

# HEALTH *Connections*

— YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE —

FINDING  
THE ENERGY  
YOU NEED

SODIUM  
OVERLOAD

BENEFITS OF  
*Mental*  
EXERCISE

*Want More?*

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 **RED BUD**  
REGIONAL HOSPITAL

# Workouts for Your *Brain*

You've heard the many health benefits of exercise routines and sports to keep your body active, but it's also important to keep the mind active. According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, a 2011 study showed that some effects of age-related mental decline may be reversible through cognitive training programs. Try these activities to help keep your brain healthy and functioning well:

- **Learn a foreign language.** This stimulates the areas of the brain that process reading, speaking, listening and memory.
- **Socialize.** Talking with others exercises your ability to concentrate, quickly analyze what's being said and communicate well.
- **Solve puzzles.** Chess, Sudoku and crosswords improve logical reasoning and problem-solving skills.



## E-cigarettes:

### A GRAY AREA

Though e-cigarettes have been promoted as safer alternatives to tobacco cigarettes, they aren't risk-free.

Smokers sometimes use e-cigarettes to try to gradually quit smoking since they don't contain tar and other toxic chemicals found in tobacco cigarettes, but they still have nicotine. Nicotine is highly addictive and raises blood pressure and heart rate. Because e-cigarettes are relatively new, their overall side effects haven't been fully studied. In April 2014, the Food and Drug Administration announced plans to regulate e-cigarettes, ban sales to minors and require manufacturers to put health warnings on the devices, but such measures won't be implemented for several years.

Foregoing nicotine altogether is still the best way to prevent addiction and the health problems associated with the substance.

## LESS MEAT = *Lower Blood Pressure?*

Researchers in Osaka, Japan, published findings in the journal *JAMA Internal Medicine* that indicate a vegetarian diet helps lower blood pressure. The specific reasons for vegetarians' better heart health haven't been fully defined, but several observations have been made.

The vegetarians in the study had lower body mass index numbers and fewer obesity risks than people who ate meat, and both of these

factors contribute to lower blood pressure. Interestingly, vegetarians with higher body weight still had low blood pressure.

Even going vegetarian part time has multiple benefits, including:

- fewer bad fats
- higher daily fiber intake
- more good fats





# Sunburn Salvation

YOU THOUGHT YOU DID EVERYTHING RIGHT DURING YOUR DAY AT THE BEACH — YOU WORE SUNSCREEN AND REAPPLIED AFTER TWO HOURS. UNFORTUNATELY, YOUR SHOULDERS ARE RED AND TENDER THE NEXT MORNING.

Where did you go wrong? Forty-five minutes after slathering up, you swam for 15 minutes, and didn't reapply sunscreen until an hour later. While you strolled the sand after swimming, your skin was unprotected from the sun's ultraviolet rays. Your shoulders felt fine last night, but sunburn can take a day or more to cause symptoms — hence your current discomfort.

Unfortunately, the worst may be yet to come. Sunburn pain peaks six to 48 hours after occurring, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Soften the blow with these soothing tips:

- **Don't dry out.** Moisturize frequently. Lotions containing vitamins C and E may benefit sunburned skin, according to The Skin Cancer Foundation. To keep cool at the same time, apply aloe gel that has been refrigerated for a short time to sunburnt skin.
- **Drink up.** Sunburn can cause dehydration, so increase your fluid intake for a few days and be on the lookout for symptoms, such as fatigue, reduced saliva and lower urine output.
- **Keep cool.** To lower your body temperature, soak a cloth in cool milk for 10 minutes, then apply to sunburn, or take a bath in lukewarm water mixed with a half cup of baking soda.
- **Sit on your hands.** If your skin begins peeling, let the process run its course instead of removing the flakes yourself.
- **Pummel the pain.** Experts recommend taking ibuprofen, which relieves discomfort and reduces swelling.

Do your best to prevent sunburn in the future, but if it happens again, you'll know what to do.

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Sometimes, sunburn needs more than home care. See a doctor if you have sunburn accompanied by fever and signs of illness, such as nausea, clammy skin and severe thirst.

## THE ABCD'S OF SKIN SCREENINGS

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer. More than 1 million cases are diagnosed annually in the U.S. That's more than prostate, breast, lung, colon, uterine, ovarian and pancreatic cancers combined.

Have suspicious moles or suspected skin cancer checked immediately to diagnose malignancies in early stages, when treatment is most effective. Perform a self-assessment on a regular basis, checking all body parts, including those not exposed to the sun. If you spy a mole or suspicious area of skin with any of the following ABCD's, show it to your doctor:

- A — asymmetry
- B — uneven border
- C — multiple colors
- D — diameter larger than 1/4 inch

*General surgeons at Red Bud Regional Hospital are here to partner with you and your healthcare provider for skin cancer removal. For information on surgical services or to make an appointment, call (618) 282-7373.*



# Finding ENERGY *Throughout Your Day*

TRY THESE TRICKS TO MAINTAIN ENERGY LEVELS THROUGHOUT THE DAY, AND **GIVE YOURSELF A BOOST** WHEN YOUR GET-UP-AND-GO HAS GONE.

### RISE AND SHINE



Not getting enough quality sleep can start your day off on the wrong foot. One way to ensure you get sufficient shut-eye is to go to bed and wake up at around the same time every day, even on weekends. Establishing a regular sleep cycle helps you fall asleep faster and wake refreshed and ready to face the day.

When the alarm goes off, resist the urge to hit the snooze button. Though you may crave a few more winks, briefly falling back asleep can leave you feeling groggy for hours. Once your feet hit the floor, let plenty of light into the room, which signals your body that it is time to wake up.

### EARLY MORNING EYE-OPENER

Even if you are not particularly hungry, eat a little something to get your metabolism going. Lean protein from foods such as yogurt, veggie or turkey sausage, eggs, or peanut butter provides more long-lasting energy than a carbohydrate-packed pastry. If you drink coffee, pace yourself. Drink a few small cups throughout the morning instead of one large cup all at once. As you head out for your daily activities, listen to some upbeat music to get in a high-energy mindset.

### MIDMORNING PICK-ME-UP

Eating many small meals throughout the day helps keep energy levels steady, so snack away! Instead of foods filled with processed or hidden sugar, choose energy-enhancing goodies, such as almonds or walnuts, low-fat microwave popcorn, whole-grain crackers, yogurt with a sprinkle of granola on top, or fresh fruit.

If you have a desk job, you may already know that sitting for long periods of time can sap your vitality.

When your eyes start to glaze over, perk up with a few simple stretches — extend your legs and then lift and lower them while flexing your toes, or raise your arms over your head and gently lean back. If you are on your feet all day instead of sitting at a desk, try exercises that build abdominal strength to make standing less fatiguing.

Whether standing or sitting, watch your posture. Hunching your back, slouching your shoulders or leaning can make you tense, achy and tired all day long.



### MID-AFTERNOON RECHARGE

Even if you ate a light lunch, you may feel your energy begin to ebb a few hours later. If this happens to you, try closing your eyes for a minute to take a mental mini-vacation. Imagine yourself in a restful scene, envisioning as many details as you can — the sights, scents, sounds and sensations. A break of even five minutes can help you feel refreshed and ready to focus.

**Another tip?** Try breathing deeply. It relieves tension and provides more energizing oxygen to your body's tissues. Count to four as you inhale through your nose, hold your breath and count to seven, then count to eight as you exhale through your mouth.

Avoid coffee or other caffeinated beverages after lunch — you may regret it later when you are still wide-awake in the wee hours. Instead, drink ice-cold water to give your spirits a lift.

### FIVE O'CLOCK REFRESHER

After an exhausting day, you may feel too tired to work out. But rather than making you more tired, moderate aerobic exercise actually helps your body create more energy. To increase your motivation, schedule workouts with a buddy at least three times a week or take your exercise clothes with you to the office and walk, run or hit the gym before heading home.

### PRIME TIME POWER-UP

You've exercised and enjoyed a healthy dinner, so now it's time to kick off your shoes and stretch out on the couch, right? Not so fast! Lying down after dinner tends to make you sleepy, and napping in the early evening could disrupt your normal sleep cycle. Instead, take a short, relaxing stroll. Research shows that walking right after dinner aids digestion and stabilizes blood sugar levels, which keeps energy levels consistent.

### SWEET DREAMS

In the hour or two before bedtime, limit your use of electronic devices. Remember how light wakes you up in the morning? The bluish glow of your computer, tablet or phone screen has the same effect in the evening.

When it's bedtime, skip the nightcap. Alcohol may help you drop off and sleep soundly for a while, but the effect wears off after a few hours, making you more likely to spend the second half of the night tossing and turning. Even if you do not wake before morning, alcohol has been shown to reduce rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, the deepest and most refreshing sleep phase. Instead, unwind with a warm drink, such as milk, cocoa or herbal tea.

Tried these strategies and still dragging? Persistent fatigue may be a sign of a health condition such as a sleep disorder, a heart condition, anemia or depression — see your doctor.



# A Portal for Proactive Health

WHEN YOU ARE DISCHARGED FROM THE HOSPITAL, WE DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND AND FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR POST-HOSPITAL RECOVERY. WE NOW HAVE ANOTHER TOOL TO HELP YOU STAY ON TRACK WITH FOLLOW-UP ORDERS SUCH AS MANAGING NEW MEDICATIONS AND DOCTORS' APPOINTMENTS.

With **My Health Home Patient Portal**, you have a valuable tool to help you manage your health, or that of a loved one, after a hospital stay. A convenient health record you can access online, **My Health Home Patient Portal** brings together the information about your hospital visit in one easily accessible location.

#### WHAT YOU'LL FIND

**My Health Home Patient Portal** makes it easier for you to closely follow your guidelines for recovery once you are home. After you set up a Portal account, you can see information about your hospital stay, including your discharge instructions, lab results, medication list and doctor reports. Your Portal account is always available online, and it is secure and private. You can give representatives access to your account, but only you and people you authorize will be able to access your records.

Not only does **My Health Home** help you track what happened

while you were in the hospital and your discharge plan, but it also provides a convenient way to download reports and share information with your outpatient providers.

#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: Is there any cost associated with the patient portal?**

**A:** No. The service is free to help you become a more informed, engaged patient.

**Q: How soon will information from my hospital stay be available?**

**A:** Typically, information about an inpatient stay will be available one to three days following discharge.

**Q: How will I know something has been added to my account?**

**A:** You will receive a verification email each time information is added.

**To get started with the My Health Home Patient Portal, or for an easy way to link to your account, visit [RedBudRegional.myhealthhome.com](http://RedBudRegional.myhealthhome.com).**



#### GET STARTED WITH MY HEALTH HOME

With our new **My Health Home Patient Portal**, you can now have secure, online access to information about your overnight hospital stays. Setting up a personal account is free — and easy. Start the process the next time you are at the hospital, or as you register for your next hospital visit.

1. At registration, share your photo ID and an email address to begin your account setup.
2. We will send you an email with a link to the Portal so you can complete your account setup.
3. Your username will be the same as the email address you provided. You will enter your name and date of birth and set a password. You also will choose a question to answer each time you log on for an extra layer of security.
4. Visit your Portal account to view information about your hospital stay, download records and share information with your outpatient doctors.

**To get started, visit [RedBudRegional.myhealthhome.com](http://RedBudRegional.myhealthhome.com).**

# Sodium OVERLOAD

DITCHING THE SALTSHAKER IS JUST THE FIRST STEP TOWARD A LOW-SODIUM DIET.

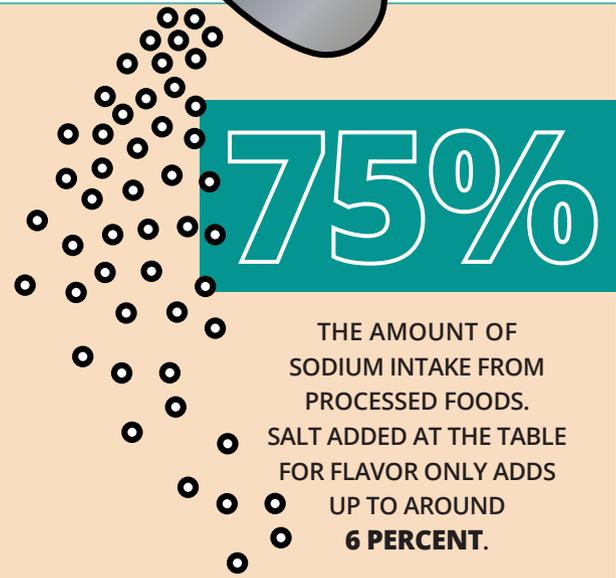
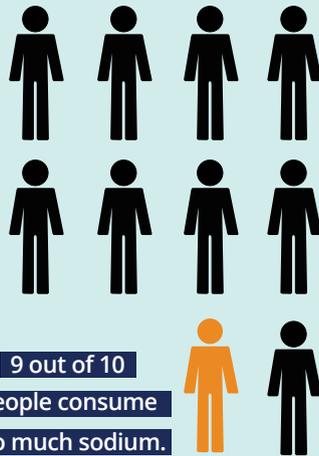
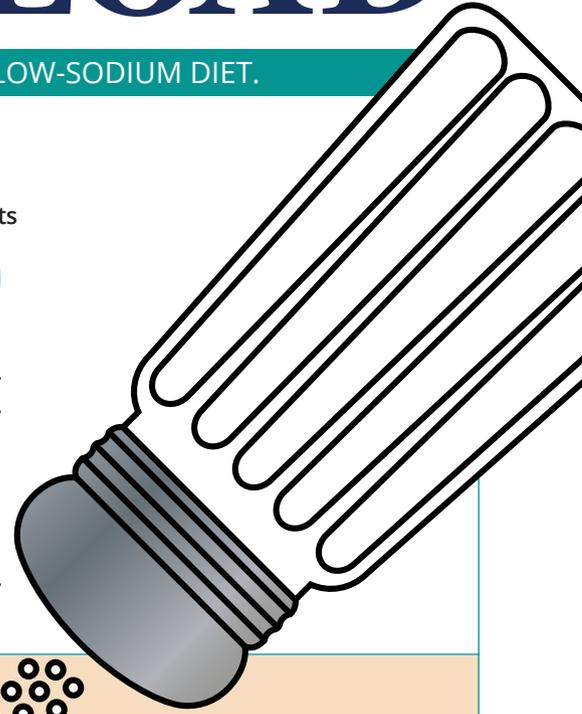
The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends only 1,500 milligrams — slightly more than one-half a teaspoon — of sodium per day. Most Americans consume more than double that amount. Keep an eye on the six most common sources of sneaky sodium identified by the AHA.

- **Bread.** Bread is the top source of sodium for Americans. Look for breads labeled “low-sodium” or “reduced-sodium” for healthier options.
- **Cold cuts.** One serving of deli meat can have up to half of your recommended daily amount of sodium. Try a lower-sodium variety of your favorite lunch meat, or switch to homemade chicken or tuna salad.
- **Pizza.** Stay away from pepperoni and sausage and add a few more veggies. Eliminating pizza altogether cuts out more than 700 milligrams of sodium per slice.
- **Poultry.** Naturally sodium-free, poultry can be loaded with preservatives that add sodium. Stick to healthy ways of cooking your bird while avoiding processed or fried chicken.
- **Soup.** One cup of canned soup packs as much as 940 milligrams of sodium. Look for low-sodium alternatives — or make your own soup!
- **Sandwiches.** A sandwich from your favorite fast-food place can have more than 100 percent of your recommended daily amount of sodium. Try bringing a sandwich from home or ordering a lighter choice from the menu.

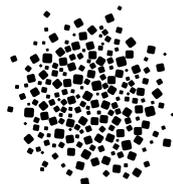
## HOW MUCH EACH DAY?

The body needs **200** milligrams of sodium.  The average person gets **3,400** milligrams of sodium.

The AHA recommends **1,500** milligrams of sodium.  ¾ teaspoon of salt = **1,500** milligrams of sodium.



## Did You Know?



**Kosher salt and sea salt** CONTAIN THE SAME AMOUNT of sodium as table salt.



Most foods, including **milk** and **celery**, contain sodium.



Too much sodium intake is one risk factor of **high blood pressure**.



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This publication in no way seeks to serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Consult your doctor before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.

# Is There Such a Thing as *Good Bacteria?*

JUST AS YOUR MOM ADVISED YOU TO AVOID THE “BAD KIDS” ON THE BLOCK, SHE MAY HAVE WARNED YOU ABOUT GERMS. BUT RESEARCHERS NOW BELIEVE BACTERIA IS IMPORTANT FOR PROMOTING GOOD HEALTH.

Bacteria inhabit much of the human body. Some cause illness, while others have no effect on people at all. Many, however, benefit their human hosts. Here are just a few habitats of healthful microbes.

## MOTHER’S MILK

Breast milk contains “probiotics,” or beneficial bacteria, which line babies’ intestines. These helpful germs protect the body from inflammation and infection by other bacteria that may cause illness.

## YOUR BELLY

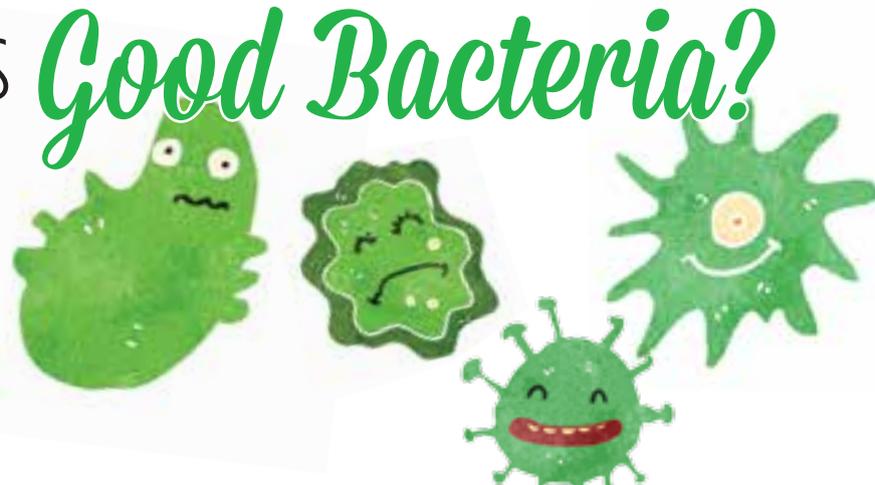
The “biome,” or collection of microorganisms, in the digestive tract is especially important to good health. Native bacteria keep hostile germs from colonizing. That’s why strong antibiotics, which kill both “good” and “bad” bacteria, may lead to infections such as *Clostridium difficile* or *C. diff*.

## THE ‘HYGIENE HYPOTHESIS’

One theory suggests that children who grow up in overly sanitary environments, protected from outdoor work and play, are more likely to develop asthma and immune-system disorders because their bodies’ immune systems have not been sufficiently challenged by a host of tough, but ultimately helpful, germs.

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**Talk with your doctor about ways to increase your exposure to good bacteria — and decrease the bad. Don’t have a doctor? Find one at [RedBudRegional.com](http://RedBudRegional.com).**



## SO, DO I STOP WASHING MY HANDS?

No. Good hygiene can stymie plenty of illnesses, from influenza to norovirus. However, you can strengthen your family’s circle of friendly bacteria by:

- avoiding unnecessary antibiotics
- eating a variety of foods, especially fruits, vegetables and whole grains
- nursing your baby for as long as your doctor recommends
- using regular hand soap rather than antibacterial products

In addition to these steps, you can also increase your intake of foods containing probiotics. These “good” bacteria, often found in yogurt and other fermented foods, are similar to those naturally found in the digestive tract. Probiotics have been associated with a number of health benefits, including treatment of irritable bowel syndrome, tooth decay and diarrhea. Recent studies have also reported that probiotics may help you get to — and maintain — a healthy weight.