

TAKE CHARGE!



January 2025

Health Fads You Don't Need

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

If you are interested in a healthy lifestyle, start by eating right, being physically active and getting enough sleep. It's not flashy advice, but these tried-and-true methods are known to help boost energy levels and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

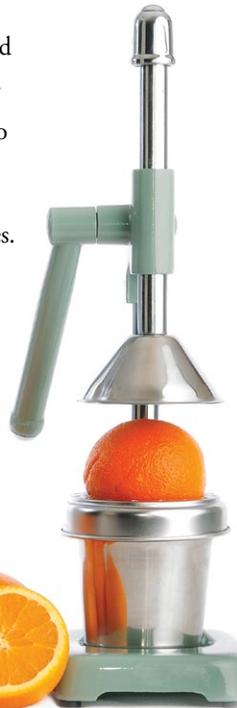
It may be tempting to take shortcuts or try wellness trends that are popular on social media, but they fall outside the parameters of a healthy lifestyle. Here are some fads to skip because there is no scientific proof they are helpful, safe or healthy.

Carnivore diet: This diet contains meat, butter and eggs, but it eliminates vegetables, fruit, grains, nuts and oils (such as olive and canola). It's the opposite of the plant-based diet that's recommended for better health. It lacks many important vitamins and minerals; this happens when an eating plan omits entire food groups. It's low in fiber, which can negatively affect digestive health. The carnivore diet is unsafe if you're pregnant or breastfeeding and for people with conditions, such as high blood pressure, kidney disease or diabetes.

IV vitamin bars: Hospitals correctly use intravenous (IV) drips to deliver vital fluids or medication to patients. But there's danger in visiting an unregulated spa for an IV drip of random vitamins your body may not need. Vitamins can be toxic in high doses, and improperly inserted IVs can lead to blood clots or infections.

Juice cleanses: Drinking juice for a few days is touted to cleanse your body of impurities. Sounds great except for one thing: It's bunk. The human body regularly self-cleans and naturally eliminates impurities through sweat, urine and feces. The FDA warns that these products make false claims about wellness and may contain potentially harmful ingredients.

Alkaline water: This bottled water is less acidic than tap water, and marketers say it can detoxify the body and slow down aging. Science doesn't support these claims. Drinking alkaline water will not change your body's overall pH — that's highly regulated by the kidneys, lungs and liver.



city events

After the Holidays - Managing That Debt

Thursday, January 9

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Register [here](#)

Supporting Employee Well-Being as a Manager

Wednesday, January 15

11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Register [here](#)

Start Strong, Stay Committed: Wellness that Goes Beyond Resolutions

Thursday, January 16

10:00 am – 11:00 am

Register [here](#)

Deferred Compensation

Nearing Retirement

Tuesday, January 7

12:00 pm – 12:45 pm

Register [here](#)

Introduction to Deferred Comp

Wednesday, January 15

12:00 pm – 12:45 pm

Register [here](#)

Understanding your Deferred Comp Statements

Thursday, January 30

12:00 pm – 12:30 pm

Register [here](#)

Healthcare Literacy Well-being Week

How to Access Care & Connect with Your Care Team

Monday, January 27

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Register [here](#)

Finding Care with Accolade Advocacy

Tuesday, January 28

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Register [here](#)

Getting the Most out of Your Health Benefits

Tuesday, January 28

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Register [here](#)

Financial Insurance Basics

Wednesday, January 29

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Register [here](#)

Know Before You Go: How to Prepare for a Visit to the Doctor

Wednesday, January 29

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Register [here](#)

Benefits Simplified – Presented by Aetna

Thursday, January 30

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Register [here](#)

The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, 4 Forms of Exercise, is at personalbest.com/extras/25V1tools.

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The Toll of Financial Stress

By Eric Endlich, PhD

Having enough money is one of the most common things that causes all of us to worry — and that couples argue about. However, worrying won't put money in your bank account or bread on the table, and it can have negative impacts, such as:

- Poor sleep.
- Difficulty enjoying life.
- Decreased productivity.
- Head, back or stomach aches.
- Conflict with your partner or loved ones.
- Reduced immunity.

Because of these effects, it's well worth trying to break this mental habit. There are several strategies you may find effective, including:

- **Facing your feelings.** These worries are normal, but when making big decisions, it's important to leave time to think things through calmly.
- **Examining your beliefs.** If you have persistent irrational thoughts about money (e.g., *"I won't be happy until I'm a multimillionaire"*), look for evidence to challenge them (e.g., *"there are many things in life that bring me joy and cost nothing"*).
- **Developing a budget.** Knowing how much is coming in and going out can help ease your mind.

- **Consulting a professional.** Ask those you trust for recommendations for financial experts who can help you make an effective plan for the future.
- **Focusing on what you control.** Prices may rise whether you like it or not, but you can still decide what and when to buy in many cases.
- **Taking a break.** Find relaxing and enjoyable activities to engage in so you're not thinking about money all the time.



It's not too late to get a flu shot. Yes, it's best to get vaccinated in September or October before flu season is going strong. But the flu virus is often still active into March. So, if you didn't get your flu shot before, make time to get it now. Remember, it takes about two weeks for full immunity to the virus to kick in after vaccination. If you got through the last couple of months without catching the flu, that doesn't mean you're not at risk for catching the virus now. By getting the flu shot, you'll not only raise the odds you'll avoid the flu, but you'll help prevent spreading the flu to others. And make sure you're up-to-date on your COVID vaccination.

Sleep and Mood

Lack of sleep can have a major impact on your mental health and emotions. According to research, sleep deprivation can affect mood by:

- Causing stress and anxiety.
- Leading to depression.
- Causing irritability.
- Making decision-making, concentration and focusing more difficult.
- Impairing the ability to learn and perform tasks that require logical or complex thinking.
- Increasing the risk of developing a mood disorder.
- Slowing reaction time.

Ways to improve your sleep:

Keep a consistent bedtime routine. Get up and go to sleep at roughly the same time every day.

Don't take long naps during the day.



Avoid alcohol, nicotine and caffeine in the late afternoon and evening.

Keep it cool. Sleep experts recommend setting your thermostat between 65°F and 68°F.

Don't go to bed too hungry or too full.

Develop a nightly bedtime routine, such as taking a bath or shower, meditating or reading.

Exercise during the day, not right before bed. **Tip:** Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise a week.

Turn off all of your electronics (yes, even your phone) about an hour before going to bed.

See your health care provider if you still have sleep problems.

Studies indicate that even a moderate lack of sleep can greatly impact temperament. In one study, University of Pennsylvania scientists discovered that participants restricted to just 4.5 hours of sleep per night for one week experienced heightened levels of stress, anger, sadness and mental fatigue. However, once the participants returned to their usual sleep patterns, they noticed significant mood improvements.

After the holidays, many people choose to reset their health by participating in Dry January, a month-long break from consuming alcohol. Many participants have reported they lost weight, slept better and felt better. And studies back it up: Dry January participants had lower blood pressure, weight loss, reduced stress and improved sleep.

Thinking of trying it? Here's some tips for managing a successful Dry January:

Have fun. Try creating new mocktail concoctions that taste great but are alcohol-free (preferably sugar-free or low in sugar). Or pursue a new hobby.

Resist temptations. Keep alcohol out of your house. Bring mocktails when you know alcohol is available at an event or a party.

Form a support network. Ask friends and family to hold you accountable. Or invite them to join you in the challenge.

Make a plan for slip-ups. We're all human. If you do drink alcohol, do a mental restart.

TIP of the MONTH

Prebiotic Soft Drinks

Soft drinks with fiber? Indeed. Trendy prebiotic soda is popping up on store shelves. It's flavored carbonated water with two to three grams of fiber per can from prebiotic inulin, acacia or tapioca. Prebiotic fibers help support the beneficial bacteria (probiotics) in the gut. This soda doesn't replace the need to get 25 to 35 grams of fiber daily from foods, such as fruit, vegetables and whole grains. If you try it, choose a low-sugar option with fewer than two teaspoons of sugar per can. **Caution:** Prebiotic fibers may cause gas and bloating, especially if you already have irritable bowel syndrome. Do not try to get all of your daily fiber intake from this soda. Rely on vegetables, beans and whole grains for a fiber-rich and well-rounded eating plan.

The Science of Satiety

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

eating smart

Satiety is the state of feeling full and satisfied after eating. This feeling of fullness is affected by hormones that react in response to food intake. There are two main hormones linked to feeling hungry and full:

- **Ghrelin** — a hormone that stimulates the appetite. It's sometimes referred to as the hunger hormone.
- **Leptin** — a hormone that regulates appetite and recognizes fullness. It's sometimes called the satiety hormone.

If these hormones are not functioning properly, they can affect the body's ability to regulate feelings of hunger and fullness. Abnormal leptin levels are linked to metabolic syndrome and obesity. This is known as leptin resistance, and researchers are looking at how it may affect weight control and health. To date, there's no effective leptin therapy to help manage obesity or metabolic syndrome. Research is ongoing.

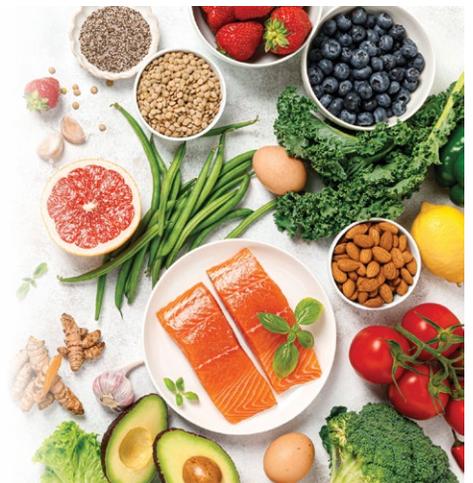
What researchers do believe is that certain nutrients in foods can dictate how full we feel after a meal. Studies show that eating foods that contain more protein and fiber can help us feel satiated and stay full for longer. On the other hand, foods that contain refined carbs (such as sugar), do not help us feel as full.

In the 1990s, researchers developed a satiety index to measure how full you get after eating certain foods. The foods that provide the most fullness are high in protein or fiber. They include:

- Fish, beef and poultry.
- Lentils and beans.
- Eggs.
- Whole grains, such as oatmeal and whole-wheat pasta.
- Fruit.
- Cheese.

Foods that are less satiating tend to be high in refined flour or sugar. These include cakes, donuts, chocolate bars and similar products.

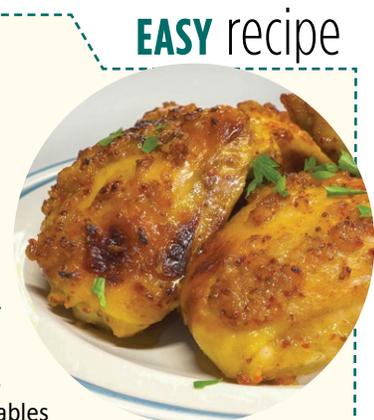
Eating meals made of balanced plates (½ plate vegetables and fruit, ¼ whole grains and ¼ protein) remains good advice. This combination at meals will help you feel full for longer, and it provides plenty of vitamins, minerals and fiber.



Sheet Pan Honey-Mustard Chicken

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1½ lbs. boneless skinless chicken thighs | 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil |
| 2 cups potatoes, 1-inch diced | ½ tsp salt |
| 1 onion, 1-inch diced | 2 tbsp fresh chopped parsley |
| 2 large carrots, sliced into rounds | |
| 3 tbsp honey | |
| 3 tbsp grainy Dijon mustard | |

Preheat oven to 400°F. **Line** baking sheet with parchment. **In** a large bowl, add chicken, potatoes, onions and carrots. **Add** honey, mustard, oil and salt to the chicken. **Stir** well to coat. **Spread** chicken and vegetables evenly onto baking sheet. **Bake** for 35-40 minutes, stirring once, until chicken is 165°F and potatoes are fork-tender. **Garnish** with parsley and serve.



Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 385 calories | 35g protein | 17g total fat | 3g saturated fat | 10g mono fat | 3g poly fat | 27g carbohydrate | 16g sugar (3g added sugars) | 3g fiber | 588mg sodium

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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EXPERT advice

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD

Q: What is norovirus?

A: Norovirus is the leading cause of gastroenteritis in the U.S.

It's transmitted from food or water contaminated with the virus or from close contact with an infected person. The virus spreads especially fast in crowded conditions, such as cruise ships, restaurants, schools, daycare centers and nursing homes.

Common symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramps, along with low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches and fatigue. The illness begins one to two days after exposure and usually lasts for one to three days. Dehydration is a risk, especially in young children, older adults and those with chronic illnesses.

Protect yourself and avoid spreading norovirus to others with this CDC advice:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds after using the toilet or changing diapers. Also wash them before preparing food or eating. Soap and water kill norovirus germs better than hand sanitizers.
- Wash fruits and vegetables and cook meat, poultry and shellfish thoroughly.
- Stay home when sick for two to three days after your symptoms stop.

News & Notes

- **Check Your 2025 Annual Benefits Statement:** Directions for checking your 2025 benefits statement in Workday along with required annual notices will be sent by U.S. mail on January 15. Please make sure your records match the City's information. Contact your department's benefits representative if you have any questions.
- **Give Yourself Permission:** Embrace your best you – mind, body and life. With WeightWatchers you can discover thousands of healthier recipes, get on a roll with exercise tracking, tame stress with guided meditations and share the love with a 24/7 support squad. All regular employees and their adult dependents are eligible to join Weight Watchers with City savings. Learn more at www.com/CityofSeattle.
- **Winter Eye Health and Protection:** In the winter, extreme temperatures, wind, and dry air can all lead to dry eyes. To prevent dry eyes, consider running a humidifier, switching to glasses for awhile if you wear contacts, and using artificial tears recommended by your eye doctor. For more information, read [this article](#) from VSP where you'll also find some discounts. If you have questions about your eye health, contact your [VSP network provider](#).

city events

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Knowing Your City Benefits Resources

Thursday, January 30

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm Register [here](#)

Healthcare Demystified: A Comprehensive Guide to Medical Benefits and Well-being

Friday, January 31

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Register [here](#)

Outdoor Winter Work Tips

Working outside in the cold is a reality for many people. In addition to slip and fall hazards, there is a chance for workers to develop cold stress if they aren't careful. Cold stress is when the cold air, moisture and snow draw heat away from the body, resulting in conditions, such as hypothermia, frostbite, trench foot and chilblains.

Hypothermia: When normal body temperature drops below 95°F due to heat being lost faster than it is replaced.

Frostbite: Tissue injury from freezing, usually affecting the extremities, particularly the feet and hands. Severe cases may require amputation.

Trench foot or immersion foot: Injury to the feet from prolonged exposure to wet and cold temperatures, leading to tissue death due to restricted circulation.

Chilblains: Painful inflammation of small blood vessels from repeated exposure of skin to cold, damp air.

Take these steps to make sure you are safe while performing required outdoor work:

- **Recognize** the symptoms of cold stress. They can include tingling, blisters, aching, shivering, reddening skin and, in the case of hypothermia, confusion.

- **Dress** for the conditions. Wear at least two layers of wool, silk or synthetics; these fabrics can retain insulation even when wet. Add a ventilated outer layer that offers wind and rain protection. Wear a hat or hood and insulated gloves. Consider protecting your face with a synthetic or knit mask if the temperature is below freezing. Wear insulated and waterproof boots with good traction.
- **Stay** dry. Bring extra socks, gloves, hats, jackets and a change of clothes in case you get wet and need to change.
- **Drink** warm, sweetened fluids. Avoid alcohol.
- **Don't** touch cold metal or wet surfaces with your bare hands.
- **Follow** safe work practices and use personal protective equipment.
- **Monitor** your physical condition, as well as your coworkers' conditions.
- **Take** frequent breaks in warm, dry areas.