



SPECIAL ISSUE

The Best of Woman's Day



Our Favorite Party Cakes

THE GOOD HEALTH Mini-Bible

Collector's Issue
Great Ideas for Years to Come

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In 3 Weeks

21 Classic Cakes And Cookies

All-Time Favorite Crafts

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BY JENNIFER GRAHAM

These days, everyone from your Aunt Betty to the local TV anchor wants to give you advice on how to stay healthy. But who has time to hear every testimonial, read every article, tune into every news report? If only someone could just boil it all down to the essentials!

We have. We've pulled together the health tips you need to know—advice that's withstood the test of time and will make sense tomorrow, next month and next year. So tune out the static and stick to these rules.

Eating Well

1. Mix it up. Food scientists tell us that they're just scratching the surface of everything there is to know about the variety of nutrients in foods. So, the more varied our diets are, the more likely we are to get everything we need. One recent survey found that the average American diet contains only about 30 different foods.

2. Make grains, vegetables, fruits and legumes the stars on your plate. Not only are they packed with nutrients and disease-fighters, but the more you eat, the less room you'll have for foods high in fat, sugar and cholesterol.

Only 12 percent of Americans eat the recommended five daily fruit and vegetable servings. This year we consumed *less* produce than we did in 1995, according to the United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association.

3. Read the label. It's one of the best ways to keep your fat and calo-

22 ways to stay well the good health MINI-BIBLE

rie intake in line. Try to eat mostly foods containing less than 30 percent fat. Americans have been doing a better job of cutting back on dietary fat: It now makes up about 33 percent of our daily calories, down from 36 percent 10 years ago.

4. Go easy on salt. The biggest source in the American diet isn't the saltshaker but processed foods—soups, frozen dinners, cold cuts. Taste food before reaching for table salt, and buy low-sodium versions of processed foods. A high salt intake has been linked to high blood pressure, which increases the risk of stroke, heart disease and diabetes.

5. Protein: Make it lean. You need protein, but many high-protein foods deliver the goods along with a high dose of fat. Alternatives: skinless chicken, fish, all kinds of beans, egg whites and nonfat and low-fat milk and yogurt. A 120-pound woman needs 44 grams of protein a day, the amount in about 4½ ounces of chicken, an 8-ounce glass of milk and

mg daily. The best sources: Low-fat or fat-free dairy products; dark, leafy greens like spinach; canned salmon and sardines with the bones; fortified cereal and juice.

Weighing What You Want To

7. Count calories, not just fat. Some reduced-fat cookies actually have more calories than regular ones. Also, you'll automatically cut fat *and* calories if you stick to standard serving sizes. A "serving" is one slice of bread, half a bagel, one-half cup of cooked rice, pasta or beans. A meat serving is about the size of a deck of cards.

8. Make time for three squares. Eat breakfast even if you're not hungry, says Gail Frank, Dr.P.H., R.D., a spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. Study after study has shown that skipping breakfast just makes you overeat later in the day. It seems we're finally learning this lesson: In a survey by the

8 ounces of yogurt.

6. Calcium: You need all you can get. According to Healthy People 2000, 79 percent of Americans age 25 and over fail to consume two or more servings of calcium-rich foods per day. The National Institutes of Health recommends 1,000 milligrams (mg) of calcium daily for women age 25 to 49; postmenopausal women not on hormone replacement therapy need 1,500

(From left) LUCIANA PAMPALONE; ALBAN CHRIST; JOE POLLIO; MARCO FRANCHINA; LUCIANA PAMPALONE; LUCIANA PAMPALONE; ALBAN CHRIST; JOE POLLIO; LUCIANA PAMPALONE; LUCIANA PAMPALONE



Calorie Control Council, 31 percent of dieters regularly skipped meals in 1986, but only 23 percent did so last year.

9. Eat until you're full—then stop. We now eat 40 to 50 percent of our meals in restaurants or as deli or take-out food, says Dr. Frank, and portion sizes have become absolutely huge. But where is it written that you must eat the whole thing? Leave what you can't finish: Put it away if you're home, ask for a doggie bag when you're out. Better yet, take less to begin with: At home, use measuring cups and a food scale; share restaurant entrées or order appetizers.

Staying on the Move

10. Do something active every day you can. Half an hour of moderate physical activity on most days of the week, say health experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, reduces your risk of many major diseases. In fact, unfit women have the same risk of dying prematurely as women who smoke cigarettes, according to a study by the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research. The good news is that raking leaves, pushing a child in a stroller, shoveling snow and dancing all count as exercise.

11. Don't just sit there. Fidgeters burn up to 800 more calories a day than non-fidgeters, according to a National Institutes of Health study. You can always be moving in some way, notes fitness expert Denise Austin, author of *Jump Start*. Tighten your abdominal muscles or squeeze your buttocks while sitting in the car at stoplights. Do a few crunches or stretch cramped neck and upper-back muscles while watching television.

12. Just do it, but don't over-

five or more days a week, were *more* likely to drop out than those who exercised three days a week for 30 minutes. The biggest reasons for quitting: injuries and time constraints.

Keeping the Mind Healthy

13. Beat stress—whatever it takes. By some estimates, 80 percent of all illness is stress-related. Walk the dog, have a heart-to-heart with a friend, listen to music, surf the Net—whatever relaxes *you*.

14. Keep it in perspective. On a scale of 1 to 10, how big a deal is missing your morning train? Maybe a 3? So don't treat it like a 9, suggests Allen Elkin, Ph.D., director of the Stress Management & Counseling Center in New York. Studies show that minor daily annoyances—not major traumas, such as the death of a loved one—do the most stress-related damage over time.

15. Stay in touch. There's an overwhelming body of research showing that people who stay connected to others get sick less often, recover faster and live longer. Intimate ties help, but so do casual relationships, such as those with your local gas station attendant, a friendly neighborhood waitress, your child's teacher.

16. Laugh about it. Heartfelt humor is one of the best health boosters going. Studies show that laughter changes breathing rhythms and brain-wave patterns, strengthens the immune system, lowers levels of stress-related hormones and reduces pain perceptions. Chase the blues away by reading the comics, renting a funny movie, calling a good-humored friend.

do it. When it comes to exercise, you *can* get too much of a good thing. In one study, people who worked out for 45 minutes or longer,

Getting Good Health Care

17. Know your family medical history. Talk to your parents, other relatives, doctors. Ask: Who died of what? At what age? When did major conditions set in? This kind of information can help you decide which tests you and other family members need, and when.

18. See your gynecologist or family physician once a year after age 18. Make sure the appointment includes a pelvic exam and Pap smear, and a rectal exam if you're over 40. Starting at age 50, ask about a sigmoidoscopy and a fecal occult blood test for colon cancer.

19. Examine your breasts once a month about one week after your period. Have a mammogram once in your late 30s, every 1 to 2 years between ages 40 and 49, and annually starting at age 50. Women over 65 have the highest breast-cancer risk, and they are the least likely to get regular mammograms.

Staying Well and Safe

20. Kick the smoking habit—again, if needed. Most people relapse at least once. You might want to use the nicotine patch or Nicorette gum, or call your local American Cancer Society for tips and support.

21. Take skin cancer seriously. Most cases are easily treated basal-cell or squamous-cell carcinoma. But melanoma kills more than 7,000 Americans a year. Apply sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 to all your exposed skin before you go out in the sun. Check your skin regularly for abnormalities; once a year, have your doctor or dermatologist check it.

22. Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). When breathing stops, permanent brain damage can occur in 4 to 6 minutes. Call your local American Red Cross or fire department or the American Heart Association (800-AHA-USA1) about classes in your area. **WD**