Self-care from A to Z
THINGS TO KNOW AND DO FOR YOUR HEALTH
This guide does not replace the advice or care of a doctor. Call or go to a doctor or clinic if you have questions or concerns about your health.
This book is for our neighbors, friends, and families. Everyone needs clear, useful information that helps them care for their health. We hope that this book serves this need — and helps us all build a more healthy community.
This self-care guide was...

Guided by Intermountain Healthcare Healthy Communities
This guide was originally developed as part of a health literacy initiative led by Delia Rochon from Intermountain Healthcare Healthy Communities program. The goal of the initiative was to improve health in our community by enabling better health communication and better access to medical services.

Created by Intermountain Patient and Provider Publications
To create this guide, our team surveyed and distilled the best evidence-based information and presented it in what we hope is an inviting, easy-to-use way. In this way, we hope to give our diverse audience the knowledge and confidence they need to manage their health.

Reviewed by Intermountain Healthcare medical experts
Many Intermountain physicians and other medical experts donated their time to review the information in this guide. Our special thanks to these professionals, listed below.

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Allergy

What is it?

An allergy is when your body overreacts to something that’s harmless to most other people. Here are some common things people are allergic to:

• **Pollen and mold.** Many people are allergic to pollen from trees, weeds, and grasses. Mold growth is a big problem in wet areas.

• **Dust mites.** Dust mites are tiny bugs you can’t see, but are everywhere. They feed off of dust, dirt, dead skin, and other harmless things in our homes.

• **Animals.** Many people are allergic to cats, dogs, and other pets. Being around these animals brings on symptoms.

• **Insect bites or stings.** If you are allergic, your reaction could effect your whole body. It will be worse than the usual redness, swelling, and itching most people have where the bite is.

• **Chemicals.** You can be allergic to chemicals in cleaners, paints, or soaps. Some people are allergic to latex (such as in latex gloves).

• **Medicines.** Some people are allergic to medicines prescribed by a doctor. But you can also be allergic to things you buy at the store. Even herbs can cause problems.

• **Foods.** Foods most likely to cause allergies are milk, soy, eggs, wheat, seafood, peanuts, and tree nuts. But you can have an allergy to any food.
What will I see or feel?

Your symptoms depend on whether you have breathed, touched, or swallowed something you’re allergic to. They also depend on how much of the substance you have been in contact with.

Here are a few ways your body may react:

- Itchy, watery eyes
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sneezing
- Coughing, a whistling sound (wheezing) when you breathe out, or trouble breathing
- Skin rash or hives
- Upset stomach or cramps
- Diarrhea

Symptoms can be mild or serious. See the box on page 8 for signs to watch for.

What can I do?

Allergies usually can’t be cured, though some children outgrow them. There are things you can do to avoid or treat the symptoms. If you think you have an allergy, do these things:

- **Visit your doctor or clinic.** A doctor can help you know if you have an allergy. A doctor can also tell you how to ease symptoms. Sometimes a doctor will prescribe medicine or allergy shots.
• **Stay away from things you are allergic to.**

  This can ease your symptoms. Here are some ideas:

  – **Pollen.** Shower or bathe every night to wash off pollen. Avoid going outside on dry, windy days. Keep your windows and doors shut. Keep your lawn cut short. Change your furnace filters monthly.

  – **Mold.** If you have a mold problem in your house, remove whatever is moldy. Get rid of your swamp cooler or houseplants. Replace moldy drywall. Always use a cleaner with bleach to clean moist areas like the bathroom.

  – **Dust mites.** Get rid of your swamp cooler if you have one. Wash all bedding in very hot water once a week or more. Wipe down furniture with a damp cloth twice a month. Put filters over heat vents.

  – **Animals.** Don’t stay in a house with a pet you are allergic to. If the pet is yours, keep it out of the bedroom. If your allergies are very bad, find another home for your pet. Some types of dogs, cats, and other animals shed less allergens. If you must have a pet, ask about those types.

  – **Medicine.** If your doctor has prescribed medicine, take it as directed. Many helpful medicines don’t need a doctor’s prescription. You can buy them at a pharmacy or grocery store. Look for medicines that say “antihistamine.” Some newer types of antihistamines don’t make you sleepy and may be better to use. Ask your pharmacist to help you choose.

  – **Nose sprays or eye drops.** Sometimes your doctor may suggest nose sprays or eye drops to help your symptoms. Follow your doctor’s directions for how to use these safely.
Call 911 or go to the hospital emergency room for:

- Swelling of the face or throat
- Trouble swallowing
- Trouble breathing
- Being dizzy or passing out
- Coughing and vomiting

These are signs of a dangerous allergic reaction. Get medical help right away!

Call or go to the doctor or clinic if:

- Your whole body has reacted strongly to a bite or sting (bee, wasp, hornet, fire ant, and so on)
- Your body has had a bad reaction to food or medicine

Talk to the doctor about a shot called epinephrine. The doctor may suggest you have this on hand in case of an emergency. You can give this shot to yourself. Others can also give you this shot by following simple directions. It could save your life.
Anxiety

What is it?

Feeling anxious is a normal part of life. But sometimes tension, worries, and fear get so bad that they cause problems with everyday life. When this happens, you may have a disorder called anxiety.

Anxiety can make it hard to sleep and hard to work. It may also cause problems in your relationships with family and friends. But as with other medical problems, you can get treatment. You can recover and live your life normally again.

What will I feel?

Anxiety symptoms can be different for each person. Here are some of the most common types of symptoms:

- **You may worry all the time.** You feel tense, tired, and restless. You may sweat, shake, or have trouble sleeping.

- **You may have a strong fear of everyday social situations.** You have trouble talking to people you don’t know. You may be afraid to leave the house.

- **You may have panic attacks.** These are times of sudden, overwhelming fear. Your heart pounds or races. You may wonder if you’re dying or going crazy. You may have trouble breathing and think you are having a heart attack.
• **You have frightening thoughts, memories, or nightmares** about something bad that happened earlier in your life.

• **You have thoughts that you can’t get out of your head.** You don’t know why you have these thoughts. Sometimes these thoughts make you feel the need to do certain things again and again just to feel okay.

**What can I do?**

Don’t let anxiety get in the way of a normal life. Instead, do these things:

• **Visit a doctor or clinic.** A doctor can help you know if your symptoms come from an anxiety disorder, another illness, or both.

• **Stick with your treatment.** The main treatments are counseling (talk therapy) and medicine. You and your doctor can decide together what’s best for you. But once you have a treatment plan, stick with it! Keep appointments with a counselor. Take medicine as directed. Don’t change what you’re doing without asking your doctor first.
• **Set healthy goals for recovery.** You may not feel like sticking to your goals at first. But try to do it anyway. You will be glad you did. Here are some areas to work on:

– **Healthy relationships.** Having a close friend or loved one to share your concerns and plans can really help. Don’t pull back from other people right now. Instead, set goals to get the support you need.

  *Example goals:* Phone a friend every day. Attend scheduled events. Join a support group. Leave the house at least once each day. Volunteer.

– **Healthy body.** Taking care of your body will help your mind, too. Set goals to make sure this happens.

  *Example goals:* Go for a walk every day. Drink 8 glasses of water each day. Eat 2 cups of fruit and 2 cups of vegetables every day. Avoid alcohol. Get about 8 hours of sleep every night.

– **Healthy spirit.** Right now, it’s good to reconnect with things that used to be fun, fulfilling, and meaningful for you. If you don’t have a hobby, start one!

Call or go to the doctor or clinic if:

- You think treatment isn’t working
- You have bad side effects from your medicine
- You want to stop treatment
- You are thinking of hurting yourself or others
- You think things would be better if you were dead
Asthma

What is it?

Asthma is a problem with your breathing tubes. With asthma, these tubes swell or spasm (like a muscle cramp). This makes it hard for you to breathe.

Asthma can come and go, but some people have symptoms every day. Asthma can make it hard for you have a normal, active life. If asthma symptoms are really bad, you could die. That’s why you should pay attention to your asthma. You need to know what to look for and what you can do to control asthma.

What will I see or feel?

You may not have asthma symptoms all of the time. Instead, you may have them only sometimes, or at a certain time of the day. When you have symptoms, it’s called an asthma flare-up or asthma attack. Here’s what you might see or feel:

- A cough, especially a cough at night
- Wheezing, a small whistling sound when you breathe out
- A tight feeling in your chest
- Trouble taking a deep breath
- Skin between the ribs and below the throat pulling in with each breath
At different times, your symptoms can be mild or serious. During a serious asthma attack, you may need to see a doctor right away. See the boxes on page 16 for signs to watch for.

**What can I do?**

Learning to control your asthma is important and could save your life. Most people with asthma can live a normal, active life if they follow these steps:

- **Take your medicine.** A doctor can give you medicine to use if you have an asthma attack. You may also get medicine to prevent attacks. Taking this medicine will lower your chance of having an asthma attack. Take this prevention medicine every day, even when you feel good. It is the best way to prevent problems.
• **Manage your triggers.** When do you get symptoms? What makes your asthma worse? The answers help you know your **triggers**, the things that can bring on your asthma attacks. A big part of controlling your asthma is managing your triggers. Here are ideas for how to do this:

  – **Colds and flu.** Do colds or flu cause your asthma attacks? If so, get a flu shot every year at a clinic. Wash your hands often. And if you do get sick, watch your symptoms carefully. It’s best to treat an asthma attack early on, when symptoms are mild.

  – **Allergies.** Many people with asthma are allergic to pets, pollen, dust, or other things. If you are allergic to something, try to avoid it. See page 7 of this guide for ideas. If your allergies are very bad, see your doctor.

  – **Exercise.** Even if exercise makes your asthma worse, don’t give up exercising! Exercise is good for every part of your body — including your lungs. Instead, talk to your doctor. Your doctor can give you medicine so that your asthma won’t get in the way of exercise.
• **See your doctor regularly.** Asthma is a life-long condition. So even if you feel fine, see your doctor at least once a year. If you are having asthma attacks more than twice a week, call for an appointment today.

• **Use an Asthma Action Plan.** Ask your doctor to fill out an Asthma Action Plan for you. This is a simple, one-page plan for controlling your asthma. It tells you how to take your medicine, what symptoms to watch for, and when to call the doctor.

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**Call 911 or go to the hospital emergency room for:**

- A lot of trouble breathing
- Trouble walking or playing
- Trouble talking
- Gray or slightly blue skin color

These are signs of a serious asthma attack (flare-up). Get medical help right away!

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**Call or go to the doctor or clinic if:**

- You think treatment isn’t working
- You have asthma attacks (flare-ups) more than twice a week
- Your symptoms get in the way of exercise, school, or work
- You have any questions about your asthma treatment
Back Pain

What is it?
Most people have back pain or soreness sometime in their lives. It’s most common between the ages of 35 and 55.

Back pain often comes from sprains or strains (see pages 121 to 123). These injuries can happen when you fall or have an accident. But they can also happen from shoveling snow, gardening — even sitting too long. Your body may not be used to these things.

Most of the time, you can get better on your own. But there are times when you should call the doctor or clinic.

What will I see or feel?
Back pain can include all of these symptoms:

• Pain and soreness in your back
• Stiffness or trouble moving because of the pain or soreness
• Soreness or numbness in your legs or arms

You can have pain in any part of your back. But the lower back is the most common place to have pain.
What can I do to PREVENT back pain?

- **Exercise 30 minutes every day.** Remember to warm up and cool down at a slower pace at the beginning and end of exercise. This helps keep your back strong and healthy.

- **Lose weight if you need to.** Extra weight is extra hard on your back. See pages 147 to 151 for weight loss tips.

- **Control your stress.** Do you worry a lot? Take time to calm down and slow down. Stress can make your back tighten and hurt.

- **Watch how you lift, sit, stand, and sleep.** See below for tips.

**When you lift...**

- Keep whatever you are lifting close to your body.

- Bend your knees, not your back.

- Turn slowly by moving your feet. Never lift and twist at the same time.

- Do NOT lift anything that’s too heavy for you.
When you SIT...
• Stand and stretch every 30 minutes.
• Sit up straight, with your knees slightly higher than your hips.
• Do NOT slump (curl over) in your chair.

When you STAND...
• Put one foot up on a low box or stool.
• Change position often.
• Do NOT stand at a counter or table that’s too low or high for you.

When you SLEEP...
• Sleep on a firm bed.
• Sleep on your back with a pillow under your knees. Or, sleep on your side with a pillow between your bent knees.
• Do NOT sleep too long.
• Do NOT sleep on your stomach.
What can I do to TREAT back pain?

- **Keep moving.** Don’t do things that hurt a lot — but do move around as much as you can. Too much rest can slow healing.

- **Get comfortable.** When you do rest, try to find a position that eases the pain. Try lying on your back on the floor. Bend your hips and knees, and put pillows under your knees.

- **Try heat or ice.** Put ice or heat on the sore area for 15 minutes every hour. Some people like to switch between heat and ice. For icing, use ice cubes in a bag, or a bag of frozen peas. For heating, try a hot water bottle or a heating pad.

- **Take pain medicine.** Use acetaminophen (like Tylenol), ibuprofen (like Advil), or naproxen (like Aleve). Follow the instructions for timing and dose. Do NOT give aspirin to a child or teen — it increases risk for a serious problem called Reye’s syndrome.
Call 911 or go to the hospital emergency room for:

- Back pain and trouble with urination (peeing) or bowel movements (pooping), for example:
  - You can’t urinate
  - You can’t control urination or bowel movements
  - You have blood in your urine

Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:

- Sudden, very bad pain
- Very bad pain that gets worse over several weeks, instead of getting better
- Numbness or weakness in your legs is getting worse
- Fever with back pain
What is it?

Bladder infections, also called urinary tract infections (UTIs) are fairly common. They happen when germs called bacteria get in your bladder or another part of the urinary system. Women get UTIs more often than men do.

If you think you have a UTI, call the doctor or clinic. Without treatment, this infection can become serious. Also learn how to prevent UTIs and what you can do on your own to feel better.

What will I see or feel?

UTIs are annoying and painful. You may notice:

- Strong need to urinate (pee) often, but you might only go a little bit each time
- Burning feeling when you urinate
- Blood in your urine — it may look pink, red, or brown (like tea)
- Cloudy urine
- Strong-smelling urine
- In children, stomachache or back pain
- In babies, fever and no other symptoms

You may not have all of these symptoms. Or, your symptoms may be mild. But without treatment from a doctor, the symptoms will likely get worse. They may grow to include throwing up, fever, and chills.
**What can I do?**

Do these things to prevent and manage a UTI:

- Drink 8 glasses of water each day. This is good for the urinary system.
- Urinate often. Don’t hold urine in for a long time. Keep things moving!
- Wipe from front to back when you go to the bathroom. That way, bacteria from your bottom won’t be spread forward, where they can get into your urinary system.
- Urinate right after sex. This helps keep bacteria out of the urinary system.
- For women, stay away from “feminine” sprays, douches, or powders. They cause problems for many women.

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**Call or go to the doctor or clinic if you think you have a UTI.**

- Only a doctor can give you medicine to cure a UTI. If you can’t reach the doctor or clinic, go to an urgent care clinic or to the hospital.
- To treat pain while you wait for medical care, use acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (like Advil). Follow the instructions for timing and dose. Do NOT give aspirin to a child or teen — it increases risk for a serious problem called Reye’s syndrome.
Broken Bone

What is it?

Broken bones are most common in childhood. That’s because kids tend to take risks, play hard, and fall down a lot. More falls mean more broken bones.

But adults can break bones, too. People with thin bones are most likely to break bones. Sometimes bones become thinner as we grow older. See “Osteoporosis” on pages 97 and 98.

Broken bones usually heal fine. But you need the care of a doctor to make sure this happens.

What will I see or feel?

It’s not always easy to know when you have a broken bone. Sprains and strains have some of the same symptoms. Still, here are a few things you may notice with a broken bone:

- When the injury happens, you may hear a snap or grinding noise
- The area may swell (get bigger, like it’s filling up with water)
- The skin may bruise (turn red and purple, or black and blue)
- The injured part may be very painful to touch, press on, or move
- The bone may poke through the skin
The injured part may look crooked or have lumps that are different from swelling

With a leg injury, the pain may be so bad that you can’t stand or walk on the leg

What can I do?

If you think a bone is broken, follow these steps:

1 **Decide how to get medical help.** The boxes on page 27 can help you know if you should go to the doctor or clinic, or call 911 for emergency help. While waiting for medical help, keep the person calm — and follow the steps below.

2 **Stop any bleeding.** Press on the wound with a clean cloth or bandage. Keep pressing until the bleeding stops.

3 **Keep the injured part as still as you can.** If you have trouble doing this, you may be able to use a splint. The splint should extend above and below the injured part. Here are some tips:
   
   – For the wrist and lower part of the arm ONLY: Use strips of cloth or a belt to tie rolled newspapers or magazines around the hand and arm.
   
   – For the lower part of a leg (shin) ONLY: With strips of cloth or a belt, gently strap the injured leg between 2 boards. Or, you can strap it to the other leg (unless it’s injured, too).
4 Use ice to help the pain and swelling. Put ice in a plastic bag, and hold it on the injured area. Keep it there for 15 minutes at a time. Repeat ice again every 2 to 3 hours for the first day or so after the injury. But do NOT do this if you have diabetes or a circulation problem.

5 Do NOT do these things:

- Do NOT move a person with an injured head, neck, back, hip, or upper leg. If you must move the person to safety, pull them gently by their clothes.

- Do NOT try to move or straighten the bone.

6 If the person starts to pass out or have trouble breathing, help them lie down. Put their head lower than their body. Raise their legs up about 12 inches.
Call 911 if:
- Person has passed out or doesn’t respond to you.
- Person isn’t breathing and isn’t moving. If you know how, start CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) while you wait for help.
- Injury is to the back, neck, hip, or upper leg (thigh).
- Person is bleeding heavily.
- Bone has pierced the skin.
- Fingers or toes are numb, cold, or slightly blue at the tip.

Call or go to the clinic, doctor, or hospital if:
- You think a bone is broken, and there are none of the signs listed in the “Call 911” at left.
Checkups and Health Tests

Don’t wait until you are sick to see a doctor. You need regular checkups and tests to prevent problems. What you need depends on how old you are. These pages provide a guide.

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<tr>
<td>• <em>Diabetes test</em>: As the doctor recommends</td>
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</table>
## Checkups and Health Tests

### For ages 50 and up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Everyone:</th>
<th>Women:</th>
<th>Men:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Height and weight:</strong> Every year</td>
<td>• <strong>Pap test</strong> (to check for cervical cancer): After 3 normal exams, every 3 years up to age 65.</td>
<td>• <strong>Prostate exam</strong> (to check for prostate cancer): As the doctor recommends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Blood pressure:</strong> Every 2 years</td>
<td>• <strong>Mammogram</strong> (to check for breast cancer): Every year</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Cholesterol:</strong> Every 5 years</td>
<td>• <strong>Chlamydia test:</strong> As the doctor recommends</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| • **Colon screen** (to check for colon cancer):  
  – Stool check every year, OR  
  – A sigmoidoscopy test every 5 years, OR  
  – A colonoscopy test every 10 years | • **Bone density scan** (to check for osteoporosis): At age 65 | |
| • **Diabetes test:** As the doctor recommends | | |
Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:

- A lump anywhere on your body that won’t go away
- Losing weight for no reason
- Fever that won’t go away
- Cough that won’t go away — or coughing up blood
- Body aches and pains that won’t go away
Chest Pain or Discomfort

What is it?
Many different things can cause pain or discomfort in your chest. You may have heartburn or a muscle strain. But you could have something more serious, like angina (chest pain from a heart problem). You could even be having a heart attack.
The information here will help you know when to get medical help for chest pain.

What will I see or feel?
There are many different types of chest pain — and many different causes. For clues about your pain, pay attention to the following:

• What type of pain is it?
  – Squeezing, pressure, fullness, or crushing feeling?
  – Very sharp, piercing pain?
  – Burning pain?

• Where do you feel it?
  – Does the pain spread out into your back, neck, jaw, shoulders, or arms?
  – Is the pain sharply focused in one area?
  – Is the pain behind your breastbone?
  – Do you have stomach pain that spreads up into your chest?
• **What other symptoms do you have?**
  
  – Trouble breathing?
  – Sweating?
  – Dizziness?
  – Nausea or throwing up?
  – Sour taste in your mouth?
  – Fast breathing?
  – Fast heartbeat?
  – Stress or fear?

• **What brings on the pain, or makes it better or worse?**

  – Exercise?
  – Lying down or bending over?
  – Coughing?
  – Deep breathing?
  – Pressing on your ribs or back?
  – Lifting your arms or twisting?
  – Swallowing?
  – Eating?

*See the next page to learn about getting medical help for your symptoms.*
**CHEST PAIN**

**Call 911 or go the hospital emergency room for:**
- Sudden squeezing, pressure, fullness, or crushing feeling in your chest
- Very sharp, piercing chest pain with trouble breathing — especially if you have not been moving your body very much
- Chest pain that spreads out into your back, neck, jaw, shoulders, or arms
- Chest pain with dizziness, sweating, a fast heartbeat, or trouble breathing
- Chest pain with throwing up or nausea
- Angina that is suddenly worse, longer lasting, or brought on by less activity

**Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:**
- Chest pain of any kind that continues for more than 3 to 5 days
- Chest pain with a fever or a cough
- Pain that worries you and affects your daily life

When you call, give the doctor as much information as you can about your pain. Look again at the “What will I see or feel?” section for ideas about how to describe your pain.
**Cholesterol**

**What is it?**

Cholesterol is a type of fat carried in your blood vessels. Your body makes most of the cholesterol you have. The rest comes from the food you eat.

It’s normal and healthy to have some cholesterol in your blood. But you don’t want too much.

High cholesterol can cause a heart attack or stroke. It can also lead to other serious health problems.

**What will I see or feel?**

By itself, high cholesterol doesn’t have any symptoms. That’s why many people don’t even know they have it.

The only way to know if you have high cholesterol is to have a blood test. Experts recommend that adults get their cholesterol checked at least every 5 years.

**What can I do?**

To help keep healthy cholesterol levels:

- **Exercise at least 30 minutes every day.** This can help balance cholesterol levels in your blood.

- **Eat healthy.** Always follow the tips starting on page 65. Be extra careful with the amount and types of fat and oil in your diet.
Stay at a healthy weight. Lose extra weight if you need to. See pages 147 to 151 for tips.

Don’t drink too much alcohol. If you drink, have no more than 1 or 2 drinks a day.

Lower your stress. Take time for yourself. Do things that make you feel happy and calm.

If your doctor has prescribed medicine for cholesterol, take it faithfully. You may not notice a change in how you feel. But the medicine is important. It can help protect your health — and your life.

Call or go to the doctor or clinic if:

- It’s time to have your cholesterol tested again
- You have side effects from your cholesterol medicine
- You can’t refill your medicine prescription for some reason
Colds and Flu

What is it?
Colds and flu are common illnesses. They are caused by a type of germ called a **virus**. Cold and flu symptoms can happen in your nose, throat, or chest. Sometimes a cold or the flu seems to affect your whole body. It can make you feel bad, but it’s usually not harmful.

Most people have at least one cold every year. Children can get 6 to 10 colds a year, especially if they are in day care. Each cold can last about 7 to 14 days.

What will I see or feel?
You may have these symptoms with colds or flu:
- Runny nose
- Watery eyes
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Sore throat
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Body aches or chills
- Fever

What can I do to PREVENT colds and flu?
- **Wash your hands often**, and have your children wash their hands often.
- **Avoid people with cold or flu symptoms.**
- **Get a flu shot** every year.
How can I TREAT the symptoms?

Colds are caused by germs called **viruses** and do not need to be treated with antibiotics. Try these things:

- **Stay home and rest.**
- **Drink plenty of water.**

- **Use medicines for fever or aches and pains.**
  Try acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (like Advil). Do NOT give aspirin to a child or teen — it increases risk for a serious problem called Reye’s syndrome.

- **For a stuffy or runny nose,** try the tips on page 113.

- **Try cold medicine.** Talk with your doctor about the best medicine for your symptoms. Do NOT give cough medicine to children under 4 years old.

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**Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:**

- Sickness that lasts more than 14 days
- High fever or long-lasting fever (see page 78)
- Trouble breathing: fast breathing, wheezing, no deep breaths
- Ear pain that doesn’t go away, or fluid coming from the ears
- Chest pain
- Confusion, dizziness, or too much sleep
- Ongoing pain, vomiting, or distress
- Signs of too little fluid in the body: dry mouth, dry skin, no tears when crying, or little or no urination (peeing)
  - For babies 3 months or less, fewer than 4 to 6 wet diapers in a day or no tears when crying
  - For older babies and children, no urination in the last 8 hours
  - For adults, no urination in the last 12 hours
**Constipation**

**What is it?**

If you are **constipated**, you are having trouble with **bowel movements** (pooping).

Constipation is uncomfortable, but it’s usually not serious. If you have it often, you should do the things listed on the next page. In some cases, you may need to see a doctor.

**What will I see or feel?**

Here are some possible signs of constipation:

- Hard, dry **stools** (poop)
- Pushing and straining to move bowels
- Pain when having a bowel movement
- Fewer than 3 bowel movements in a week
- A “full” or swollen feeling in your abdomen (belly)

Symptoms differ from person to person. And they can be more serious in a baby. See the boxes on page 41 to know when to get help.

You might have trouble with your bowels even if you are not constipated. For example, you can have large stools after a large meal. Or you can have small, hard stools (like rabbit poop) if you don’t drink enough water.
What can I do?

Here are some things you can do to prevent and treat constipation:

- **Eat a healthy diet.** Include more vegetables, fruits, beans, and whole grains. These foods have a lot of fiber. Fiber helps make bowel movements easier. See pages 65 to 71 for more tips on healthy eating.

- **Limit low-fiber foods.** If you are often constipated, limit foods like ice cream, cheese, and meat.

- **Drink plenty of water.** Drink 8 cups of water every day — unless your doctor has told you to limit fluids.

- **Exercise at least 30 minutes every day.** Exercise makes your whole body work better. See pages 72 to 75 for exercise tips.

- **Visit the bathroom more often.** Go when you first feel the need to urinate (pee) or have a bowel movement. It’s not good to hold things in.

- **Try medicine.** You can buy medicine for constipation at the store. Look on the label for the words “stool softener” or “laxative.” But don’t use laxatives for more than a week. And do NOT give laxatives to a baby or child unless your doctor says to.
**Call 911 or go to the hospital emergency room if:**

- A baby (except those who are breastfed only) goes 3 days without a bowel movement — AND is throwing up and fussy.
- Constipation happens suddenly — and you have cramps and can’t pass stool or gas (fart). Do NOT take a laxative medicine in this case.

**Call or go to doctor or clinic for:**

- No bowel movement for 3 days, even after doing the things listed on page 40
- Constipation in a baby younger than 2 months
- A baby (except those who are breastfed only) going a full day without a dirty diaper
- A child holding back bowel movements to resist potty training
- Very bad pain in your abdomen — especially if you also feel “full” in your abdomen
- Bloody bowel movement (poop)
- Throwing up a bright yellow or green liquid
- Constipation AND diarrhea (loose, watery stool) one after the other
- Very thin stool, like a pencil
- Needing to use a laxative for longer than one week
- Pain where the stool comes out of your bottom (rectum)
- Weight loss for no reason
Cough

What is it?

Coughing is how your body clears your lungs and airways. Coughing can also be a response to something that irritates your throat or airways. Sudden cough in babies or young children may mean they swallowed something that went into their wind pipe.

Usually, a cough is not harmful and will go away by itself. But sometimes it’s a sign of an illness that needs treatment. Rarely, coughing warns of a dangerous problem that requires medical help right away. Read the information on these pages to help you decide the best thing to do for your cough.

What will I see or feel?

People cough for many different reasons — and there are many different types of coughs. Here are a few types you can have:

- **A cough with mucus.** Your cough may bring up globs of sticky fluid called mucus. The mucus may be clear, yellow, green, or tan.

- **A dry cough.** A dry cough doesn’t bring up mucus. It may start with a tickly feeling.

- **A cough with a noise.** You can have a cough that sounds like a seal barking. Or, you can have a cough with wheezing. Wheezing is a whistling sound when you breathe in or out.
• **A cough that lasts for weeks or months.** Some coughs last a long time. You may cough throughout the day, or just at night. Or, you may cough only when you do certain things (like exercise), or during certain times of the year.

If you go to the doctor or clinic because of your cough, the doctor may ask which type of cough you have. Your answer may help the doctor know what’s causing your cough.

**What can I do?**

Here are some things to know and try:

• **Stay away from smoke.** Smoke irritates your lungs and airways. If you smoke, stop. If someone in your family smokes, make them go outside to smoke.

• **Drink enough liquid.** Water can help loosen mucus. Drinking plenty of water makes it easier to cough up and get rid of mucus.

• **Sleep with your head raised.** Using an extra pillow to raise your head a little may help your cough.

• **Suck on cough drops or hard candy.** But do NOT give these to children under 5 years old because they can choke.

• **Try honey.** But do not give honey to children under 1 year old.

• **Talk with a doctor or pharmacist** about what medicines may help your symptoms. You can get some medicines at a pharmacy or grocery store without a prescription. Do NOT give cough medicine to children under 2 years old.
Call 911 or go the hospital emergency room for:

- A baby who can’t eat, drink, or cry because of coughing
- Trouble speaking more than 4 or 5 words at a time because of coughing
- Chest pain that goes up to the neck, arm, or jaw
- Passing out
- A lot of trouble breathing
- Coughing up blood or pink, foamy mucus

These may be signs of a serious problem. Get medical help right away!

Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:

- Any coughing in a baby less than 3 months old that affects sleeping or feeding
- In a child under 3 years old, a cough that sounds like a seal barking
- A cough that happens suddenly and doesn’t stop for an hour or more
- Wheezing (whistling sound when you breathe in or out)
- Breathing quickly, or trouble taking a deep breath
- Losing weight for no reason
- Extreme tiredness
- Sweating at night
- Chest pain when coughing
- Coughing with a high fever or long-lasting fever (see page 78)
- A cough that lasts for 2 weeks, and isn’t getting better
Cuts, Scrapes, Scratches, and Punctures

What are they?

Cuts, scrapes, and scratches happen when something tears the skin surface. Everyone gets small cuts, scrapes, and scratches from time to time. Active kids may get them every few days!

Punctures are holes in your skin. They happen when something sharp — like a nail or a pencil — pushes through your skin. The wound can go as deep as the muscle underneath.

You can usually take care of small wounds at home. But sometimes you may need to see a doctor.

What will I see or feel?

Here’s what you may notice when you have a cut, scrape, scratch, or puncture:

- Bleeding
- Pain
- Loss of feeling in the area near the wound
**What can I do?**

Don’t ignore a cut, scrape, scratch, or puncture. Even if the wound seems small, you need to take care of it. Here’s what to do — and when to get medical help:

1. **Stop the bleeding.** If the wound doesn’t stop bleeding on its own, press on it with a clean cloth or bandage. Hold it for 10 minutes. If the wound is still bleeding after 10 minutes, go to the hospital.

2. **Wash your hands with soap and water.** When your skin is broken, everything that touches it must be very clean.

3. **Wash the wound with water only.** Let the water run over the wound for a few minutes. If you have a puncture, let the water run on it for 5 minutes to get deep inside.

4. **Check for stuff in the wound.** Sometimes bits of dirt, gravel, or other stuff can get in the wound. This is more likely when you have a puncture or scrape. If you see something in the wound, gently pull it out with tweezers. Then rinse the wound again with water. Put some antibiotic ointment on the wound.

5. **Put a bandage on the wound.** Use a stick-on strip (like a Band-Aid). Or, use first aid tape to hold a bandage over the wound.

6. **Change the bandage at least once a day.** When the wound has a good scab on it, you can stop using bandages.
Cuts, Scrapes, and Scratches

Call 911 or go to the hospital emergency room if:

- Bleeding does not stop — even though you have pressed on the wound for 10 minutes

Call or go to the doctor or clinic if:

- You have not had a tetanus shot in the last 5 years
Depression

What is it?

Depression is an illness. It’s not just being sad. When you’re depressed, your brain is not working like it should. Depression causes symptoms in your body, too. It causes more problems with daily life than any other illness in the U.S.

Anyone can have depression. This includes men and women, rich and poor, young and old. Even children can be depressed.

Depression can make it hard for you to be a good friend, spouse, or parent. It can hurt you at work or school. It can even make you want to hurt yourself. Just like any other medical illness, depression can be treated. With treatment, most people can recover.

What will I see or feel?

Depression affects people in different ways. It can be mild or severe. You may have it only once in your life. It may happen after a stressful event, like the loss of a family member. But many people have it again and again. If you have depression, you will probably have one or more of these symptoms:

- Feeling sad or hopeless
- Having trouble enjoying things you once enjoyed
- Being easily annoyed
• Sleeping too much, or having trouble sleeping
• Feeling tired all the time, having little energy
• Eating too much, or too little
• Having trouble concentrating
• Wanting to be alone more
• Moving too slowly — or being very restless
• Feeling like a failure, or that you’re a bad person

What can I do?

Don’t ignore signs of depression. Instead, do these things:

• **Visit a doctor or clinic.** Depression is often overlooked. It can also be confused with other problems. A doctor can help you know if your symptoms come from depression, another illness, or both.

• **Stick with your treatment.** The two main treatments for depression are counseling (talk therapy) and medicine. You and your doctor should decide together what’s best for you. But once you have a treatment plan, stick with it! Keep any appointments with a counselor. Take any medicine as directed. Keep taking your medicine even if you feel better. If you stop medicine too soon, your depression may come back.
• **Set your own goals for recovery.** You may not feel like sticking to your goals at first. But try to do it anyway. You will be glad you did. Here are some areas to work on:

  – **Healthy relationships.** Having a close friend or loved one to share your concerns and plans can really help. Don’t pull back from other people right now. Instead, set goals to get the support you need.

    *Example goals:* Phone a friend every day. Attend scheduled events. Join a support group. Leave the house at least once each day. Volunteer.

  – **Healthy body.** Taking care of your body will help your mind, too. Set goals to make sure this happens.

    *Example goals:* Go for a walk every day. Drink 8 cups of water every day. Eat 2 cups of fruits and 2 cups of vegetables every day. Avoid alcohol. Try to get 8 hours of sleep every night.

  – **Healthy spirit.** Right now, it’s good to reconnect with things that used to be fun, fulfilling, and meaningful for you.

Call 911 or go to the hospital emergency room if:

- You feel so low that you feel like hurting or killing yourself

_You can always get the help you need!_

Call or go to the doctor or clinic if:

- You think treatment isn’t working
- You have bad side effects from your depression medicine
- You want to stop treatment
- You have thoughts of hurting yourself or others
Diabetes

What is it?

Diabetes is a serious illness. It happens when you don’t have enough insulin — or when your body doesn’t use insulin well. Insulin’s job is to change glucose (sugar) from food into energy. If it can’t do this, sugar builds up in your blood. You have high blood sugar.

There are two types of diabetes. Type 2 is the most common type. It happens most often in adults who are overweight. Type 1 is less common. It happens more in children and teens.

Caring for diabetes means controlling your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol. That’s because if you have diabetes, you probably have high blood pressure and high cholesterol too. You have a bigger chance for heart attack and stroke. You can also have eye, kidney, and foot problems.

Diabetes has no cure. But you can still live a good, active life. You just have to make healthy choices every day.
What will I see or feel?

You may not see or feel anything at first. It depends on the type of diabetes you have. For example, type 1 often brings strong symptoms that come on quickly. But type 2 happens slowly. You may not notice anything for a while.

Some common symptoms of diabetes are:

- Tiredness
- Unusual thirst or hunger
- Tingling or lack of feeling in your hands and feet
- Blurry vision
- Frequent infections, or cuts and sores that take a long time to heal

If you have symptoms, a doctor can give you a blood test. Only a blood test can show for sure whether you have diabetes.
What can I do?

To manage your diabetes, you need to make healthy choices every day. You also need to know what to do when you have problems.

Make healthy everyday choices.

- **Learn as much as you can about diabetes.** Ask your doctor how to sign up for diabetes education. Diabetes education is a special class or one-on-one meeting to help you learn to manage your health.

- **See your doctor at least 2 times a year.** You need regular health checkups. You also need a chance to talk about how your diabetes treatment is working.

- **Lose weight, if you need to.** You’ll feel better, and you may need less medicine. See pages 147 to 151 for tips.

- **Don’t smoke.** Smoking can make the health problems that come with diabetes worse.

- **Help your family make healthy choices, too.** Diabetes tends to run in families. You can help your family stay healthy by exercising and eating healthy meals together.
Stick to your treatment plan.
Your doctor or diabetes educator can help you learn to do these things:

- **Test your blood sugar.** Use a meter. A healthy range before you eat is about 90 to 130 mg/dL. Your blood sugar should always be under 180 mg/dL.

- **Eat regular, healthy meals.** Don’t skip meals, or eat too much at once. Eat mostly vegetables, whole grains, and fruits. Eat less salt, fat, and fewer sweets. A personal **meal plan** from your diabetes educator or doctor can help you make good choices.

- **Take your medicine every day, the right way.** You might have medicine for diabetes and for other health problems. Make sure you know what to take, and when to take it.

- **Exercise every day.** Try for at least 30 minutes of fast walking or other exercise. Talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program. See pages 72 to 75 for tips.
Recognize and treat HIGH blood sugar.

High blood sugar is about 180 mg/dL or more. A high reading on your glucose meter might be the first sign of high blood sugar. You might also have these symptoms:

- Extreme thirst or hunger
- Increased urination (peeing)
- Blurry vision
- Tiredness

If you have high blood sugar, do these things:

1. Get back to your treatment plan. Follow your meal plan, take your medicine correctly, and exercise every day.

2. If your blood sugar stays high, even though you are following your treatment plan, you need to see a doctor. See the boxes on page 59 for when and how to get medical help.
Recognize and treat LOW blood sugar.

Low blood sugar is about 70 mg/dL or less. Along with checking your blood sugar, watch out for these symptoms of low blood sugar:

- Shakiness or dizziness
- Sweating
- Hunger
- Headache
- Feeling cranky, sad, or confused

If you have low blood sugar, do these things:

1. Tell someone around you that you have low blood sugar. You might need help if you pass out.

2. Eat or drink 15 grams of carbohydrate. Here are a few ways to get about 15 grams:
   - A half cup of fruit juice
   - A piece of bread
   - 3 to 5 pieces of hard candy

3. If your blood sugar does not come up within 15 minutes, take in 15 more grams of carbohydrate.

4. If your blood sugar is still too low after 15 more minutes, you may need to see a doctor. See the boxes on page 59 for when and how to get medical help.
Take extra care of yourself when you are sick.

Being sick can make it harder to control your blood sugar. Do these things to stay safe:

- Check your blood sugar every 3 to 4 hours.
- Stick to your meal plan, if you can.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Continue taking your medicines — unless your doctor tells you not to.

See the next page for when to get medical help.
Call 911 or go the hospital emergency room if:
You have these signs of very high blood sugar:
- A fruity smell on your breath
- Severe thirst or hunger
- Extreme tiredness
- Stomach pain or body ache
You have these signs of very low blood sugar:
- You feel dizzy or think you might pass out
- You feel like you are fading away or you can’t think well

Call or go to the doctor or clinic if:
- Your blood sugar is too high (180 mg/dL or more) or too low (70 mg/dL or less), and you can’t get it back to a normal even after doing the things on pages 56 and 57
- Your blood sugar is too high or too low more than twice a week
- You are sick and not getting better
- You have a question about your treatment
- You are pregnant, or want to become pregnant
- You are throwing up
Diarrhea

What is it?
Diarrhea is when you have loose, watery stool (poop). With diarrhea, you have to go to the bathroom more often. Sometimes it’s hard to get there in time. Diarrhea is uncomfortable, but usually not serious. Sometimes you may need to see a doctor though.

What will I see or feel?
You may have these symptoms:
- Loose, watery stools (poop)
- Cramps or pain in your abdomen (belly)
- Fever
- Upset stomach or throwing up

Diarrhea can make your body lose too much fluid. In this case, you may not urinate (pee) very much. You might also have dry skin or a dry mouth. Babies are more likely to have this problem.

What can I do?
Diarrhea can last a few hours or a few days. It usually goes away on its own. Until then, do the following:
- Keep eating. Choose foods like bananas, yogurt, crackers, soup, rice, and noodles.
- Stay away from milk and cheese, fatty foods, and high-fiber or spicy foods. When your diarrhea is gone, you can eat normally.
• **Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water, clear soda, or juice each day.** For babies with diarrhea, give drinks like Pedialyte or Ricelyte. You can buy these in a store. Babies can also keep breastfeeding. If your child won’t drink, give them Popsicles to suck on.

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**Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:**

**Adults or children:**
- Diarrhea lasting 7 days or more
- High fever or long-lasting fever (see page 78)
- Throwing up and very bad pain in the abdomen
- Bloody or black stool
- Signs of too little fluid in the body: dry mouth, dry skin, no tears, or little or no urination (peeing). For children, no urination in the last 8 hours. For adults, no urination in the last 12 hours.
- Recent use of antibiotic medicine
- Constipation (trouble pooping) AND diarrhea, one after the other
- Diarrhea in a person more than 70 years old

**Babies:**
- Diarrhea lasting more than 12 to 24 hours
- High fever or long-lasting fever (see page 78)
- Throwing up and pain in the abdomen
- Unusual sleepiness or fussiness
- Bloody or black stool
- Signs of too little fluid in the body: dry mouth, dry skin, no tears, or little or no urination (peeing). For babies 3 months or less, fewer than 4 to 6 wet diapers in a day. For older babies, no wet diapers in 8 hours.
Ear Infection

What is it?

An ear infection happens when the inside of your ear gets stuffy, just like your nose. Your ear can fill up with fluid. This can cause redness, swelling, and pain.

Ear infections often happen after a cold or the flu. They are common in children, but can happen in adults, too.

What will I see or feel?

**Adults**
- Ear pain, pressure, or popping
- Trouble hearing
- Fever

**Children**
- Fussiness
- Tugging at ear
- Trouble eating
- Trouble sleeping
- Trouble hearing
- Fever

If too much fluid builds up in the ear, the eardrum may burst. This is the body’s way of relieving the pressure in the ear. If this happens, you may notice fluid or blood draining out of the ear.
What can I do to PREVENT ear infections?

- **Wash your hands often** and have your children do so, too. You can clean your hands with soap and water or with special gel that kills germs. This is called an “antibacterial” gel.

- **Check with your child’s daycare.** Ask how often they clean the toys. Also ask if they remind kids to wash their hands often.

- **Avoid smoke.** And don’t let your child be around people who smoke.

- **Breastfeed your baby** rather than giving a bottle.

- **Get a flu shot** each year. Other members of your family should get one, too.

- **Don’t give your baby a pacifier (binky).**

- **Ask a doctor about possible allergies.**

What can I do to TREAT ear infections?

- **Get plenty of rest.**

- **Take any medicine your doctor prescribes.**
  Most of the time, treating the symptoms is all you need to do. The infection will often go away without medicine. If your doctor prescribes an antibiotic, follow the directions. Take the medicine every day until it’s all gone. Do this even if your ear doesn’t hurt anymore.
• **Use medicine or eardrops to ease pain.**
  Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about the best medicine for you.

  - Use acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (like Advil). Do NOT give aspirin to a child or teen — it increases risk for a serious problem called Reye’s syndrome.

  - Use eardrops prescribed by your doctor. Or, you can use drops of warm (not hot) mineral oil. Do NOT use drops if your child has had surgery to put in ear tubes.

  Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:

  - Signs that the eardrum has burst (fluid or blood draining from the ear)
  - Pain that doesn’t go away
  - High fever or long-lasting fever (see page 78)
Eating Healthy

Eating in a healthy way is one of the best things you can do. It helps you stay at a healthy weight. It helps prevent diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and some types of cancer. It helps you feel and live better.

Healthy eating doesn’t mean giving up all the foods you enjoy. It means making healthy choices more often. Follow the tips on the next few pages.

Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables

Fruits and vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Try to eat 3 to 4 servings of fruit (about 2 cups total) and 3 to 5 servings of vegetables (2 to 3 cups total) every day. Whole, fresh fruits are best. Here are some sample serving sizes:

**Fruit servings**
- 1 medium piece of fruit (orange, apple, kiwi, plum, peach, pear)
- ½ banana or grapefruit
- 1 cup berries or melon
- ½ cup unsweetened juice
- ¼ cup dried fruit

**Vegetable servings**
- 1 cup raw vegetables
- ½ cup cooked vegetables
- ½ cup vegetable juice
**Eat less fat, and choose healthy types of fats**

Fats come from butter, oils, meats, and milk products. You need some fat in your diet, but not too much. You also need to choose the right types of fat. These pages give examples of fats to choose more often, and fats to limit.

**Fats to choose more often**

Look for foods with **unsaturated fat**. There are 2 main types, **monounsaturated** and **polyunsaturated**. Here are some examples of each:

- **Monounsaturated fats** are found in:
  - Olive oil or olives
  - Canola oil
  - Peanut oil
  - Nuts

- **Polyunsaturated fats** are found in:
  - Vegetable oils (like soybean, safflower, sunflower, sesame, or corn oil)
  - Salmon or tuna (fresh or water-packed)
Fats to limit

The worst types of fats are **saturated fats** and **trans fats**. Both of these types of fat can raise your cholesterol and cause other health problems. So eat less of the foods that contain these fats.

- **Saturated fats** are found in:
  - Meats like beef, pork, and fatty parts of chicken
  - Butter
  - Cream cheese
  - Sour cream
  - Ice cream
  - Cocoa butter
  - Tropical oils like coconut and palm oil

- **Trans fats** are found in:
  - Many margarines (especially stick margarine)
  - Vegetable shortening
  - Packaged foods like chips, crackers, and cookies
  - Bakery items like doughnuts and pastries
  - Microwave and theater popcorn
  - Fried foods like French fries, fish sticks, and chicken nuggets
  - Any food with the words “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated” on the label
Eat more whole grains

Foods like bread, rice, and pasta are a big part of how most people eat. But some grains are better for your health than others. Foods made with whole grains and unprocessed starches have more fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

Start by eating less white bread, white rice, and white pasta. Slowly add more whole-grain foods from the list below. Do this until at least half of the grains you eat are from whole grain.

**Whole-grain foods**

- Whole-grain bread or cereal
- Whole-wheat pasta or couscous
- Brown rice
- Oatmeal
- Sweet potatoes or squash
- Corn
Choose low-fat proteins

Most people can get enough protein by eating 2 to 3 portions per day. Meat is a good source of protein, but some meats are high in saturated fat. Learn to choose low-fat cuts of meat, or choose good non-meat sources.

Low-fat meat sources of protein

- Chicken white meat or turkey white meat
- Scale fish or water-packed tuna or salmon
- Lean cuts of beef and pork, such as sirloin, tenderloin, or extra lean hamburger

Low-fat non-meat sources of protein

- Low-fat cheeses and cottage cheese
- Eggs
- Lentils (dried beans and peas)
- Soy products like soy milk or tofu
- Nuts, peanut butter

Here are a couple more tips:

- **Bake, broil, grill, or boil** your meat instead of frying. That way, you won’t be adding extra fat.
- **Keep meat portion sizes small.** A healthy serving is about 3 ounces — about the size of a deck of cards.
Choose low-fat milk products

Dairy products include milk, yogurt, and cheese. They are good sources of calcium, protein, and vitamins A and D. But many dairy products are high in fat. And some people have trouble digesting them. So choose low-fat dairy products or dairy substitutes.

Aim for 3 dairy servings (about 3 cups) of low-fat milk products each day. Some good choices are listed below.

**Low-fat dairy products**

- 1 cup of 2%, 1%, or skim (fat-free) milk
- 1 cup of low-fat or fat-free yogurt
- 1/2 cup of low-fat cottage cheese

**Low-fat dairy substitutes**

- Fortified soymilk, rice milk, and almond milk
- Lactaid, Dairy Ease, and similar products (for people who can’t have lactose)
Limit salt, sugar, and alcohol

Here’s why and how to do this:

- **Salt (sodium).** Most Americans eat 3 to 4 times more salt than they need. This can lead to extra fluid in your body (bloating). It can also raise your blood pressure. To prevent this, try not to add extra salt to foods. Try other spices instead. Also avoid processed foods like lunchmeat, bacon, and canned food.

- **Sugar.** Foods with added sugar can lead to weight gain. They also don’t give you any nutrition. So don’t eat too many sweet treats like cake, candy, or cookies. Also limit or give up soda pop and other sweetened drinks.

- **Alcohol.** Alcohol is in wine, beer, and liquor such as whiskey, vodka, and rum. Alcohol gives you calories, but no nutrition. Drinking too much alcohol can cause health problems like liver disease and high blood pressure. It can also lead to weight gain. If you do drink alcohol, don’t have more than 1 or 2 drinks a day. This amount can be healthy for most people.

Drink enough water

Unless the doctor says not to, **drink about 8 cups of water a day.** Water helps your body work better, especially in hot, dry climates. It also may keep you from drinking unhealthy drinks like soda pop.
Exercise

Why exercise?

Regular exercise helps your health in many ways. Here are just a few:

• Protects your heart and bones
• Makes you stronger
• Gives you more energy
• Lifts your mood
• Helps you lose weight or stay at a healthy weight
• Lowers your chance of having diabetes, high blood pressure, or other health problems
How much and what type of exercise do I need?

Exercise for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.

Exercise so that your heart, lungs, and muscles work harder. This is called **aerobic exercise**. Examples are:

- Fast walking
- Jogging or running
- Cycling
- Cross-country skiing
- Dancing
- Hiking
- Swimming

Besides aerobic exercise, add activity to your life in other ways, too. Here are some tips:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk instead of driving. Or, park your car farther away and walk the rest of the way.
- At work, use lunch hours and coffee breaks to walk around the block.
- Take up an active hobby. Garden. Hike. Golf. Play with your kids or grandkids.

Build your muscles, too. Do pushups, leg lifts, or pull-ups. Lift cans or milk jugs. Go to a recreation center for strength training.
How hard do I need to work when I exercise?

Exercise should not be too hard OR too easy. It should be moderate.

What is moderate exercise? It depends. What feels moderate to you is different from what feels moderate to someone else. Base your exercise on how YOU feel.

**Moderate exercise feels like this:**

- You breathe a little harder, but you don’t feel out of breath.
- You can talk to a friend, but might have trouble singing a song.
- You sweat a little bit, but you’re not soaked with sweat.
- Your muscles feel a little tired, but they don’t hurt.
How do I get started?

- **First, make sure you are healthy.** If you have chest pain, dizziness, or any other health problems, check with your doctor first.

- **Start slowly and build slowly.** You may start with only 5 to 10 minutes a day for the first week. Then add 5 minutes each day of the following week, and so on. Your goal is 30 minutes or more, most days of the week.

- **Warm up and cool down.** Exercise gently at the beginning and end of your workout. This helps prevent injuries.

- **Stretch.** Learn some gentle stretches for all your muscles. Stretch slowly until you feel just a little discomfort. Then hold the stretch for 15 seconds or more.

**Just do it!**

The biggest risk of exercise is not starting. Just do it! Find activities you enjoy — and keep them fun. Exercise with a friend or family member. Set goals. Track your progress. And reward yourself! You are taking an important step toward better health.
Fever

What is it?
When your body temperature rises higher than normal, you have a fever.

A fever usually means that your body is fighting an infection. Most often, it’s not serious. But sometimes you need to treat the cause of the fever, or take medicine to help bring the fever down.

What will I see or feel?
You can measure body temperature with a thermometer. A reading above about 100.4°F is a fever. With a fever, you might notice these symptoms:

- Sweating
- Red face
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Body aches or chills
- Not being hungry
What can I do?

Here are some tips to feel better, recover faster, and stay safe:

- **Drink lots of water.** If your child has a fever and won’t drink, give Popsicles to suck on.

- **Dress lightly and keep the room cool.** Being too hot can make a fever worse.

- **Stay home and rest.** Sleep. This will help your body fight the illness.

- **Bathe in lukewarm water.** Lukewarm means slightly warm, NOT hot or cold. Stop bathing if this causes shivering.

- **If fever is 101ºF or more, take medicine to lower it.** Use acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (like Advil). Follow the instructions for timing and dose. Do NOT give aspirin to a child or teen — it increases risk for a serious problem called Reye’s syndrome.

See the next page for when to call a doctor or clinic.
Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:

- **High fever:**
  - For a baby less than 3 months, 100.4°F or higher
  - For a baby 3 to 6 months, 101°F or higher
  - For a child or adult, 103°F or higher

- **Fever that lasts a long time:**
  - For a child under 2 years old, if the fever lasts longer than 1 to 2 days
  - For older children and adults, if the fever lasts longer than 2 to 3 days

- **Fever with any of these symptoms:**
  - Confusion
  - Crying a lot
  - Ear pain that doesn’t go away or fluid coming from the ears
  - Trouble breathing
  - Abdomen pain
  - Stiff or painful neck (it’s painful to bend chin to chest)
  - Sore throat without a stuffy or runny nose
  - Trouble moving an arm or leg
  - Severe headache
  - Headache and vomiting
  - Child is not drinking
  - Seizure (uncontrollable shaking of arms or legs and/or passing out). **If the seizure does not stop after 5 minutes, call 911.**
Headache

What is it?

A headache is pain or aching in your head or neck. Everyone gets headaches from time to time. They can be caused by many different things. Most are not serious, but sometimes need to be treated.

What will I see or feel?

Your pain may depend on the type of headache you have.

- **With a tension headache** you may:
  - Feel like a tight band is squeezing your head
  - Have pain or tension in your neck and shoulders
  - Feel a dull, constant ache somewhere on your head

- **With a severe headache** or a type of headache called a **migraine**, you may:
  - Feel sick to your stomach, and you may even throw up
  - Have throbbing pain that may be worse on one side of your head
  - Be bothered by light or see flashing lights or spots
  - Be bothered by noise

See page 82 for when to get medical help for a headache.
**With a sinus headache** you may:

- Feel pain or pressure in the front of your head or face
- Have a stuffy or runny nose
- Have pain when you bend over or first wake up

See pages 112 to 114 to learn more about sinus problems.

**What can I do to PREVENT headaches?**

- **Get plenty of sleep,** and learn to relax. Some headaches come from tiredness and stress.

- **Avoid smoke.** Smoking can affect your sinuses and blood vessels. Smoking or being around smoke can make headaches worse.

- **Keep a list of when you get headaches.** Also write down what you think might be causing them.

- **Avoid food or drinks that seem to trigger headaches.** For example, these foods often cause problems: alcohol, caffeine, bananas, chocolate, cheese, nuts, and artificial sweeteners (like Nutrasweet).
What can I do to TREAT a headache?

- **Rest in a dark, quiet room** with your eyes closed. Ask people to leave you alone while you rest.

- **Try over-the-counter pain medicine.** Over-the-counter pain medicine is medicine you can buy at the pharmacy or grocery store. Talk with your doctor about the best choice for you. Examples are acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (like Advil). Follow the instructions for timing and dose. Do NOT give aspirin to a child or teen — it increases risk for a serious problem called Reye’s syndrome.

- **If your doctor prescribes medicine, follow instructions carefully.** Talk with your doctor if you have questions.

- **Rub (massage) the muscles in your shoulder and in the back of your neck.** This may help loosen tight muscles and help your headache go away. Do not use massage if you have tingling or weakness in your arms or legs.

- **Try using heat or cold.** Take a warm bath or shower. Or, put a cold or warm washcloth over the part that hurts. Do this for 15 to 30 minutes, 3 to 4 times a day. This may relax the muscles.
Call 911 or go to the hospital emergency room if:

- You have headache that comes on suddenly and is very bad
- You have a headache that is your “worst ever”
- You have a headache with slurred speech, change in eyesight, problems moving your arms or legs, dizziness, confusion, or memory loss
- You have a headache that gets worse and worse over 24 hours
- You have a headache along with a fever, stiff neck, nausea, and throwing up
- Your headache is from a head injury
- You have a very bad headache around one eye, with redness in that eye
- You are over age 50 and your headaches have begun recently — especially if you have trouble seeing or have pain while chewing

Call or go to the doctor or clinic if:

- Headaches wake you up from sleep
- A headache lasts more than a few days
- Headaches are worse in the morning
- Headaches are now more frequent or more painful than your “usual” headaches
- You have frequent headaches with no known cause
Heartburn

What is it?
Heartburn is a burning feeling in your chest. It’s not a problem with your heart. It’s a problem with how your body handles food. It happens when acid from your stomach backs up into your food pipe (esophagus).

Most people have heartburn from time to time. There are many simple things you can do to treat it. But if you have heartburn often, you may need to see a doctor.

What will I see or feel?
If you have heartburn, you may have these symptoms:

- Burning feeling behind your breastbone
- Chest pain when you lie down or bend over
- Bitter, hot, or sour taste in your mouth
- Hoarse voice or sore throat
What can I do to PREVENT heartburn?

- **Stay away from foods and drinks that give you heartburn.** Here are some common examples:
  - Drinks with alcohol or caffeine
  - Soda pop or other fizzy drinks
  - Chocolate and mint
  - Citrus fruits and juices
  - Tomatoes and tomato sauces
  - Spicy or fatty foods
  - Full-fat milk or cheese

- **Eat smaller meals more often.** This way, stomach acid is less likely to back up. Just make sure you don’t eat too much in a day.

- **Don’t lie down, bend over, or exercise right after you eat.** Wait 2 hours.

- **Raise the head of your bed about 6 inches.** You can do this by putting bricks or books under the legs at the head of the bed.

- **If you need to, lose weight and stop smoking.** Heavy people and smokers have more heartburn.

- **Drink plenty of water,** especially when taking medicine.

- **Don’t wear clothes that squeeze your stomach.**
What can I do to TREAT heartburn?

Try medicine you buy at the store. Many different medicines treat heartburn. Read the labels, and follow the instructions carefully.

Call 911 or go to the hospital emergency room for:
- Burning feeling that comes with a squeezing or crushing feeling in your chest
- Bloody vomit (throw up), or vomit that is black like coffee grounds
- Black or bloody stools

Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:
- Frequent heartburn that does not get better even when you do the things listed earlier
- Heartburn that gets worse when you try medicine
- Losing weight without trying to
- Trouble swallowing
- Unexplained cough or wheezing (whistling sound when you breathe)
High Blood Pressure

What is it?

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the inside walls of your arteries. If your arteries become too narrow or hard, the pressure of the blood inside goes up. This makes it harder for your heart to do its job.

Normal blood pressure is “120” over “80” (120/80) or less. If either number is higher, you might have high blood pressure. But keep in mind that blood pressure goes up and down all day long. One reading alone can’t tell if you have high blood pressure. A doctor can decide if you have it.

High blood pressure can cause serious health problems. For example, high blood pressure can lead to heart attack, stroke, or kidney problems.

High blood pressure is common. It happens to all kinds of people. That’s why you should try to prevent it — and stick with treatment if you already have high blood pressure.
What will I see or feel?

High blood pressure is sometimes called a “silent killer.” That’s because it often brings no symptoms at all.

The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to measure it. This should happen at every doctor’s visit. You can also check your blood pressure on your own with a machine that has a cuff that goes around your arm. Many pharmacies and stores have a machine that you can use for free.

What can I do?

For a healthy blood pressure:

- **Exercise at least 30 minutes every day.** This helps lower blood pressure.

- **Eat healthy.** Follow the tips starting on page 65. Especially try to limit salt. Too much can raise blood pressure.

- **Don’t smoke.** High blood pressure is more common in smokers than in non-smokers.

- **Stay at a healthy weight.** Lose extra weight if you need to. See pages 147 to 151 for tips.

- **Don’t drink too much alcohol.** If you drink, have no more than 1 or 2 drinks a day.

- **Lower your stress.** Take time for yourself. Do things that make you feel happy and calm.
- **Check your blood pressure regularly.** Use a machine at the pharmacy or store. Tell your doctor if you think your blood pressure is too high.

- **If your doctor has prescribed medicine for your blood pressure, take it faithfully.** You may not notice a change in how you feel. But the medicine is important. It can help protect your health — and your life.

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**Call or go to the doctor or clinic if:**

- It has been 2 years or more since you had your blood pressure checked

- You have side effects from your blood pressure medicine

- You can’t refill your medicine prescription for some reason
Ingrown Toenail

What is it?

An **ingrown toenail** is when the edge of the nail grows into the skin of the toe. It can be quite painful. If you have poor blood flow, it can be serious. People with diabetes often have poor blood flow.

You can usually take care of an ingrown toenail at home. But sometimes you might need to go to the doctor.

What will I see or feel?

If you have an ingrown toenail, you may notice these things around your toenail:

- Redness
- Pus along the edge of the toenail
- Swelling
- Pain — especially when you push the reddened skin toward the toenail

Ingrown toenails happen most often with your big toe.
**What can I do to PREVENT ingrown toenails?**

- Wear shoes that fit well.
- Cut toenails straight across the top. Don’t cut them too short.
- Keep your feet clean and dry.
- If you have diabetes, go to the doctor or clinic for foot checkups at least once a year. If you have trouble cutting your toenails yourself, you may need to go more often. You may also need to see a special foot doctor called a podiatrist.

**What can I do to TREAT ingrown toenails?**

1. **Soak your foot in warm water** for about 15 minutes. Then take your foot out and dry it well.
2. **Try to get the nail “unstuck” from the skin.** Use a cotton swab (Q-tip) or the dull end of nail file to gently pull the nail away from the reddened skin. You can also try sliding dental floss under the nail.
3. **Trim the toenail** where it’s pushing into your skin, if you can.
4. **Wet a small piece of cotton with water, then put it under the nail.** The cotton helps keep the nail from pushing into the skin again.
5. **Repeat these steps several times a day.** You can stop when the nail starts to grow out and the pain goes away.
Call or go to the doctor or clinic if:

- You still have redness, pain, and swelling, even after trying the steps on page 90 for a week
- The redness, pain, and swelling are very bad — especially if you have a fever
- The redness and swelling is spreading up the toe or foot
- You have diabetes and have an ingrown toenail
Medicine Tips

Medicines can do a lot for your health. They can cure sickness or help you stay well. They can help you feel better. But if you don’t take them correctly, medicines can be harmful. To stay safe and get the most good from your medicine, follow these tips:

- **Tell the doctor about ALL of the medicines or other things you take.** Some things are harmful if taken together. So tell your doctor if you take any of these things:
  - Prescription medicines, like antibiotics
  - Medicines you buy at the store, like aspirin or cough medicine
  - Vitamins or minerals
  - Herbs or diet supplements

- **Ask and understand these things about each medicine:**
  - What is it for?
  - What does it look like?
  - How much do I take, and when do I take it?
  - How long do I take this medicine?
  - Do I take it with food, or with NO food?
  - What are the side effects?
  - Is there anything I can’t do when I’m taking this medicine?
  - What should I do if I forget to take it?

A doctor or pharmacist can answer these questions. Don’t be afraid to ask!
• **Don’t stop taking a medicine without talking to the doctor first.** Some people stop because they feel better and don’t think they need it anymore. Others stop because they DON’T feel better, or don’t want to pay for refills. But stopping can be dangerous. Some medicines are vital for your health. Others must be stopped gradually to avoid problems. Always ask a doctor first.

• **Order refill medicine early.** If you take a medicine every day, get your refill 1 to 2 weeks before you need it. You don’t want to run out.

• **Use a reminder.** Set an alarm to alert you when it’s time to take your medicine. Or, take your medicine when you do other everyday things, like brush your teeth or eat breakfast.

• **Use a pillbox to organize your medicines.**

• **Keep a list of all your medicines.** Keep it with you at home and wherever you go. Try a chart like the *Medicine Manager* shown on pages 152 to 155. A chart can help you keep track of:
  – What your medicine is for
  – What it looks like
  – Whether you should take it with food, or not
  – When to take it
Mouth and Tooth Problems

What is it?

Many different problems can affect your mouth and teeth. Most of these problems aren’t serious. But they can be painful, and some need treatment.

What will I see or feel?

Here are some things you may notice:

- **Thrush.** This is a yeast infection that brings white spots on the tongue, gums, and inside the cheeks. The spots look like milk, but you can’t rub them off. Thrush is common in babies. It sometimes occurs in adults taking antibiotics or other medicines. Thrush needs to be treated by a doctor.

- **Teething.** A teething baby may drool and chew on things. That’s because new teeth are growing up through the gums.

- **Tooth decay.** Signs include tooth soreness, a swollen cheek, and black or brown spots on the tooth.

- **Mouth sores.** Viruses are often the cause of painful mouth sores, which are also called *canker sores*. These sores can happen inside your cheeks and on your tongue, lips, and gums. They can be raised bumps, or shallow holes.

- **Gum disease.** You may have red, tender gums that may bleed when you brush your teeth.
What can I do to PREVENT mouth and tooth problems?

- Do NOT put a baby or toddler to bed with a bottle or sippy cup. The milk or drink will stay on the child’s teeth all night. This can cause tooth decay.

- Brush and floss your teeth regularly. Help your children do the same.

- Eat a healthy diet. See the tips starting on page 65.

- See a dentist at least once every year. Take your children to see a dentist, too.

What can I do to TREAT mouth and tooth problems?

- For teething. Teething is normal, but can bother your baby. Here are some ideas to help your baby feel better until the teeth come in:
  
  - Give baby a clean, cold, wet cloth to chew on. Or, rub baby’s gums with the cloth.

  - Offer a teething ring. Make sure the teething ring is made of hard rubber — and that you keep it clean.

  - Give acetaminophen (like baby Tylenol) if your doctor says it’s okay. Do NOT give any medicine that contains aspirin — it increases risk for a serious problem called Reye’s syndrome.
• **For mouth sores.** Mouth sores usually go away in 4 to 7 days. Here’s what to do for pain until then:
  - Gargle with cool water.
  - Eat Popsicles or suck on ice cubes.
  - Stay away from hot drinks and spicy or salty foods.
  - Make a thin paste of baking soda and water, and put it on the sore. Or, you can buy gels and pastes to put on the sore while it heals. This may help ease the pain.
  - Also for pain, you can try acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (like Advil). Follow the instructions for timing and dose. Do NOT give aspirin to a child or teen — it increases risk for a serious problem called Reye’s syndrome.

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### Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:

- Mouth sores that begin soon after you start a new medicine
- Mouth sores that last longer than 2 weeks
- White patches on the roof of the mouth or tongue (this may be thrush)
- Mouth or tooth problems with another health problem like HIV, cancer, or diabetes
- Other symptoms like fever, skin rash, or trouble swallowing
- Very bad discomfort or pain
Osteoporosis

What is it?

Osteoporosis is thin, weak bones. When you have this illness, your bones can break easily and heal slowly.

Anyone can have osteoporosis, but it happens more often in older people. Also, more women have it than men.

What will I see or feel?

Osteoporosis happens slowly over time. At first, you might not have any signs. Later on, you might have these:

- **Back or neck pain**
- **Loss of height** (happens as your back slowly becomes curved and you begin to stoop)
- **Broken bones**

Your doctor can take a picture of your bones to see if you have osteoporosis.
What can I do?

Do these things to keep your bones healthy:

- **Get enough vitamin D and calcium.** Eat more broccoli and green leafy vegetables. Eat low-fat cheese and yogurt. Drink low-fat milk. Take a vitamin that has vitamin D and calcium.

- **Exercise every day.** Staying active will protect your bones as you age. See the exercise tips starting on page 72.

- **Don’t smoke.** Smoking thins your bones faster.

- **Don’t drink too much alcohol.** More than 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks a day is bad for your bones.

- **Take your osteoporosis medicine** if your doctor prescribed it. It can help build bones or slow down bone loss.

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**Call or go to the doctor or clinic if:**

- You wonder if you should be tested for osteoporosis
- You have pain that won’t go away with aspirin or other pain medicine
Poisoning

What is it?

Poisoning is when a chemical gets into your body and makes you sick. Sometimes the chemical is clearly harmful to humans, like bleach. But it can also happen if you take in too much of something that’s usually safe, like a medicine.

You can be poisoned by swallowing, breathing, or touching something. Here are some examples:

- Taking too much of a medicine or vitamin
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Swallowing detergent, paint, cleaning fluid, antifreeze, or a chemical for killing bugs or mice
- Eating a harmful plant, or a food that has harmful bacteria
- Breathing fumes from a gas engine or an open can of paint
- Splashing something in your eye, like bleach
- Spilling a harmful liquid on your skin, or touching a plant like poison ivy
- Getting bitten by certain spiders or snakes

Poisoning can be serious. In fact, each year in the U.S. about 1,000 people die from it.
What will I see or feel?

It can be difficult to know when someone has been poisoned. The symptoms depend on the poison. Still, there are some things that may lead you to suspect poisoning, for example:

- Chemical-smelling breath, or a strange smell on the clothes or skin
- Burns or rash around the mouth or on the skin
- Trouble breathing
- Throwing up, nausea, or stomach cramps
- Diarrhea or trouble controlling urination (peeing)
- Passing out (especially if near a furnace, a car, a fire, or in a place with little or no fresh air)
- A slightly blue or gray color in the lips
- Cough or feeling of choking
- Chest pain or change in heartbeat
- Confusion, dizziness, or trouble seeing straight
- Sleepiness or weakness
- Headache
- Loss of feeling or tingling in a part of the body
- Muscle twitching or jerking

These symptoms are more likely to be from poisoning if they happen suddenly for no clear reason. Also, in a child you may see a clue. For example, you may see an empty container nearby, or a bit of the poison still in the child’s mouth or hand.
What can I do to PREVENT poisoning?

- Keep the Poison Control Center number (1-800-222-1222) where you can easily see it. Try next to your phone or on the refrigerator.

- Keep all medicines, vitamins, cleaners, makeup, and household chemicals out of reach of children. Put them in cabinets with latches that kids can’t open.

- If you’re using a chemical, watch kids carefully. Don’t leave children alone, even for a moment. Most poisonings happen when you are using the chemical.

- Label harmful chemicals. Also draw the skull symbol, or write “poison” on the container. This can help warn kids that the chemical is bad for them.

- Don’t store household chemicals in food containers, even if they are labeled.

- Follow directions for taking medicines and vitamins. Also, don’t call them “candy.” Your child might try to eat a lot of them.

- Don’t paint or use strong cleaners in closed-up spaces. Instead, work outside or open the windows and use a fan.

- Keep houseplants up high, where children can’t reach them. Also, learn whether the plants in your yard or neighborhood are poisonous. Avoid these plants.

- Teach your children. Tell them what can happen if they get into harmful chemicals.
What can I do to TREAT poisoning?

Stay calm and do these things:

- **For swallowed poison:** Call the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222). If the person throws up, keep their mouth and throat clear.

- **For poison in the eye:** Gently rinse the eye with slightly warm (not hot) water for 15 minutes. If the eyelid is stuck closed, do NOT force it open. Also call the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222).

- **For poison on the skin:** Take off any clothes that have the poison on them. Rinse skin with water for 10 minutes. Then, wash skin gently with soap and water and rinse well. Also call the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222).

- **For breathed poison:** Move into fresh air right away. Open doors and windows wide to let fresh air in. If the person throws up, keep their mouth and throat clear. Also, call the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222). And do NOT light a match in the area!
Call 911 or go to the hospital emergency room if:

- Person is not breathing or their heart is not beating
- The Poison Control Center tells you to

Call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 if:

- You think you or someone else has been poisoned
- You have any question about poisoning any time

The experts at this number can give you free advice any time, day or night. It does NOT have to be an emergency.
Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)

What is it?

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is a group of symptoms tied to a woman’s menstrual cycle (period). Symptoms usually start 5 to 11 days before your period. Most symptoms stop when your period begins.

PMS symptoms can affect your body, mind, and mood. They can be mild or severe. In some cases, they can make normal life difficult. So it’s good to know what you can do to feel better — and when you may need to see a doctor.

What will I see or feel?

If you have PMS, you may have some of these symptoms before your period:

- Breast soreness and swelling
- Tiredness and trouble sleeping
- Upset stomach, a “full” feeling or swelling in the abdomen
- Bad pain in your abdomen that comes and goes (cramps)
- Headache
- Changes in appetite, or food cravings
- Feeling stressed or cranky, crying a lot
- Feeling very anxious or sad
- Trouble thinking or remembering well
What can I do?

Here are some things you can do to ease PMS symptoms:

- **Exercise 30 minutes every day** — all month long. This can help prevent and treat PMS symptoms. It’s also good for your total health. See pages 72 to 75 for tips.

- **Eat healthy.** Follow the tips starting on page 65. And pay extra attention to these things before your period:
  - **Limit salt.** You may feel better and have less swelling.
  - **Eat smaller meals, more often.** This can help with food cravings.
  - **Stay away from caffeine and alcohol.** This may help ease aches, pains, and mood swings.
  - **Get enough calcium.** Drink low-fat milk. Eat yogurt and broccoli. Drink soymilk with calcium.
  - **Take a multivitamin.**

- **Get enough sleep.** Get at least 8 hours a night.

- **Lower your stress.** Take time for yourself. Do things that make you feel happy and calm.

- **Take medicine for pain and discomfort.** Try acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (like Advil). You can also try medicines especially for PMS. These often combine pain medicine with something to help with bloating. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist.
Call or go to the doctor or clinic if:

- PMS symptoms are very bad and nothing helps
- PMS symptoms get in the way of normal life: work, family life, friendships, or school

Treatment is available!
Safety Tips

Accidents often happen at home. Follow these basic safety rules to stay safe and get help when you need it.

How can I get help when I need it?

• **Put the Poison Control Center number on every phone:** 1-800-222-1222.

• **List other important phone numbers near the phone, too.** Your list may include phone numbers for your doctor or clinic, close family members, or friends.

• **Teach your children about the 911 number.** Make sure they know it’s for emergencies, not for fun.

• **Keep this guide near the phone.** It will help you know when to get medical help. You can write important phone numbers on the inside of the back cover.

• **Keep all phones where you can easily get to them.** Have at least one phone on every floor of your house.

How can I prevent poisoning?

• **Keep these things in cupboards that children can’t open:**
  – All household cleaning products
  – All medicines and vitamins
  – All gardening and auto products

See other poison safety tips in the “Poisoning” section of this book, starting on page 99.
How can I prevent choking?

- Don’t leave babies or young children alone while they are eating.

- Don’t let window-blind and curtain cords hang down. Cut them short. Or, clip them up with clothespins or cord clips.

- Don’t feed young children foods that they can choke on. For example, save these foods until your children are at least 3 years old:
  - Hotdogs or hotdog pieces
  - Popcorn
  - Whole grapes
  - Chunks of meat or cheese (very small pieces are okay)
  - Raw carrots
  - Nuts and seeds

- Keep these things off the floor and out of reach of children:
  - Balloons
  - Plastic bags
  - Coins
  - Marbles
  - Small caps and lids
How can I prevent falls?

- **Pick up or move things you could trip over.** This includes electrical cords, dog dishes, and drapes.

- **Make sure rugs and loose carpets don’t slide around.** Use anti-slip pads beneath them.

- **Keep stairs safe.** Put handrails on your stairs. Keep stairs well lighted. And take away loose rugs or carpets near the stairs.

- **Put grab-bars in your bathtub and shower.**

- **Don’t use step stools.** If you really have to use one, have someone nearby to help. Also, use a stool that is stable and has a top handrail.

- **If you have young children in the home, use safety gates.** Put them at the top and bottom of every stairway. Use them to keep kids away from a swimming pool, fireplace, or other danger.

- **Don’t leave a baby alone on a bed or changing table.** They can easily roll off.

- **Don’t stand up too quickly.** You could get dizzy and fall.
How can I prevent fire injuries?

- Put smoke detectors on each floor of the house. Check once a month to see if they are working. Put in new batteries each year. Use a yearly event like a holiday or birthday to remind you.

- Put carbon monoxide (CO) alarms on each floor.

- Keep at least one fire extinguisher on hand. The kitchen and garage are good places.

- Don’t smoke in bed. Better yet, don’t smoke in the house. Quit smoking, if you can! See page 119 for tips.

- Wear only fire-resistant clothes for sleeping.

- Cover unused electrical outlets. You can buy safety plugs at the store.

- Keep matches and lighters in a locked drawer or cabinet.

- Make sure space heaters are at least 3 feet away from beds, curtains, and other things that could catch fire.

- Don’t wear loose clothing near the stove or oven. Loose, long sleeves are the biggest danger.

- Watch what you put next to the stove, oven, or heater. Plastics, chemicals, papers, and other things can easily melt or catch fire.

- Have a fire escape plan. Make your family practice it at least once a year.
How can I prevent burns?

- Keep the iron in an out-of-the-way, safe place after using it.

- **Turn the water heater down** from 160°F to 120°F. Water at 160° can cause burns in only 1 second!

- **Turn pot handles toward the center of the stove** while cooking. This way, kids can’t pull pots off the stove.

How can I prevent drowning?

- **DO NOT leave a child alone in a bathtub or near water.** A child can drown in as little as an inch of water in only 1 to 2 minutes! If the phone or doorbell rings, wrap the child up in a towel and take him with you. Better yet, let the phone ring.

- **If there are children in the house, always leave toilet lids closed.** Use a toilet-lid lock.

How can I prevent other injuries?

- Keep razors and razor blades away from children.

- **Keep knives, forks, scissors, and other sharp tools in a drawer.** Use a latch that kids can’t open.

- **Fasten tall furniture (like bookshelves) to the wall** to prevent it from tipping over.

- **Put padding on corners or sharp edges** of coffee tables or other furniture.

- **Always wear a helmet when riding a bike.** A helmet can prevent head injury and save your life.
Sinus Problems

What is it?

**Sinuses** are air-filled spaces in the bones in your head. They are behind the forehead, cheeks, and eyes. The sinuses make **mucus**, the sticky fluid that helps to clean the air you breathe in.

Sinus problems can bring annoying and painful symptoms. Usually these symptoms are just part of a cold, and will go away when the cold gets better. But sometimes you need to call a doctor.

What will I see or feel?

If you have a sinus problem, you might notice these symptoms:

- Runny nose with thick mucus
- Stuffy nose
- A daytime cough that may be worse at night
- Puffy eyes, especially in the morning
- Bad breath
- Drainage down the back of your throat
- Headache
- Pain in the upper teeth
- A feeling of soreness or pressure in your face or behind your eyes
- Fever
What can I do?

Here are some tips to feel better and get well faster:

- **Get plenty of rest and fluids.** This will help your body fight the illness.

- **Take medicine if needed:**
  - For pain, use acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil). Follow the instructions for timing and dose. Do NOT give aspirin to a child or teenager — it increases risk for a serious problem called Reye’s syndrome.
  - For a runny or stuffy nose, try a medicine with a decongestant.

- **Try nose spray.** Look for one that contains a decongestant. Do NOT use for more than 3 days.

- **Rinse your sinuses with salt water** once or twice a day. It’s a bit messy, but it’s a great way to help clear a sinus problem. Here’s how to rinse your sinuses:

  1. First, make a salt water rinse from 1 cup of water mixed with ½ teaspoon of salt. (You can also use a saline rinse from a store.) Put the salt water in a rubber bulb syringe. For a baby, use an eye dropper.

  2. With your head over a sink, hold your head sideways.

  3. With the syringe or eye dropper, squirt a stream of salt water into the top nostril.
4 Let the salt water run from your top nostril to the lower nostril. Some of the water will come out of the lower nostril. Some may drain down the back of your throat.

5 Repeat this with the other nostril.

Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:

- Symptoms that last for more than 2 weeks
- Pain that is bad or getting worse, or is on one side of the head or face
- Ear pain that doesn’t go away, or fluid coming from the ear
- High fever or long-lasting fever (see page 78)
Skin Problems (Rashes)

What are they?
Most people have skin problems from time to time. Usually you can take care of them at home. But sometimes you might need to see a doctor.

What will I see or feel?
The word rash is used for many different skin problems. Here are a few common problems, and the types of rash they can bring:

- **Acne.** Small, red bumps (pimples) on the face, chest, or back. The bumps may have white or yellow pus inside. They can be sore.

- **Eczema.** Dry, red, itchy rash. It often appears on the face, elbows, and backs of knees.

- **Hives.** Raised pink-colored patches and spots. They are often paler in the center, and more red on the edges. They may itch.

- **Diaper rash.** Bright red rash on a baby’s bottom.

- **Fungus infections.** An itchy pink spot that spreads out in a circle as it grows. It happens most often on your arms, legs, chest, or groin.

Watch for any other symptoms that may come with the skin problem. This may help reveal the cause of the problem.
What can I do?

To prevent problems:

- **Bathe or shower regularly.** Use warm, not hot, water. If you have oily skin (looks shiny), wash every day. If your skin is dryer, try every other day.

- **Use mild soap.** Try a soap labeled “for sensitive skin.” Baby wash is a good choice for the whole family. Also avoid strong-smelling soaps.

- **Moisturize.** Use lotion or cream right after you bathe. Some good ones to try are Aveeno, Cetaphil, Eucerin, and Nivea. Be careful, though. Sometimes a moisturizer can make a rash worse.

- **Avoid perfumes or scented soaps or lotions.**

- **Drink 8 glasses of water every day.** This helps your whole body stay healthy — including your skin.

- **Protect your skin from the sun.** See page 128 for ideas on how to do this.

For acne:

- **Try acne creams** from the store.

- **Choose makeup and lotion carefully.** Stay away from oily products. Look for things marked “water-based.”

- **Keep your hair and hands clean and off your face.** The things that touch your face can make it more greasy.

- **Don’t pick or squeeze pimples.** This can cause scars.
For eczema:
- **Don’t scratch.** Put moisturizer on the area. Cover it with a bandage if you need to.
- **Wear loose, cotton clothing.** This will help keep your skin from being bothered by sweat or rubbing.
- **Try a cream with 1% hydrocortisone.** You can buy this at the store.

For hives:
- **Put cool, wet towels on the hives.**
- **Use an antihistamine medicine.** You can buy this at the store. Benadryl is a common brand, but can make you sleepy. For daytime use, look for an antihistamine that says “non-sedating.”

For diaper rash:
- **Change diapers more often.** Wipe with plain water, not scented wipes.
- **Let baby go without a diaper** as much as possible. The air is good for baby’s skin.
- **Use diaper cream.** You can buy this in the baby section of the store.

For fungus infections:
- **Keep the area as clean and dry as possible.** Wash more often. Wear clean cotton clothes.
- **Use anti-fungal cream, spray, or powder.** Common brands are Monistat-Derm, Lotrimin, and Lamisil.
SKIN PROBLEMS

Call 911 or go to the hospital emergency room for:

- Tightness in throat
- Wheezing (whistling sound when you breathe) or trouble breathing
- Swelling in the face or tongue
- Passing out
- Shortness of breath
- Tongue or face swelling

Your rash may come from a dangerous allergic reaction — especially if you have the above symptoms.

Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:

- Rash, spots, blisters, or strange coloring in an infant 3 months or younger
- Diaper rash that does not get better in 3 days, even though you’ve tried the tips listed earlier
- Diaper rash that goes beyond the diaper area
- Rash with a fever
- Rash that looks infected (painful, red, may be leaking fluid)
- Rash with mouth sores
- Rash that is painful and on one side of the body or face
- Rash that is very uncomfortable or painful
- Acne that is leaving scars
- Any rash that isn’t getting better even though you’ve tried the tips listed earlier
Smoking and Tobacco Use

Is it ever okay?

Using tobacco is bad for you, no matter how you use it. All of these are harmful:

- Smoking cigarettes, cigars, or pipes
- Chewing tobacco
- Using snuff

Tobacco contains nicotine. Nicotine is an addictive drug. That’s why people get hooked on tobacco and find it hard to give up. But lots of people have quit. You can, too.

Why is it so bad?

You can’t always see or feel the damage that tobacco does to your body — especially at first. But here’s what using tobacco does:

- It hurts your lungs. Smoking can cause breathing problems, like asthma or emphysema.
- It causes cancer. Smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer. Chewing tobacco and using snuff can lead to mouth and throat cancer. Tobacco use of any type may lead to many other cancers, too — like cancer of the cervix, kidney, and bladder.
• **It raises your risk for heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.** These are serious health problems.

• **It hurts your looks.** Tobacco stains your teeth and can wreck your gums. It causes wrinkles. It gives you bad breath.

• **It harms your friends and loved ones.** Smoking can harm the people you live and work with. Breathing your second-hand smoke hurts their health, as well.

**What can you do?**

It’s never too late to be healthier. Here are some things you can do:

• **Call 1-800-784-8669 (1-800-QUIT NOW) for free help to quit tobacco.**

• **Ask your doctor or clinic staff about quitting.** They can give you advice. They may also give you medicine to help you quit.

• **Don’t let others smoke in your house.** This protects your family’s health. It also helps you stay away from smoking.

Quitting may be one of the hardest things you ever do. But it’s one of the best things you can do for yourself and your family.
Sprains and Strains

What are they?

A sprain is an injury to a joint, like an ankle, knee, or wrist. A strain is a muscle injury. Sprains and strains happen when part of the joint or muscle is torn or stretched too much. They are common and painful.

Sprains and strains happen most often when you fall down or twist your body suddenly. Often you can take care of them at home. But there are times when you should see a doctor.

What will I see or feel?

Here are some things you may notice with a strain or sprain:

- **Soreness or pain**, especially if you move the hurt joint or muscle.
- **Stiffness**. The area is hard to move.
- **Swelling**. The area gets bigger, like it’s filling up with water.
- **Bruises**. The skin turns red and purple at first, then blue, green, or even yellow as it heals.

These symptoms can be mild or very bad. If they are very bad, you might have trouble using the hurt joint or muscle.
What can I do?

Here are some tips for taking care of a sprain or strain:

• Do the “R.I.C.E.” treatment:

  R – Rest. Don’t exercise the hurt area for a few days. It’s okay to move it gently.

  I – Ice. Put ice in a plastic bag, and hold it on the area. Keep it there for 15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours for the first day or so after the injury. But do NOT do this if you have diabetes or a circulation problem.

  C – Compression. Wrap the area with an elastic bandage, like an ACE bandage. Begin wrapping at the end farther from your heart. Don’t wrap it too tightly. Loosen it if the area gets numb.

  E – Elevation. Keep the hurt area raised up higher than your heart. For example, you can put a sprained ankle up on a pillow while you watch TV, read a book, or sleep.

• Treat pain with medicine. If the pain is bad, use acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (like Advil). Do NOT give aspirin to a child or teenager — it increases risk for a serious problem called Reye’s syndrome.
Call or go to the doctor or clinic if:

- You heard a popping sound when a joint was injured
- You have a lot of swelling
- Pain is very bad
- The injured area looks crooked or has lumps that are different from swelling
- You can’t move the injured joint
- You can’t stand on the injured leg
- You have numbness in part of the injured area
- The injury is to an area that has been hurt several times before
- You have pain, swelling, or stiffness that doesn’t get better in 2 to 3 days
- Child will not use injured arm or leg
Stroke

What is it?

A stroke is when blood going to the brain stops suddenly. The brain doesn’t get enough blood, and can be badly damaged.

Strokes are fairly common. They are always serious. They can cause long-lasting problems with thinking, speaking, and moving. You can even die from a stroke. That’s why you should follow the prevention tips on the next page. Also, learn the signs of stroke. The faster you get medical help for a stroke, the less brain damage there may be.

What will I see or feel?

Common symptoms of stroke include:

• Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg especially on one side of the body

• Sudden confusion, or trouble speaking or understanding

• Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes

• Sudden dizziness, trouble walking, or clumsiness

• Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

Stroke is an emergency. Always call 911 right away if you notice the symptoms above.
What can I do?

Do these things to help prevent stroke (and heart problems, too):

- **Exercise 30 minutes every day.** This helps lower blood pressure and protect your health.

- **Eat healthy.** Follow the tips starting on page 65.

- **Don’t smoke.** Smokers have more strokes and heart attacks than non-smokers.

- **Stay at a healthy weight.** Lose extra weight if you need to. See pages 147 to 151.

- **Don’t drink too much alcohol.** If you drink, have no more than 1 or 2 drinks a day.

- **Take medicine to control high blood pressure or high cholesterol.** If a doctor has given you medicine for these things, take it! Even if you don’t notice a change, the medicine can help protect your health.

- **Lower your stress.** Take time for yourself. Do things that make you feel happy and calm. Try to get about 8 hours of sleep every night.
Call 911 or go to the hospital emergency room for:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg — especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, or trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden dizziness, trouble walking, or clumsiness
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause
Sunburn

What is it?

A sunburn is just what it sounds like — a burn from the sun’s rays. You can also get a sunburn from a tanning bed or lamp. They have the same rays.

Sunburn can happen when you don’t protect your skin from the sun. It’s more likely to happen during the middle of the day, when the sun is brightest. And although anyone can get a sunburn, it usually happens quicker in people with light skin.

Sunburns are uncomfortable. But the big problem with sunburns is that they can lead to skin cancer later in life. That’s why you should work to prevent sunburns as well as treat them.

What will I see or feel?

Here’s what you may notice with a sunburn:

- Pink or red skin
- Painful skin
- Skin that is warm to the touch
- Fever
- Blisters
- Swelling, especially in the legs

The worse your sunburn, the more of these symptoms you may have.
What can I do to PREVENT a sunburn?

- **Stay in the shade.** Get under a tree or umbrella. You will still get some of the sun’s rays, but they won’t be as strong.

- **Wear sunscreen lotion.** Look for “SPF” on the label. This stands for Sun Protection Factor. Choose a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher. Put it on every 2 to 3 hours while outside.

- **Stay out of the sun from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** The sun’s rays are strongest then.

- **Wear a hat with a wide brim.** This protects your face and neck.

- **Wear sunglasses.** Choose glasses that say “UV protection.” This means they help protect your eyes.

- **Cover up.** Wear light, long-sleeved shirts and long pants.

- **Don’t be fooled by cloudy days or cold weather.** The sun’s rays still come through clouds. And cold air doesn’t make the sun less bright. Snow is extra bad—it reflects the sun back at you. So does water when you’re boating or water skiing.

- **Take extra care with babies and children.** Follow all the steps above. Even a few bad sunburns will raise your child’s risk of cancer later on.
What can I do to TREAT a sunburn?

- **Take a cool shower or bath** or put cold, wet cloths on the burn.

- **Treat pain.** Try acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil). Do NOT give aspirin to a child or teenager — it increases risk for a serious problem called Reye’s syndrome.

- **Put moisturizing lotion or gel on the burn.** Aloe vera gel is a good one you can buy at the store. But do NOT use lotion or gel if the skin is blistering. Also, do NOT use products that contain benzocaine, lidocaine, or petroleum (like Vaseline).

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**Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:**

- Fever with the sunburn
- Blisters with fluid in them
- Dizziness or trouble seeing well when you have a sunburn
Keep some basic medicines and health supplies at home. You can use them for injuries or other health problems — big or small.

Put these self-care supplies all in one place. That way, you can easily find them when you need them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supply:</th>
<th>Use for:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antacids (like Mylanta or Maalox)</td>
<td>Treating upset stomach and heartburn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antihistamine pills or syrup (like Chlor-Trimeton and Benadryl)</td>
<td>Helping allergy symptoms, treating reactions to poison ivy, bee stings, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antibiotic ointment or cream (like Bacitracin, Neosporin or Polysporin)</td>
<td>Preventing or treating infections that can come from skin cuts, scrapes, scratches, punctures, and ingrown toenails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandages (like Band-Aids), gauze, and first aid tape</td>
<td>Covering and protecting wounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye drops and artificial tears (do not share with others)</td>
<td>Soothing dry or scratchy eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heating pad or hot water bottle</td>
<td>Soothing pain, strains, cramps, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibuprofen (like Advil) and acetaminophen (like Tylenol) pills or syrup</td>
<td>Treating pain and fever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply:</td>
<td>Use for:</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice pack</td>
<td>Easing swelling, minor pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nose spray (do not share with others)</td>
<td>Treating colds and flu, sinus problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isopropyl alcohol</td>
<td>Cleaning skin and thermometers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunscreen lotion with an SPF of 15 or more</td>
<td>Preventing sunburn and protecting against skin cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermometer</td>
<td>Taking temperature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweezers</td>
<td>Removing splinters or other stuff stuck in cuts, scrapes, or punctures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinc oxide</td>
<td>Healing moist, irritated skin like diaper rash</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Throat Problems

What is it?

Some common throat problems are sore throats and laryngitis. If you have laryngitis, it’s hard to speak. You may even lose your voice completely for a while.

Most throat problems aren’t serious. They come with a cold, then go away. But sometimes they are a sign of an illness, like strep throat, that needs treatment with antibiotics.

What will I see or feel?

Here are some different throat symptoms:

- Burning or “scratchy” feeling in your throat
- Throat pain when you swallow, or all the time
- Redness and swelling on the inside of your throat
- Hoarse voice (voice sounds deep or strange) or no voice at all

These symptoms can come from many different illnesses.
What can I do?

Here are some tips to feel better and know when to get medical help:

- **Drink plenty of liquids.** Warm drinks like tea with honey or lemon can soothe your throat. Kids might like cold drinks or Popsicles.

- **Gargle with warm salt water 3 to 4 times a day.** Use ½ teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of warm water. Don’t swallow the salt water.

- **Suck on hard candy.** But don’t give this to children under 5 years old — they can choke.

- **Take medicine for pain.** Use acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (like Advil). Follow the instructions for timing and dose. Do NOT give aspirin to a child or teen — it increases risk for a serious problem called Reye’s syndrome.

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**Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:**

- Increased trouble swallowing or trouble breathing
- White or yellow spots or patches in your throat
- Baby or child drooling much more than usual
- Child with sore throat plus fever or vomiting
- Hoarse voice that lasts more than a week
- High fever or long-lasting fever (see page 78)
- Sore throat that gets worse each day
Throwing Up (Vomiting)

What is it?

When you throw up (vomit), fluid or food from your stomach comes shooting out your mouth. The upset feeling in your stomach right before you throw up is called nausea. You can have nausea without throwing up.

Everyone throws up from time to time. Children throw up more than adults. Women often have nausea and throw up during the early weeks of a pregnancy. This is called morning sickness.

Many different things cause nausea or throwing up. Often the problem goes away on its own. But sometimes you need treatment from a doctor.

What will I see or feel?

Adults know when they throw up or feel nausea. But with a baby, you may wonder if the baby is spitting up or throwing up. Spitting up (reflux) is more common. See page 136 for signs of throwing up and when to call the doctor or clinic.
What can I do?

Try these things when your stomach is upset:

- **Rest.** Moving around can make things worse.

- **Sip liquid.** Sip water, clear soda, and juice. Also, for babies and kids, try drinks like Pedialyte or Ricelyte. You can buy these in a store. Babies can keep breastfeeding. If your child won’t drink, give Popsicles to suck on.

- **Stay away from food smells.** Don’t cook. Don’t go in restaurants or other places that smell like food.

- **Eat bland foods.** Snack on food like crackers and toast. If you can keep these down, try cereal, rice, and fruit. Don’t eat fatty or spicy food.

---

**Call 911 or go the hospital emergency room if:**

- Your child may have taken in a poison
- Your child has swallowed aspirin (Children and teens should NOT take aspirin — it increases risk for a serious problem called Reye’s syndrome.)

---
Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:

- Nausea, with very bad headache
- Throw up that is green or yellow
- Throw up that is bloody or looks black, like coffee grounds
- Nausea, with very bad stomach pain for more than 2 hours
- Adults and children:
  - Trouble keeping any liquids in the stomach for 12 hours
  - Signs of too little fluid in the body: dry mouth, dry skin, no tears, or little or no urination (peeing)
    - For children, no urination in the last 8 hours
    - For adults, no urination in the last 12 hours
  - Throwing up that lasts more than 2 to 3 days
- Babies:
  - Spitting up often
  - Throwing up again and again
  - Trouble keeping any liquids in the stomach for 8 hours
  - Signs of too little fluid in the body: dry mouth, dry skin, no tears, or little or no urination (peeing)
    - For babies 3 months or less, fewer than 4 to 6 wet diapers in the last day
    - For older babies, no wet diapers in the last 8 hours
  - Unusual sleepiness or fussiness
What is it?

Everyone feels tired from time to time. It can be a normal response to too little sleep, too much stress, or too much physical work. But it can also be a sign of an illness that needs treatment.

What will I see or feel?

A doctor might use the word fatigue to describe these symptoms:

- Feeling very, very tired
- Feeling weak
- Having very low energy
- Having trouble doing everyday things
- Not wanting to do anything
- Not wanting sex
What can I do?

- **Exercise every day.** Believe it or not, exercise can give you more energy. Aim for 30 minutes every day. See pages 72 to 75 for tips.

- **Get enough sleep.** Aim for at least 8 hours of sleep every night.

- **Eat healthy.** Eating too little — or too much — can make you feel weak. So can eating too much sugar or fat. See pages 65 to 71 to learn about healthy eating.

- **Drink water during the day.** Your body needs fluid to work right. Aim for 8 glasses a day, unless your doctor tells you not to.

- **Take a multivitamin.**

- **Cut back on caffeine.** Caffeine (found in coffee and many sodas and energy drinks) gives quick energy. But it makes you more tired later on.

- **Drink less alcohol.** Drinking too much alcohol can cause low energy and other health problems. If you do drink, don’t have more than 1 or 2 drinks a day. Some studies show this amount may help your heart. Not drinking at all is fine, too.

- **Change your daily routine.** You may need to work less, or work a different schedule. Or, you may need to do fewer activities.

- **Get up and move.** Sitting all day at work or at home can make you feel more tired. Get up and walk around every now and then. This helps your blood flow and may give you more energy.
Call 911 or go to the hospital emergency room for:
- Confusion or dizziness
- Blurry vision
- Very little or no urine
- Recent swelling and sudden weight gain

Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:
- Weakness or tiredness that lasts 2 weeks for no reason, especially with fever or weight loss
- Weakness or tiredness with constipation (see page 39)
- Weakness or tiredness with dry skin or weight gain
- Sleep problems: waking up many times in the night, or not being able to sleep
- Weakness or tiredness with headaches (see page 79)
- Feeling down or sad, or not being able to enjoy the things you used to (see page 48)
Vaccines (Immunizations)

What are they?

When germs invade your body, you get sick. A vaccine helps prepare your body to fight against the germs. Vaccines are also called immunizations.

The diseases that vaccines protect against can cause severe sickness, handicaps, and even death. In years past, some of these diseases were common. But because of vaccines, most are now rare. Still, if people don’t get vaccines, the diseases can become common again.

Vaccines are very safe for most people. There is a very small risk of serious problems. The risk from getting the diseases is far greater than any risk from getting the vaccine.

It’s good to know what vaccines you and your children should have, and when. Talk to your doctor. If you have missed any vaccines, it’s not too late to catch up!
What will I see or feel?

Most vaccines are given as shots, usually in the arm. The shot may hurt for a moment when the needle first goes into your arm. Some people say it doesn’t hurt at all.

You or your child’s arm may feel a little stiff and sore for a few days after the shot. There may be redness or mild swelling where the shot was given. You might also have a slight fever, or feel tired or fussy. These are all normal symptoms. See page 144 for when to call the doctor or clinic.

What can I do?

Get your vaccines when you should — and make sure your children do too! Follow the schedules on the next pages. Talk to your doctor or clinic if you miss a vaccine or have any questions.

A flu shot is recommended every year for adults and children 6 months and older.
Vaccine schedule for babies, children, and teens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Vaccine (number in series)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newborn</td>
<td>• Hepatitis B (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>• Hepatitis B (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• DTaP (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hib (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Polio (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pneumococcal (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rotavirus (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>• DTaP (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hib (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Polio (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pneumococcal (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rotavirus (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>• Hepatitis B (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• DTaP (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hib (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Polio (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pneumococcal (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rotavirus (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every year starting at 6 months</td>
<td>• Influenza (flu)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abbreviation used in these tables:

- DTaP = Diptheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis
- Hib = *Haemophilus influenzae* type b
- MMR = Measles, Mumps, Rubella
- Tdap = Tetanus, diptheria, and pertussis
- HPV = Human papillomavirus
## Vaccine schedule for babies, children, and teens, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Vaccine (number in series)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 to 18 months</td>
<td>- DTaP (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hib (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Pneumococcal (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- MMR (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Varicella (chickenpox) - (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hepatitis A (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 24 months</td>
<td>- Hepatitis A (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6 years</td>
<td>- DTaP (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Polio (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- MMR (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Varicella (chickenpox) - (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 years and older</td>
<td>- Tdap booster at age 11 or 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Meningococcal vaccine: 2 doses, one dose at age 11 or 12 and the second dose 5 years later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- HPV vaccine: 3 doses between ages 11 and 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Catch up time!</strong> If you’ve missed any earlier vaccines, you can catch up on these vaccines now:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Hepatitis B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Polio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– MMR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Varicella (chickenpox)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Hepatitis A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Vaccine schedule for adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>Vaccine:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every year</td>
<td>• Influenza (flu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 10 years</td>
<td>• Td booster (Tetanus and diptheria)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Once or twice in a lifetime | • Pneumoccal (Pneumonia)  
  – All adults aged 65 or older  
  – Adults with asthma  
  – Adults with heart disease  
  – Adults with diabetes  
  – Other adults as recommended by your doctor  
• Zoster (shingles) - one dose for adults age 60 and older |

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**Call or go to the doctor or clinic for:**

- High fever or long-lasting fever (see page 78)
- Seizures (jerking or staring)
- Trouble breathing
- Fast heart rate
- Dizziness
- Severe weakness
- A child or baby who won’t stop crying for 3 hours or more
- Any other reason your doctor tells you about
- Concerns or questions about any symptom
Vertigo

What is it?

Vertigo is a specific kind of dizziness. It is more than feeling lightheaded or unsteady. When you have vertigo, you may have an alarming sense that you are spinning, even when you are actually holding still.

Vertigo is not an illness itself. It’s a symptom of another problem. The problem is most often in your inner ear, but it may be in your brain. Most of these problems are harmless and get better, but some can be life-threatening.

What will I see or feel?

If you have vertigo you may feel:

• The room around you spinning, or your body spinning
• A sense of your body or the room tilting or swaying
• Unsteady or off balance

These feelings can last a few seconds, a few hours, or even several days. The feelings can come and go. You may feel worse when you move your head or change positions. You may also have:

• Nausea or vomiting
• Blurry vision or trouble focusing
• A feeling of anxiety (heart beating fast, mild shortness of breath)
• A mild headache
What can I do?

- **Rest and lie still** during the vertigo attack.
- **Move your body slowly**, especially when going from sitting to standing. Take steps to prevent falling.
- **Move your head slowly**, especially when looking up or turning from side to side.
- If you are vomiting, drink plenty of fluids.

---

**Call 911 or go to the hospital emergency department if:**
You have vertigo along with one or more of these symptoms:
- Severe headache
- Temperature over 100°F
- Double vision
- Trouble speaking or hearing
- Inability to walk
- Passing out
- Numbness or tingling
- Chest pain or severe trouble breathing
- Vomiting that won’t stop

---

**Call or go to the clinic, or doctor:**
If you have vertigo that comes and goes, you need to go to a clinic or doctor. Vertigo is usually harmless, but the cause needs to be identified. Your doctor can often give you medicine or a simple treatment in the office to lessen or relieve your symptoms. Sometimes, the doctor may recommend certain exercises or therapy. This depends on what may be causing your vertigo.
Weight Loss

Am I at a healthy weight?

Not everyone can, or should, be skinny. But everyone can be healthier. Doctors use two common ways to tell if your weight is healthy for you.

- **Measure your height and weight.** Your doctor will compare your height and weight to a chart called the **body mass index chart (BMI)**. This helps tell if you should lose weight, and about how much.

- **Measure around your waist.** People who carry extra weight around their waist may be at higher health risk. Use a tape measure to measure around your waist. For women, more than 35 inches is too much. For men, more than 40 inches is too much.

It’s not good to be underweight or overweight. In the U.S., most people are overweight.

Why do I need to lose weight?

If you weigh too much:

- **You risk serious health problems.** People who are overweight are more likely than others to have high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and even some types of cancer. The more overweight you are, the higher your risk.
• **You may tire quickly, and lack energy.** Extra weight is hard on your body. You might not be able to do all the things you want to do in a day.

• **You may find exercise more difficult.** Extra weight is hard on your joints. You may get out of breath easily.

• **You may have poor self-esteem, or feel sad and down.** Studies show that overweight and depression often go together.

The good news is that even a little weight loss can improve your outlook — and your health. This is especially true if you can keep it off!

**What can I do to lose weight?**

Special diets may help you lose weight fast. But they are often unhealthy. They can be hard to keep up. And most people who lose weight quickly gain it back quickly, too.

**If you need to lose weight, do it the right way.** Lose no more than 1 or 2 pounds a week. Do it by making healthy, lifelong changes in your eating and exercise habits. See 5 keys to successful, healthy weight loss on the next page.
1 **Be aware.** Keep a diary for a few days. You may not realize you have bad habits until you see them on paper. Write down what you eat, how much you eat, and where you eat it. Write down how much activity you get. Try to figure out what makes you eat poorly or skip exercise. Then make a plan to handle things in a better way.

2 **Be more active — every day.** Regular exercise is a key to losing weight and keeping it off. Add at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise most days of the week. (Even more is better.) But remember, ALL physical activity adds up to better health. So look for ways to be more active throughout the day. See pages 72 to 75 for more exercise tips.

3 **Make healthier food choices.** Eat foods low in fat and sugar. Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Drink more water. Give up soda. Follow the guidelines starting on page 65.

4 **Eat smaller portions.** Most Americans eat too much. For example, an average fast-food value meal is more food than most people should eat in an entire day! So learn what “normal” portion sizes are. Then get in the habit of serving them to yourself and your family. See the next two pages for help.

5 **Keep track.** Set goals and track your progress in a journal. Make goals for your weight, your activity, and your eating habits. Write down your progress. Celebrate small successes along the way. And if you get off track, don’t give up. It takes time to make lasting changes — but your health is worth it.
Compare what you eat to these standard serving sizes:

- 1 slice of bread
- ½ cup of cooked cereal, rice, or pasta
- 6 crackers
- 1 cup (8 ounces) of milk or yogurt
- 1 to 2 ounces of cheese (an ounce is about the size of your thumb)
- 3 ounces of cooked meat, poultry, or fish (about the size of a deck of cards)
- 2 tablespoons of peanut butter
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon butter or oil
- ¾ cup (6 ounces) of juice
- 1 medium apple, orange, or other piece of fruit
- 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables
- ½ cup of other vegetables
Tips to help you watch your portion sizes:

- Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruits first. Serve meat or pasta last.

- Keep serving bowls off the table. You will be less tempted to take second helpings.

- Don’t snack right out of a bag. Put your food on a plate.

- Eat slowly. Stop eating before you feel full.

- Don’t skip breakfast. People who skip breakfast tend to eat more later in the day.

See more healthy eating tips on pages 65 to 71.
My Medicine Manager

Taking medicine is an important part of your treatment. It’s important to know why, how, and when to take it. Your doctor or pharmacist can help. Don’t be afraid to ask questions. Also ask for help if you have problems refilling a prescription for any reason.

Use the charts on the following pages to help you manage your medicines. Write down whatever will help you, including questions to ask.

Any medicine allergies?  □ yes  □ no

If yes, list: ______________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

My pharmacy:

Name:________________________________________

Address:_____________________________________

Phone:_______________________________________

Pharmacist:__________________________________
**Medicine name:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What it's for:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

When I started taking it: ____________ When to refill: ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What it looks like</th>
<th>How much to take</th>
<th>When to take it</th>
<th>Special Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>morning</td>
<td>With food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>noon</td>
<td>NO food</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>evening</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bedtime</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other instructions:

Side effects or questions:

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**Medicine name:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What it's for:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

When I started taking it: ____________ When to refill: ____________

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<td>evening</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bedtime</td>
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</table>

Other instructions:

Side effects or questions:
### Medicine name: ____________________________

What it’s for: ____________________________

When I started taking it: ________________  When to refill: ________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What it looks like</th>
<th>How much to take</th>
<th>When to take it</th>
<th>Special Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>morning noon evening bedtime</td>
<td>□ With food □ NO food</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other instructions:

Side effects or questions:

---

### Medicine name: ____________________________

What it’s for: ____________________________

When I started taking it: ________________  When to refill: ________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What it looks like</th>
<th>How much to take</th>
<th>When to take it</th>
<th>Special Instructions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>morning noon evening bedtime</td>
<td>□ With food □ NO food</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other instructions:

Side effects or questions:
**Medicine name:**

What it’s for:

When I started taking it: _______________  When to refill: _______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What it looks like</th>
<th>How much to take</th>
<th>When to take it</th>
<th>Special Instructions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>morning</td>
<td>With food</td>
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<td>bedtime</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other instructions:

Side effects or questions:

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**Medicine name:**

What it’s for:

When I started taking it: _______________  When to refill: _______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What it looks like</th>
<th>How much to take</th>
<th>When to take it</th>
<th>Special Instructions</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>noon</td>
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<td>evening</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bedtime</td>
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</table>

Other instructions:

Side effects or questions:
# My Appointments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Appointment is with</th>
<th>Problem or concern</th>
<th>Notes and instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Important Phone Numbers

Poison control: 1-800-222-1222
Police: ________________________________
Fire: ________________________________
Emergency: 911

Doctor: ________________________________
Clinic: ________________________________
After hours call: ________________________________
Pharmacy: ________________________________
Other contacts: ________________________________