



long term care connection

Spring 2008

Things to Know

Cholesterol: Keep it in check

If you have diabetes, you may have a problem with cholesterol, a type of fat in your blood.

Diabetes raises your risk of heart attack and stroke. If your cholesterol is high, you have a bigger risk.

There are two types of cholesterol—good and bad. Not enough of the good kind or too much of the bad kind can block your blood vessels.

Doctors check cholesterol levels with blood tests. If you have diabetes, you should have your cholesterol checked at least once a year.

To keep your cholesterol at a healthy level:

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Keep active every day.
- Don't smoke.

Source: American Diabetes Association

» action

take

Visit www.americanheart.org and search for “Heart of Diabetes program” to learn more about living a healthy lifestyle.

Eating healthy

Eating a good diet isn't hard. It just takes a little planning. Eating right can help you feel better and give you more energy. And you'll get the nutrients you need, like calcium, iron and vitamins.

What is healthy eating?

A well-rounded diet includes:

- » Whole-grain bread, pasta, cereal and rice
- » Low-fat or nonfat yogurt, milk and cheese
- » Lean meat, fish, tofu and poultry
- » Many different fruits and veggies

Challenges to healthy eating

If you have trouble chewing or digesting foods, try fruit and vegetable juice and canned fruits and veggies. You can also try many vegetables creamed or mashed.

Here are some other tips for



healthy eating: » Plan meals ahead of time and make a shopping list. » Store canned or frozen foods for when you don't feel like cooking or cannot go out. » Make a large portion of your favorite dish, and eat the leftovers for a day or two. You can also freeze leftovers for later.

Sources: National Institute on Aging

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Medicines: 4 ways to protect yourself

Some things don't get the respect they deserve. That includes over-the-counter (OTC) drugs—those you



buy without a prescription, such as aspirin.

OTC drugs may seem harmless. But like any drug, they can sometimes cause serious side effects. Unless you use them carefully, they can hurt you rather than help you.

So play it safe the next time you take an OTC drug. Be sure to:

1. Learn. Read the label and find:

- The name of the drug
- What problem the drug treats
- If you should check with your doctor before using the drug
- If there are things you shouldn't do while using the drug, such as driving or eating certain foods
- How the drug might make you feel

- How much you should take
- When you should stop taking the drug

2. Speak up. Check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you still have questions about taking the drug.

3. Remember: More doesn't mean better. Never take a drug in a higher dose or for a longer time than the label says to. If the drug isn't helping, check with your doctor. You may have a different problem or need a different drug.

4. Be choosy. Always pick an OTC drug that treats only the problems or symptoms that you have. Otherwise, you take extra drugs that you don't need.

Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration

» hospital to close

news

As of June 1, 2008, Mesa General Hospital (Maricopa County) is closing. You must use another facility for hospital services after that date.

You can improve your health literacy with Ask Me 3™

Have you ever felt shy about asking your doctor questions? You are not alone. The Ask Me 3™ campaign was created to help members talk to their doctors.

Ask Me 3™ is three questions you should ask your doctors about concerns or questions

related to your health. The questions are:

- 1. What is my main problem?**
- 2. What do I need to do?**
- 3. Why is it important for me to do this?**

These questions can help you get important details

about your medical needs. The next time you visit your doctor, don't forget to use the Ask Me 3™ questions.

For more information about health literacy and better communication with your doctor, visit www.AskMe3.org.