

*Spring 2017*

# Health & Fitness

*Make Time for a Healthier & Fitter You.*



**Healthy Eating • Food & Nutrition • Home Health Care  
Diet & Exercise • Assisted Living**



**NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH**

# Celebrate by 'Putting Your Best Fork Forward'

Are you finding it difficult to keep up with your healthy New Year's habits? Tackle those resolutions with renewed energy in March during National Nutrition Month and remember that small changes, made over time, can add up.

The 2017 National Nutrition Month theme, "Put Your Best Fork Forward," encourages everyone to start small — one forkful at a time. Whether you're planning meals to prepare at home or making selections when dining out, it's crucial to develop a healthy eating style that you can maintain.

"To make lasting, healthful changes to your eating habits, it's important to start small," says registered dietitian nutritionist and Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics spokesperson Caroline Passerello. "Registered dietitian nutritionists can help you develop personalized solutions that will keep you healthy and allow you to still enjoy your favorite foods throughout your entire life."

Passerello offers these ways you can "Put Your Best Fork Forward."

- Choose Healthier Options When Cooking at Home. "Eating a variety of healthful foods across and within all food groups helps reduce the risk of preventable, lifestyle-related



SKUMER - FOTOLIA.COM

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chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and obesity," says Passerello. "Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat dairy, lean proteins and oils."

- Find Healthful Options When Dining Out. "Finding healthful options at restaurants is easier today than it ever has been," says Passerello. "Most restaurants offer healthful options. Look for items that are steamed or roasted, and ask for sauce, dressing and

cheese on the side. To-go boxes can help control portions. Eat half your meal at the restaurant and take the other half home."

- Set a Good Example for Your Children. Parents are the most important role models for their children. "Modeling healthful eating habits starts in the kitchen," Passerello says. "Involving your kids in the cooking with age-appropriate tasks, serving balanced meals with a variety of nutrient-rich foods and enjoy-

ing dinner together as often as possible are among the many things you can do to help your family be mindful of their eating habits."

- Consult a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. "A healthy lifestyle is much more than choosing to eat more fruits and vegetables. While that is important, it's also essential to make informed food choices based on your individual health and nutrient needs," Passerello says. "A registered dietitian nutritionist can educate you

and guide your food choices while keeping your tastes and preferences in mind. They are able to separate facts from fads and translate nutrition science into information you can use." To find a registered dietitian nutritionist in your area, visit [eat-right.org](http://eat-right.org).

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' National Nutrition Month website, [eat-right.org/NNM](http://eat-right.org/NNM), includes articles, recipes, videos and educational resources to spread the message of good nutrition and an overall healthy lifestyle for people of all ages, genders and backgrounds. You can also follow National Nutrition Month on social media using #NationalNutritionMonth.

This National Nutrition Month, keep up the good work you began in January by recommitting to health and wellness in March.

*Courtesy of StatePoint*

**COFFEE**

## Good or bad?

(StatePoint) A majority of Americans drink coffee daily, with an average of about three cups a day, according to Harvard School of Public Health.

Will all those cups of Joe being downed nationwide, it's important to consider the beverage's potential effects on your health.

Science indicates there are some substantial health benefits to drinking coffee regularly. Various studies have suggested that drinking coffee regularly could decrease the risk of heart disease and stroke, lower the risk for developing type 2 diabetes, protect against gallstones and lower the risk of developing Parkinson's Disease.

However, it's important to note that because of its caffeine content, coffee intake should be moderated. Its acidity can also impact issues like bone and muscle deterioration, and kidney stones. Conventional coffee can also raise cholesterol levels when regularly prepared French press or Espresso style.

For these reasons, many people are rethinking the types of coffee they drink in order to avoid particular health concerns. For example, unlike a conventional acidic cup of coffee, Bio Coffee is alkaline, caffeine-free and made with wheatgrass. It contains three to five servings of vegetables in one cup of coffee, as well as six grams of fiber — approximately 25 percent of the recommended daily amount.

**COFFEE » PAGE 6**



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**SENIORS**

# 3 ways to save on prescriptions this year

If you signed up for a new Medicare plan during Open Enrollment, it's important to understand how your prescription drug costs may be affected. Even if you did nothing to alter your coverage, some features of your plan may have changed for 2017.

Unfortunately, almost one-in-five Medicare beneficiaries don't have a good understanding of their plan, and a good portion have some misconceptions about copays, according to a recent survey by Walgreens.

Here are three easy steps to help you make the most of your benefits and find potential cost-savings for your prescription medications under your Part D coverage.

## Think Generic

When possible, consider using a less expensive prescrip-

tion drug brand or generic. These alternatives typically carry the same formulas at a reduced cost, saving patients substantially over time.

## Preferred Pharmacies

Verify whether your plan has preferred pharmacies — which are pharmacies that have an agreement with a Part D plan to charge less than a standard network pharmacy. For example, Walgreens, which is a preferred pharmacy for many of the nation's top plans, can help lower the cost of your copays, even to \$0 in the case of Tier 1 generics on certain plans.

"Depending on the design of your plan, coverage, and prescription drugs, you can pay higher copays at one pharmacy in comparison to another if your pharmacy is not in your plan's preferred network! So,

choosing the right pharmacy is definitely important," says Mariah Moon, the blogger behind "The Simple Parent," who recently wrote about helping her mother research her options for lowering her drug costs as part of the #PartDATWalgreens campaign.

## 90-Day Refills

"My pharmacist told me that many physicians are willing to write 90-day prescriptions for many of the medications that seniors are often prescribed. This not only saves time by requiring fewer trips to the pharmacy, but also may save copay costs," says Shelley Webb, a registered nurse and founder of "The Intentional Caregiver," who cared for her father in her home for four years and was recently sponsored by Walgreens to share tips about saving on



Medicare beneficiaries seeking help navigating prescription drug costs can find free resources at [walgreens.com/topic/pharmacy/medicarepartd](http://walgreens.com/topic/pharmacy/medicarepartd).

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prescription costs with her readers.

Medicare beneficiaries seeking help navigating prescription drug costs can find free resources at [walgreens.com/topic/pharmacy/medicarepartd](http://walgreens.com/topic/pharmacy/medicarepartd).

If you didn't review your plan before renewing, it's not too late to become a savvy consumer and learn more. Doing so can help you save money.

*Courtesy of StatePoint*



## LET'S HAVE A heart to heart

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**HEALTH BOOST?**

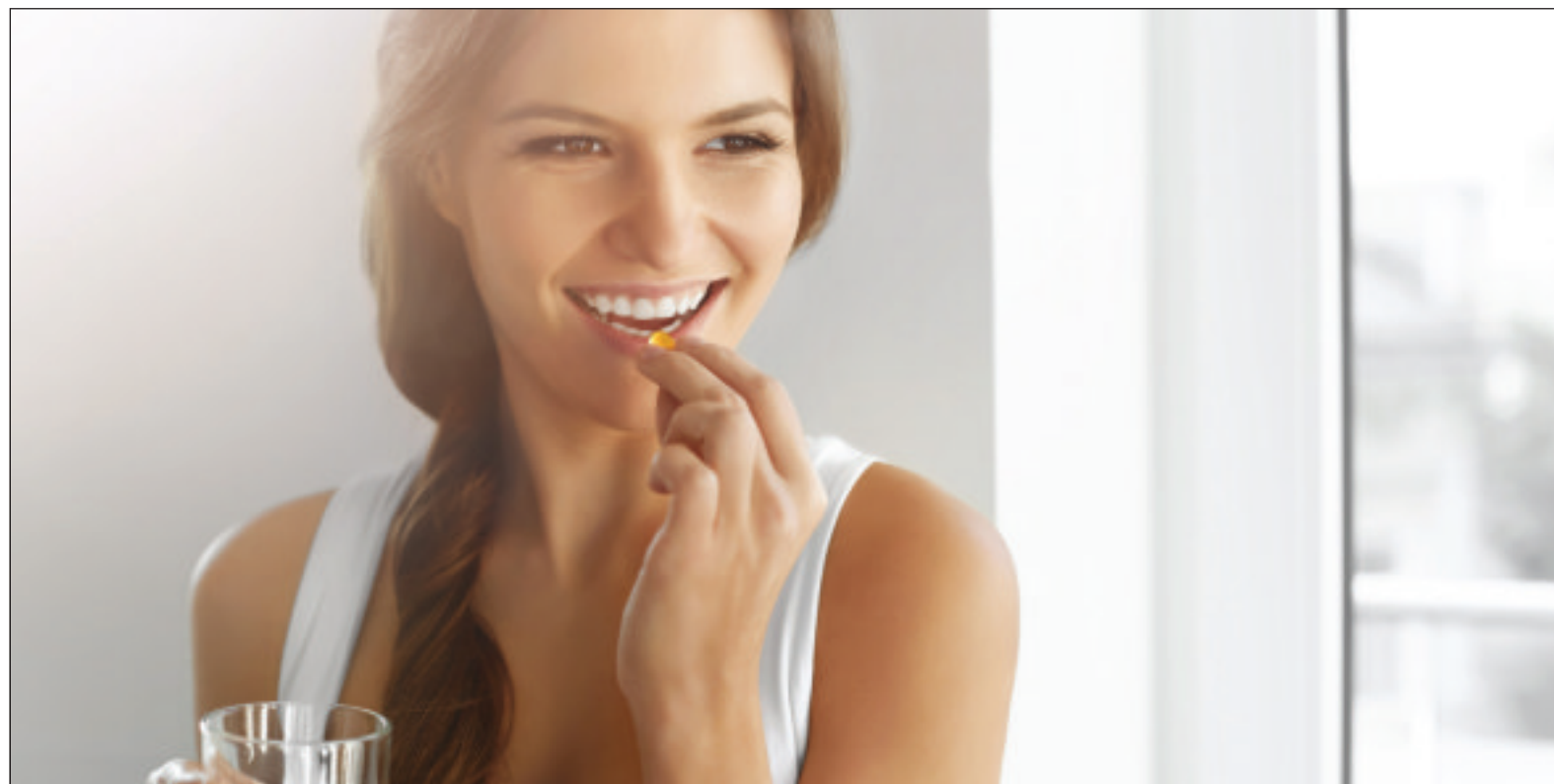
# What to know before taking vitamins or supplements

As Americans look to improve their health, many will turn to vitamins and supplements as part of their healthier routines. However, experts stress the importance of understanding the potential interactions supplements can have with medications and some brands of medical test results.

One notable example is Vitamin B7, also commonly known as biotin, which is frequently the top selling supplement online, and found in a number of multivitamins. Among its many benefits, biotin can help keep your eyes, liver and nervous system healthy, as well as contribute to healthy skin, hair and nails. Some doctors are recommending using biotin to help with multiple sclerosis and diabetes, too.

It's important to research side effects or ask your doctor about them before taking any supplement. For example, while biotin supplements are not associated with any side effects, taking biotin can affect certain brands of blood test results, which can lead to a misdiagnosis or unnecessary treatments for heart disease, thyroid conditions, breast cancer, pregnancy and fertility.

"If you take a multivita-



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min, biotin supplements or pre-natal vitamins, be sure to talk to your doctor before your next blood test, so that he or she can ensure the lab uses a test that is not affected by biotin," says Ramani Wonderling, PhD, as-

sociate director for scientific relations in diagnostics at Abbott, a global healthcare company.

Dr. Wonderling advises patients to ask their doctors the following questions.

▪ Will the tests you order be

impacted by my taking biotin?

▪ I prefer not to stop taking my supplements. Can you use a blood test that is not impacted by my taking biotin supplements?

Wonderling also advises that those who take supple-

ments read labels carefully and do their own research about supplement brands, for optimum safety and health benefits. To learn more about supplements, biotin and blood tests, visit [abbott.com/biotin](http://abbott.com/biotin).

"Taking supplements can

be an effective way to fill nutritional gaps," says Wonderling. "But before embarking on a regimen, be sure you understand all the possible effects of each supplement you take."

*Courtesy of StatePoint*



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## Bone Health

Osteoporosis is a disease of the bones that occurs when a person loses too much bone, produces too little bone or both. Though the disease is most often associated with women over 50, anyone can suffer from osteoporosis, which weakens bones and can make them more susceptible to breaks. Exercise is a great way for men and women to build and maintain strong bones in an attempt to prevent the onset of osteoporosis. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, weight-bearing exercises can help build and maintain bone density. But the NOF notes that men and women who have suffered broken bones due to osteoporosis or those at risk of such breaks may need to avoid high-impact weight-bearing exercises, which include dancing, hiking, jogging, and jumping rope, among others. For those whose physicians who suggest they avoid high-impact weight-bearing exercises, low-impact weight-bearing exercises can help them strengthen their bones. Such exercises may involve low-impact aerobics and using cardiovascular machines, such as elliptical trainers, stair-step machines and treadmills. Additional exercises that can benefit men and women looking to prevent or combat osteoporosis can be found at [www.nof.org](http://www.nof.org).

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# What you need to know about eye health

**WHAT YOUR EYES CAN TELL YOU**  
#EYEOPENINGMOMENTS

**EYE EXAM MILESTONES:**

- 6 MONTHS OLD:** FIRST EYE EXAM. IMPORTANT TO HAVE THEIR FIRST COMPREHENSIVE EYE EXAM AT A MILESTONE AT AGE.
- 3 YEARS OLD:** REEVALUATE THE INITIAL EXAM. IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THEIR VISION, RECEIVE AN ADDITIONAL CHECKUP AT 3 YEARS OF AGE.
- SCHOOL-AGE:** THE BEST ONE EXAM SHOULD BE DONE AT 3 YEARS OF AGE OR BEFORE STARTING PRESCHOOL AND EVERY YEAR THEREAFTER.

**WHAT TO EXPECT AT AN EYE EXAM**  
MAKE AN APPOINTMENT:  
VSP.COM  
FIND A DOCTOR, SEARCH FOR A VSP DOCTOR NEAR YOU BY VISUAL ADDRESS.

**DURING YOUR EXAM:**

- COMPLETE MEDICAL FORMS
- LOOK AT AN EYE CHART
- GENERAL VISION CHECK AND PRESCRIPTION
- Eye Teaming Test + Glaucoma Test or "puff test" + Refraction + Pupil Dilation + Slit Lamp Exam

**AFTER YOUR EXAM:**  
SELECT YOUR FRAMES OR CONTACT LENSES.  
START SEEING CLEARLY.

**OTHER THINGS YOUR EYES CAN TELL YOU**

ONE STUDY FOUND THAT EYE DOCTORS WERE THE FIRST TO IDENTIFY SIGNS OF DIABETES, 34% OF THE TIME, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE 39% OF THE TIME, AND HIGH CHOLESTEROL 62% OF THE TIME.

"Good eye care is more than just seeing signs or being able to read. As we know, it really can affect more than that. Your eyes are the window to the world. They are the first to see the signs of disease, not to have them checked out regularly."

- Tracie Fobes, Penny Pinchin' Mom

**TALK OF THE TOWN**  
2013

**vsp.**  
Vision care for life

Did you know that doctors now recommend that children as young as six months old should have their first comprehensive eye exam? And not only is correcting vision problems crucial for

**An eye exam can detect such health problems as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.**

happiness and success, but an eye exam can detect such health problems as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Experts say eye care should be a lifelong commitment, with eye exams beginning in infancy and progressing at different intervals as you age.

Unfortunately, visits to the eye doctor can be a financial hurdle for families without vision insurance. To help these families overcome this obstacle, the vision care experts at VSP have built

a free online service at [vsp.com](http://vsp.com) where you can now find eye doctors and affordable vision plans.

"Little eyes are precious things to protect, and ensuring our kids can see well grants them not only a richer view of the world, but better tools to learn," says Tracie Fobes, the blogger behind Penny Pinchin' Mom. "Thankfully, we have great vision insurance, and keeping up on our kids' vision care has not been a financial burden."

*Courtesy of StatePoint*



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*ivanko80 - Fotolia.com*

## Coffee

FROM PAGE 2

It also provides a natural source of pre- and probiotics for better digestive health. To learn more about its health benefits, visit [BioCoffee.com](http://BioCoffee.com).

"With so many people failing to eat enough vegetables, drinking your greens in the form of coffee may be one of the most convenient ways to get one's daily dose, in addition to a variety of other health benefits," says Dr. Tom Shreves, MD, a Bio Coffee drinker.

"It can also help you avoid the issues associated with a typical cup of coffee."

While most coffee lovers are unlikely to put their mugs down, Bio Coffee can provide a healthy morning ritual.

*Courtesy of StatePoint*

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**SENIORS**

# 5 smart, easy steps to preserving brain health

Everyone knows aerobic exercise gets the heart pumping and lifting weights keeps muscles strong. But when it comes to keeping the brain healthy, most people are unsure what to do.

As you age, brain health and maintaining memory functions becomes a top concern. Turns out, these issues may begin sooner than you think.

"We tend to think about memory decline as an older person's issue, but that's not the case at all," says Dr. Aimee Gould Shunney, a licensed naturopathic doctor specializing

in women's health and family medicine. "There was a study published in 2012 in the British Medical Journal that examined cognitive function in people age 45 to 70. The researchers did not expect it, but they found evidence of cognitive decline in the 45-year-old participants as well as the older participants."

She notes there are two basic pathological processes that cause degeneration of the brain: oxidative stress and inflammation. Basically, the standard American diet and lifestyle contribute

to those processes. No matter your age, you can take charge of your brain health by following these five smart steps from Dr. Shunney:

## Healthy eating

"A Mediterranean-type diet that focuses on whole foods, good fats and foods high in antioxidants is a great place to start," says Dr. Shunney.

She encourages her patients to focus on getting omega-3 fats from fish and monounsaturated fats from olives, olive oil, nuts and seeds. She also recommends increasing



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- *Journal of Chiropractic Medicine* 2008

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fruits (especially berries) and beans (they're packed with antioxidants). What's more, research shows a little cocoa, coffee and red wine can act as antioxidants and are beneficial in low to moderate amounts.

## Supplements

In addition to a quality multivitamin, Dr. Shunney recommends an omega-3 supplement. "Getting enough omega-3s is one of the most important measures we can take," she

says. "DHA is the dominant omega-3 in the brain."

She suggests Omega Memory by Nordic Naturals. Learn more at [www.nordicnaturals.com](http://www.nordicnaturals.com).

## Regular sleep

Poor sleep is a risk factor for cognitive decline. "Studies show both sleep deprivation and sleeping too much impact cognitive performance," Dr. Shunney says. "A good goal is to go to bed around the same time each night, sleep

for 7-8 hours, and get up around the same time every morning."

## Thinking activities

"I recommend anything that keeps your mind working," says Dr. Shunney. "Activities that require things to be arranged or puzzles that have to be put together. Crossword puzzles, word games and board games are all great."

## Socialize

"Social isolation has been linked with cognitive decline," says Dr. Shunney. "In one study, people who were lonely experienced cognitive decline at a 20 percent faster rate than people who were not lonely."

Make time to take a foreign language class, join a Toastmaster's Club, take a watercolor class - anything that connects you regularly to other people.

*Courtesy of BrandPoint*



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**HOMEOPATHIC**

# How you can safely treat common illnesses

For short-term conditions that come on quickly like the common cold, to chronic conditions such as arthritis or allergies, homeopathic medicines are among the safest types of drugs, say experts.

"Homeopathic treatments offer another choice for those looking for low-risk over-the-counter options with natural active ingredients," says Mark Land, president of the American Association of Homeopathic Pharmacists (AAHP), which represents the majority of the manufacturers, distributors and marketers of homeopathic products.

While many may be unfamiliar with homeopathy, Land and the experts at AAHP offer some useful facts that could help you approach illness differently in the future.

## What is Homeopathy?

Contrary to common belief, "homeopathy" is not a synonym for "natural" or "herbal supplement." It's a specific system of medicine that uses high dilutions of plants, animals or minerals to relieve the same symptoms that they can cause at full strength. For example, a micro-dose of a coffee bean can help alleviate nervousness.



SWAPAN - FOTOLIA.COM

In 2015, the America Association of Poison Controls Center prepared a report for AAHP. It showed less than one percent of all pharmaceutical reports to the nationwide network involved homeopathic medicine.

The medicines' health claims are based on traditional uses of these 200-year-old active ingredients.

Given their long history, the products are not evaluated through the Food and Drug Administration's new drug approval process. However, the agency oversees their manufacturing and marketing.

## Safety Benefits

Amassing a long record of safety, these traditional homeopathic remedies demonstrate very little possibility of adverse events.

In 2015, the America Association of Poison Controls Center prepared a report for AAHP. It showed less than one percent of all pharmaceutical reports to the na-

tionwide network involved homeopathic medicine. For the \$1.2 billion homeopathic industry, this is proportionally below the rate of its market share of non-prescription drugs in general.

Generally, homeopathic preparations have very low risk of side effects, overdose, or interaction with conventional medications

or herbal remedies, according to the AAHP. They also don't mask or suppress symptoms, which is helpful in the case of misdiagnoses.

## Where Can You Find It?

Local health food stores provide an abundance of homeopathic choices for a wide variety of conditions,

**Contrary to common belief, "homeopathy" is not a synonym for "natural" or "herbal supplement."**

while national retailers, including drugstores, offer popular top sellers. Prices are competitive with their conventional counterparts.

## What to Look For?

Product labels provide familiar drug information, including what the item treats and instructions for use. The active ingredients are Latin for their source and are followed by a dilution level. For more information about homeopathy, visit [aahp.info/consumer-information](http://aahp.info/consumer-information).

The next time you are under the weather, consider a homeopathic remedy. Due to the safety features, these therapeutic options are ideal as a first-sign-of-symptom defense before a condition escalates.

*Courtesy of StatePoint*

## Heart Disease

Heart disease can affect just about anyone. While it was once widely and mistakenly considered a man's disease, since 1984, more women than men have died each year from heart disease. According to the Harvard Medical School, heart disease is the leading cause of death in women over age 65, just as it's the leading killer of men.

Myths abound with regard to heart disease and heart attack risk. One such myth that prevails is that a person who has heart disease should avoid all exercise. However, cardiologists advise that physical activity can help to strengthen the heart, which will improve blood flow to the brain and internal organs.

Those who want to exercise should speak with their doctors about which types of exercise are right for them. In the interim, begin with some low-intensity walking, as this is usually a safe, low-impact way to improve personal health.

*MetroCreative*



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