

Health Connection

A PUBLICATION OF GREENBRIER VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER



Trouble getting your zzzs?

What this may mean for your health

The secret to weight control?

Pumping iron!

What stress tests can reveal

Good news for 'bad' knees

Win a **FREE** \$100 Wal-Mart gift card!
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The secret to weight control for women: Pumping iron!

Reaching middle age doesn't mean you get to retire to the porch rocking chair. Since your metabolism slows as you get older, it's more important than ever to stay active to keep from gaining weight.

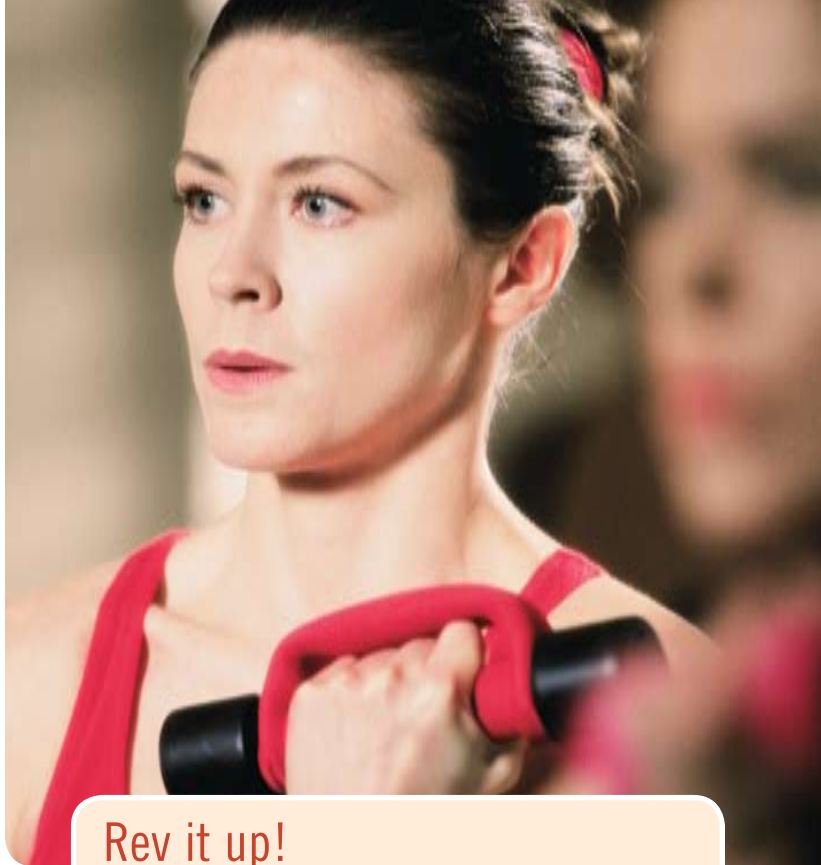
STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

A buildup of belly fat isn't uncommon as you age, but there's a powerful weapon to help you combat middle-age spread: weight lifting. A National Institutes of Health study found that women who pumped iron twice a week—on machines or using free weights—prevented or slowed unhealthy fat accumulation around the midsection, which has been linked to heart disease and other ailments.

But the benefits don't stop there. Weight lifting, or strength training, can also help you:

- relieve arthritis
- improve your balance and reduce falls
- strengthen your bones
- maintain an overall healthy weight
- control your blood sugar
- improve your sleep
- increase your aerobic capacity
- boost your self-esteem

Strength training can be done by most anyone at any age. To get started, talk with your doctor. He or she can recommend an exercise program suited to your abilities. When combined with regular aerobic exercise, weight lifting can be just what the doctor ordered.



Rev it up!

Try combining weight lifting with these surefire ways to kick-start your metabolism and keep off the pounds.

- 1. Get your zzzs.** When you don't sleep well, your body craves energy and releases glucose into the bloodstream, which slows your metabolism and contributes to weight gain. But getting enough sleep—about eight hours—can keep your metabolism on course.
- 2. Eat breakfast.** Breakfast fuels you for the rest of your day. Skipping meals can cause you to eat more high-calorie, high-fat foods at your next meal. Eating smaller, more frequent meals can boost metabolism.
- 3. Go aerobic.** Engaging in activity that raises your heart rate for at least 60 minutes on most days can help you control weight and boost metabolism. Aerobic activities include walking, jogging, cycling and swimming.

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Filling out the online survey is easy: Simply go to www.healthconnectionmag.com and complete the survey.

By completing our survey, you'll be automatically entered in a random drawing to win one of five gift cards.

All surveys must be completed online by May 27, 2008, to be eligible to win. One entry per person please. Thank you for your time and assistance.

All responses will be kept strictly confidential. We do not sell, rent or give away your e-mail address.



JOINT SOLUTIONS

Not your father's knee surgery

Your knee joints support almost half your body weight, so it's no wonder that they sometimes break down.

If you have joint pain and have exhausted non-surgical remedies—medicines, exercise, weight loss, physical therapy—it may be time to consider a knee replacement.

Today's knee replacements allow for greater range of motion and flexibility than in the past, so patients can return to active lifestyles. According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, 90 percent to 95 percent of today's knee replacements last 15 years or more. More than 150 knee-replacement designs are available today. The type of implant that best suits you depends on factors such as your weight, age, gender and anatomy.

NEW HELP FOR KNEE PAIN

Because surgeons can perform minimally invasive knee replacement, patients suffer less trauma to surrounding muscles, tissues and tendons and less bleeding than with traditional surgery. Surgeons make

a four- to six-inch long incision, compared with the traditional eight to 10 inches. Smaller incisions mean shorter hospital stays, faster recoveries and less scarring.

Depending on the level of damage, surgeons may replace only some parts of the knee. If the entire joint is damaged, they'll perform a total knee replacement in which the damaged area is removed and replaced with implants made of plastic, metal or ceramic.

However, like natural joints, man-made versions can wear down, requiring a second surgery. Also, when minimally invasive surgery is performed, some studies show a risk that the knee implant won't be as accurately placed as with traditional knee replacement. (Some surgeons use computer-guided instruments to help combat this problem.)

If you're considering knee replacement surgery, your doctor will weigh the benefits and risks of minimally invasive surgery and discuss with you the best surgical option to get you back on your feet, pain free.

Anatomy of a worn-out knee

Cartilage acts as a protective layer so your joints can move smoothly with little friction. But sometimes cartilage is damaged—most commonly from osteoarthritis—which can cause pain and inflammation in the tissues surrounding the joint. Over time, the cartilage wears away, allowing rough edges of the bone to rub against each other, which can result in more pain.





When it comes to matters of the heart, we're right here.

When it comes to matters of the heart, the diagnostic cardiac testing services you need are right here at Greenbrier Valley Medical Center. Now there's no need to travel out of town. Talk to your physician or call us at **304-647-4411** for more information on our cardiac services.



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How do you know whether you're getting enough rest? Experts say if you feel drowsy during the day or if you routinely fall asleep within five minutes of lying down, you're probably among the sleep deprived. And while you may think you can go on living this way, your body cannot.

"While we're getting our shut-eye, cell growth and repair take place. Sleep also helps our bodies conserve energy and other resources that the immune system needs to fight infection and mount an effective attack should we get sick later," says GVMC neurologist John Collins, M.D. "It's also the time our brain's frontal cortex shuts down; lack of rest to this part of the brain affects our ability to control speech, access memory and solve problems."

DANGER SIGNS

When you don't get enough rest, your body builds what experts call sleep debt. The debt accumulates over time and takes a physical and mental toll on your entire system.

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Is lack of sleep taking a toll on your health?

Not getting enough zzzs is a serious condition

How many hours of sleep did you get last night? If it was less than eight, you may be one of the 47 million adults suffering from sleep deprivation. Until recently, many health professionals didn't take lack of sleep seriously. But new research proves that not getting enough "beauty rest" increases the risk of several health problems and can interfere with memory, energy levels, physical abilities and moods. If you're not sleeping well, getting a diagnosis at the Greenbrier Valley Medical Center (GVMC) Sleep Lab can help.

SLEEP BENEFITS

If you think you can handle your lack of slumber with another cup of coffee, think again. Caffeine can actually make you feel more tired than you did before—and it just helps perpetuate the cycle. Sleep is often the first thing busy people forgo, yet it's something our bodies desperately need.

Tips for catching your zzzs

To sleep easy and improve your quality of life, try these tips:

- **Develop a relaxing, nightly ritual such as reading, listening to music or taking a bath.**
- **Create an environment that's conducive to sleep—make it quiet, dark and comfortable.**
- **Abstain from alcohol, caffeine and cigarettes at least two to three hours before you plan to turn in.**
- **Exercise no later than three hours before bedtime.**
- **Don't use bedtime to do work.**
- **Don't overeat or leave yourself hungry before bedtime.**

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about cancer's risk factors?

Take this quiz to find out.

1

Which is not a known breast cancer risk factor?

- a. alcohol
- b. obesity
- c. number of pregnancies
- d. an injury to the breast

2

Smoking:

- a. causes one-quarter of all cancer deaths
- b. causes one-third of all cancer deaths
- c. causes only lung cancer
- d. none of the above

3

If you're a male, you have a greater chance of developing prostate cancer if you are:

- a. Asian
- b. Hispanic
- c. African-American
- d. Caucasian

4

You can reduce your risk of colon cancer by:

- a. eating less red meat
- b. eating at least three servings of vegetables a day
- c. both a and b
- d. There's nothing you can do to reduce your risk.

5

Over the years, routine Pap tests have reduced the rate of which type of cancer?

- a. ovarian
- b. cervical
- c. uterine
- d. bladder

ANSWERS: 1. D; 2. B; 3. C; 4. C; 5. B



Putting your heart to the test

If your doctor wants to find out how well your heart is working, he or she may have you take an exercise stress test. A stress test, or exercise electrocardiogram, typically requires that you walk or run on a treadmill at varying speeds and inclines while hooked up to heart-monitoring equipment.

A stress test can also help determine the cause of chest pain, light-headedness or shortness of breath or predict the likelihood of a heart attack. It can also determine your capacity for exercise, especially if you have been physically inactive.

HOW THE TEST WORKS

When you exercise, your body demands more oxygen, requiring your heart to pump more blood. During exercise, your doctor can detect symptoms that could reveal a heart problem. Signs of potential trouble include abnormal changes in your heart rate or blood pressure or shortness of breath. A blockage in the arteries, an irregular heartbeat and poor aerobic conditioning can all cause these symptoms.

Because women don't always have the same heart symptoms as men do, standard stress tests may be less accurate for females. In these instances, your doctor may recommend an imaging stress test that takes pictures of the heart, such as magnetic resonance imaging, echocardiography or positron emission tomography.

Pregnant?

3 tests you should discuss with your doctor

What expectant mother isn't concerned about her baby's health? If you're pregnant, talk with your doctor about whether you should have screenings for the following:

1 Down syndrome. This screening should be before week 20 of your pregnancy. It should include an ultrasound to measure the thickness at the back of the fetus' neck as well as blood tests to look for increased risk of chromosomal abnormalities. If you're at risk for having a baby with Down syndrome, diagnostic tests such as amniocentesis and chorionic villus sampling may be used to diagnose or rule out a birth defect.

2 Fetal fibronectin (fFN). The presence of the pregnancy protein fFN during weeks 24 to 34 signals an increased preterm delivery risk for high-risk pregnancies. In a screening similar to a Pap test, secretions are collected and analyzed. The absence of fFN is a reliable indicator that the pregnancy will continue for at least another two weeks.

3 Group B strep (GBS). GBS is the most common cause of life-threatening infections like sepsis and meningitis in newborns. Late in your pregnancy, your doctor will use a swab to collect samples from your vagina and rectum. If you test positive for GBS, you'll be given antibiotics intravenously during labor or when your water breaks to prevent spreading the infection to your baby.



GO FISH!

The benefits of omega-3

Omega-3s, the fatty acids most commonly found in fish, have an impressive resume: They decrease heart arrhythmia risks, reduce triglyceride levels, lower blood pressure and slow artery narrowing and hardening.

Experts believe omega-3 fatty acids can help combat the inflammation behind certain diseases. Omega-3's heart-health benefits are well established: Consuming omega-3 fatty acids regularly could reduce your risk of heart attack death by a third or more. Other ongoing research suggests a link between omega-3 and decreased dementia risk and reduced joint tenderness in rheumatoid arthritis.

THE BEST SOURCE OF OMEGA-3

Fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines and albacore tuna are high in two kinds of omega-3 fatty acids, eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). The American Heart Association recommends eating a three-ounce serving of fatty fish at least twice a week.

But what about reports of fish contamination? Experts agree: Heart benefits outweigh contamination risks. However, women and children should keep their canned tuna consumption to no more than 6 ounces a week and eat no more than 12 ounces of most other fish to avoid the effects of contaminants in fish. (Others such as shark, tilefish and swordfish should be avoided altogether.)

You can also get omega-3 from walnuts, flaxseed, canola oil and soybeans, but evidence of their heart-healthy benefits isn't quite as strong as those found in fish. People who have coronary artery disease or need larger doses to lower triglycerides may take supplements under their doctors' recommendations.



IS LACK OF SLEEP TAKING A TOLL ON YOUR HEALTH?

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Put another way: Chronic fatigue weakens your body's immune system, leaving you more susceptible to various ailments. Extreme tiredness also elevates your stress level, further eroding your body's defenses. "This then aggravates your mental process, which can lead to confusion, memory loss, irritability and emotional highs and lows," says Dr. Collins.

What's more, sleep shortages affect the body's ability to regulate glucose and produce insulin, which can lead to diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure. A University of Chicago study found that a week of sleep deprivation made otherwise healthy test subjects take 40 percent longer than normal to regulate their blood sugar levels. Insulin production and the body's response to insulin were also compromised, falling to 30 percent below normal.

And, if that's not enough, chronic fatigue has been linked to another danger: automobile accidents. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, more than 100,000 automobile accidents a year are caused by driver fatigue. The reasons are obvious: The fewer hours of rest you get, the greater your chances of falling asleep at the wheel. Lack of sleep also makes you more susceptible to road rage.

COMMON CAUSES

If you're not sleeping well, it might be that you're worried about something or that you play your "to-do" list in your head at night. Or, you might be overly tired because of your lifestyle choices: Drinking caffeine or alcohol before bed ranks among the most common reasons behind sleep deprivation.

"Medication can also interfere with the body's natural rhythms, causing restlessness and insomnia,"



The GVMC Sleep Lab provides a comfortable environment to diagnose and treat sleep disorders.

says Dr. Collins. "An underlying medical condition, such as asthma, could also be keeping you awake."

The good news is that sleep deprivation is preventable. But it will probably mean making some lifestyle changes.

! Sleep easy today!

If you've been having trouble sleeping, GVMC can diagnose and treat your sleep disorder in our new sleep diagnostic testing facility. For more information, call the GVMC Sleep Lab at (304) 647-4411.

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