

JUNE 2009

This issue ▶ Signs of Depression ▶ Boater Safety ▶ Men and Osteoporosis ▶ Connect With Care ▶ Food Poisoning

## SAFE AT HOME 5 BEST STEPS

**I**s your home as safe as it could be? According to Health Canada, the home is the most common place where Canadians at nearly every age suffer unintentional injuries.

Children and seniors are the top victims, but everyone can use a refresher to prevent common unintentional injuries at home:

### 1) Don't take a fall.

**Install grab bars in the tub or shower.** Keep stairs well-lit and use handrails when walking up or down. Use a ladder, not furniture, to reach high areas. Ensure throw mats or rug edges are securely fastened. Install a gate at the top and bottom of stairs if you have a wandering toddler (do not use pressure-style gates).

### 2) Prevent poisonings.

**Children are most at risk, so practice kid safety:** Lock up cleaners, medications and other potentially dangerous items. Leave household products and drugs in original containers. Use child-resistant lids when provided (these lids make containers harder, but not impossible, to open). Keep your province's or territory's Poison Control Centre number (listed at [www.capcc.ca/provcentres/centres.html](http://www.capcc.ca/provcentres/centres.html)) handy.

### 3) Don't get burned.

**Two easy ways to stop in-home fires:** Don't leave cooking unattended, and maintain smoke alarms on all floors of your home. Keep fire extinguishers handy. Give space heaters at least 3 feet/9 metres



of space and turn them off when you sleep or leave the space. Snuff candles before bedtime or when leaving the room.

### 4) Remove choking and suffocation hazards.

**Keep objects that can fit in a toilet paper tube out of children's reach.** Have babies sleep on their backs. Keep soft objects out of their cribs, and window cords out of reach.

### 5) Don't leave children unattended around water.

**This includes bathtubs, toilets, and pools.** Empty buckets and wading pools after use and store upside down. Children should always swim with an adult; no one should swim alone – ever.

**Make your home a sanctuary – not a danger zone.**

## HEALTH notes

■ **Do you walk barefoot?** It's tempting in warm weather. Walking is good exercise for the feet and legs, but wear shoes when you do it. Shoes are made for walking and protecting your feet from all sorts of mishaps, indoors and outdoors.

■ **In Canada, approximately 11% of men and 16% of women will develop major depression.** The bright side: Depression is usually treatable. For more information, visit Health Canada at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/diseases-maladies/depression-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/diseases-maladies/depression-eng.php).

■ **To help your kids avoid weight gain, limit sweetened beverages.** Regular soft drinks, sports and energy drinks, and fruit juices are loaded with calories and sugar. Get your child into the habit of drinking water. Research indicates that children who are offered water have fewer weight problems than those who habitually consume regular soft drinks.

■ **Caffeine, arguably the world's most popular drug,** reduces the quality and length of sleep by inducing temporary alertness. It does this by increasing adrenaline and blocking chemicals in the brain. If you consume caffeine and have trouble sleeping, try cutting back. Also limit or avoid caffeine if you are prone to headaches, stomach ailments or nervousness. Pregnant women and nursing mothers should limit use and young children should avoid it. Experts say a maximum of 250mg of caffeine daily (such as 3 8-ounce cups/.24 litres of coffee) is okay if it's not consumed 4-6 hours before bedtime.

## JUNE GOAL:

Keep an eye on your portions when Saturday rolls around. People typically eat more on weekends.

## 5 Unexpected Ways to GAIN WEIGHT

**Losing weight is a challenge for many people.** For some, it's not as simple as diet and exercise. If you've tried to lose weight without success, you may need to think outside of the box. Let's explore 5 factors that may be adding weight or hindering your weight loss:

### 1 Lack of sleep.

Research suggests sleep deprivation can affect hormones that control appetite. A good night's rest can also give you the energy needed for a healthy, active lifestyle.

### 2 Peers.

In 2007, the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported that people with obese friends may not perceive excess weight as a problem and were nearly 57% more likely to become obese. On the other hand, friends are the best motivators: Team up to reach your goals together.

### 3 Stress.

Stress triggers the release of cortisol, which may increase appetite – which can lead to weight gain and trouble losing weight. In addition, stress can cause fatigue, which may cause you to eat more.

### 4 Prescription drugs.

Some medications may increase appetite and slow metabolism. Ask your provider if weight gain could be a side effect of any medications you are taking.

### 5 Undiagnosed medical conditions.

The most common disease associated with weight gain is *hypothyroidism*, resulting from a deficiency of the thyroid hormone. This condition may lower metabolism.

Ask your provider if one or more of these factors might affect your weight.

## MIND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



**D**epression is a major cause of disability, more so now as people are feeling especially worried and stressed about their future security. Without relief, prolonged melancholy can lead to depression.

### Check yourself for these signs of depression:

- Sadness most of the time (often for no apparent reason)
- Ongoing fatigue
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Inability to enjoy things you used to enjoy
- Unexplained weight loss or gain
- Changes in sleep patterns (sleeping more or insomnia)
- Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Ongoing irritability, anger, or anxiety
- Thoughts of suicide

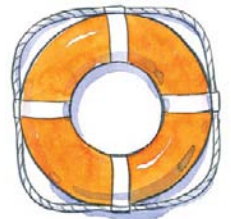
Checking one or more of these symptoms may indicate you need professional help. If you

have thoughts of suicide, see your health care provider right away. Nearly 80% of people who seek treatment recover their former positive lifestyles and enjoy better health. Work with your provider to find the best options for you.

**Your emotional health deserves daily attention.** Here are some habits that may help you see things more positively and restore your emotional well-being:

- ✓ Record your emotional highs and lows in a journal.
- ✓ Set achievable goals that give you confidence in the future.
- ✓ Stay in touch with people you enjoy.
- ✓ Relax, meditate, and get out and enjoy nature.

Life is full of change, and everybody faces positive and negative circumstances, hope and despair. They make up the natural, often difficult and unpredictable, ebb and flow of life.



## Ahoy! SAFETY AFLOAT

### Boaters, take these precautions before you leave the dock:

**Suit up with lifejackets.** Everyone – crew and passengers – whether on a canoe, kayak, sailboat, or yacht, needs to wear one. It doesn't matter if you swim like a fish or only know how to dog paddle. Of the hundreds of Canadians who drown each year while boating, more than 87% were not wearing a lifejacket or a personal flotation device (Canadian Red Cross).

**Complete a boating education course.** Learning the rules for safe operation and navigation of your boat will increase your enjoyment of it.

**Get a courtesy check.** Transport Canada – and in some areas, the Canadian Coast Guard, Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary and other boating and water safety organizations – provide a free check of your boat's safety equipment. Schedule a check every spring.

**Don't mix alcohol and boats.** Consider these statistics from the Canadian Red Cross: 37% of Canadian boaters say they drink alcohol every time they boat. Alcohol consumption is a factor in more than 40% of deaths involving recreational boating.

**Learn more** about boating safety at the Office of Boating Safety: [www.tc.gc.ca/marinesafety/debs/obs/menu.htm](http://www.tc.gc.ca/marinesafety/debs/obs/menu.htm).



# Not Just For Women: Osteoporosis

**O**steoporosis – bone loss – is a women's disease, right? **Wrong!** This silent disease affects 1 in 8 Canadian men aged 50 and older.

If you're a guy, take a few minutes to see if your bones are at risk. Factors include:

- I have a low BMI.
- I have had a fracture after age 40 (especially vertebral compression fractures).
- I smoke.
- I drink more than 2 alcoholic drinks a day.
- I may not get enough calcium and vitamin D.
- I do not get regular physical activity.
- I have hypogonadism (low levels of male hormones).
- I have used glucocorticoids (such as prednisone and cortisone) for more than 3 months.
- I have a family history of osteoporotic fractures.

**Even if you have few of the risks listed above, take bone health seriously now:**

**Discuss bone health and testing with your provider.** Osteoporosis Canada recommends men age 65 and older get a bone density test. All men older than 50 should get tested if they have risk factors. Talk to your provider about screening.

**Get enough calcium and vitamin D.** Men of all ages need need 1,500mg of calcium and 800 IUs of vitamin D daily. Discuss supplements with your provider.

**Get moving.** Weight-bearing physical activity, such as walking,



basketball, racquetball and lifting weights, helps prevent osteoporosis by strengthening muscles and bones as they work against gravity.

**If you smoke, quit.** Smoking accelerates bone loss. And drink alcohol in moderation, if at all.

**Review your medical conditions or medications with your provider** – some may affect bone health. Awareness and prompt treatment are your best game plan for healthy bones.

**FOR WOMEN ONLY:** When was the last time you discussed osteoporosis screening with your provider? Bone loss can begin in the 20s or 30s, so it's important to identify any personal risks you can offset now.

**MORE INFO** ▶ Osteoporosis Canada: [www.osteoporosis.ca](http://www.osteoporosis.ca)



## Q: What are probiotics? By: Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

**A:** Probiotics are food ingredients containing live microorganisms that have beneficial health effects. People worldwide have long used various bacteria and yeasts to create probiotics. Probiotics supply the live action required to start cultured or fermented foods such as yoghurt, buttermilk, sour cream, kefir, tempeh, miso and raw sauerkraut.

Benefits: Eating foods containing probiotics helps replenish the friendly bacteria in your digestive tract. The good bacteria help crowd out harmful germs. They may improve digestion, protect immunity, and help relieve irritable bowel syndrome and other intestinal conditions.

**Best sources:** For general health, the usual recommendation is 6-8 ounces/170-227g of yoghurt a day. In addition, you can boost activity of helpful gut bacteria by slowly increasing your intake of soluble fibre; good sources include fruits, vegetables, beans, flaxseeds, oats and barley.

Consult a provider before ① taking supplements, or ② giving probiotics to infants, the elderly, or people with a chronic disorder or weak immune system.



**STAY  
CONNECTED  
WITH CARE**



*Online safety isn't just for kids.*

**T**he buzzword for 21st century technology is **mobility**. The Pew Internet and American Life Project predicts that by 2020, most people worldwide will use mobile devices – cell phones, smart phones and other devices – as their main access to the Web and email.

As we join the ranks of mobile users, we need to be vigilant about hazards such as spam, cyber bullies, predators, and identity thieves. Taking precautions makes connecting safe and fun for everyone.



### **EMAIL – Protect your privacy**

– never send personal details such as age, name and Social Insurance number or financial information. Banks and governments never ask for this information in an email. Use age- and gender-neutral email addresses and screen names. Never open messages or download attachments from strangers; use filters to block unwanted email.



### **SHOPPING ONLINE – Buy only from trusted and secure**

**retailers** – look for <https://> in the website address – the “s” stands for secure. Look for a return policy, complete contact information and help features, including an 800 number.



### **SOCIALIZING ONLINE – Follow precautions noted above**

when using chat rooms, instant messaging and social networking sites (SNS). Teens love to use all three, so keep an eye on their activities and discuss precautions. Check your child's SNS profile regularly to ensure content and the people viewing it are appropriate.



### **AND SPEAKING OF CONTENT ...**

These days everyone can share their short film or pictures with the world with a few keystrokes. Make sure your masterpiece doesn't reveal personal information, such as a house number or clothing with a person's name or school or inappropriate material.

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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# FOOD POISONING



Can you pass the food safety test?

**W**e share the globe with invisible microbes, many of them in the food we eat. Some of them can make us sick, causing little more than uncomfortable gastric symptoms for a couple days; others can cause serious illness. Fortunately, most people seldom get sick from contaminated food because they have adequate immunity to resist harmful bacteria.

**Test your knowledge about safe food handling.** Key: "Raw" refers to meats, seafood, poultry and eggs – animal-based foods that require special care and cooking.

1. **True**  **False**  A maximum of 50°F/10°C is the proper refrigerator temperature.
2. **True**  **False**  The safest way to thaw frozen raw food is in the refrigerator.
3. **True**  **False**  After handling raw meat, poultry or fish, the best way to cleanse your hands is with a quick rinse in hot water.
4. **True**  **False**  Wood cutting boards are better than plastic surfaces for handling raw foods.
5. **True**  **False**  Place leftovers in shallow containers and refrigerate within 2 hours after cooking.
6. **True**  **False**  People with weakened immunity should not eat raw shellfish.

**2 food safety principles: Keep cold food cold and hot food hot. Separate raw food from ready-to-eat.**

## ANSWERS

1. **FALSE** – A temperature of 40°F/4°C or less is needed to slow the growth of most bacteria. Keep freezers at 0°F/-18°C.
2. **TRUE** – You can also thaw foods in the microwave if you will be cooking the food promptly.
3. **FALSE** – Immediately after handling raw foods wash your hands in hot water and soap for 20 seconds, then use a fresh clean towel to dry off.
4. **FALSE** – Both surfaces can harbour bacteria, but wood absorbs more and is harder to clean. Best: Use a separate board for preparing raw foods to avoid cross-contamination to ready-to-eat food.
5. **TRUE** – Hot foods need quick refrigeration after cooking because cooling invites bacterial growth. Don't keep it if it sits out longer. *Tips:* Shallow containers cool or freeze food faster than deeper ones, and stop bacterial growth quicker. Reheat leftovers to at least 165°F/74°C before eating.
6. **TRUE** – People with diabetes, cancer, liver disease and HIV infection are especially vulnerable to food poisoning.

**Does food borne illness increase in warmer months?** Yes – bacteria grow and multiply faster in warm, humid temperatures. With more time spent outdoors, our risk of bacterial contamination increases without the normal kitchen safeguards of refrigeration, storage, washing and preparation. *Best advice:* For picnics and potlucks, chill prepared foods within 2 hours after cooking; then transport them in a cooler. Seal raw foods securely and apart from ready-to-eat. Outdoors, keep your cooler in the shade.

## Recipe of the Month

# Grilled Eggplant Sandwiches



- 1 medium **eggplant**, cut crosswise into 4 half-inch/1.27cm thick slices
- 4 medium slices **rustic Italian bread**, half-inch/1.27cm thick
- Olive oil **cooking spray**
- 3 medium **tomatoes**, minced and drained
- 2 tbsp/10g shredded **Parmesan cheese**
- Salt and pepper** to taste

- 1 Preheat grill to medium-high. Lightly salt eggplant and let stand 10 minutes.
- 2 Place eggplant and bread slices on a heavy-duty baking sheet; lightly spray both sides with cooking oil spray.
- 3 Grill eggplant until golden and soft, 2-3 minutes per side. Grill bread about 1 minute per side. Return eggplant and bread to baking sheet.
- 4 On each slice of bread layer an eggplant slice and equal portions of tomatoes and cheese.
- 5 Place baking sheet on grill, close grill lid until sandwiches are hot and cheese is melted, about 5 minutes.

## Nutrition Facts

Makes 4 (open) sandwiches.

Amount Per Sandwich	Calories	197
	Protein	10g
	Total Fat	3.7g
	Carbohydrate	41g
	Fibre	5g
	Sodium	397mg