

# HealthyLife<sup>®</sup> Letter

April 2007



SHOE LEATHER

*Running experts agree that runners should replace their running shoes every 350 to 500 miles to prevent wear and tear on knees and ankles – long before the shoes start to show signs of wear. Inventive students at Babson College are making a device that attaches to a shoelace and logs the number of miles on the shoes. Until the “Stridekick” hits the road, runners might write the date of purchase inside the shoes and track the number of miles they pound out on their new shoes.*

## Be Fit

### Jump start your child’s physical fitness

“Parents play a critical role in shaping their kids’ physical habits later in life,” said Randy McCoy, curriculum director for The Little Gym International. He offers these tips to boost your child’s fitness and self-confidence:



- \* Kids should try their best – but they don’t have to be the best. Parents, coaches and gym teachers should pay special attention to this one. For most kids, success is about more than winning or losing. It’s about benefiting from the learning that takes place when taking on a challenge, trying their best, and having fun.
- \* Kids thrive in environments where they feel supported and safe. Kids whose physical activities take place in these environments are more likely to stick with them later in life.
- \* Challenge your child. It is healthy to present your child with new challenges and risks, but do so without expectations. Let them take the challenge at their own pace.
- \* Lead by example. Some kids aren’t eager to try new physical activities. Demonstrate the skill yourself, provide positive motivation, and your child will likely want to give it a try.
- \* Repeat it. Repetition of a skill is necessary for the child to internalize and eventually master it. It also gives a child more opportunities to experience success, build confidence and develop strength and endurance.
- \* Safety matters. If your child is participating in organized physical activities, make sure they are led by trained instructors. Sports equipment should be sized for children.
- \* Don’t mistake your child’s physical development for Olympic training. Your child might be the fastest runner in the class, but that’s not a reason to pull them out of other activities to pursue a gold medal. At this age, the focus on physical activity should be fun and health – not fame and world records.



#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

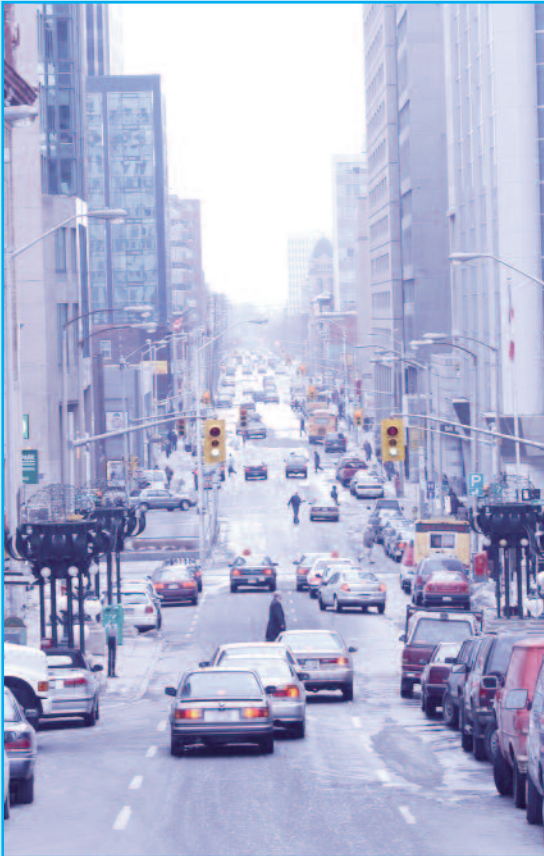
Be Fit .....	1
Self-Care Corner .....	2
What’s Up Doc? .....	3
Healthy Eating.....	4
Health Tips .....	6
Work Life .....	7
Family Life.....	8

# Self-Care Corner

## Forget new car smell

If your car is long past smelling the way it did when it rolled off the factory floor, and the evergreen deodorizer hanging from your rear-view mirror is making you gag, try this.

Sprinkle a few drops of essential oils (peppermint or cinnamon) on a tissue. Fold it and slip it into the vent on your dashboard or stick it under the seat.



Aromatherapy can make the morning commute less frustrating or make you more alert behind the wheel. A study at Wheeling Jesuit University found that drivers showed decreased levels of frustration, anxiety, and fatigue when exposed to peppermint and cinnamon scents. On driving tests, the test drivers were more alert.

*{**Note:** Many topics like the ones above are contained in a medical self-care guide, such as Healthier at Home®, Health at Home®, and HealthyLife® Self-Care Guide. They serve as excellent resources. If you have a self-care guide, refer to it whenever you are unsure about what to do for symptoms and health issues you are experiencing. It can help you make better decisions about when to seek professional assistance and when you can treat yourself at home using self-care.}*

## Stick your arm out the car window

If you spend a lot of time driving, chances are you may have long-term contact with the sun's harmful rays. You could develop skin cancers most often on the left side of your face. Men were more prone to



developing the most common type of skin cancer and a more dangerous variety, said skin doctors at St. Louis University School of Medicine. Findings were released by the American Academy of Dermatology.

Sun coming down on you through the windshield is filtered by the very nature of windshield glass. It filters the ultraviolet A and B rays (UVA, UVB). But side and rear windows are not designed to block harmful burning UVB rays.

### You can protect yourself in 2 ways:

1. Apply sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher) to all sun-exposed parts of your skin. Wear protective clothing (wide-brimmed hats, long sleeves).
2. Tint your side windows or use a UV filter on windows to reduce the amount of UVA that penetrates glass. Drive with the windows closed.



# What's Up Doc?

## The one cycling problem men don't talk about

Riding a bike for long periods can cause temporary erectile difficulties, according to a new report from Harvard



Medical School. The report entitled What to Do about Erectile Dysfunction, says men most at risk are those who cycle more than 3 hours a week.

Here's why: Sitting on a bicycle for a long time puts pressure on the perineum. This is the area between the genitals and anus. This pressure can harm nerves and for the short term slow down blood flow, causing tingling or numbness in the penis and, eventually, erectile dysfunction.

These safety measures may help you prevent cycling-related problems:

- \* Wear padded biking shorts.
- \* Raise the handlebars so that you're sitting fairly upright. This shifts pressure from the perineum to the buttocks.
- \* Switch to a recumbent bike – the design allows the rider to lean backward.
- \* Use a wide, well-padded or gel-filled seat instead of a narrow seat, which places more pressure on the perineum.
- \* Position the seat to reduce pressure: Make sure it is not so high that your legs are fully extended at the bottom of your pedal stroke, and don't tilt the seat up.
- \* Change your position and take breaks during long rides.
- \* If you feel tingling or numbness in the penis, stop riding for a week or two.

## Tanning may be addictive

Despite repeated health warnings about the dangers of tanning from sunlight and tanning beds, some people still think “bronze is beautiful.”

Just like addictions to drugs or alcohol, people who continue to tan will refuse to change their behaviors, even knowing they have an increased risk of developing skin cancer. A new study of college students shows the power of ultraviolet (UV) light. The study was conducted at the University of Washington and was published in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology.



The researchers said the UV light releases “feel good” chemicals in the brain causing the same type of sensation that occurs with intense exercise (the “runner's high”). If tanning is addictive, as the study suggests, education alone about the risk will not change behavior for the same reason “don't drink” and “don't smoke” messages fail to change behavior.

# Healthy Eating



## Empty calories sabotage weight control

For the millions of Americans who are trying to lose extra weight, the solution may not be in what you eat, but in what you drink. “Believe it or not, more than 20% percent of our daily calories come from the things that we drink,” said Susan Aaronson, MS, RD, wellness coordinator for the MFit Health Promotion Division at the University of Michigan Health System. “In fact, the World Health Organization recommends that people consume only about 10% of their calories from liquids,,” she said.

To help you make healthier beverage choices and cut back on calories, Aaronson offers the following tips.

- \* **Soft drinks:** “Soda is full of sugar and empty calories, making it a major contributor to the obesity problem in the United States,” said Aaronson. “If you chose to eliminate one can of soda each day, which contains about 9 teaspoons of sugar, you can lose about a pound in 1 month; and over the course of a year, you can lose up to 15 pounds.” If you absolutely can’t eliminate soft drinks completely, drink diet soda or reserve it for special occasions.
- \* **Fruit and vegetable juices:** “Read the label carefully,” cautions Aaronson. “If a juice label says that it’s ‘made with real fruit juice,’ it may actually contain less than 10% of ‘real’ juice and about 7 teaspoons of sugar. The best juice drinks to pick are those that say they contain 100% juice.” Limit juice to one serving or 5 ounces a day. The rest of your daily servings of fruits and vegetables should come from the real thing.
- \* **Milk:** Choosing low-fat milks can help you save hundreds of calories each day. Milk also contains vital nutrients such as calcium, protein, vitamin D, and vitamin A that you won’t find in other beverages. Plus, it is recommended that you get 3 servings of dairy every day. To get the most from your milk, Aaronson said to choose 1 percent,  $\frac{1}{2}$  percent, or skim milk. With these options, you will still get all the nutrients your body needs but without the extra calories and fat.
- \* **Sports and energy drinks:** Sports drinks contain a lot of calories – one-half to one-third the amount of sugar you’ll find in soft drinks. “Sports drinks were actually developed for endurance athletes,” said Aaronson. “So if you plan to exercise for more than one continuous hour, then sports drinks are for you.” Energy drinks have little food value. They are loaded with calories. “They’ll give you a quick high, followed by an extremely-low low afterward,” said Aaronson.
- \* **Alcohol:** If you are planning an evening of dinner and drinks, remember that you could easily drink as many calories as you eat. The average glass of wine has about 100 calories and a 12-ounce beer contains about 150 calories. A mixed drink might have about 300 calories, and the rich frozen drinks like daiquiris 500 or more calories each.
- \* **Water:** So what is the ideal beverage to quench your thirst? It’s the colorless, odorless, and tasteless refresher that makes up over half of our body mass: Water. “Water is the single most important beverage that we can consume,” said Aaronson. “A person could drink only water and be just fine, as long as he supplements his diet with food sources that contain calcium and other nutrients that one may find in other beverages such as milk and juice.”

In general, 80% of a person’s liquid calories should come from water depending on their height, weight, and where they live. That means the average adult should drink between 4 and 6 cups of water a day. Another option is flavored water that has added vitamins. But Aaronson said if you’re already eating a healthy diet, there’s no reason to drink vitamins in the form of water.

The bottom line: “The next time you think about digging into the fridge for a soda, save yourself the money and the calories and reach for the tap instead,” Aaronson said.

# Healthy Eating



## Mindless eating

How many decisions do you make each day about when, what, how much and where you eat? Most people think they make about 15 food- and beverage-related decisions, but the truth is 15 times that. Researchers at Cornell University, whose study was published in *Environment and Behavior*, observed, through extensive interviews, that we make over 200 decisions. Because we do so mindlessly, with our brains on autopilot, we let outside cues such as package size, plate size, and people around us influence our choices.

## Featured Recipe

### Honey Nut Stacks of Snacks

#### Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups packed light brown sugar
- 1 cup butter or margarine
- 2 cups Honey Nut Cheerios cereal
- 2 cups quick-cooking or old-fashioned oats\*
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

#### Directions

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Place the brown sugar and butter in a 2-quart saucepan. Heat over medium heat, stirring constantly, until smooth. Remove the saucepan from the heat.
2. Stir in the rest of the ingredients. Pour the mixture into an ungreased 13 x 9 inch pan. With a rubber spatula, spread the mixture in the pan until it is even.
3. Bake 16 to 18 minutes or until the edges are golden brown and firm. Place the pan on a wire rack. Cool completely, about 45 minutes.
4. With a table knife, cut the baked mixture into 6 rows by 6 rows to make 36 bars. Store the bars in a loosely covered container.
5. Makes 36 bars. One bar contains 110 calories, 5 g total fat, 13 g carbs.

\* Both quick-cooking and old-fashioned oats are rolled oats. The only difference between the two is that the quick oats are cut into lots of pieces before they are steamed and rolled.

Used with permission from the *General Mills Cheerios Cookbook*, where you'll find plenty more fun and tasty treats and clever craft ideas for kids.



# Health Tips

## No need to be irritated about diaper rash

Diaper rash might not seem like something to cry about, but parents in the know would likely offer a different view. That's because the red, sore skin that results from diaper rash can be frustrating to treat and cause great distress for babies.

Happily, doctors who specialize in skin care can help parents treat this common skin problem.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Dermatology, Mary K. Spraker, MD, FAAD, associate professor at Emory University, discussed practical ways to prevent diaper rash. She explained how advances in the design of disposable diapers and a new prescription drug are helping to reduce this irritating condition.



There are 2 common forms of diaper rash – simple “irritant” diaper dermatitis and candida or “yeast” diaper rash.

Irritant diaper rash occurs when feces combined with urine inflame a baby's delicate skin if they are in contact with it for a long time. The best way to prevent this type of diaper rash is to remove a soiled diaper as soon as possible.

Today's disposable diapers cause less diaper rash than cloth diapers, Dr. Spraker said.

The super-absorbent gel that was added to the core of disposable diapers in the mid-1980s can absorb many times its weight in moisture. This gel also grabs on to the wetness without letting go of it, trapping urine in the center of the diaper and leaving the surface of the diaper that touches the infant's skin nearly completely dry. Since wet, softened skin is less healthy, it is more easily irritated by fecal material and more easily infected by candida. The introduction of this super-absorbent gel marked a significant advancement in preventing diaper rash.

In the 1990s, a breathable membrane similar in design to the popular fabric in hiking and sport outerwear garments that keeps rain out but “breathes” to prevent excess perspiration was added to higher-end disposable diapers. This membrane allows water vapor to escape through the cover of the diaper, which reduces the humidity inside the diaper and keeps the diapered skin drier and healthier.

In addition to using disposable diapers that feature these design improvements, Dr. Spraker makes the following recommendations to treat constant diaper rash:

- \* Promptly change diapers containing stool. Since urine by itself is not irritating, mildly wet diapers do not need to be changed immediately. Industry studies show that most parents change a baby's diaper 6 to 7 times per day on average.
- \* Cleanse fecal matter off baby's skin with baby wipes, which are non-irritating.
- \* Apply a barrier cream that contains zinc oxide or petrolatum. It is not necessary to use a barrier product to prevent a rash.
- \* Avoid using unnecessary products, such as powders, on baby's bottom. Baby powder should be avoided, as babies can breathe them in and develop pneumonia.



To treat diaper rash caused by candida, ask your doctor about a prescription antifungal cream or ointment.

# Work Life

## Did you hear what I said? Effective talking starts with listening

Effective communication in the workplace requires thought, planning, and a good dose of people savvy, says consultant Liz Bywater, PhD, of Bywater Consulting Group. Whether you're delivering a job evaluation, addressing a peer, or asking the boss for a much-deserved promotion, she says you can improve your odds of being heard by using the following tips:

- \* **Prepare, prepare, prepare.** If you've got a specific message to deliver, practice what you'll say and how you'll say it. Try to see the recipient's response. How will the conversation flow? Consider as many possible scenarios as are reasonable. Be ready to handle whatever comes your way.
- \* **Find the best place to talk.** If the conversation is private in nature, don't bring it up in front of others. Plan ahead to make sure a private spot is available.
- \* **Listen before you speak.** Many times, the best way to get your point across is to let the other person talk first. You can get things rolling by asking his or her opinion on the situation. Then just sit back and listen. What better way to understand how the other person feels and thinks – and then to frame your message after that?
- \* **Empathize.** Try to see things from the other person's point of view.
- \* **Start with something positive.** If you begin the conversation on a real positive note, you will help set your listener at ease. He or she will be less defensive and better able to hear what follows.
- \* **Use the right language.** Don't talk down to people by overly simplifying language. Likewise, don't try to wow the other person with big words.
- \* **Be kind.** Be aware of your tone of voice. You can deliver even the most negative feedback without making the person feel bad.
- \* **Be clear.** The other party shouldn't have to work at figuring out what you're trying to say.
- \* **Be concise.** Get to the point, then move on. Most people have a whole lot of other work to attend to and are eager to get back to their "to do" lists. Don't waste their time or yours by dancing around the issue.
- \* **Be direct.** Say what you mean. Chances are, the other person will thank you for being direct.

## 5 ideas to spring clean your office space

Spring cleaning isn't just for your home. Have you ever thought about spring cleaning your work space? Whether you have a cubicle or a large, corner office, Barbara Myers, The Time Manager ([www.INeedMoreTime.com](http://www.INeedMoreTime.com)) shows you how to organize for spring:

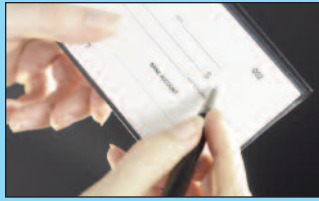
1. Clean off all flat surfaces. Toss the trash. Put back only what you use daily.
2. Make a list of your job duties. Gather all the items for each task and store them together.
3. Make a list of your paper files. First, sort them out on paper. Then redo the actual files.
4. Clean up your computer. Print a list of files. If you don't know what each one is, look it up. Delete programs and files you no longer use. Buy a good instruction book for the programs you do use.
5. Empty your desk drawers. Put back only the supplies you'll use in the next two weeks. Keep back-ups in a plastic drawer unit or in the office storage cabinet. Keep your desk drawers clutter-free.





# Family Life

## Feed your kids healthier



### 'CHECK' THIS OUT

*If you're still paying your credit card accounts with a check, don't write your entire credit card account number on the check. Why? Anyone handling your check could grab your credit card number and head to the shopping mall. Unlikely, but makes sense. You can write the last 4 digits of your credit card account number. The credit card company knows the rest. Better yet: Pay your credit cards through online services.*

If you want your kids to eat healthier, feed them. Sit down to a family meal. And watch less TV.

After following 8,000 children from kindergarten to third grade, researchers at the University of Missouri-Columbia concluded that kids who ate meals with their families ate healthier foods. The researchers also suspected that family meal time also protected children from some of the habits that could lead to weight gain – like too much TV time.



Overweight kids in the study were watching about 16 hours of TV a week compared to 2 hours of TV a week for kids whose parents said they were not overweight.

The study, which was funded by the US Department of Agriculture, was published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association.



Copyright 2007, American Institute  
for Preventive Medicine.  
30445 Northwestern Hwy., Ste. 350,  
Farmington Hills, MI 48334  
248.539.1800 • 800.345.2476  
[www.HealthyLife.com](http://www.HealthyLife.com)  
All rights reserved.