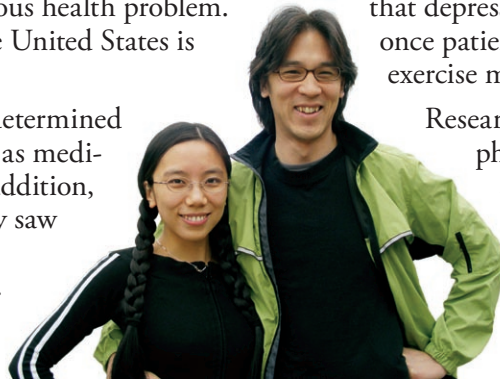


## Exercise Is Good for Your Mental Health

Depression is a very common and serious health problem. The most prescribed medication in the United States is anti-depressants.

Researchers at Duke University have determined that regular exercise is just as effective as medication in treating depression. And in addition, the people who exercised in their study saw improvements in mental function that those on medication didn't experience. The researchers also found that staying active greatly reduces the chance



that depression will return. They observed that once patients started feeling better, they tended to exercise more, which made them feel even better.

Research continues to confirm that regular physical activity not only helps the heart and circulation, but it directly impacts the brain and emotional health, helping improve your mood and helping you maintain good mental health.

*Duke University News and Communication. August 2008.*

## Eating Fiber Helps Your Heart

Cardiovascular disease remains the primary cause of death and disability worldwide. An easy way to help your heart that is often overlooked is to eat high-fiber foods. Eating foods that are high in soluble fiber can lower your LDL cholesterol levels, which in turn decreases your risk for both coronary heart disease and stroke. Foods highest in soluble fiber for reducing cholesterol levels include:

- **Whole grains:** oatmeal, oat bran, psyllium, brown rice, barley
- **Legumes:** peas, beans, lentils, garbanzos, soy beans, tofu
- **Fresh fruit:** oranges, pears, apple, berries, melons, peaches
- **Vegetables:** salads, tomatoes, carrots, greens, broccoli, Brussels sprouts

Aim for 10-25 grams of soluble fiber daily.

*American Heart Association. 2008.*

You can get a list of foods high in soluble fiber at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/chd/Tipsheets/solfiber.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/chd/Tipsheets/solfiber.htm)

## Sweet Drinks Increase Diabetes Risk

A new study confirms that soft drinks and sweetened fruit drinks (e.g., lemonade, fruit punch) increase the risk of developing diabetes. In the study, women drinking 2 or more soft drinks daily were 51% more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than women seldom drinking soft drinks. For sweetened fruit drinks, the risk was 37% higher. Researchers also found that women who increased their intake of sugar-sweetened soft drinks during the study had a considerably higher weight gain during the 6-year study than did women who reduced consumption.

In the Nurses' Health Study, women consuming 1 or more soft drinks daily had an 83% increased risk of diabetes

compared to women who seldom drank soft drinks (fewer than 1 a month). Women who drank sweetened fruit drinks daily were twice as likely to develop diabetes as those seldom drinking these sweetened fruit drinks.

When you're thirsty, nothing beats pure water! When drinking juice, make sure it's pure fruit juice (no added sugar) for best health – and drink it moderately (6 oz/per day). The study saw no increase in diabetes risk from drinking pure orange or grapefruit juice.

*Archives of Internal Medicine. July 28, 2008.*

*Journal of the American Medical Association. August 25, 2004.*

## Keep Your Goblins Safe

The fun of Halloween includes dressing up, bobbing for apples, and calling out "Trick or Treat!" You remember the excitement of rushing from door to door with your friends and family, hoping for lots of your favorite treats. But today's world is different. Read some ways to keep Halloween safe, friendly, healthy, and fun for your children. You can even celebrate Halloween in non-traditional ways, and still create happy memories for you and your family.

[www.wellsources.info/handouts/safe-goblins.pdf](http://www.wellsources.info/handouts/safe-goblins.pdf)



## Is It a Food Allergy? Probably Not

One-third of Americans believe they have food allergies. In reality, only 2% of adults and up to 6% of children – an estimated 4 million Americans – actually have them. The rest suffer from food intolerance.

With a food allergy, your body perceives a food as an enemy and wages war to rid it from your system.

- If you are allergic to a particular food, you may first feel itching in your mouth as you start to eat it.
- After the food is digested in your stomach, you may have GI symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, or pain.
- When the food allergens enter and travel through your bloodstream, they may cause your blood pressure to drop.
- As the allergens reach your skin, they can cause hives or eczema.
- When the allergens reach your mouth and lungs, they may cause throat tightness and trouble breathing.

Learn more about food intolerance at: [www3.niaid.nih.gov/topics/foodAllergy/understanding/foodIntolerance.htm](http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/topics/foodAllergy/understanding/foodIntolerance.htm)

An allergic reaction to food can take place a few minutes up to a day after eating. If you suspect a food allergy, see an allergy specialist. Even if you start out with mild symptoms, repeated exposure to the allergen can sensitize you so that eventually you could suffer severe consequences. Severe reactions can occur with as little as 1/5,000 of a teaspoon of the offending food. If you have a true food allergy, you must completely avoid the food.

Food intolerance occurs when your body cannot adequately digest a portion of the food. (Remember, most likely you have food intolerance rather than an allergy.)

Food intolerance can be uncomfortable, but it's not life threatening. Try these strategies:

- If you suspect you are intolerant to a particular food, eat the food 2-3 times in a row. Keep a food journal of what you eat and what reaction, if any, you have.
- If it's a small problem, eat the food in smaller amounts or less frequently.
- If it's a larger problem, try the food in a different form. If your body lacks the enzyme lactase, for example, you'll likely have cramps and diarrhea if you consume milk. But, many lactase-intolerant people can eat yogurt.
- You cannot be allergic to an entire food group. If you find you're sensitive to walnuts, try almonds and Brazil nuts. If you have bloating and gas from eating red beans, try white beans. If peaches upset your stomach, try pears.

*National Institutes of Health. 2008.*



### Common Food Allergies

In adults, the foods that most often cause allergic reactions include:

- Shellfish such as shrimp, crayfish, lobster, and crab
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts such as walnuts
- Fish
- Eggs



The most common foods that cause problems in children are:

- Eggs
- Milk
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts

Peanuts and tree nuts are the leading causes of the potentially deadly food allergy reaction called anaphylaxis.

## Stay Active in the Rain or Snow

You're not alone if you find it difficult to keep up with your walking program on rainy, windy, snowy, cold winter days. Here are some suggestions to help you stay active:

1. **Invest in a water-resistant wind-breaker or vest.** Avoid wearing a rubberized/vinyl rain slicker. They're great for taking a leisurely stroll through the rain, but if you exercise in them, you'll be as wet inside the slicker (from sweat, as you would be with no jacket at all!



2. **Dress in layers**, with a reflective or brightly colored jacket for the outside layer.
3. **Wear a light cotton/nylon garment** under your outer jacket to provide extra protection against moisture.
4. If you have trouble keeping your feet warm, **wear two layers of socks** – with moisture-wicking socks next to your skin.
5. **Choose shoes with good traction.**
6. **Wear warm gloves**, a cap or hat, and a scarf around your neck.

*American Red Cross. 2008.*

### ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

**Q:** How can I fit an exercise plan into my busy work schedule?

**A:** Busy schedules are a challenge for many people, maybe most. Here are some thoughts that might help. Go to [www.wellsource.info/ask-NoTime4Exercise.pdf](http://www.wellsource.info/ask-NoTime4Exercise.pdf) to read the entire answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.