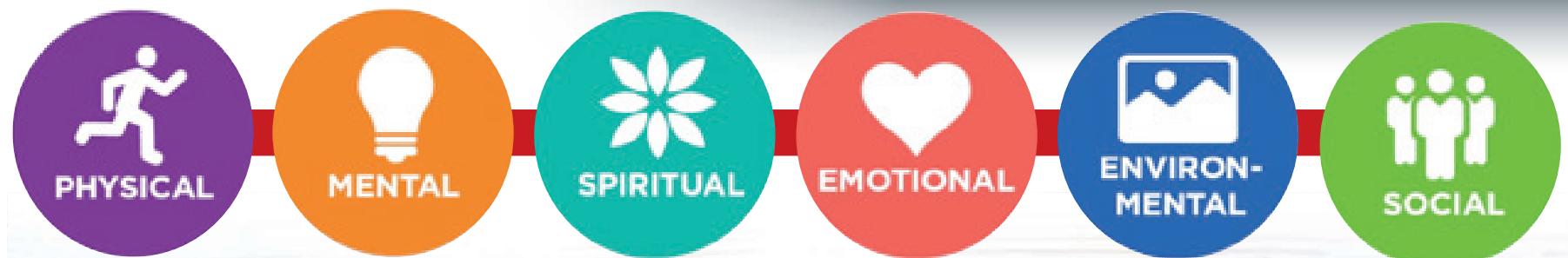


Health, *Mind &* BODY

JANUARY 2026

A Special Section From

The Malone Telegram

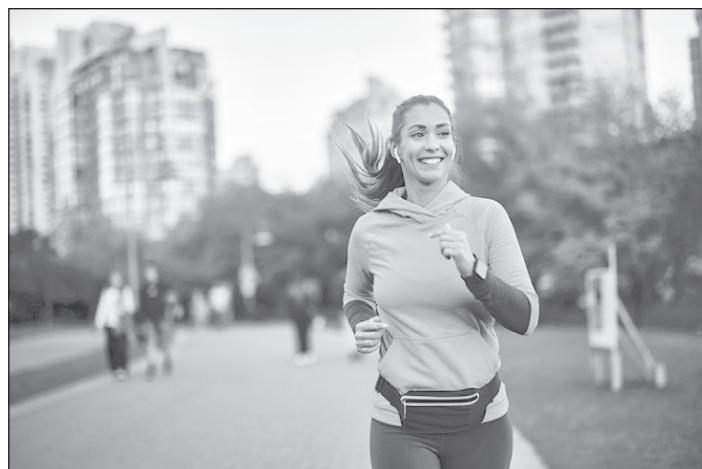


The multifaceted benefits of aerobic exercise

Metro

Routine physical activity has a significant impact on physical and mental health. Though the temptation to be sedentary is ever-present and arguably greater than it's ever been, getting up and moving can prolong life and make for happier, healthier days.

There's no wrong way to be physically active, and many health professionals urge people to find a physical activity they enjoy so they're more likely to maintain a commitment to exercise. Aerobic exercise is one option to consider because it encompasses a wide range of activities and pays a wealth of dividends. Running, cycling, hiking, swimming, and even walking are popular forms of aerobic exercise, which benefits the body in myriad ways.



Metro

Aerobic exercise and disease prevention

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons notes that a fitness regimen that includes regular aerobic exercise can help people avoid potentially deadly diseases, including heart disease,

diabetes, stroke, and some cancers. Johns Hopkins Medicine notes that aerobic exercise, which organizations such as the American Heart Association advise combining with strength-training exercises at least twice per week, is effective at prevent-

ing disease because it helps to control or modify various risk factors for conditions like heart disease.

Aerobic exercise and bone strength

Another notable benefit of routine aerobic exercise is it helps to build stronger bones. Harvard Health notes that various studies have shown that weight-bearing exercises, including aerobic activities like walking or running, put stress on bones which stimulates the formation of extra deposits of calcium and activates bone-forming cells. This process ultimately results in denser, stronger bones, which is a particularly notable benefit for adults over 40, a point in time when bone strength typically begins to decline at a rate of roughly 1 percent each year.

Aerobic exercise and men-

tal health

Harvard Health notes the benefits of aerobic exercise extend beyond the physical and into the mental. That link is neurochemical in nature, as aerobic exercise stimulates the production of endorphins, which Harvard Health notes are chemicals in the brain that naturally elevate mood, contributing to feelings of both relaxation and optimism. While that's happening, aerobic exercise also helps to reduce levels of the body's stress hormones.

Aerobic exercise is accessible and highly beneficial. Individuals of all ages are urged to commit to routine aerobic exercise so they can reap the physical and mental health rewards such a commitment produces.

Annual health checkups can be vital to cancer prevention

Metro

Annual health checkups are so vital that many insurance providers offer once-yearly wellness visits free of charge to policy holders. It's important for people to get annual physicals even if they feel fit and healthy, as these yearly visits can help uncover issues that may not be producing symptoms.

Annual wellness visits also afford adults an opportunity to discuss their lifestyle with their physicians, which can identify areas where changes might be necessary with a goal toward improving long-term health. Yearly health checkups also provide an opportunity to learn about key screenings, especially those that may detect for cancer. But industry

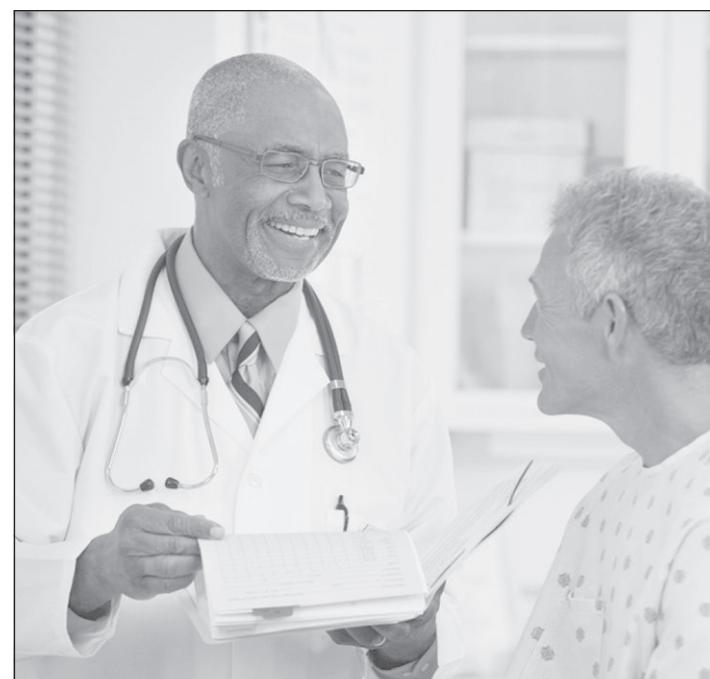
surveys indicate far too many adults aren't taking this vital step.

A 2024 survey from the Prevent Cancer Foundation found that 39 percent of surveyed adults had not had a routine medical appointment in the previous 12 months. That's a troubling finding and one that could be more costly than adults realize, as the PCF reports that as many as 50 percent of cancer cases and half of all cancer deaths are preventable. Screening for cancer, a process that often begins with discussions during annual wellness checkups, is a life-saving and typically non-intrusive way to detect the disease at its earliest, most treatable stage, a point in most cancer instances when

symptoms are not necessarily present or noticeable. Annual checkups also offer patients an opportunity to discuss lifestyle changes that can decrease their cancer risk.

Some adults may not recognize that their existing lifestyle is increasing their cancer risk. For example, the American Cancer Society notes that a sedentary lifestyle, a diet lacking in sufficient nutrition and excessive alcohol consumption all can increase a person's cancer risk.

Annual wellness visits provide an excellent opportunity for adults to discuss their lifestyle with their physicians, who may recommend some potentially life-saving tweaks that can greatly reduce a person's risk for cancer.



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Probiotics may provide a healthy boost

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It's easy to view bacteria and yeasts through a particular lens, without realizing that these microorganisms serve various functions. Certainly, bacteria can lead to infections, but certain bacteria also are important for maintaining health. Probiotics are live microorganisms (mostly bacteria and some yeasts) that may offer various health benefits. Probiotics are sometimes referred to as 'good' or 'beneficial' microbes due to their role in balancing the gut ecosystem. The Mayo Clinic reports that research suggests probiotics may be helpful, but it hasn't yet been proven that probiotics improve health and are safe for everyone. While side effects from probiotic supplements seem to be rare, it's best to consult a physician before taking such products.

What are some common probiotics?

The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health says the most common probiotics are bacteria that belong to groups called *Lacobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium*. Others are yeasts such as *Saccharomyces boulardii*. Probiotics are found in various foods, including fermented dairy products like yogurt, kefir and cheese as well as other fermented foods, including sauerkraut, kimchi, pickles, tempeh, miso, sourdough, salami, olives, and kombucha.



Metro

Additional forms of probiotics include probiotic capsules and powders.

What are prebiotics?

The terms prebiotics and probiotics cannot be used interchangeably. Harvard Health says prebiotics are ingredients in certain foods that the intestines cannot fully digest. One can think of prebiotics as the food upon which probiotics feed. Prebiotics also may trigger the growth of good microbes in the digestive tract.

Potential probiotic benefits
Probiotics may benefit health through several mechanisms. They may restore gut microbe balance after a poor diet, illness or antibiotic use. Probiotics can help crowd out harmful pathogens in the gut. They may reduce 'leaky gut' by

supporting gut barrier integrity. Probiotics also may calm inflammation and help boost the immune system.

Additional uses for probiotics

Probiotics are largely known for their use in the digestive tract, but probiotics also come in topical versions or suppositories to target specific areas. Harvard Health says vaginal probiotic supplements are hugely popular and are designed to promote beneficial bacteria. Some common gynecological conditions are thought to be caused by an imbalance of bacteria inside the

vagina. However, as of now, the benefits of suppositories like these are unknown and should be discussed with a gynecologist before use. Topical probiotics have demonstrated beneficial effects for the treatment of certain inflammatory conditions like acne, rosacea, psoriasis, and others, says the National Institute of Health. But again, caution should be

heeded and any new products should be discussed with a doctor.

Probiotics are an all-natural alternative that many people consider when seeking to improve personal health. It's important to speak with health care providers about the efficacy of probiotics and whether they are safe and effective for particular needs.

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Vitamin D and its link to cancer prevention

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Vitamin D, also known as the sunshine vitamin, is crucial for maintaining health. Vitamin D is essential for bone health and immune function.

For the last 20 years, researchers have studied vitamin D to determine if it can help to prevent certain cancers. The theory that it may be built upon the role vitamin D plays in regulating cell growth, proliferation and cell death (apoptosis).

Data published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 2019

that was based on the largest randomized clinical trials on the topic, the VITAL (Vitamin D and Omega-3 Trial), reveals the link between vitamin D and cancer prevention is nuanced.

The primary finding was that vitamin D supplementation did not significantly lower the overall incidence rate of invasive cancer in the general population, when compared to the placebo. However, when researchers looked into spe-



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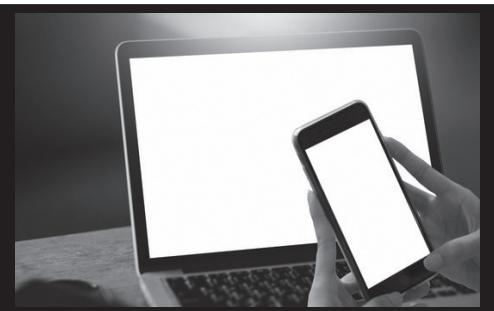


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How screen time affects adults

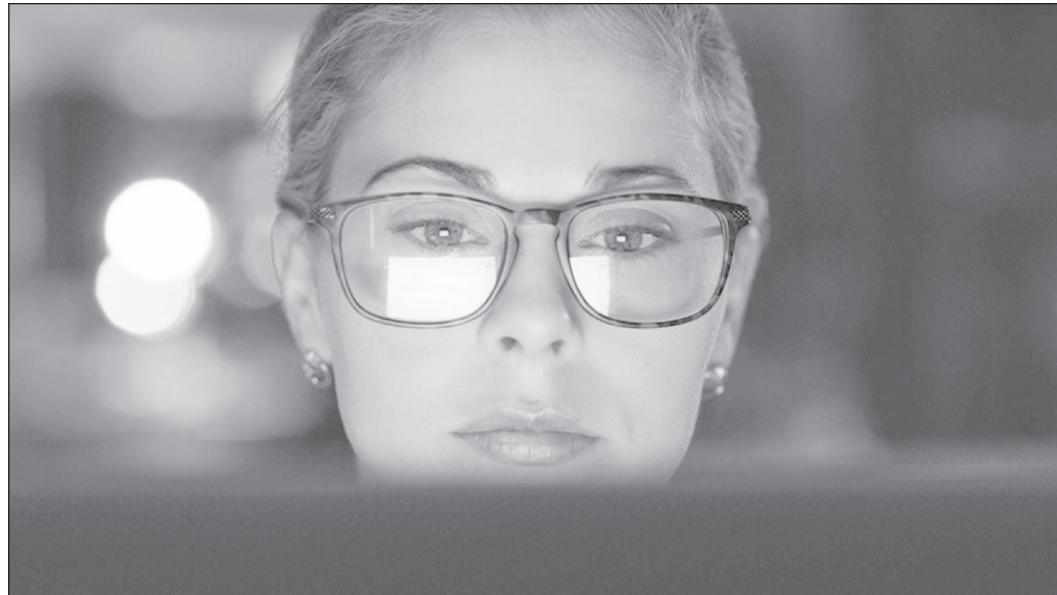
Metro

The effects of screen time are a point of frequent conversation. However, such discussions often focus on the impact of screen time on the health and well-being of children. But children are not the only age group who has to consider how much time they spend with their devices.

Many professionals spend hours on end in front of computers, and those same people may spend a lot of their free time watching shows and/or scrolling social media and news stories online. There are quite a number of negative effects of too much screen time, even for adults.

However, the point in time when device usage is considered detrimental to adults' health is not clearly defined. Some health experts say that limiting social media use to 30 minutes per day leads to a 'significant improvement in well-being.' If that isn't enough to convince adults to put down their devices, perhaps an examination of the various harmful side effects of screens might do the job.

¥ Depression: A 2017 study published in the journal Pre-



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ventative Medicine Reports found a significant association between television watching and computer use with moderate or severe levels of depression. Several studies also have found a positive association between screen time and depression in adolescents.

¥ Eye strain: Looking at screens can impact eye health. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends the 20-20-20 rule for adults

who work on a computer. This rule says that individuals look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds every 20 minutes of the day.

¥ Neck and back pain: Time spent sitting at a desk or on a phone and looking down adversely affects the body. This places strain on the neck, shoulders and back. In fact, many health care providers refer to the condition as 'tech neck.' Pain can occur and the risk for severe musculoskeletal

issues can increase when these positions are held for too long, according to Reid Health.

¥ Cognitive changes: A 2020 study in Science Direct found that adults who have been diagnosed with smartphone addiction had problems with the part of their brains responsible for transmitting messages. Such adults also exhibited reduced cognitive performance. In addition, Stanford Lifestyle Medicine reports adults who

watched television for five hours or more per day had an increased risk of developing brain-related diseases like dementia, stroke or Parkinson's.

¥ Reduced physical activity: People who spend too much time on screens may be less likely to engage in physical activity, such as going on walks, working in the garden, playing sports, or engaging in active hobby projects. A sedentary lifestyle is linked to various health implications, such as increased risk for obesity and the health problems that come with being overweight.

¥ Impact sleep: The JAMA Network reports that among a cross-sectional analysis of 122,058 participants in the American Cancer Society Cancer Prevention Study-3, screen use was associated with decreased sleep duration and worse self-reported sleep quality. Electronic screen use before bed can disrupt circadian rhythms, leading to poorer sleep.

Screen time is not just a concern for children. Adults should moderate screen usage to safeguard themselves from an assortment of negative, device-related outcomes.

Tips to ensure a better night's sleep

Metro

A state of sleep is necessary to give the body and mind time to recharge and prepare for the next day. Though such benefits are widely recognized, a significant percentage of individuals across the globe are failing to get sufficient rest, a dangerous reality that could be putting people at risk for various diseases and conditions.

Lack of sleep is such a prominent problem that the research team behind a 2024 study published in the journal *The Lancet: Diabetes & Endocrinology* dubbed insufficient sleep as a 'neglected public health issue.'

That study surveyed 2,000 adults in the United Kingdom and found that 90 percent of respon-

dents reported current sleep problems, with two-thirds of those individuals indicating they had experienced their issues for more than six years. And it's not just adults suffering from sleep issues, as a 2023 peer-reviewed editorial written for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the modern 24-hour lifestyle and pervasive utilization of electronics and social media is normalizing insufficient sleep among children and adolescents.

Sleeping problems are not to be taken lightly, as the National Institutes of Health notes sleep deficiency has been linked to heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, obesity, and depression.

Children who are not getting enough sleep may experience difficulty paying attention, which could adversely affect their academic performance, and might be prone to misbehavior. Of course, many of these side effects can be avoided by getting sufficient sleep. With that in mind, adults, parents, children, and adolescents can consider these strategies to get a better night's sleep, courtesy of the Sleep Foundation.

¥ Replace an old mattress. Old mattresses can be uncomfortable and thus make it harder to fall asleep.

¥ Block out light. Light exposure adversely affects circadian rhythm, so keep external light out of your bedroom and dim lights

as bedtime approaches. Avoiding bright light as you transition to bedtime can contribute to the production of the hormone melatonin, which facilitates sleep.

¥ Set an appropriate temperature. The Sleep Foundation advises setting a bedroom temperature thermostat to between 65 and 68 degrees Fahrenheit to prevent feelings of being too hot or too cold when going to bed.

¥ Wake up at the same time each day. A routine that includes the same wake-up time each day can acclimate the body to a healthy sleep routine.

¥ Begin to relax 30 minutes before bed. A pre-bedtime routine focused on relaxation can facilitate sleep. The Sleep Foundation notes activities like quiet reading,

low-impact stretching, listening to soothing music, and mindfulness meditation can help you ease into sleep.

¥ Avoid devices an hour before bed. The light emitted by tablets, smartphones and laptops can suppress melatonin production, making it hard to fall asleep. Make the hour before bedtime each night a device-free time.

¥ Exercise each day, but avoid intense activity close to bedtime. Daily exercise has been found to promote sleep, but intense exercise right before bed can make it hard for the body to settle down. Insufficient sleep is an emerging issue for people of all ages across the globe. Some simple strategies can be employed to facilitate a better night's rest.

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Great workouts on days when a trip to the gym isn't feasible

Metro

The right workout routine can make a world of difference in a person's life. When people like their fitness regimens, they're more likely to commit to routine exercise, which can help reduce their risk for chronic diseases, make them less vulnerable to injury and improve their mental health.

No two people are the same, so a workout regimen that's enjoyable and effective for one person will not necessarily appeal to another individual. Some people have no qualms about exercising in a gym, where strength-training machines and cardiovascular equipment facilitate full-body workouts that promote healthy minds and bodies. But others find gyms intimidating or can't fit daily gym excursions into their schedules. Others may find working out in the same facility each day a little boring.

That's why it can be beneficial to find alternative means to exercising on those days when a trip to the gym isn't feasible or appealing.

Take to the trails. The great outdoors can be a gym unto itself. Various outdoor activities can build strength and promote cardiovascular health. Hiking is one such activity. According to Harvard Medical School, the uneven terrain hikers encounter on trails requires more energy to traverse, which in turn burns more calories than walking on level surfaces.

Commit to interval training. Interval training has long been recommended to busy adults with hectic schedules. Interval training is exercise that involves periodic short bursts of intense physical activity followed by periods of rest or low-intensity activity. Interval training sessions tend to be shorter than moderate-intensity continuous training (MICT), but the periodic bursts of intense physical activity make interval training sessions highly effective workouts.



Metro

In fact, a 2021 study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health found that interval training provides similar health and performance benefits as MICT. Challenging hikes can mimic the effects of interval training, as can additional activities such as jumping rope, cycling and swimming that do not necessarily need to be performed at a gym.

Embrace your inner yogi. Yoga is another physical

activity tailor-made for busy adults who don't have time

to get to the gym each day. The characterization of yoga as a niche activity is no longer applicable, as participation among males in the United States alone grew from four million in 2012 to 14 million in 2022, according to Yogkulam.org.

Though global participation figures are hard to determine, market projections estimating the valuation of the yoga industry at \$215 billion in 2025 are a testament to the popularity of this activity, which Johns Hopkins Medicine credits with improving strength, balance and flexibility. Yoga also has

become increasingly accessible since the pandemic, as Yogkulam.org notes 40 percent of yoga practitioners prefer virtual classes available through platforms such as YouTube that can be streamed from the comforts of home.

There's no shortage of ways to fit exercise into your daily schedule, even on days when a trip to the gym is not in the cards.

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PARKING IN REAR SIDE ENTRANCE

What to know about processed foods

Metro

Anyone looking to eat right undoubtedly knows there's no shortage of advice in relation to dietary habits. Fad diets and nutritional trends are shared on social media platforms and websites every day. While access to such information is more available than ever, the volume of data can be overwhelming, especially for people looking to make simple and healthy tweaks.

One trending topic among advocates for improved nutrition concerns processed foods. Various health concerns, from the obesity epidemic to increased rates of high blood pressure, have been traced to processed foods. Such associations merit consideration, and that begins with answering some common questions surrounding processed foods.

What are processed foods?

The United States Department of Agriculture defines processed foods as any raw agricultural commodity that has been altered from its original state. Such alterations occur when foods are subjected to various processes, including pasteurization, blanching, freezing, dehydrating, or fermenting, among others. Fortification is another means to processing foods.

Is processing always unhealthy?

Processing food is not always bad for human beings. For example, milk is pasteurized and commercial milk products are fortified with vitamin D. In regard to fortified milk, adding vitamin D ensures milk drinkers receive sufficient amounts of a nutrient that helps strengthen bones. So why the fear of processed foods? The negative characterizations of processed foods arises mainly from foods that are considered ultra-processed. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics uses a spectrum to differentiate between various types of processed foods. Minimally processed foods include washed fresh spinach, while heavily processed foods include ready-to-eat foods like cereal and crackers. The negative attributes often associated with processed foods typically refers to heavily processed foods, which may also be referred to as ultra-processed foods.

What are some examples of minimally processed and ultra-processed foods?

Potatoes are perhaps the simplest example of how a single food item can sometimes be healthy and other times lack nutrition, even though it's the same item.

A baked potato is minimally processed because it's been altered from its original state after being washed and baked. But the nutritional profile remains largely the same after these minimal adjustments to the potato. French fries are made from potatoes, but they're often greatly altered from

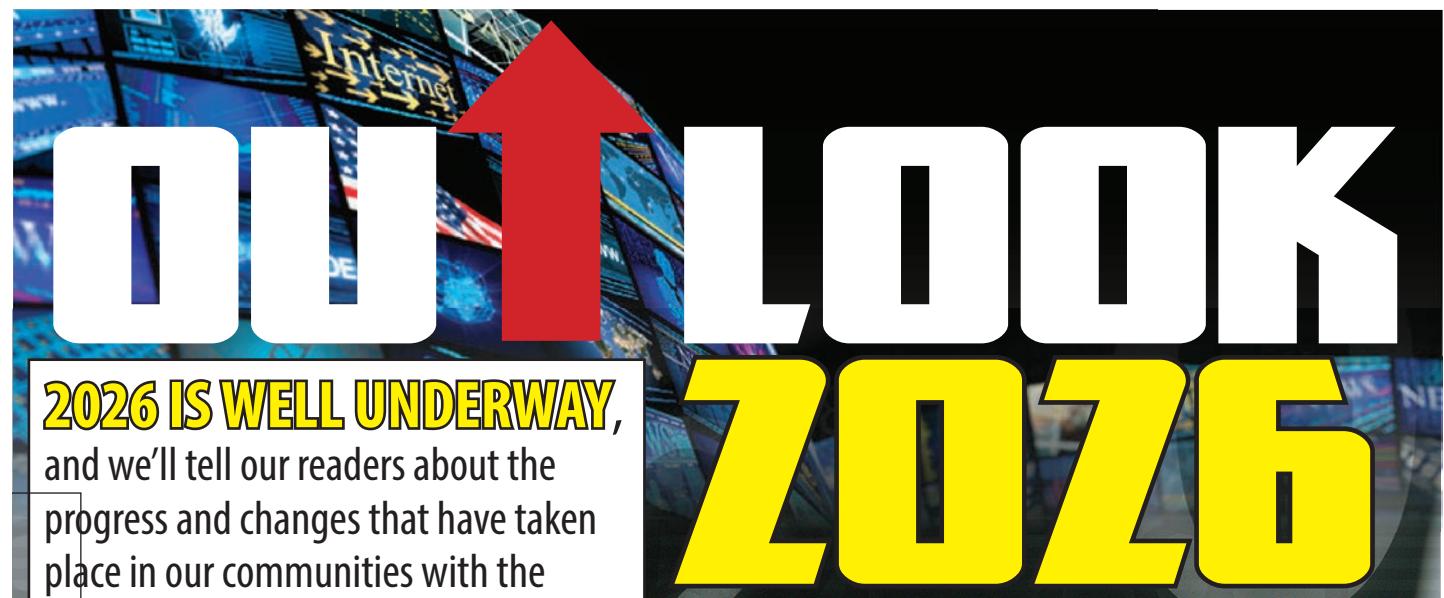
their original state after being fried in oil. French fries also tend to be heavily salted, furthering altering them from their original state and thus lowering their nutritional profile.

What can I do to avoid eating heavily processed foods?

The Mayo Clinic Health Sys-

tem advises reading food labels to analyze items in relation to how processed they may or may not be. Foods that contain additives and preservatives like high fructose corn syrup, hydrogenated oils, food dyes, sodium nitrates, sodium nitrites, monosodium glutamate (MSG), and sulfites are

best avoided or consumed in low amounts. The debate around processed foods is complicated. People seeking to bolster the nutritional profile of their diets are urged to avoid ultra-processed foods and work with a physician or dietitian to ensure they're making healthy choices.



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Nutritious snacks kids will love

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Medical professionals note the important role parents can play in helping children build healthy relationships with food. That assistance can begin at an early age so kids get the nutrients they need and learn to enjoy healthy, whole foods. Offering children two or three items at snack time helps them feel in charge of their food decisions, and could set them on a path to lifelong health. Snack time can be particularly tough for parents, as children may resist anything that isn't potato chips or other foods that do not boast a strong nutritional profile. But many snack foods are both flavorful and nutritious, and parents can offer such items when kids get between-meal hunger pangs.

Fun snacks

Pairing creative presenta-



Metro

tion with healthy foods often encourages children to try new things. Consider these options for snacks that elevate the fun factor.

¥ 'Ants on a log': Parents may have come across these tasty snacks as requests from

teachers or at preschool snack time. They're essentially celery sticks filled with cream cheese, peanut butter or seed butter, and topped with raisins.

¥ Fruit kabobs: Foods on sticks are easy for young hands to grasp. Using blunt wood-

en skewers, adults can thread grapes, melon chunks, strawberries, granola bar pieces, and maybe marshmallows. The kabobs can be served with a yogurt dip.

¥ Smoothies: Smoothies are a great option that blend fruits and vegetables into something that may be more palatable to youngsters. Parents can take this snack one step further by freezing the smoothie batter into popsicle molds to create a refreshing dessert. Quick snacksHaving quick snacks at the ready is essential when hungry kids are around. Children may be more inclined to eat a few smaller meals and snacks than three big meals as they go about their days.

¥ Cheese sticks: Prepackaged, low-fat cheese sticks or cheese slices are a protein-rich snack that kids can help themselves to when they get hungry

between meals. Cheese also can be paired with apple slices or whole wheat crackers.

¥ Parfaits: Let children create their own yogurt 'Sundaes' with their favorite ingredients. Have plenty of toppings on hand that can be added to plain or vanilla flavored yogurt, such as berries, bananas, chia seeds, nuts, and granola.

¥ Hummus: Blended chickpeas can be seasoned with an array of flavors to create hummus varieties kids love. Mixing cocoa powder and honey into hummus also can create a 'dessert' hummus that goes well with graham cracker dipers.

Kids might demand less healthy fare at snack time. However, parents can stay a nutritious course and offer many healthy and flavorful alternatives to potato chips.

Risk factors for heart disease

Metro

The World Health Organization reports that ischaemic heart disease, also known as coronary artery disease, is the leading cause of death across the globe. Ischaemic heart disease accounts for 13 percent of the world's deaths, affecting people from all walks of life and every corner of the globe.

The WHO also notes that deaths attributed to ischaemic heart disease rose by 2.7 million between 2000 and 2021, the largest uptick in deaths of any disease in the world during that time.

Data from the WHO underscores the threat posed by ischaemic heart disease.

But humanity is not helpless against the disease. In fact, many risk factors are within a personal's control, suggesting that a concerted effort to educate the public about the risk factors, and how to avoid them, could have a profound and life-saving impact.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute reports that almost half of all adults in the United States have at least one of three key risk factors for ischaemic heart disease, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada indicates nine in 10 Canadians have at least one risk factor for heart conditions, stroke or vascular cognitive impairment.

One of the more significant hurdles to beating heart disease is raising awareness of its risk factors among the billions of people across the globe who have at least one of those factors, even if they don't know it.

According to the NHLBI, the following are some notable risk factors for heart disease.

¥ Age: Heart disease risk increases with age, but anyone can develop it. For men, risk increases significantly around age 45, while women's risk increases more rapidly around age 55.

¥ Environmental/work conditions: Indoor or outdoor air pollution increases risk for heart disease. The NHLBI

notes that air pollution may cause or worsen conditions like high blood pressure or inflammation, which are known risk factors for heart disease. Long and/or irregular working hours (55 hours or more per week); exposure to toxins, radiation, secondhand smoke, or other hazards; work-related stress; and sedentary positions throughout a workday are some work conditions associated with an elevated risk for heart disease.

¥ Family history/genetics: A father or brother diagnosed with heart disease prior to age 55, or a mother or sister diagnosed before age 65, is a risk factor for heart disease. The

NHLBI also notes research has found that some genes are linked to a higher risk of heart disease.

¥ Lifestyle habits: Unhealthy lifestyle habits that increase heart disease risk include a sedentary lifestyle, excessive alcohol consumption, insufficient sleep over a prolonged period of time, smoking, and poor diet.

These are some heart disease risks that people should be aware of as they seek to improve their overall health. More information about ischaemic heart disease can be found at nhlbi.nih.gov.

Vitamin

From T3

cific cancer types, the VITAL study showed a statistically significant 38 percent reduction in total cancer mortality (death from cancer) among participants who took vita-

min D for at least two years.

Among the more than 25,000 men and women who participated, those who took 2,000 international units of vitamin D each day for an average of 5.3 years were nearly 20 percent less likely than those who took the placebo to have an advanced cancer, which is defined as one that metastasized or proved fatal.

The risk reduction also correlated to participants being at a normal weight.

Researchers didn't see a benefit in people who were overweight or obese. There has been a compelling trend regarding colorectal cancer and vitamin D supplementation. Data published in *JAMA Network Open* showed that those who consistently supplemented with vita-

min D had a roughly 17 to 25 percent lower risk of developing advanced colorectal adenomas or cancer, suggesting a potential benefit for protecting against gastrointestinal malignancies.

While vitamin D is vital for overall health, it cannot conclusively and universally be recommended as a cancer prevention measure for the general public, based on scientific

consensus supported by the National Cancer Institute and other medical organizations.

However, given the link between vitamin D and cancer mortality, supplementing with vitamin D is a low-risk measure individuals can adopt. It's always best to consult with a doctor for more guidance about appropriate supplementation doses and health strategies.

Hudson Headwaters Malone Family Health opens in February!

Since December 2023, Hudson Headwaters Health Network has operated a temporary primary care location, Family Health at Malone, on the Alice Hyde Medical Campus at 16 Third Street. Patients will soon be welcomed at the new state-of-the-art health center, now named Malone Family Health, located at 24 Fourth Street, also on the hospital's campus.

"Over the last two years, Hudson Headwaters has proudly served the Malone community by providing vital health care services within Franklin County," shared Susan Foster, FNP, lead provider at Malone Family Health. "As a nonprofit, Federally Qualified Health Center, our mission is to expand access to health care. We look forward to wel-



coming a growing team of providers at the new center and delivering high-quality primary care to Malone families for years to come."

In addition to Susan Foster, April Worlock, FNP also sees patients in Malone. Other providers throughout the Network's service region are also caring for patients and two

new physicians will be joining in February and March.

Malone Family Health offers family medicine, pediatrics, immunizations and screenings, gynecology, care management, behavioral health, nutritional counseling and diabetes education and more. The new health center will also include a pharmacy, pending

NYS Board of Pharmacy approval. Starting in February, Malone Family Health will be open Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. New patients are welcome, and most health insurances are accepted, including Medicare and Medicaid. Budget plans, sliding fee program and prescription assistance are also available for qualified patients. Online scheduling is available and appointments may be made by phone. For more information, call the center at 518-824-2562 or visit Hudson Headwaters' website at <https://www.hhhn.org/locations/family-health-at-malone>.

ABOUT HUDSON HEADWATERS:

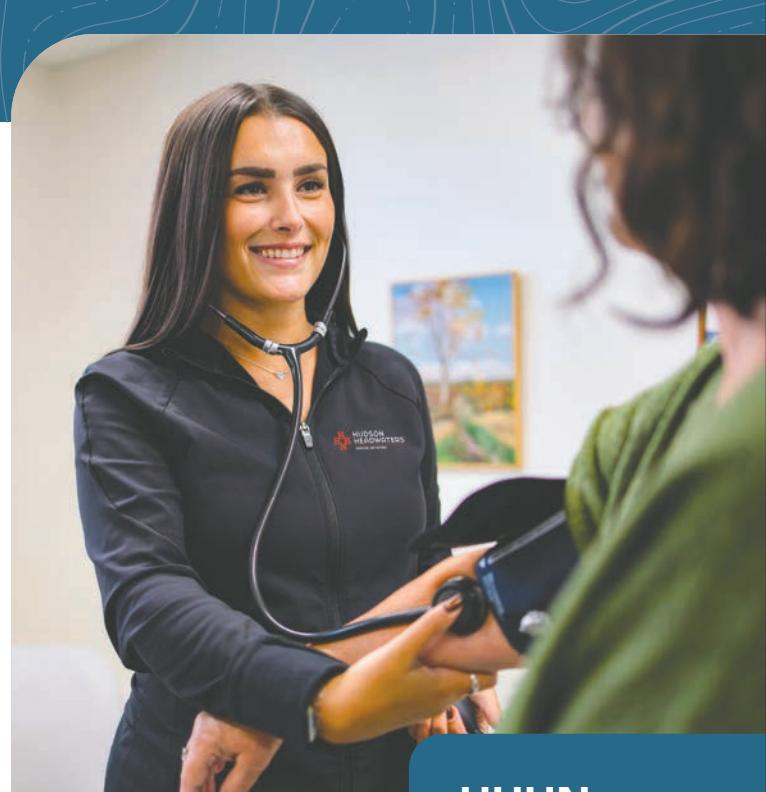
Hudson Headwaters Health Network is a nonprofit network of 26 community-based primary care health centers

serving patients of all ages from Saratoga County to the Canadian border, an area of about 7,900 square miles. Hudson Headwaters serves 157,000 patients throughout seven counties. The Network is the sole medical provider in much of this rural, medically underserved region. In the Glens Falls area, Hudson Headwaters is the only primary care "safety-net" provider, and the organization's doors are open to all regardless of insurance or ability to pay. For the past twenty years, Hudson Headwaters has depended on the 340B Federal Drug Pricing Program to fulfill its mission by maintaining crucial health care services and responding to the growing needs of our region. Learn more at [HHHN.org](https://www.hhhn.org).

Malone Family Health

New Name, New Location, Same Quality Care.

Malone Family Health Opening in February, New Patients Welcome.



[HHHN.org](https://www.hhhn.org)

Tips to safeguard your mental health each day

Metro

When seeking to be as healthy as possible, it's important that people do not overlook the importance of protecting mental health. The World Health Organization says more than a billion people across the globe live with a mental health condition. The need for action on mental health is urgent and undeniable, as safeguarding mental health is integral to a person's well-being.

The National Institute of Mental Health says that mental health is more than just the absence of a mental illness. It includes emotional, psychological and social well-being. Self-care and action play key roles in maintaining good mental health and getting support and treatment if a serious issue is present. Here are steps anyone can take each day to protect their mental health.

¥ Exercise regularly. Just 30 minutes of exercise most days, which can include walking, can boost a person's mood and improve health. The NIMH says small amounts of exercise add up, so it's possible to spread out the 30 minutes over the course of



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the day. Exercising outdoors also exposes a person to natural sunlight, which is proven to boost mood.

¥ Foster relationships. Good relationships are important for mental well-being. If possible, a person should take time each day to be with family, friends or

colleagues. Volunteer work at a local school, community group or hospital can foster socialization for those who may not be able to get together with friends or family with regularity.

¥ Learn new skills. The United Kingdom-based NHS Services says research shows learning

new skills can improve mental well-being by boosting self-esteem and self-confidence. It also helps identify a sense of purpose.

¥ Relax. People should schedule time for relaxation and stress management. Yoga, meditation, reading, or spending time in nature are great ways to slow down,

relax and recharge.

¥ Seek help. Anyone with a mental health concern should seek someone to talk to. For some, simply talking things through with a friend or family member may be enough to resolve issues. Others may find that talking to a therapist or counselor is the best course of action. There also are support groups where others who understand similar experiences can provide validation and support.

¥ Curtail harmful behaviors. Some people turn to drugs and alcohol to mitigate mental health issues. This self-medication is harmful and can exacerbate mental health conditions. Individuals should consult with medical professionals if they suspect they may need medication or additional help to treat mental health issues.

Efforts to safeguard mental health are essential. Anyone who has concerns about their mental health or the mental health of others should speak first to a primary care provider. He or she can then offer a referral to a qualified mental health professional.

Cherries offer some sweet perks

Metro

Eating healthy, diverse food offerings is a step in the right direction for overall wellness. Foods rich in essential vitamins and minerals should be front and center in most people's diets, and one particular fruit is quite literally the cherry on top when it comes to nutritional value.

Cherries, which are small stone fruits (fruits that have a pit or seed inside), boast some impressive benefits. Michigan grows most of the sour cherries in the United States, while Washington, California and Oregon grow 90 percent of the sweet cherries. Whether they're tart or sweet, the nutritional benefits of cherries abound.

Here's a look at some of the health benefits.

¥ High in antioxidants:

Cherries are high in plant chemicals (polyphenols and anthocyanins) that have antioxidant properties. The Cleveland Clinic says antioxidants fight free radicals, which can cause cell damage and contribute to chronic diseases. Cherries contain vitamins A, C and E.

¥ Reduce inflammation: These same plant chemicals also are vital in reducing inflammation throughout the body. Healthline says cherries can reduce inflammation by blocking inflammatory enzymes and lowering inflammatory markers. This is good news for people with arthritis or gout, who may find that consuming cherries or drinking cherry juice can alleviate symptoms.

¥ Promote restful sleep:

Tart cherries contain key compounds that support better sleep, says WebMD. These include melatonin, serotonin and tryptophan. These natural chemicals help promote relaxation and sleep-wake cycles.

¥ Low glycemic index: Cherries are low-glycemic index foods. The fiber from the skin facilitates a slow increase in blood sugar, which makes cherries a treat for those with diabetes when enjoyed in moderation. Research is underway to see if a healthy diet that includes cherries may reverse prediabetes, says the Cleveland Clinic.

It's always best to thoroughly wash cherries to remove any dirt and pesticide residue. WebMD says cherry pits naturally have small amounts of cyanide in them. One would



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have to eat a lot of crushed pits for them to be harmful, but it's best to spit out the pits. Pits should be removed before giving cherries to children. Select cherries that have bright green

stems, plump fruit and a darker color, which have a better flavor profile.

Cherries are nutritionally sound foods that offer a number of health benefits.



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