

DOCTORS DIRECT HEALTHCARE NEWS

May 2016

YOUR SOURCE FOR HEALTH NEWS AND TIPS

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HEALTHCARE CONSUMERISM TIP: SAVE \$ BY LEARNING TO AVOID HEALTHCARE PITFALLS

QUESTION: I want to better understand healthcare cost issues? What should I read?

ANSWER: We recommend reading the *New York Times* "Paying Till It Hurts" series.

In 2013, nearly 10 million insured adults had medical bills they couldn't pay off. Nearly 3 in 5 personal bankruptcies are due to medical bills. "Paying Till It Hurts" is an investigational journalism series by Elisabeth Rosenthal, M.D. of the *New York Times*. Each installment examines a common medical issue, such as drug prices, vaccines, emergency room use, childbirth, and colonoscopy. Doctor Rosenthal interviews patients, physicians, economists, and hospital and industry officials and writes about the things that lead to unexpected and unaffordable medical bills. If you want to avoid surprise medical bills and unnecessary costs, "Paying Till It Hurts" is a must read.

Paying Till It Hurts	On the Web
New York Times	www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/health/paying-till-it-hurts.html
Facebook	www.facebook.com/groups/payingtillithurts
Twitter	twitter.com/hashtag/payingtillithurts
Twitter	twitter.com/nytrosenthal

Two other resources for learning to save money when interacting with the healthcare system are (1) True Cost of Health Care (truecostof-healthcare.net), and (2) Save on Medical (www.saveonmedical.com/blog). True Cost of Health Care is the brainchild of David Belk, M.D., and covers what he's taught his patients to do to save money. The Save on Medical blog posts several articles a month on different ways to save money on medical services.

www.DoctorsDirectHealthcare.net

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EXERCISE CORNER: GET ACTIVE DURING PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SPORTS MONTH

May is *National Physical Fitness and Sports Month*. The centerpiece is *The President's Challenge*, which helps people of all ages and abilities improve their overall health and fitness through a suite of recognition programs. One of these programs is targeted at children. It's called the *Presidential Youth Fitness Program*. If you have a child, check whether their school will be participating, and, if so, offer encouragement and recognition to your child. Find out more at www.pyfp.org.

The adult (or family) recognition program is the *Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA+)*. This is an 8-week challenge designed to help us eat better and get more active. You can track your progress by creating an individual online account and after eight weeks earn a *Presidential Active Lifestyle Award*. All it takes is a commitment to (1) being active for 30 minutes a day, at least 5 days a week, for 6 out of 8 weeks, and (2) eating healthy by choosing and focusing on a healthy eating goal for 6 out of 8 weeks. Sign up at www.presidentschallenge.org.

TAKE THE ADULT FITNESS TEST

The President's Fitness Test isn't just for kids. There's an adult version called *The Adult Fitness Test*. The test covers (1) Aerobic Fitness (400 M walk, one-mile walk, or 1.5 mile run), (2) Muscular Strength and Endurance (Half Sit-ups and Push-ups), (3) Flexibility (Sit-and-Reach Test), and (4) Body Composition (BMI and Waist Circumference). After completing these testing activities, enter your data at www.adultfitnesstest.org, and receive an evaluation.

GO SCREENFREE FOR 1 WEEK

As a society we are spending more of our leisure hours in front of some type of a screen—watching television, playing video and mobile games, and using computers, tablets, and smart phones. Health experts say screen time at home should be limited to two hours or less a day. *ScreenFree Week* (May 2-8) challenges us to turn OFF TV, video and mobile games, and other screens we use for entertainment, and turn ON the world around us for just one week. Can you meet this challenge? Find out more at www.screenfree.org.



SPEND TIME BICYCLING

May is *National Bike Month*, which means it's the ideal time to use a bicycle to get some outdoors exercise. Bicycling is good for our heart and immune system. It lowers stress, trims waistlines, and tones muscles. And, more importantly, it's fun! Warmer weather makes it easier to enjoy the outdoors on a bicycle. The longer days means it's still light enough to go for an after work bicycle ride with family or friends. The beginning of bicycling season is a great time to join a local bicycling group. Check on MeetUp.com to find a group near you.

May has several bicycling events. May 4th is *Bike to School Day*, the perfect day to bike to school with your child. Find out more at www.walkbiketoschool.org. *Bike to Work Week* is May 16th to 20th and *Bike to Work Day* is May 20th. This is a good week to use your bicycle to commute to work.

JOIN THE NATIONAL BIKE CHALLENGE

May 1st is the kickoff of the *National Bike Challenge* (nationalbikechallenge.org). Get in better shape, win prizes, and meet new people. You can participate as an individual, as part of a team, or with a group from work. Joining the *National Bike Challenge* is a free and easy way to challenge yourself, your colleagues and your community to ride more and to earn prizes and recognition for each mile you bicycle. Join the Facebook group (www.facebook.com/nationalbikechallenge). app (free for Apple and Android).

PROJECT ACES DAY (MAY 4)

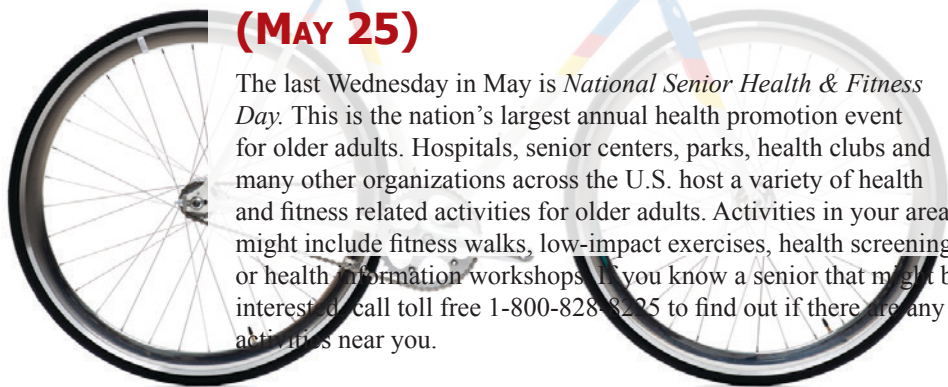
Project ACES Day (All Children Exercise Simultaneously) is held on the first Wednesday in May. This has been called "the world's largest exercise class," because, at 10AM local time, millions of children, parents and teachers from all over the world will exercise simultaneously as a gesture of fitness and unity. Find out more at www.lensaunders.com/aces.

PACES DAY (MAY 7)

Exercising at school is great. Exercising at school and at home is even better. *PACES Day* (Parents And Children Exercise Simultaneously) is on the Saturday following *Project Aces Day* and is dedicated to getting families to exercise together, promoting both exercise time and family time. Parents are encouraged to exercise with their children for 15-45 minutes sometime on May 7th.

NATIONAL SENIOR HEALTH & FITNESS DAY (MAY 25)

The last Wednesday in May is *National Senior Health & Fitness Day*. This is the nation's largest annual health promotion event for older adults. Hospitals, senior centers, parks, health clubs and many other organizations across the U.S. host a variety of health and fitness related activities for older adults. Activities in your area might include fitness walks, low-impact exercises, health screenings, or health information workshops. If you know a senior that might be interested, call toll free 1-800-828-8225 to find out if there are any activities near you.



NATIONAL HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE EDUCATION MONTH

Almost 7 out of 10 adults have high blood pressure (hypertension) or prehypertension. High blood pressure can lead to heart attacks and stroke, two of the leading causes of death. To bring attention to this major health issue May is *National High Blood Pressure Education Month*. This means it's the perfect month for learning more about your blood pressure and taking diet & lifestyle steps to improve it.

Blood pressure (BP) is written as two numbers. The first (and larger) number is systolic BP. This is the pressure in blood vessels when the heart beats. The second number is diastolic BP. This is the pressure in vessels when the heart rests between beats. A reading of 120 systolic and 80 diastolic would usually be stated as "120 over 80." This May find out your BP numbers. Your doctor can measure your BP. You can also get an accurate BP assessment done by using a machine (available at many pharmacies or to buy for use at home).

We recommend you follow at least several of these blood pressure-friendly diet & lifestyle steps this month: (1) Try the DASH Diet (**D**ietary **A**pproaches to **S**top **H**ypertension [dashdiet.org]) or the *Mediterranean Diet* (see the Mediterranean Diet article), (2) Get more sleep (see the Better Sleep Month article), (3) Become more physically active, (4) Lower stress, (5) Reduce belly fat and lose weight, (6) Quit smoking and avoid second-hand smoke, (7) Watch less TV and spend less leisure time on computers or playing video games (see ScreenFree Week article), (8) Avoid soft drinks & fast food, and (9) Keep alcohol to a moderate amount (i.e., a maximum of 2 drinks daily for men; a maximum of 1 drink daily for women).

Check out *Million Hearts*™ some time this May. This is a national initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. One of its steps is called "Know your ABCs," where B stands for Blood Pressure Control. Find out more at millionhearts.hhs.gov.

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic Blood Pressure		Diastolic Blood Pressure
Normal	<120	and	<80
Prehypertension	120-139	or	80-89
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1	140-159	or	90-99
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2	160-179	or	100-109
Hypertensive Crisis (Emergency care needed)	≥180	or	≥110

WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY (MAY 31)

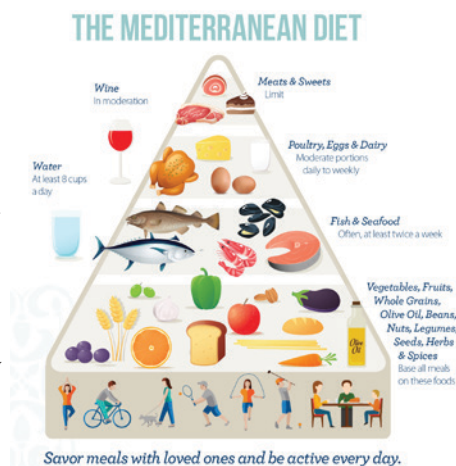
World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) is observed around the world on May 31st. The goal is to get tobacco users to abstain from all forms of tobacco (e.g., cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, cigars) for 24 hours. If you are a current tobacco user, can you give up tobacco for a day? If you aren't, but have a family member or close friend who is, can you encourage them to quit? If you have been considering quitting tobacco products, May 31st is a great time to call a Quitline toll-free at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669) to get free support with quitting tobacco.

MAY 31st
World No Tobacco
Day
Call Quitline
800-QUIT-NOW

MEDITERRANEAN DIET MONTH

The Mediterranean Diet is inspired by the traditional diets of southern Italy, Greece, and Spain. It (1) is heart-healthy, (2) prevents diabetes and high blood pressure, and (3) promotes weight loss. The principles of this diet are to (1) use olive oil as your main added fat/oil, (2) eat plenty of nuts, seeds, beans, legumes, and whole cereal grains, (3) enjoy an abundance of fruits and vegetables, (4) have fish at least a few meals a week and eat low amounts of meat and meat products, (5) eat a moderate amount of dairy products (mostly as cheese and yogurt), and (6) drink plenty of water and, if you drink alcohol, make it red wine in moderation.

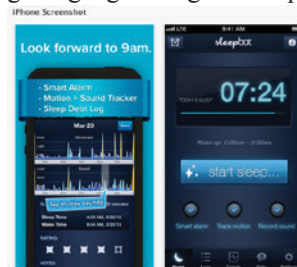
No matter what you are currently doing, making your diet more Mediterranean



diet-like is as easy as 1, 2, and 3. (1) Add at least 1 tablespoon of olive oil to something you eat every day. Make sure you add it after the food is cooked, or use it to dip bread or vegetables. (2) Have a small handful of nuts daily. (3) Have a cup of plain yogurt once a day. To find out more about the Mediterranean Diet visit oldwayspt.org.

BETTER SLEEP MONTH

A good night's sleep makes everything just a little bit better. We perform better at work, have more motivation to do healthy things (like eat well and exercise), feel happier and more full of energy, and much, much more. Some of us don't get enough sleep, because we don't allow enough time. Others struggle to get enough quality sleep because of a sleep issue or complaint (like sleep apnea or insomnia). And some of us try to sleep in an environment that isn't ideal for getting a good night's sleep (it's too light, too noisy, etc.).



During Better Sleep Month do something to improve your sleep. Go to bed earlier (30-60 minutes earlier is a good starting place). Make your bedroom environment darker or quieter. Try a sleep app like SleepBot (mysleepbot.com).

WOMAN'S HEALTH



National Women's Health Week (May 8th-14th) and *National Women's Checkup Day* (May 9th) are this month. These two events are intended to remind women to (1) get regular medical check-ups and preventive screenings, (2) be active, (3) eat healthy, and (4) avoid unhealthy (e.g., smoking) or unsafe (e.g., texting and driving, not wearing a seatbelt) behaviors. Find out more at www.womenshealth.gov/nwhw.

OTHER MAY NATIONAL HEALTH OBSERVANCES (NHO)

Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, & World Asthma Day (May 3rd): May is the peak of allergy and asthma season. Find out more at www.aafa.org.

Skin Cancer Awareness Month: Late Spring means it's time to start thinking about sun safety. All month has a focus on detecting and preventing skin cancer. Many organizations offer free skin cancer screenings as part of *Melanoma Monday* (May 4th) and throughout the month (www.melanomamonday.org). The Friday before Memorial Day weekend is *Don't Fry Day*. *North American Occupational Safety and Health Week* (May 1st-7th): This is held every year to

raise awareness about health and safety in the workplace, in an effort to prevent injuries and illnesses. Find out more at www.naosh.org.



MAY FOOD HOLIDAYS

Asparagus Month: Buy and cook some of this super healthy vegetable this month.

Egg Month: Eggs help prevent diabetes, and, despite having cholesterol, moderate egg consumption—up to one a day—does not increase heart disease risk in healthy individuals.

Salad Month: Can you eat a salad every day this month as a Salad Month Challenge?

Strawberry Month: Peak strawberry season in the U.S. is from April through June. Make sure you look for fresh strawberries where you shop.

Raisin Week: The first week of May is Raisin Week. Raisins are a convenient and healthy snack: Bring some to work this week.

Orange Juice Day (May 4th): Have a glass, or better yet an entire orange, to celebrate.

Pick Strawberries Day (May 20th): Is there a strawberry farm near you? Find out at www.pickyourown.org.

Wine Day (May 25th): If you drink, enjoy a glass of wine to celebrate.

May 2016

Doctors Direct

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 National Bike Challenge Starts	2 ScreenFree Week Melanoma Monday®	3 ScreenFree Week World Asthma Day	4 ScreenFree Week Bike to School Day Project Aces Day	5 ScreenFree Week Cinco De Mayo	6 ScreenFree Week	7 ScreenFree Week PACES Day
8 ScreenFree Week Mother's Day Women's Health Week	9 Women's Health Week Women's Check-Up Day	10 Women's Health Week	11 Women's Health Week	12 Women's Health Week	13 Women's Health Week	14 Women's Health Week
15	16 Bike to Work Week	17 Bike to Work Week	18 Bike to Work Week	19 Bike to Work Week	20 Bike to Work Week Bike to Work Day Pick Strawberries Day	21 Armed Forces Day
22	23	24	25 Senior Health & Fitness Day Wine Day	26	27 Don't Fry Day	28
29	30 Memorial Day	31 World No Tobacco Day				