resources available to you.



**Be prepared with an emergency fund.**

**Keep it liquid.** Put this cash in a money market or other interest-bearing account. Replace the funds as soon as possible after you use them.

**Tip:** Review your insurance needs, such as life, auto and homeowner's coverage. Depending on your circumstances, you may want to consider adding liability coverage to protect against any financial damages you or your business might incur.

# Relief for Prostate Discomfort

**T**he small prostate gland is located under the urinary bladder in men. It can produce uncomfortable symptoms if it becomes infected or gradually grows larger. That's because a swollen or enlarged prostate can put pressure on the bladder and nearby urethra and rectum.

When things don't feel normal, here's how to find timely relief for 2 of the most common prostate problems.



**Prostatitis** – Infection or inflammation of the prostate causes pelvic pain, sometimes with burning and frequent urination.

*Medical care:* Get an evaluation promptly to exclude other causes. Treatment may include rest, anti-inflammatory drugs and antibiotics.

**Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH)** – The prostate often grows larger with age. In more than half of men after age 60, BPH symptoms may develop. These include: a feeling of urinary urgency; frequent urination; awakening at night to empty the bladder; weak urine stream; difficulty in starting or completing urine flow.

*Medical care:* Get an evaluation to exclude prostate cancer. Treatment may include watchful waiting, prescription medications or surgery. Inform your provider if you are taking the dietary supplement *saw palmetto*.

*Self-care:* Take time to urinate completely and regularly. Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day, but limit fluid intake before bedtime, so the urges don't disrupt your sleep. Check with your provider before taking medications since some types make prostate symptoms worse.

**Don't forget routine screening.** Starting at age 50, or earlier if you have increased risk, ask your provider about tests to detect prostate cancer.

*Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP*

# Parenting: Living With Rules

**T**wo cornerstones to a child's wellbeing are love and discipline. The first one comes naturally to most parents. Discipline comes easier if you establish your role and your rules.

**Be a leader.** Children depend on their parents to be authoritative and decisive. It helps them feel secure and stay focused on the business of growing up. While your kids may test your authority, they expect you to stay in charge and enforce the rules; their role is to obey them.

**Be consistent.** Rules and approaches to discipline need to be discussed between parents and decided with care. Make sure the rules fit the child's abilities, and that you can live with your rules and adhere to

them. Frequent changes or retractions can be confusing to children and contrary to discipline, while consistency leads to responsible behaviour.

**Learn from mistakes** – including your own. You're not always going to get it right the first time. Try to remain unemotional and objective. Talk about what went wrong, apologize if necessary, and explain how you will handle things in the future. This gives your child a good model of how to recover from mistakes.



**MORE INFO** ▶ Canadian Paediatric Society, [www.caringforkids.cps.ca/behaviour/EffectiveDiscipline.htm](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/behaviour/EffectiveDiscipline.htm)

# Alcohol Use



## DANGER AHEAD

**Did you know** – in 2002, the cost of alcohol-related injuries and fatalities totalled \$14.6 billion, including \$3.3 billion in direct health care costs, \$7.1 billion for lost productivity due to illness and premature death, and \$3.1 billion in direct law enforcement costs.

Alcohol impairs motor skills and alters judgment, which can lead to vehicle crashes, mishaps while bicycling or walking, unintentional injuries at home and work, firearm injuries, homicides, suicides and domestic violence, including child abuse. Risk of sexual assault increases with binge drinking – defined as 3-plus drinks in women or 4-plus drinks in men during a single occasion.

Having just 2 alcoholic drinks (within a 6-hour window) increases your risk for injury. However, some people are impaired even after one drink or at the legal blood-alcohol level.

**If you drink, even moderately, be aware you are impaired.** Don't drive a car or boat, ride a bike or operate machinery; be extra cautious in the kitchen to avoid cuts and burns; and slow down to avoid falling down.

**Guide:** Moderate alcohol use is a maximum of 2 standard drinks per day (men – no more than 14 standard drinks a week; women – no more than 9 standard drinks a week). One standard drink equals 12 ounces/341ml of beer (5% alcohol), 5 ounces/142ml of wine (12% alcohol) and 1.5 ounces/43ml of distilled spirits, such as whiskey, gin or tequila (40% alcohol).

**MORE INFO** ▶ Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse: [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca)

**In 2002 deaths attributed to alcohol resulted in 191,136 potential years of life lost, according to the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.**



**Keep those questions and suggestions coming!**

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# 12 Healthy Meal Makeovers

By Cynthia Gale, MS, RD

**T**hink about some of your favourite recipes and the ingredients they contain. Chances are with a few minor variations and new cooking techniques they can be made healthier, more nutritious and still taste delicious. Here are a dozen ideas to help you make the switch to healthier cooking.

- 1 Cook with reduced calorie products, such as fat-free or reduced-fat sour cream, cream cheese and other light dairy foods as well as low fat spreads and salad dressings.
- 2 Use lean cuts of meat, including beef and pork cuts labelled loin and round. Trim all visible fat and skin from meat and poultry before cooking. Rinse or drain ground meat after browning it to remove excess fat.
- 3 Switch to healthier cooking fats, including olive and canola oils. Avoid lard, butter, tropical oils, and shortenings.
- 4 Replace cooking oil with vegetable oil spray, broth, juice or water when sautéing.
- 5 Oven fry or pan-fry foods in a small amount of oil instead of deep-frying.
- 6 Decrease salt by adding spices, herbs or citrus to boost the flavours in foods. Buy low-sodium canned products.
- 7 Replace some of the sugar in your baking with applesauce or dried fruit.



- 8 Use egg substitute or egg whites for at least half of the eggs needed in your cooking (yolks have all the fat and cholesterol).
- 9 Use whole grains such as barley and brown rice instead of white rice in stews and casseroles for added fibre and nutrients.
- 10 Rely on dried beans, peas and lentils as healthy substitutes for meat when preparing casseroles, stews or soups.
- 11 Add extra vegetables – to your plate, on your pizza and in your soups, salads, sandwiches and omelettes.
- 12 Have the correct utensils – also important ingredients. Invest in a good quality set of non-stick skillets, baking pans, and saucepans that don't require greasing.

**Best advice:** Make just 1 or 2 changes at a time. Modifying recipes should soon become easy with practice.

**Tip:** You can reduce the sugar and fat by ¼ to ½ in many recipes with little taste change in the finished product. Try a little reduction at first, and if you are satisfied, reduce a bit more next time.

## Recipe of the Month

# UNfried Chicken

Crispy yet moist, you won't believe it's not fried.

### Seasoning Mix – 1 tsp/5ml each:

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 tsp/5ml thyme        | 1 tsp/5ml oregano         |
| 1 tsp/5ml basil        | 1 tsp/5ml onion powder    |
| 1 tsp/5ml paprika      | 1 tsp/5ml garlic powder   |
| 1 tsp/5ml black pepper | 1 tsp/5ml salt (optional) |

- 1 cup/250ml corn flake cereal (no sugar added), crumbled
- ½ cup/120ml egg whites (about 3 egg whites)
- 1 tbsp/15ml non-fat milk
- 6 skinless chicken breasts (about 4 ounces/113 grams each)

Preheat oven to 350°F/177°C.

- 1 Mix seasoning ingredients; combine with corn flake crumbs.
- 2 Blend egg whites with milk in one dish.
- 3 Dip chicken in egg wash to fully coat.
- 4 Dip chicken in crumb mixture to fully coat.
- 5 Place chicken breast on an elevated rack and bake for 30-35 minutes or until internal temperature is 170°F/77°C. (The elevated rack will allow the chicken to cook crispy underneath.)

## Nutrition Facts

Makes 6 servings.

Amount Per Serving	Calories	215
	Total Fat	4g
	Sodium	551mg
	Total Carb	4g
	Fibre	trace
	Protein	38g

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