

# ESSENTIALS *for* HEALTH



## The Scoop on Poop

What is YOUR poop telling you? We know, you don't like to talk about it. However, everyone poops and it's an important part of your health.

We all have our own personal bowel patterns. Some of us go one or more times per day. For others, a few bowel movements a week is normal. The color and consistency of our stools can vary as well.

Occasional bouts of diarrhea (frequent bowel movements with loose stools) or constipation (small, hard stools that are difficult to pass) are not unusual. Stress, infection, medications, and pregnancy can all disrupt your normal bowel routine. If your diarrhea or constipation is accompanied by pain, swelling, fever or vomiting, however, see your doctor right away. Likewise if you have bright red or black stools, it may be a sign of blood. For occasional or minor bowel

problems, diet changes and exercise should get you back on track.

### Should I squat?

Before the invention of modern toilets, humans had to squat to poop. Sitting, rather than squatting, may slow bowel movements and prevent complete elimination. A few small studies do show better, easier elimination when people squat.

### Tips to healthy pooping:

- Drink plenty of water
- Eat more fruits, veggies, beans, and whole grains
- Limit fatty and sugary foods
- Exercise to keep your digestive system moving
- Manage your stress

## TURMERIC TEA

Turmeric, the spice that gives curry its yellow color, has anti-inflammatory effects and can help some patients with arthritis or joint pain.

### Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- Pinch of clove
- Pinch of nutmeg
- Pinch of fresh ground black pepper
- 4 cups of water
- Raw honey and/or lemon to taste

### Preparation

- Simmer ingredients in water together for 10 minutes.
- Strain and add honey and lemon to taste.



## Want to Prevent Cancer? MOVE!

You've heard it before: physical activity lowers your risk for developing cancer. Now, new research published in the Journal of the American Medical Association provides even more evidence that exercise helps protect against cancer. The study followed 1.44 million people worldwide for a median of 11 years, making it one of the largest studies to examine the relationship between exercise and cancer.

We already had pretty convincing evidence that exercise reduced the incidence of cancers of the breast, colon, and endometrium, which together account for one out of four cancers. The new study further supports this and demonstrates a reduced risk for an additional 10 types of cancer, including some that are less common. Although regular, moderate-intensity exercise lowers cancer risk, the more you exercise—and the more intense the exercise—the greater your risk reduction.

### How much is enough?

The Centers for Disease Control, recommend 30 minutes daily of moderate-intensity activity (for example, walking) at least five times per week, or vigorous-intensity physical activity for at least 20 minutes three or more times per week. Find activities you enjoy so it's easy to stick with them.

If you have a daughter, you can help her lower her future risk of breast cancer by promoting and encouraging physical activity now. The National Cancer Institute says high levels of vigorous activity during adolescence may be especially protective against breast cancer, the most common type of cancer in women.



# STROKE 101

**Do you know the warning signs? Learn to recognize the signs of a stroke and call 911 immediately if you—or someone with you exhibits any of these signs. Remember: minutes count when you are having a stroke.**

When you have a stroke, a part of your brain is deprived of oxygen-rich blood and within minutes, brain cells begin to die. This causes symptoms in the part of the body controlled by the brain area affected. Strokes can cause permanent brain damage and disability and are the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S. There are two main types of strokes.

**Ischemic (is-KE-mik) stroke.** Nearly 90% of strokes are ischemic strokes. Ischemic strokes occur when a clot, caused by atherosclerosis (the buildup of plaque in your arteries), blocks a blood vessel, cutting off the supply of blood. A clot can form directly in a blood vessel that supplies blood to the brain (cerebral thrombosis), or it can form in an artery elsewhere in the body. If the clot breaks loose, it can get stuck in a small blood vessel in the brain. This is called a cerebral embolism. Many ischemic strokes are caused by clots that form in the carotid arteries, the main arteries on either side of your neck.

A Transient Ischemic Attack or mini-stroke (TIA) is also caused by a clot-related blockage. However, a TIA is temporary. The clot either dissolves on its own or nearby blood vessels reroute blood around the clot. TIAs usually don't cause long-term brain damage, but they are a warning sign that you are at risk for a stroke.

**Hemorrhagic (hem-a-RAJ-ik) stroke.** The other 10% of strokes are caused when a weakened blood vessel in the brain ruptures. The blood accumulates and puts pressure directly on brain tissue or in the space between your brain and your skull.

The first line of a treatment for a stroke is to dissolve the clot or to find and control bleeding in the brain.

Of course, it's best to prevent strokes in the first place. One way to do this is by managing your blood pressure. More than three-quarters of first-time stroke patients have blood pressure that is higher than 140/90 mm Hg. A 10 mm Hg drop in the top number, or a 5 mm Hg drop in the bottom number, can cut your stroke risk in half, according to the American Stroke Association. Eating well, exercising, and controlling your blood sugar and cholesterol will all help lower your risk of stroke.

**F**



**FACE**

ONE SIDE OF THE FACE IS DROOPING

**A**



**ARMS**

ARM OR LEG WEAKNESS

**S**



**SPEECH**

SPEECH DIFFICULTY

**T**



**TIME**

TIME TO CALL FOR AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY

## Got Heel Pain?

If so, you are not alone. Every year, nearly two million people seek treatment for plantar fasciitis (Fashee-EYE-tiss), or jogger's heel.



The plantar fascia is the ligament on the bottom of your foot. It connects your heel to the front of your foot and absorbs stress and pressure. Too much stress from running or other activities can damage the ligament and cause inflammation and heel pain. Plantar fasciitis usually hurts after exercise or activity—not during. In fact, you're most likely to feel the pain when you get up from sleeping or sitting for a long time.

### Treatment

The good news is that more than 90% of cases of plantar fasciitis will improve with conservative treatment, although you may need to be patient. It can take 10 months to two years to recover completely. If you suspect you have plantar fasciitis, give your foot a rest for a week or stop activities that make the pain worse. Ice your foot for 20 minutes, three or four times a day, and try over-the-counter, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (such as ibuprofen or naproxen).

The best treatment (and prevention) for plantar fasciitis is exercise and stretching, which releases tight muscles in your calves and feet. Wear shoes with good support and cushioning. Your local running store can help you find a good walking or running shoe.

**Don't ignore your pain.** Plantar fasciitis can become chronic if left untreated. When at-home treatments don't help, see your doctor. She may recommend a temporary boot cast, orthotics (shoe inserts), night splints (to stretch your plantar fascia while you're sleeping) or a single cortisone injection (additional cortisone injections don't help and they have risks). As a last resort, your doctor may suggest surgery. However, surgery does not always relieve symptoms and has serious risks, including nerve damage.

For more information, contact HCMC Community Educator and Industrial Wellness Nurse Lori Stambaugh, RN BSN, at 731-644-8269 or [lstambaugh@hcmc-tn.org](mailto:lstambaugh@hcmc-tn.org)



According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), food scraps and yard waste make up 20 to 30% of landfill waste. You can shrink your environmental footprint by purchasing "ugly" food and composting food scraps.

**Ugly food.** Grocers typically will not sell fruits and vegetables that are visually compromised because of their shape or appearance, even though they are perfectly nutritious and taste the same. Much of this produce winds up in landfills. Some retailers, such as Whole Foods and Walmart, are experimenting with local

programs to repackage these healthy, but ugly, foods to consumers. If this trend takes off, it could significantly reduce food waste and perhaps offer consumers a lower cost food option. Check with the grocers in your area to see if they offer ugly produce.

**Composting.** Composting food scraps enriches the soil, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers, and reduces the amount of methane generated by decaying foods in landfills. If you can't compost in your backyard, you can purchase a special indoor composting bin from a hardware or garden supply store. The EPA says you need equal amounts of brown material (dead leaves, branches and twigs, which provide carbon) and green material (grass clippings, fruit and vegetable scraps and coffee grounds, which provide nitrogen). Layer the green and brown material and add water, which helps break down the solid material. It can take several months to two years to create rich soil from your compost.