



long term care connection

Summer 2008

Things to Know

How to make a healthy salad

Is your salad lost under layers of croutons? Smothered with cheese? Swimming in dressing?

If so, your salad may pack a lot of extra fat and calories. And that's not so healthy.

If it's time to give your salad a makeover, keep these basics in mind:

- Start with a bed of dark, leafy greens, such as spinach or romaine.
- Add at least two colorful veggies. Carrots, tomatoes or peppers are all great choices.
- Throw in some hearty toppings. Try low-fat cheese, tuna, lean turkey, tofu or kidney beans.
- Sprinkle on sweetness. Toss in some chopped apples, oranges or strawberries.
- Top it lightly. Opt for vinegar, lemon juice or any low-fat dressing.

Sources: American Dietetic Association; American Institute for Cancer Research



Heart health may depend on dental health

Your heart health may rely in part on how well you take care of your teeth.

That's why it's important that you take good care of your teeth and gums. Try these tips:

Keep it clean. Brush twice a day and floss once a day to help keep gum disease away.

Check it out. Visit your dentist for regular checkups and cleanings.

Have healthy habits. Eating well and not smoking can help protect

your gums and teeth.

Report signs of gum disease. Let your dentist know if your:

- Gums bleed when you brush
- Gums are red, swollen or tender
- Teeth are loose or separating

Studies have shown that gum disease affects the heart. It can damage your arteries and lead to heart attacks. And if you already have heart problems, gum disease could make them worse.

Source: American Dental Association

» action

take

Don't forget to get your flu shot.

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Understanding the language of medicine

Have you ever left your doctor's office unsure of your medical situation and what to do to treat it? You're not alone. Many people have a hard time understanding health information. The result is that people often aren't following their doctor's orders the right way and are misreading prescription drug labels.

Your doctor can't make you feel better without your help. What can you do to work with your doctor? You need to ask questions—as many as it takes—until you know what your condition is and how to treat it.

Asking your doctor questions is not always easy, so it helps to have some tools. Here are three questions to ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist:

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

Here's how it works:

Q. Doctor, what is my main problem?

A. You have diabetes.

Q. What do I need to do?

A. You need to exercise, eat right and take the medicine I'm going

to prescribe for you.

Q. Why is it important for me to do this?

A. If you don't, your condition will get worse. Diabetes is very serious. It can lead to blindness, kidney damage, loss of a foot and even to early death.

That's pretty straight talk from a doctor!

What could happen if this patient does not ask these questions? The patient might leave unsure about his or her condition and how important it is to follow the doctor's advice. He or she might not exercise,

eat a healthier diet or get the prescription filled—or fill it but not feel any different when taking it, so stop. This is bad news all around.

Getting more help

The AskMe3 questions work outside the doctor's office too. Having a test or procedure? Need a new medication? Talking to a nurse on the phone? Use the questions.

If doing this on your own sounds too hard, bring a family member or friend. Your doctor wants you to understand what's going on. It makes his or her job easier—and understanding your medical care will help keep you healthier.

Adapted with permission from Aetna IntelliHealth

Language and interpretation services

It's important for you to take care of your health. This means that you need to understand your doctors. You might not understand your doctor because he or she speaks a different language from you or because you are hearing-impaired. Mercy Care can help.

Mercy Care has a large group of doctors as part of its plan. Many of the doctors speak many languages—not just English.

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى معلومات بهذه اللغة، فمن فضلك اتصل بـ Member Services وقل لنا ما هي لغتك.

Mercy Care can get a telephone or sign language interpreter for you at no cost to you.

To find a doctor who speaks your language, go to your Mercy Care Provider Directory or Mercy Care's Web site at www.MercyCarePlan.com. If you need help in your language or have a hearing impairment, call Member Services for an interpreter at (602) 263-3000 or (800) 624-3879.