

Nov. 2020

Healthy Living



A supplement of the
Journal Review

Are you thinking of selling your home to move to a condo or senior supportive environment?

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Many seniors would prefer to continue living in their own home, or aging in place. Sometimes, circumstances work against those preferences:

- *Home maintenance becomes a burden*
- *A major life event forces considering a move*
- *An aging parent wants to live closer to adult children or other caretakers*
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4 tips for restoring sensitive, irritated, dry skin

(BPT) - Beautiful, healthy-looking skin is a reflection of overall good health. But it's not just a question of how your skin looks - how it feels is just as important. If your skin is sensitive, you may experience symptoms that make you feel uncomfortable.

How do you know if you have sensitive skin?

- * Your skin flushes or turns red easily
- * You have itchiness or dryness

- * Beauty products or fragrances irritate your skin

- * You're sensitive to sun or wind

- * You have broken capillaries on your face

Because your skin is affected by your internal health and your external environment, there are many potential causes for skin sensitivity - and many possible treat-

ments.

Sensitive skin is typically caused by a compromised skin moisture barrier, allowing for increased water loss and faster absorption of irritants and allergens that come in contact with your skin. Psychological and emotional factors can also contribute to skin sensitivity, as well as environmental conditions.

Whether your sensitive skin is on your face, body or both, it helps to identify common triggers.

Everyday sensitive skin triggers

While some people are genetically predisposed to sensitive skin, others can be sensitized by their environment and lifestyle. Some factors that may trigger sensitive skin reactions include temperature or

humidity changes, pollution or smoking, plus use of soaps, household or cosmetic products - especially those containing high concentration of fragrances. Other potential triggers include medical treatments like chemotherapy or radiation, or factors like emotional stress or lack of sleep.

The good news is, there are steps you can take in your everyday life to safeguard your skin against possible triggers.

Create restorative spaces

We've been spending a lot more time at home, so it's worth evaluating your living space. Making small changes can create a more restorative environment to improve your overall well-being, including the health of your skin.



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Humans are attracted to nature for a reason. Being in or around nature offers restorative benefits to your physical and emotional well-being. Here are four tips for bringing positive, natural elements into your environment and daily routine.

1. Grow plants.

Bring more plants into your home, as they can improve indoor air quality by absorbing toxins and increasing moisture levels - which helps nourish dry, sensitive skin.

2. Stock up on gentle skincare.

Use products specially created for sensitive skin. For example, Aveeno offers gentle cleansing and moisturizing products made from naturally derived ingredients - like oat - formulated to nourish, calm and restore skin so it looks and feels healthier. Oats have been used in skincare since ancient times for their ability to



soothe and nourish skin, because they help:

- * Replenish and hydrate the moisture barrier
- * Restore skin's pH
- * Soothe sensitive, dry skin

Both of the company's new collections are formulated without fragrance, parabens and phthalates.

For the body: The Aveeno Restorative Skin Therapy line is a dermatologist-tested body care regimen clinically proven to be well-tolerated and effective on distressed, sensitive skin. Their Restorative Skin Therapy Oat Repairing Cream is formulated with a rich complex of aloe, pro-vitamin B5 and the brand's highest concentration of prebiotic oat, and is clinically

proven to intensely moisturize over time to improve skin's resilience.

For the face: The Aveeno Calm + Restore facial care collection is formulated with soothing oat and calming feverfew to calm irritated, dry skin. The line includes a Calm + Restore Oat Gel Moisturizer for daily use. It hydrates to strengthen the skin's moisture barrier over time.

3. Get choosy about fabrics.

Select clothing and linens - including face masks - made from gentle, natural materials (like cotton or bamboo).

4. Amp up your lighting.

Increase natural lighting to boost vitamin D intake.

For National Healthy Skin Month this year, find new ways to improve your skin's health and appearance. Visit Aveeno.com to find the right products for the health of your skin.

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4 Things to Know When Shopping for a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan

(BPT) - About 10,000 Americans turn 65 every day and by 2050, seniors will represent more than 20% of the population.

[i] If you are 65 or older, staying healthy is more important than ever. One step includes picking a Medicare prescription drug plan during Open Enrollment, which began Oct. 15.

If you pay out-of-pocket for your prescription drugs, a Medicare prescription drug plan may help save money. Each plan provides a list of covered medications, which is available through the plan's website and customer service center.

With the right tools and a trusted partner to provide guidance, it can be a simple process. Read the following tips to help pick a plan:

#1: Consider a stand-alone or combination plan.

In addition to examining out-of-pocket costs and what your plan covers, a good place to start when considering your options is to research a Prescription Drug Plan (PDP) and Medicare Advantage Prescription Plan (MAPD). A PDP is a stand-alone plan that only covers prescription drugs. A MAPD combines Part A (hospital insurance), Part B (medical insurance) and usually Part D (prescription drug) into a single plan. [ii]

#2: Evaluate the plan

each year.

Your Medicare prescription drug plan benefits can change yearly, including prescription drug coverage, premiums, deductibles and pharmacy benefits. Even if you're keeping your plan, it's important to evaluate if it continues to fit your needs. And for the six in 10 Americans living with at least one chronic condition [iii] that may require multiple daily medications, having a plan with minimal copays can be critical. Talking to an independent insurance broker can help assess your individual needs. Walgreens has teamed up with eHealth*, an independent, fully licensed health insurance broker offering free, personalized advice with no obligation to enroll. People found an average savings of \$710 annually when using eHealth. [iv]

#3: Ensure your selected plan works with your preferred pharmacy.

Check if your pharmacy of choice is in the plan's preferred network to save on copay costs. Pharmacists also understand individual medication needs to help you navigate your Medicare prescription drug plan options.

Pharmacists play a pivotal role in communities, and in these times, are highly accessible resources to ask health-related questions. Walgreens pharmacists have stepped

up in incredible ways to support people throughout the pandemic, whether it's spending additional time over the phone to address questions or combining prescription refills to fit busy schedules and reduce trips to the pharmacy.

#4: Explore ways to lower costs at the pharmacy.

Check whether your brand-name prescription has a generic alternative, and then talk with your doctor to see if this would be a good option for you. If your brand-name prescription doesn't have a generic alternative, there may be lower-cost brand-name prescriptions used to treat the same condition. Ask your pharmacist, and then talk with your doctor to see if switching brands makes sense in your situation.

*eHealth is a licensed insurance broker. No commissions are paid to Walgreens. No obligation to enroll.

[i] The Aging Readiness & Competitiveness Report. AARP International. <https://arc.aarpinternational.org/File%20Library/Full%20Reports/ARC-Report-United-States.pdf>

[ii] How do Medicare Advantage Plans work? Medicare.gov. <https://www.medicare.gov/sign-up-change-plans/types-of-medicare-health-plans/medicare-advantage-plans/how-do-medicare-advantage-plans-work>

[iii] About chronic diseases. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/index.htm>

[iv] eHealth's Medicare Choice and Impact report examines user sessions from more than 111,000 eHealth Medicare visitors who used the company's Medicare prescription drug coverage comparison tool in the fourth quarter of 2019, including Medicare's 2020 Annual Election Period (October 15 - December 7, 2019).



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What you need to know about the cancer-diabetes connection

(BPT) - There are more connections between diabetes and cancer than you'd expect. Research suggests the two can be intimately related - with some cancer treatments putting patients at risk for insulin dependence, and type 2 diabetes greatly increasing a person's susceptibility to cancer.

Because cancer and both types 1 and 2 diabetes can weaken the immune system, people with these disorders are also at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).[1]

Cancer and diabetes are connected

In type 1 diabetes, the body no longer sufficiently produces insulin. In type 2 diabetes, the body may still be producing insulin, but other metabolic cells of the body become resistant to its effects (insulin resistance). Insulin, a hormone the pancreas makes to allow cells to use glucose, remains the standard treatment option for millions of people living with diabetes.[2] In 1978 at City of Hope, a biomedical research complex and National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center in Southern California, Arthur Riggs, Ph.D., and Keiichi Itakura, Ph.D., conducted research that led to the invention of synthetic human insulin, which trans-

formed modern diabetes management. In 2017, City of Hope founded the Wanek Family Project for Type 1 Diabetes, an ambitious program designed to rapidly translate laboratory discoveries into new treatments - and eventually a cure - for type 1 diabetes.

Cancer and diabetes are "two sides of the same coin" because at a fundamental level both are disruptions of the body's normal metabolism. For example, people with type 2 diabetes are twice as likely to develop liver or pancreatic cancer and run a higher-than-normal risk of developing colon, bladder and breast cancer. City of Hope's Debbie C. Thurmond, Ph.D., explained that obesity is a major risk factor for both cancer and type 2 diabetes. "Excess fat may provoke the disruption of the body's normal metabolism and increase inflammation, which is a known trigger for both diabetes and cancer," she said.

Diabetes and COVID-19 also appear to be connected

While there's still much to learn about COVID-19, recent data from the CDC reported more than three-quarters of people who died from COVID-19 had at least one preexisting condition. Specifically, diabetes was noted as an underlying condition in

approximately four out of 10 patients. Among people younger than 65 who died from the infection, about half had diabetes.[3]

Managing diabetes during COVID-19

People with diabetes - type 1 or type 2 - are more susceptible to contracting COVID-19 than others, and have poorer outcomes if they do. City of Hope's Ping H. Wang, M.D., noted, "Patients with diabetes have higher risks of serious complications and ketoacidosis from COVID-19," and explained that warning signs of severe infection are heightened shortness of breath, persistent chest pain and an intense feeling of fatigue. Even mild symptoms should not be ignored, he said. If you are experiencing any flu-like symptoms, Wang said you should call your physician and continue to monitor your blood glucose.

For more information on City of Hope's Diabetes & Metabolism Research Institute, clinical trials and innovative diabetes research, visit [CityofHope.org/diabetes-awareness](https://www.cityofhope.org/diabetes-awareness).

[1] U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). People with Certain Medical Conditions. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html> [2] American Diabetes Association. Insulin Basics. Available at <https://www.diabetes.org/diabetes/medication-management/insulin-other-injectables/insulin-basics> [3] STAT News. Why people with diabetes are being hit so hard by Covid-19. Available at <https://www.statnews.com/2020/10/01/why-people-with-diabetes-are-being-hit-so-hard-by-covid-19/>

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Caring for Your Nutrition When Caregiving

(Family Features)

Family caregivers of people with illnesses, injuries or disabilities sometimes spend more time thinking about those they care for than themselves. It's important to remember that self-care is essential to providing good care to others and must include eating well.

Healthy eating can be especially challenging for caregivers who often have limited time to shop and cook. Fast food, snacks and comfort meals are tempting but usually lack healthy amounts of protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals.

In addition to preventing low energy, muscle loss, illnesses and unplanned weight change, a healthy diet may help reduce the stress and fatigue that can come with caring for a loved one.

These tips from the Administration for Community Living can help caregivers take steps toward better nutrition without adding to already full to-do lists:

1. Drink healthy beverages at each meal and 2-3 times between meals. Water, milk, juice (to replace missing fruits and vegetables) or non-sweetened drinks are all better-for-you options.

2. Get enough protein, a key nutrient that helps build and repair tissues.



Consider these ideas for increasing your protein intake:

- * Eat a high-protein food like fish, chicken or eggs at every meal

- * Try plant proteins like nuts, peanut butter, beans and tofu

- * Eat your protein first at meals

- * Eat low- or non-fat dairy products and use Greek yogurt

- * Opt for cheese at snack time

- * Top your food with chopped nuts like almonds

3. Drink a liquid supplement, like a meal replacement or protein shake, if foods alone do not supply all the nutrients you need. A health care provider can make specific dietary suggestions based on your unique health needs, diet and conditions.

For more information and ideas, talk to your doctor or dietitian and visit eatright.org.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images #14916

Source: Administration for Community Living

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Tips to Get the Whole Family Moving at Home

(Family Features) With many families stuck at home juggling working remotely, homeschooling and trying to keep everyone happy and healthy, it can be easy to let an otherwise active lifestyle fall by the wayside.

Regardless of age, being physically active provides numerous health benefits. The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity for adults each week, and 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity for kids between the ages of 6-17 each day. Finding ways to move daily can help everyone in the family maintain their health - and prevent them from going stir crazy.

Although prioritizing activity in a quarantined environment might be one of the last things on your mind, parents who model healthy behaviors can inspire their kids to do the same.

When you sweat during family activities, don't forget to stay hydrated. An option like Propel Flavored Electrolyte Water can help parents replace electrolytes lost in sweat. With zero calories, no sugar, and nine fruit flavors, it can help keep you hydrated and moving at home or outdoors.



Consider these tips to keep the whole family motivated and moving - you might be surprised to find that exercise can be fun.

Go for a walk or bike ride. Incorporating walks or bike rides into your family's daily routine can help get everyone moving as well as create quality bonding time. If your family is more on the adventurous side, consider venturing outside your neighborhood to find new trails or rougher terrain to explore nature while getting active. While your annual family vacation might've been canceled, there are likely hidden trails within a short drive from home.

Take a virtual class. Many fitness instructors and gyms are sharing free classes online designed for the whole family. Simply connect a streaming device to your television and search for virtual classes that are geared toward getting families moving, regardless of fitness level. Fitness instructors and

studios are also sharing a variety of workouts - from family yoga to dance cardio in various time increments - on social media that you can find by searching various fitness-related hashtags.

Play a family game. Playing games together is an old-fashioned way to get the whole family moving and having fun. An activity as simple as tag or racing around the house, or even a game that requires some equipment such as soccer or basketball, can get everyone's heart rate up. You can even create a fitness deck or activity dice to turn working out into a fun game.

Build your own obstacle course. Set out hoops, pillows, rope, ladders, cardboard boxes and other items you find around the house to create a fun and challenging obstacle course either indoors or out. This can be easily adapted to varying levels of difficulty to meet each family member's level. Don't forget a stopwatch to see who can complete the course the quickest.

Get your family moving and find more hydration tips at propelwater.com.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images #15375 Source: Propel

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Glaucoma: What you need to know about ‘the sneak thief of sight’

(BPT) - “Will I go blind?” It’s a frightening thought that most people have when they are first told they have glaucoma.

“Patients are almost always concerned that they are going to lose their vision,” said Dr. Andrew Iwach, executive director of the Glaucoma Center of San Francisco. “The good news for the majority of patients is that we can maintain their vision with treatment.”

The sneak thief of sight Glaucoma, an eye disease that damages the optic nerve, is the leading cause of irreversible blindness. It affects more than three million people in the United States. The National Eye Institute projects this number will rise by 58% over the next decade to 4.2 million people.

The most common form of the disease is open-angle glaucoma, which affects 90% of patients and occurs when the eye’s drainage canals become clogged over time, according to the Glaucoma Research Foundation.

Open-angle glaucoma has been called “the sneak thief of sight” because it strikes without symptoms. Experts estimate that half of the patients who have glaucoma don’t know it. As much as 40% of vision can be lost without a person noticing. And once that eyesight

is lost, it’s permanently gone.

“I didn’t have any symptoms prior to diagnosis,” said Richie Kahn, 34, who was diagnosed in March 2019. “By then, glaucoma had already stolen part of my vision. I was surprised to learn that my brain was actually compensating for my vision loss by filling in the blanks.”

Hope through treatment

Since glaucoma has no symptoms in its early stages and progresses slowly over many years, eye doctors emphasize the importance of regular eye exams to detect the disease before there’s a significant loss of vision.

The target for glaucoma therapy is to lower intraocular pressure (IOP). High IOP causes damage to the optic nerve, which produces vision loss in the disease. Approaches to lowering IOP include a wide range of eye drop medications, laser treatments that are performed in a doctor’s office and several types of incisional surgery.

Dr. Trinh Green has lived with glaucoma for 24 years after being diagnosed at age 21. Like Kahn, she had no symptoms of the disease, so news of her diagnosis came as a total surprise. Her advice to others is to remain calm and stay op-

timistic throughout their care and treatment.

“I think it’s very important for people to stay calm after learning they have glaucoma,” said Trinh. “There are many more treatments available in the last few years. I also owe so much to Dr. Iwach. He’s a very calming presence. Whenever there was a setback and the disease progressed, he would tell me, ‘I have a few more tricks up my sleeve.’”

The power of knowledge

In addition to early detection and treatment, Iwach emphasized the importance of patients learning everything they can about glaucoma.

“Getting the facts, including risk factors and treatment options, can empower patients to improve their outcomes and reduce their fears,” he said.

He encourages his patients to read “Understanding and Living with Glaucoma,” published by the Glaucoma Research Foundation. The free booklet offers a comprehensive introduction to glaucoma and guidance about how patients can work with their doctors to manage the disease.

Glaucoma patients like Kahn found power in knowledge in their fight against glaucoma.



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5 Affordable Anti-Aging Tips from a Celebrity Dermatologist

(BPT) - With all the changes that have occurred this year, it's not surprising that women everywhere have been reassessing their skincare routines. Spending more time at home has spurred a focus on overall skin health and rituals to smooth out lines and wrinkles - and they want convenient solutions that get the job done but don't cost a fortune.

A new poll from RoC Skincare and Poshly surveyed 1,000 beauty

shoppers to understand if women have shifted skincare habits since the pandemic. Results showed that while 71% had to make changes to their budget, they still want to maintain an effective routine.

Whether they are rethinking high-end anti-aging treatments, skipping in-office visits or simply being more conservative with spending, women are turning to options found right in the drugstore aisle: 1 in 4 reported they have

stopped getting injectables or professional skincare treatments and started using retinol and drugstore products.

Fortunately, there are inexpensive practices and products out there like OTC retinol (a vitamin A derivative) that are effective at keeping skin looking bright, smooth and youthful, according to board-certified celebrity dermatologist Dr. Anna Guanache. "While some of my best advice to my patients may seem



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simple,” Guanche says, “it’s also all too easy to neglect the basics that really make a difference to protect and improve your skin.”

Here Guanche shares her top anti-aging tips that involve either no cost or affordable items found online and at your local store.

1. Go easy on the hot water

Hot water can strip your skin of its natural oils, which can lead to dryness and the appearance of premature aging. Keep the water temperature from getting too hot (you can even set your water heater to a lower default temp).

Pro tip: Apply moisturizer right out of the bath or shower, and immediately after washing your face.

2. Look to retinol at night

Retinol is an anti-aging mainstay, and choosing one has never been easier because of the new Retinol Correxion Night Serum Capsules from RoC - the brand that discovered how to stabilize this superpower ingredient. This treatment in particular rivals prescription skincare options and it works - clinical testing showed 97% had visibly reduced lines and wrinkles after one night.

“What I love about these Capsules is the



instant gratification you get with overnight line smoothing benefits and how the results keep getting better overtime if you make them a regular part of your nighttime routine,” says Dr. Guanche. “And even better, they are perfectly dosed, don’t irritate skin and a steal for the price.”

Find RoC at your local drugstores or Target.com.

3. Prioritize sleep

While you’re letting your skin absorb a retinol like RoC, make sure you’re sleeping a good eight hours per night if possible. Keeping your room cooler and darker at night will help ensure you’ll not only fall asleep more easily, but stay asleep longer, for the rest your body and face need.

Pro tip: Launder your bedding regularly, especially your pillowcases! That way you know you’re helping to keep your skin clean

while you’re getting your beauty rest.

4. Stock up on vitamins

“Keeping your skin looking and feeling its best is also a question of feeding it from within,” says Dr. Guanche. Taking daily supplements containing vitamins such as C, E, D and K will help nourish your skin from the inside out.

Eating foods rich in vitamins, like colorful vegetables and fruits, is also a vital - and delicious - way to “feed” your skin well.

5. Limit sun exposure

While getting a little vitamin D from sunshine is a good thing, too much time under UV rays can prematurely age your skin - and put your skin at risk. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends using a facial moisturizer or sunscreen containing at least 30 SPF for the best protection against sunburn and skin cancer.

Pro tip: Keep sunscreen near the door or in your bag so you’ll remember to apply before going out.

Sticking to these tips daily will make a big difference in how your skin looks and feels. Try a couple until they become habit, then try more. Your skin will thank you!



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Get Tested for COPD: Your Lungs Will Thank You

(Family Features)
If you're often short of breath during everyday activities, your chest feels tight, or you cough a lot, you may be chalking it up to getting older, having allergies, or being a smoker (now or in the past). Fortunately, there's a way to know whether something more may be at play. Consider getting a lung function test to find out if you have a serious condition called chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD.¹ Knowing the cause of your cough and breathing problems will not only help you manage your symptoms - it'll help you feel better, too.

COPD includes two main conditions - em-

physema and chronic bronchitis.² It's usually caused by cigarette smoking or breathing in other irritants, such as dusts or chemical fumes.³ In a small fraction of people, a genetic condition called alpha-1 antitrypsin (AAT) deficiency plays a role in causing COPD.⁴ More than 16 million Americans have been diagnosed with COPD, and millions more have it but don't know it,⁵ according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI).

COPD doesn't have a cure at the moment, but if you seek advice from a health care provider and get diagnosed early, you can slow down this

progressive disease.⁶ During your appointment, your provider will talk to you about your symptoms and your medical history then listen to your breathing. He or she also may recommend one or more tests to help diagnose COPD.⁷

Spirometry: A Lung Function Test⁸

The main test for COPD is called spirometry. During this test, a technician at your health care provider's office will ask you to sit down and put a clip on your nose, so you can breathe only through your mouth. The technician will then ask you to put your mouth around a mouthpiece, which looks



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like the mouthpiece on a snorkel. It's connected to a machine that measures how well you breathe.⁹ The technician will ask you to take in a deep breath then blow all of your air out as fast as you can. You'll repeat that a few times. It's painless, but it does take some effort.¹⁰

Your provider will use the test results to determine how healthy your lungs are, if you have COPD and how serious it is, or if asthma or other conditions are causing your symptoms.¹¹ Spirometry can also help your provider know if you have COPD before you even have symptoms, so if you're concerned about your lung health, consider getting a spirometry test.

Ask for a lung function test if you:¹²

- * Are over age 40
- * Are or were a smoker
- * Feel out of breath often
- * Bring up a lot of mu-

cus when you cough

* Have already been diagnosed with a lung disease

* Have AAT deficiency

* Are concerned about your lung health

Another factor to consider when assessing your lung health is COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus that has spread throughout the world.¹³ Unlike COPD, COVID-19 causes abrupt coughing and trouble breathing, so your health care provider may want to test you for it.

If you have a chronic lung disease, such as COPD, and get infected with COVID-19, you are at higher risk of getting very sick. COVID-19 can affect your respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs), and possibly lead to pneumonia and acute respiratory disease. For more information on COVID-19, visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

NHLBI's Learn More Breathe BetterSM program provides free

educational resources about COPD, videos on spirometry, and more. Find them at copd.nhlbi.nih.gov.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images

1 <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd> > Diagnosis

2 <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd> > What Is > Overview

3 <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd> > What Is; Diagnosis > video

4 <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd> > causes

5 <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd> > What Is > Outlook

6 <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd> > Treatment

7 <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd> > Diagnosis

8 <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd> > Pulmonary Function Tests > SPIROMETRY

9 The COPD testing animation > Pulmonary Function Tests > SPIROMETRY

10 <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd>

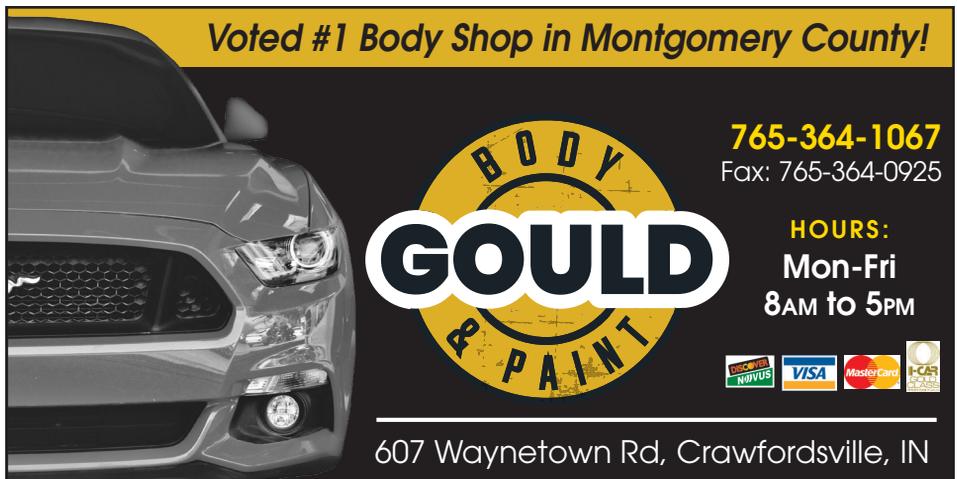
11 <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd> > Pulmonary Function Tests > SPIROMETRY

12 <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd> > Diagnosis > video

13 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf> > Know about COVID-19

#15222

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



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5 Ways to Ensure Medication Safety During COVID-19

(Family Features)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, staying healthy is top of mind. For individuals at risk for or diagnosed with COVID-19, the addition of new treatments may pose another medical danger: adverse drug events (ADEs). ADEs cause an estimated 150,000 deaths per year in the United States and 1.3 million emergency room visits, resulting in nearly 350,000 people hospitalized for further treatment.

The experts at Tabula Rasa HealthCare, a team of clinical pharmacists building solutions for personalized medication safety,

recommend several actions to improve medication safety and prevent ADEs:

1. Keep an updated list of all your medications.

Ask your doctor(s) for a list of all your medications and update it with over-the-counter medications to ensure you both have a complete profile. Document why you take each medicine, the dose, frequency and time of day. Always have access to it by, for example, creating a secure note in your phone for safekeeping. Also, share a copy with a loved one in case of an emergency.

2. Ask your phar-

macist to review your medication regimen.

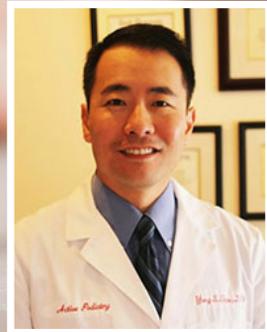
Make an appointment with your pharmacist to review your medications, including prescription, non-prescription, supplements, herbals and recreational drugs. While you may see multiple health care providers, your pharmacist can provide a holistic review of your regimen. Ask questions and try to understand the purpose of each medication. Your pharmacist likely has access to technological tools that identify risk for preventable ADEs. For example, Tabula Rasa HealthCare's Med-Wise is a one-of-a-kind



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technology solution that compares how medications interact together. Using this unique solution, pharmacists may assist you with managing your medications safer and smarter. If you are not aware if your health plan covers pharmacist visits, consider selecting a plan that does.

3. Ask about the benefits of a “pharmacogenomic” test.

If you have a chronic illness and take multiple medications, ask your pharmacist for a test that identifies your personal gene make-up that can affect the way certain medications interact with each other in your body. With this data, your pharmacist can determine if your medications will work as expected, or if they may put you at risk for ADEs. With tools that store this data, your pharmacist can per-

sonalize your medication regimen and help reduce your risk for ADEs.

4. Ask your pharmacist about risks with every new medication.

If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, talk to your pharmacist before taking any new medications to determine if they may increase your risk for ADEs. When adding or removing medications to or from your regimen, it is important to understand how these changes impact your risk for an ADE. Another tool your pharmacist may use is the MedWise Risk Score to help you better understand and measure medication risk with changes. Your pharmacist may adjust how you take your medications or recommend an alternative that is safer for you.

5. Develop a routine for taking your medica-

tions and stick with it.

Be consistent when you take your medications to avoid ADEs. Your pharmacist can provide you with a unique medication profile that outlines the time to take each of your medications for safety. Setting reminders such as an alert on your cell phone or sticky notes can help remind you to take your medication on time.

Pharmacists are medication safety “quarterbacks,” helping optimize your medication regimen, avoid ADEs and assure you and your loved ones stay healthy and safe, during and after COVID-19. To learn more, visit trhc.com/nextfrontier.

Photos courtesy of Getty Images

#15313

Source: Tabula Rasa HealthCare



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