



GOOD HEALTH

A JOURNAL DEDICATED TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

SPRING 2008

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Make sure you really need the scan before you get one. **PAGE 2**



YOUR HEREDITY

Learn what your genes have to do with diabetes. **PAGE 3**

HOW TO help SOMEONE QUIT SMOKING

Someone you care about wants to quit smoking, and you'd like to help. Your support could make a big difference.

The American Cancer Society offers the following ways you can help:

Don't offer advice. Just ask how you can help. Offer to talk at any time encouragement is needed.

Do help relieve stress by assisting with household responsibilities. Plan diversions, such as going to the movies or taking a walk.

Do provide oral substitutes for smoking, such as hard candy. Cut up fresh veggies and keep them available in the refrigerator.

Don't give up if the person resumes smoking. Provide words of praise for the effort. Remind him or her that most people who don't succeed are ready to try again within a short time. Promise that you will continue to provide support.



TIPS FOR AN active PREGNANCY

The warmer weather offers a great chance to get out, enjoy the scenery, and maintain an active lifestyle for a healthy pregnancy.

Exercise can increase your sense of well-being and provide health benefits to both you and your baby. It will help keep your muscles toned, increase your blood circulation, and give you more energy. Exercise also lowers stress and helps your body prepare for labor and delivery.

Now that you know the benefits, here are a few tips:

- ▶ Talk to your prenatal provider about how much and what type of exercise would be best for you. Swimming and walking are great choices.
- ▶ Drink fluids before, during, and after exercise.
- ▶ Dress for the occasion; layer clothing, and wear well-fitting shoes.
- ▶ Avoid working out on an empty stomach.
- ▶ Avoid exercising on your back after your 13th week of pregnancy.
- ▶ Sign up for a pregnancy exercise or yoga class if you prefer to stay indoors.
- ▶ Reduce back pain by always remembering to stretch.
- ▶ Build exercise into your everyday routine. Take a walk after dinner or do light housework.
- ▶ Take short walking breaks every hour or so on long car trips.
- ▶ If you are a smoker, make your best effort to quit.



A healthy PREGNANCY WITH RMHP

Are you pregnant or planning to become pregnant soon? We have a prenatal program just for you. It includes nurses specially trained to assist you during your pregnancy. We have a case management program to help you with any complications, such as high blood pressure, nausea and vomiting, preterm labor, twins or other multiples, and other pregnancy

complications.

We will send you a pregnancy health screening form to assess your needs. There are also many resources available to assist you in having a healthy pregnancy. When you return your screening form, you will receive the education materials you requested and a \$10 gift card to Target. If you are interested in this Rocky Mountain

Health Plans program, please contact our prenatal nurses:

Janice Ferguson, RNC
800-843-0719, ext. 7890, or
970-244-7890
janice.ferguson@rmhp.org

Heather Stephens, RN
800-843-0719 or
970-244-7804
heather.stephens@rmhp.org

DO YOU REALLY NEED A CT SCAN?

When computed tomography (CT) scans were introduced in the 1970s, they revolutionized medical imaging by producing 3-D views of organs and other tissues. The scans are valuable for their use in helping doctors to diagnose diseases of the brain, pancreas, kidney, lung, and other tissues. They are also commonly used to check for appendicitis in children. More than 62 million CT scans were done in the United States last year, a huge increase from the 3 million performed in 1980.

However, a new study done by *The New England Journal of Medicine* in November 2007 suggests that they are being used more often than needed. The study concludes that high lifetime doses of radiation may increase the risk of cancer among the people studied.

CT scans are popular with doctors because they provide detailed information and are quick, painless, and widely available. Even so, compared with a conventional x-ray, CT scans require exposure to much higher levels of radiation (in some cases, 10 to 20 times higher), depending on the type.

The effects of radiation build up in the body over time. This can be an issue for

people with chronic conditions who have had many CT scans in their lifetimes. There is also a risk to children, whose growing bodies are especially sensitive to radiation.

CT scans are sometimes used by people who are otherwise healthy, simply to check if there could be undiscovered problems. Many medical societies and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration advise against using CT scans for this type of diagnostic testing.

CT scans can play an important part in detecting diseases and saving lives.

When used for the right reasons, their benefits are clearly greater than their risks. Before having a CT scan or other procedure involving radiation, you should:

- ▶ Make sure the CT scan is really needed.
- ▶ Keep a record of your CT scan and x-ray history for your doctor to review.
- ▶ Be sure the radiology facility is accredited by the American College of Radiology. This ensures that the physicians and staff members meet education and training standards, and that the equipment is checked and adjusted regularly to ensure that it is working correctly.

Sources: American College of Radiology; *The New England Journal of Medicine*; Mayo Clinic



Jim Kearns, Medicare Retention Specialist

Welcome, NEW MEDICARE MEMBERS

My name is Jim Kearns, and I am the Medicare Retention Specialist for Rocky Mountain Health Plans. If this is your first experience with RMHP, welcome! We think you've made a wise choice for your Medicare plan. If you have been with us before, either as part of an employer group, individual, or a Medicare plan, we are very glad to have you back.

Part of my job is to contact new Members to make sure their health plan gets off to a good start. If you need help finding a primary care doctor, have questions about your benefits, or want to know about our mail-order prescription services, I can help. Or if you have ongoing health care needs, such as oxygen or home health services, I can work with you to ensure a smooth transition to Rocky Mountain Health Plans for you and your providers. So you may be getting a friendly call from me to touch base with you.

We know that trying to understand health care can be challenging, which is why our professional and friendly Customer Service team is highly regarded in the industry.

If you have any questions about your plan, please give our Customer Service team a call at the number below:

- ▶ **800-346-4643**, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. MST, Monday through Friday. Part D benefit questions: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. MST, seven days a week (except on Thanksgiving and Christmas).
- ▶ If you are hearing impaired and use TTY equipment, call **800-704-6370**.
- ▶ Para asistencia en español llame al **800-346-4643**.

Also, more and more folks like you are going on-line for services like banking and shopping. As an RMHP Medicare Member, you can get information about claims and benefits, change your PCP, order an ID card, and lots more on our secure website. Go to our website, **www.rmhp.org**, and register online for *Access RMHP*, our secure Internet Member site.

Thank you for choosing Rocky Mountain Health Plans!

Good health. That's the plan.

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diabetes AND YOUR FAMILY TREE

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOUR FAMILY BACKGROUND COULD AFFECT YOUR RISK FOR DIABETES?

Chronic conditions like

diabetes are at an all-time high in the U.S., and your heredity can play a key role in your risk for the disease.

According to the National Diabetes Education Program, if your family background is African American, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic American/Latino, or Pacific Islander, you are more likely than the general population to get type 2 diabetes. Along with your heredity, other risk factors may contribute, including being over age 45 or overweight. The American Diabetes Association states that although heredity is a factor, careful attention to your diet and moderate exercise can delay and possibly reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes types People at any age can get diabetes. With diabetes, our bodies are unable to either produce insulin or use insulin properly. Insulin is a hormone that helps glucose (sugar) enter cells to provide fuel for them. There are three basic types of diabetes:

1. Type 1 is usually first diagnosed in children, teenagers, or young adults. The body isn't able to produce insulin, and

treatment includes taking insulin.

2. Type 2 is the most common form of diabetes and can occur at any age. With type 2 diabetes, the body isn't able to produce enough insulin or use the insulin properly. Treatment includes taking diabetes medication.

3. Gestational diabetes occurs in some pregnant women. Gestational diabetes also puts you at risk for developing diabetes in the future.

Take these steps Even if you are at high risk for diabetes, there are steps you can take to lower your risk for this disease:

- ▶ Be physically active. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week. A daily walk, dancing, and swimming are good choices.
- ▶ Adopt a healthy diet. Choose foods low in fat, and eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- ▶ Maintain a healthy weight. Limit high-fat foods, and substitute water or skim milk for sweetened soft drinks and juices. Cut down on portion sizes, and eat slowly.

Sources: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Diabetes Education Program; American Diabetes Association

TOOLS TO HELP FIGHT **midlife** WEIGHT GAIN

The pounds creep on so gradually that it's easy to pretend they don't exist. But sooner or later, you can't ignore them. You've gained a dress size. Or your belt needs an extra notch.

Welcome to an all-too-common rite of passage: midlife weight gain. It's as though our bodies were conspiring against us, and in some ways they are. Consider: ▶ As we age, the body loses muscle. And this loss of muscle can slow the metabolism—meaning the body needs fewer calories to maintain a healthy weight. ▶ Making matters worse, many of us become less active with age and burn fewer calories, increasing the likelihood of weight gain.

And those extra pounds do more than affect the way we look in our bathing suits, especially if they settle around our waist, says Suzanne Farrell, MS, RD, spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association (ADA).

Upper body fat in particular heightens the risk of a host of health problems, including diabetes, high cholesterol, and early heart disease.

Take control With the right mind-set, you can keep your weight from inching upward. Or—if it already has—you can trim down. The following tips from Farrell and the ADA can help:

Change your habits. If you're inactive, find ways to move more. One easy solution: Sneak exercise into your daily routine. Head for the stairs, not the elevator. Park at the far end of the parking lot and walk the rest of the way.

Already active? Then try working out a little harder or a little longer.

Also, more than ever before, be mindful of what you eat. Scrutinize your diet and look for—and change—habits that promote weight gain. You need fewer calories than you once did.

Consider strength training. Working out with weights—or doing other kinds of strength training—can speed up an aging metabolism.

Stay positive. Let midlife be your gateway to a healthier life.





ATV SAFETY FOR ALL AGES

The popularity of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) has been on the rise since the 1970s, and so has the number of injuries to ATVerers of all ages.

As when driving a car or motorcycle, when operating heavy machinery such as an ATV at a high rate of speed, the driver must assume a certain level of risk. But here are some tips that can help keep the off-roaders in your family off the injured list.

- ▶ **Always wear a helmet.** Many ATV injuries are head injuries. Helmets can reduce the severity of head injuries. It is also a good idea to wear boots, goggles, gloves, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt.
- ▶ **Never ride as a passenger or drive with a passenger.** Most ATVs are designed for a single rider. A passenger can make the vehicle more difficult to control.

HELMETS CAN HELP REDUCE THE SEVERITY OF HEAD INJURIES.

▶ **Stay off the pavement.** Keeping your ATV on dirt roads and paths, where it is designed to operate, is much safer than riding on pavement. Many ATV-related fatalities occur on paved roads.

▶ **Never let children ride or drive an adult ATV.** According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, about one-third of all ATV-related injuries and deaths happen to children younger than 16. Most of those accidents occur when a child is riding an adult ATV.

▶ **Take a safe-driving course.** Just as you would not drive a car without a driver's license, don't try to operate an ATV without first receiving training. Statistics show that drivers with training have a lower injury rate than drivers with no formal training.

BUILD YOURSELF A healthier SALAD

Loading up your salad with fruits and vegetables can turn it into a great source of nutrients, including vitamins A and C, folate, and fiber. However, toppings such as cheese, croutons, olives, and creamy dressing can add fat and calories.

The trick is to build your salad the right way. The American Dietetic Association offers the following tips:

Start with greens. Make lots of dark green, leafy vegetables the foundation of your salad. Spinach, watercress, and romaine and red leaf lettuce are good choices. Remember: The deeper the color, the more nutrients you'll get.

Brighten with color. Heap on plenty of brightly colored vegetables, such as tomatoes, broccoli or cauliflower florets, beets, shredded carrots, or red and green peppers. Add a touch of sweetness with man-

darin orange segments, sliced strawberries, chopped apples, or grapes.

Top with healthy protein. Round out your salad with high-protein, low-fat toppings. Some ideas: ▶ Kidney, pinto, or garbanzo beans. ▶ Grilled chicken, roasted turkey, tuna, or cubed tofu. ▶ Almonds, walnuts, or sunflower seeds. Nuts and seeds are high in fat, so sprinkle on just a few.

Lighten up on the dressing. Go easy on the ranch, blue cheese, and other high-fat, creamy dressings. One or two tablespoons is best, not a whole ladleful. Better yet, try a splash of vinegar or a low-fat dressing, such as vinaigrette.

Boost the flavor. As a final touch, try topping your salad with fresh herbs, such as tarragon, cilantro, or mint. Or sprinkle on a dash of your favorite dried herbs and spices.



TAKE THE TIME TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN SMART eating HABITS

By providing a salad bar for lunch, elementary schools can increase the amount of fruits and vegetables students eat, according to a new study by the University of California, Los Angeles.

The findings, published in *Public Health Nutrition*, showed

that the students studied ate fruits and vegetables much more often—4.09 times daily instead of 2.97 times—when they had access to a salad bar. The study also found that the students' daily intake of cholesterol, saturated fat, and total fat decreased greatly.

Good nutrition and a balanced diet help kids grow up healthy. No matter the ages of your children, here are five of the best strategies to improve nutrition and encourage smart eating habits:

1. Have regular family meals.
2. Serve a variety of healthy

3. Be a role model by eating healthy yourself.
4. Avoid battles over food by establishing a schedule of meals and snacks. Don't force kids to clean their plates. Don't bribe or reward kids with food.
5. Involve kids in the process.

Most kids love helping decide what to have for dinner. Talk to them about making healthy choices and creating balanced meals.

For more information about kids and nutrition, visit www.kidshealth.org.

Source: National Wellness Institute



GOOD HEALTH

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HOW TO reach US



HEALTH CARE BENEFITS QUESTIONS

Customer Service 800-346-4643 or 970-243-7050

Para asistencia en español 800-346-4643

TTY line for the hearing impaired 800-704-6370
(special equipment required)



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