

Newsflash

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Protecting Your Vision

Making the following lifestyle changes can play a role in reducing your risk of developing cataracts, diabetic retino-pathy, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration (AMD), or can slow the progression of those eye disorders if you already have them.

- **Eat right.** A healthful diet high in green leafy vegetables, fish, fruit, and other food high in antioxidants may help protect against age-related eye diseases.
- **Watch your weight.** Obesity has been linked to the progression of AMD and an increased risk of cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma.
- **Exercise.** Regular physical activity may reduce your risk of developing AMD, lower eye pressure linked with glaucoma, and reduce diabetic retinopathy's progression.
- **Control blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels.** Consult your doctor about a program that's right for you.
- **Shield your eyes.** Wearing sunglasses and a hat with a wide brim to protect you from ultraviolet rays may help delay cataracts and help reduce the risk of AMD.
- **Don't smoke or drink too much.** Smoking is associated with all four eye disorders, and too much alcohol is known to increase the risk of cataracts.



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Men's Health Month—Heart Health

Heart disease is the most common cause of death for men in the United States. A healthy diet and lifestyle are the most common contributors to good cardiovascular health. Other conditions you may experience as you age include diabetes and high blood pressure. Modest changes to your diet can help to reduce your risk of developing these diseases.

Because cardiovascular disease interferes with your heart's ability to pump blood through your body, it can keep you from enjoying all of your day's normal activities; working, time with friends and family, playing with your children or grandchildren, climbing stairs and even having sex.

Look at the list of statements below. If any of them are true about you, make an appointment to see your healthcare provider today. Just one "Yes" answer means you are at risk. Two "Yes" answers quadruples your risk. Three "Yes" answers increases your risk by 10 times:

- I'm 45 or older. (Your risk of developing cardiovascular disease doubles each decade.)
- An immediate family member (father, mother, brother, sister) was diagnosed with high blood pressure or some other kind of heart condition before age 55
- I'm African American
- I get little or no exercise
- I'm overweight or obese
- I eat a lot of salty foods and/or I add salt to what I'm eating
- My cholesterol is high
- I smoke. (If you do, you are two to four times more likely to develop heart disease than a nonsmoker.)
- I have high blood pressure
- I use recreational drugs, such as cocaine
- I'm under a lot of stress (at work and/or at home)
- I drink more than two alcoholic drinks every day
- I drink a lot of coffee (not decaf) or other caffeinated beverages
- I have diabetes. (More than 80% of people with diabetes die of some kind of CVD.)
- I'm taking prescription medications that affect blood pressure

National Safety Month

Staying safe at work is very important. If you don't work in a safe way, you can get hurt or become sick. The good news is that there are things you can do – both at work and at home – to lower your chances of getting hurt.

Take these steps to prevent injuries at work:

- Lift things safely
- Arrange your equipment to fit your body
- Take short breaks and stretch
- Wear protective equipment
- Ask about health resources at work

Your overall health can also affect how you feel and perform at work. To be able to work safely, it's important for you to:

Get enough sleep. Getting a good night's sleep every night is important for performing well at work. When you are well rested, you are more likely to make good decisions and avoid getting hurt. To sleep better:

- Don't eat a big meal close to bedtime.
- Stay away from drinks with caffeine (like coffee, soda, and energy drinks) several hours before you go to sleep.
- Get regular physical activity, but don't exercise right before you go to bed.
- Make sure your bedroom is dark and quiet.

Eat a healthy diet. Your body needs the right vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients to stay healthy.

Stay active. To get the health benefits of physical activity, do a combination of aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities.

Watch your weight. To stay at a healthy weight, balance the calories you eat with the calories you use.

Take steps to manage stress. Chronic (ongoing) stress at work or at home can increase your risk of getting sick or hurt. You can reduce stress by planning ahead, noticing when you feel stressed, and taking time to relax.

Taking steps to stay safe and healthy at work can help you get more done at work and feel better overall.

- When you lift something heavy:
 - ◊ Bend at your knees, not at your waist
 - ◊ Keep your back straight
 - ◊ Test the object first. If it's too heavy, get help
- Sit or stand up straight while you work. If you sit, adjust the chair or desk to your height.
- Take breaks often when you are doing repetitive tasks.
- "Warm up" and stretch before you start working.
- Even a 5-minute break can help increase your concentration and reduce stress. Take short breaks often and stretch or go for a walk.

What You Can Do to Keep You and Your Family Safe at Home

Keeping your family out of harm's way is your **Number 1** priority. Unfortunately, many of our homes can be dangerous — preventable injuries and deaths continue to rise in homes and communities.

The National Safety Council estimates everyday approximately 245 people die of unintentional injuries in homes and communities. In 2007, the six leading causes of unintentional injury death in the U.S. were:

- Motor vehicle crashes
- Poisonings, including unintentional overdoses
- Falls
- Choking
- Drowning
- Fires, flames and smoke

When someone is injured, the effects go beyond that person and extend to the family members, friends, neighbors, employers and communities. The key to preventing injuries is making simple changes to your lifestyle—recognizing where most hazards are and how injuries can occur when participating in different activities.

Below are a few of the many strategies to prevent injuries:

- Stay off your cell phone when driving. Your safety practices directly influence the safety practices of your children
- Get trained in First Aid, CPR and AED online or in a classroom
- Check and, if necessary, change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- Properly dispose of unused and expired medications