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5 weight loss myths debunked



Metro

Losing weight is a popular New Year's resolution every year. Roughly 50 percent of people age 20 and older acknowledge they tried to lose weight over the past 12 months, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Successful weight loss requires hard work and patience. Still, many myths abound, and people may think there are quick fixes to shedding a few extra pounds. Debunking some of those myths can help people adopt more realistic weight loss strategies.

Myth #1: Avoid carbs to lose weight. A healthy diet is comprised of a mix of foods that include carbohydrates. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans indicate that carbohydrates, such as those found in vegetables, fruits and whole grains, are a foundation of healthy eating. Carbs also provide much-needed fiber.

Myth #2: You can target specific fat loss. Exercising and eating healthy can produce overall weight loss and diminish fat concentrations in certain parts of the body, indicates the healthy eating source Eat This, Not That. But each body is unique, and where people lose fat varies. Gender is one factor that can affect people's figures. Exercise can tone muscles in key areas to help make a person appear thinner in those regions, but it will not neces-

sarily make fat go away in one place over another.

Myth #3: Eating fat makes you fat. Fat is very calorie-dense and common in junk foods, which is why it can get a bad rap. However, as long as calorie intake is within a healthy range — even if some calories are from fat — weight gain will not occur from fat alone, says Healthline. The body needs healthy fats to function properly.

Myth #4: Crash diets will make weight fall off. Dramatically cutting calories can lead to nutritional deficiencies and have an adverse effect on weight loss. The body may slow its rate of metabolism to conserve calories, as a crash diet may fool your body into thinking you are starving. It's better to stick to a gradual decrease in calories while still consuming the daily recommended amounts based on your age and other factors.

Myth #5: Tons of exercise will make the pounds disappear. Research has repeatedly indicated that exercise can help boost weight loss. However, the real way to shed pounds is primarily linked to diet. According to Shawn M. Talbott, Ph.D., a nutritional biochemist and former director of the University of Utah Nutrition Clinic, weight loss is generally 75 percent diet and 25 percent exercise. People see the biggest short-term results when they eat smart.

If losing weight is your New Year's resolution, get the facts before adopting a weight loss regimen.

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Risk factors that can compromise mental wellness



Metro

At the dawn of a new year, much is made about the popularity of resolutions focusing on improving physical fitness. While it's important to be physically fit, a new year also marks a great time to examine one's mental wellness.

The World Health Organization defines mental wellness as 'a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her society.' Men and women who are mentally unwell may find it difficult if not impossible to achieve their other goals, including those pertaining to their physical fitness.

No one is immune to mental health problems, which the American Mental Wellness Association notes are never the result of a single risk factor. Many people whose mental wellness has been compromised are dealing with a variety of risk factors. The AMWA breaks down those risk factors into four categories: biophysical, psychological, social, and spiritual. Learning these risk factors can help people learn more about themselves and might even compel them to seek help before their mental wellness is compromised.

Biophysical

- Family history of mental

health problems

- Complications during pregnancy or birth

- Personal history of traumatic brain injury

- Chronic medical conditions, such as cancer or diabetes. Hypothyroidism or other brain-related illnesses, such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease, also can compromise mental wellness

- Use of alcohol or drugs

- Poor nutrition

- Lack of sleep

Psychological

- Stressful life situations, such as financial problems or breaking the law

- Traumatic life experiences, such as rape or serving in the armed forces

- Low self-esteem, perceived incompetence and/or a negative view of life

- Poor academic achievement

Social

- Being abused or neglected as a child

- Being in an abusive relationship or friendship

- Having few friends or few healthy relationships

- Recent loss, either by death, divorce or other means

- Bullying; both victims of bullying and perpetrators can be at risk for mental health problems

- Growing up, or currently living, in poverty

- Poor social skills, poor communication skills

- Discrimination
- Lack of access to support services

Spiritual

- Perception of being irre-

deemable or inherently flawed beyond repair

- Perception of insignificance

- Conflicting thoughts or doubts surrounding deep religious beliefs

The good news for people who think their mental wellness has been compromised is that various treatments are available. Talk therapy or speaking with a peer who has

had similar life experiences can help some people as they confront problems regarding their mental wellness. Information about additional treatments, including specialized therapies, is available at www.americanwellness.org.

Fitness goals are popular New Year's resolutions. But the start of a new year also marks a great time to consider one's mental wellness.

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How to approach nutrition when feeding children away from home



Metro

Children can be picky eaters. Parents know that getting kids to eat anything, much less healthy foods, can sometimes make the dinner table feel more like a battlefield than a place to break bread. That's especially so when the dinner table is in a restaurant, where savvy youngsters might know less nutritious dishes like macaroni and cheese or fried chicken fingers are on the menu. But the benefits of a healthy, balanced diet are so numerous for youngsters that it's worth doing whatever it takes to get kids to embrace nutrient-rich foods, both at home and when dining out.

The American Academy of Family Physicians notes that a healthy diet can stabilize children's energy levels, help them maintain healthy weights and potentially prevent mental health conditions, including anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD. But recognizing the importance of a healthy diet and getting kids to embrace one are two different things, especially when kids are dining out and being tempted by unhealthy alternatives. In recognition of that, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following strategies to parents who want their kids to eat healthy when they're

away from home.

- **Make meals all-inclusive.** When preparing school lunches or taking youngsters out for a night on the town, make sure to offer a mix of foods from the five food groups. The AAP recommends parents offer vegetables, fruit, grains, low-fat dairy, and/or quality protein sources, which can include meat, fish, nuts, seeds, and eggs. Offering each of these foods at every meal may not be feasible, but kids should eat foods selected from the major food groups at every meal.

- **Avoid highly processed foods.** The National Institutes of Health notes that studies have suggested there's a link

between highly processed foods and health problems. Such foods, which typically contain ingredients such as hydrogenated oils, high-fructose corn syrup and flavoring agents, are typically high in calories, salt, sugar, and fat. While highly processed foods tend to be easier to make and readily available at restaurants, serving them to youngsters can start kids down the road to poor dietary habits, potentially increasing their risk for obesity and diseases like heart disease and diabetes. When packing snacks for school lunches or taking kids out to restaurants, be sure to include or bring along healthy whole foods, such as fruits

and vegetables. This can ensure kids get some healthy fare during mealtime.

- **Enhance foods if necessary.** While high amounts of sugar, salt and fat can jeopardize the health of adults and youngsters alike, the AAP notes that small amounts of these substances can be used to enhance kids' enjoyment of healthy foods and increase the likelihood that they will eat them.

Parents may not have much control over what their children eat while away from home. But a handful of strategies can increase the likelihood that kids enjoy healthy fare when eating at school or at restaurants.



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3 simple ways to eat healthier every day



Metro

Diets can be difficult to navigate. Since no two people are the same, a healthy diet that satisfies one person won't necessarily satisfy another. Vegetarians might be perfectly happy without chicken or steak, while some people might shudder at the notion of never indulging in the occasional filet mignon.

While the most effective diets tend to be those that emphasize nutrition while still allowing individuals to indulge in some of their favorite dishes in moderation, the following are three ways that everyone, regardless of their personal preference, can eat healthy every day.

1. Eat lots of whole-grain carbohydrates.

Fad diets tend to paint carbs as the enemy, but various studies have shown just how integral carbohydrates, particularly whole-grain varieties, are to a healthy diet. One such study published in 2018 in the medical journal *The Lancet Public Health* found that diets that got between 50 and 55 percent of their calories from plant-based carbohydrates like whole grains were associated with a lower risk of mortality

than low-carb diets that favored animal-derived protein sources. When buying carbs at the grocery store, shoppers can opt for whole-grain varieties, including whole-grain pastas, brown rice and cereals. That won't require sacrificing flavor and makes for a simple way to eat healthier every day.

2. Make a concerted effort to eat more fruits and vegetables.

The United Kingdom-based National Health Service, which is the largest single-payer healthcare system in the world, recommends eating at least five portions of fruits and vegetables every day. That may sound like a lot, but it's pretty easy to incorporate all those healthy fruits and veggies into a diet. For example, add a serving of antioxidant-rich blueberries to your cereal bowl each morning. At dinner time, allow vegetables to take up the most real estate on your plate. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention note that diets rich in fruits and veggies can help people control their weight and may even reduce their risk for certain diseases, including cancer.

3. Kick added sugars to the curb.

Avoiding added sugars is another way anyone, regardless of their food preferences, can eat healthier every day. Healthy foods such as fruit

contain natural sugars, and these don't pose a threat to overall health. However, added sugars, which the Harvard Medical School notes are found in many foods and can include honey, molasses and corn syrup, can increase a person's risk for various conditions and diseases, including obesity, heart disease and diabetes. Fruit contains fiber that slows the absorption of natural sugars, but the body digests added sugars much more quickly, leading to an uptick in blood sugar levels that can ultimately contribute to diabe-

tes. Added sugars can be found in a host of foods and beverages, including some that aren't generally considered unhealthy, like bread, certain breakfast cereals and pasta sauces. When shopping, consumers should read nutrition labels and avoid products with excessive amounts of sugar.

Eating healthy does not require people to abandon their favorite foods. A few simple adjustments can be all it takes to improve the nutritional value of your diet.

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How to reduce skin cancer risk in winter

Metro

Sunscreen and the great outdoors go hand-in-hand during the warmer months of the year. For instance, few people can imagine spending a day at the beach without first covering their skin in sunscreen. But skin also must be protected when spending time outdoors in winter.

The World Health Organization notes that one in every three cancers diagnosed across the globe is skin cancer. While that's a scary notion, it's important to note that many skin cancer cases are preventable. Protecting skin in winter, a time when many people mistakenly believe their skin is not vulnerable to damage caused by the sun, is one way for people to reduce their risk of developing skin cancer.

■ Don't put sunscreen in storage. Even if you won't be beachfront and basking in the sun's rays, it's still important to apply sunscreen in winter. The Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, which specializes in cancer treatment and actively seeks tomorrow's cures through cutting-edge research, recommends applying a sunscreen with a minimum sun-protection factor, or SPF, of 30. Make sure to apply sunscreen to all areas that may be exposed to the sun, including the face, neck, ears, and hands.



■ Frequently reapply sunscreen. The 'set it and forget it' approach does not apply to protecting the skin with sunscreen. Reapply sunscreen every 90 minutes that you are outdoors to ensure your skin is fully protected at all times. Skiers should recognize that they are much closer to the sun as they traverse the slopes, and that means the UV radiation is more intense on the mountain than it might be in the foothills or lower elevation areas. That heightened intensity only un-

derscores the importance of reapplying sunscreen.

■ Don't forget to protect your lips. The DFCI notes that the lower lip is especially vulnerable to the sun's rays. A lip balm with an SPF of 30 or higher should be applied before going outside and then frequently reapplied while outdoors. In addition, women can use makeup with SPF to further protect their lips and their skin.

■ Avoid tanning booths. Indoor tanning booths increase

users' risk for skin cancer and premature skin aging. In fact, the DFCI notes that cancer

researchers have found that the risk of developing melanoma is 60 percent greater among people who have been exposed to UV radiation from indoor tanning. And that risk only increases with each visit to a tanning booth.

■ Don't forget to protect the skin while on vacation. People who vacation in warm climates during the winter may be the envy of coworkers and neighbors upon returning home with a tan, but it's imperative that travelers prioritize protecting their skin while on vacation. Embrace the same principles of skin protection, including applying sunscreen and wearing wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses, that you would when lounging by the pool or visiting the beach in the summer.

Unprotected skin is vulnerable to sun damage and skin cancer year-round, including when the temperatures dip below freezing.

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Combat veterans and the threat posed by PTSD

Metro

Every day men and women in the military put themselves in harm's way to protect the lives and freedoms of their fellow countrymen. These brave men and women pay a steep price for their service, spending time away from their loved ones and putting themselves at risk of long-term physical and mental injuries.

Many men and women, even those who never served in the military, are aware of post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, a mental health problem that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event. Combat veterans are vulnerable to PTSD, and the percentage of veterans who deal with it each day is alarming. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, as many as 20 percent of veterans who served during Operations Iraqi Freedom or Enduring Freedom have PTSD. In addition, the USDVA notes that estimates now suggest as many as 30 percent of Vietnam veterans have had PTSD in their lifetime.

Though it's not exclusive



to men and women who have served in the military, PTSD has long been linked to combat veterans. In fact, the American Psychiatric Association notes that PTSD has been referred to as 'shell shock' and 'combat fatigue' in the past.

While the APA notes that a diagnosis of PTSD requires exposure to an upsetting traumatic event, that exposure can be indirect rather than firsthand. Because some people may assume that only firsthand exposure to trauma can lead to PTSD, many may be suffering in silence. That

makes it all the more important that people learn to recognize the symptoms of PTSD. According to the APA, symptoms of PTSD, which can vary in severity, fall into four categories.

1. Intrusive thoughts: Flashbacks, distressing dreams and repeated, involuntary memories are examples of intrusive thoughts symptomatic of PTSD. The APA notes that some people with PTSD experience flashbacks so vivid that they feel they are reliving the traumatic experience or that it is unfolding before their eyes.

2. Avoiding reminders: Some people with PTSD may avoid people, places, activities, objects, or situations they feel will trigger distressing memories. Soldiers, for example, may avoid interacting with fellow combat veterans. Avoiding discussions about a traumatic event and how they feel about it is another symptom of PTSD.

3. Negative thoughts and feelings: The APA says that negative thoughts and feelings may include ongoing and distorted beliefs about oneself or others; ongoing fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame; consid-

erably diminished interest in activities previously enjoyed; and a sense of estrangement and detachment from others.

4. Arousal and reactive symptoms: These symptoms may include irritability and angry outbursts; reckless or self-destructive behavior; being easily startled; or have difficulty concentrating or sleeping.

PTSD poses a significant threat to the men and women who serve in the military. Additional resources about PTSD is available at www.ptsd.va.gov and www.psychiatry.org.

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See ATTACK 11

Recognize signs of heart attack in women

Metro

Many people are familiar with the image of a heart attack sufferer clutching his or her chest or feeling surprising, tingling sensations in his or her left arm. While those symptoms are common, heart attacks can produce a wide array of symptoms, and some of them may actually be much less apparent than chest pain or tingling in the left arm. That's especially so for women.

The organization Go Red for Women, which highlights women's heart health during the month of February, advises that many symptoms women can experience when suffering from heart disease may be overlooked or misunderstood as signs of less threatening conditions. However, jaw

pain, nausea, pressure, and sweating all may be indicative of a heart attack. A failure to recognize that and act quickly could prove fatal.

The American Heart Association says that heart disease is the foremost killer of women in the United States. The Heart and Stroke Foundation says heart disease and stroke kill 31,000 women in Canada annually. Despite those figures, many women are unaware of the threat of heart disease and its symptoms.

Heart attack occurs when blood flow to the heart is blocked by a buildup of a substance called plaque in the coronary arteries. Heart attack can strike any woman, though women who deal with high stress, are overweight or are heavy smokers are at the great-

est risk.

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The rise of telehealth services

Metro

Getting sick once meant traveling to a physician's office only to sit in a waiting room with fellow under-the-weather individuals. Few if any people like leaving home when they're feeling ill, and thanks to technology, many no longer need to do so.

Telehealth services, which the Massachusetts Medical Society defines as the delivery and facilitation of health and health-related services including medical care, provider and patient education, health information services, and self-care via telecommunications and digital communication technologies, are revolutionizing the healthcare industry. In many instances, patients need not leave the comfort of their beds or sofas to be diagnosed and treated. The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology says telehealth, which is a broader scope of remote healthcare services than telemedicine, can utilize everything from videoconferencing, the internet, store-and-forward imaging, streaming media, and terrestrial and wireless phone communications.

Many providers and insurance companies now offer some method of telehealth services. Consider some of these statistics.

■ The American Telemedicine Association says more than one-half of all hospitals in

the United States have a telehealth program.

■ Forty-eight states require payers to cover telehealth, says the Center for Connected Health Policy.

■ BBC Research indicates that telehealth makes up roughly one-quarter of the healthcare-related technology market.

■ The American Medical Association says nearly 75 percent of all doctor, urgent care and emergency room visits could be handled safely and effectively over the phone or via video.

■ Beckers Hospital Review says 82 percent of millennial patients surveyed would rather have a telemedicine visit than an in-person consultation.

■ Around seven million people use telehealth services across the globe, according to eVisit.

Telehealth can connect rural providers and their patients to services at other sites and promote patient-centered health care. With a shortage of some medical specialties in rural areas, telehealth can play an important role in ensuring all patients get access to care they need. But the benefits do not only extend to rural patients. Individuals who are elderly and/or those who have mobility issues and cannot travel easily can benefit from telehealth services. Furthermore, any patient with a

rare condition may no longer have to travel long distances to consult with specialists in that field.

Telehealth applications and programs on smartphones, tablets or laptops can make it easy for people to monitor

their health. These apps can enable patients to do things like track health measurements, share information with clinicians, manage chronic illnesses, and set medication or appointment reminders. Patients also can communicate

with providers to get health information through patient portals or to refill prescriptions effortlessly.

Telehealth is changing the face of medicine and utilizing technology in unique ways.

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Beating the winter blues

Metro

Most areas in Europe and North America observe daylight saving time. Daylight saving time is often welcomed in spring, as it helps to extend daylight hours well into the evening. But few may welcome turning the clocks back in fall.

Coupled with the natural shortening of daylight hours as winter approaches, the end of DST facilitates a sudden shift in the ratio of sunlight to darkness. As autumn transforms into winter, the number of available hours of daylight slowly dwindles. Some areas of Alaska and Canada see only about three or four hours of daylight per day in the winter months. Conversely, those who live in Key West, Florida, the southernmost point of the contiguous United States, may enjoy around 10 hours of daylight.

Fewer daylight hours can adversely affect mood and productivity. Seasonal affective disorder, often referred to as 'SAD' or 'the winter blues,' has been recognized and included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders. Clinicians say that, as days become short and dark, a predictable set of symptoms of SAD may emerge. Individuals with SAD may experience a host of symptoms, including difficulty waking in the morning; diminished energy levels; a tendency to eat more; an inability to concentrate; and depression.

The Cleveland Clinic advises that approximately half a million people in the United States suffer from winter SAD, while 10 to 20 percent may suffer from more mild forms of winter blues. The Canadian Mental Health Association states that between 2 and 3 percent of Canadians will experience SAD in their

lifetime. Another 15 percent will experience a mild form of SAD that leaves them only slightly depressed. Similar symptoms can occur for those people who live in cloudy regions or high latitudes.

Evidence strongly suggests SAD is linked to sunlight. This lack of sunlight may trigger production of melatonin in some individuals. Melatonin is a hormone made in the pineal gland that regulates sleep onset and sleeping patterns.

A combination of self-care strategies as well as professional medical treatment may help those with winter blues or more severe SAD. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says that these strategies can help people coping with SAD.

- Get out of the house into sunlight or brightly lit spaces early in the day when the sun is out.

- Increase time spent outdoors. Take a break midday and enjoy lunch outside or take a walk, even if it's chilly.

- Try to spend time with other people and chat with friends and relatives.

- Avoid overloading on carbohydrates like cookies and candies.

- Talk to a doctor about using light therapy, which is the first line of SAD treatment, according to the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

- Consider cognitive behavioral therapy or talk therapy with a licensed mental health provider. He or she also can make recommendations about the use of medication to alleviate symptoms if other treatments do not provide results.

There are many ways to mitigate the symptoms of winter blues.



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The relationship between eating and exercise

Metro

Diet and exercise are each vital components of a healthy lifestyle. While these components tend to be looked at separately, diet and exercise are actually interconnected.

According to the American College of Sports Medicine, adequate food and fluid should be consumed before, during and after exercise. Following that advice can help men and women maintain their blood glucose concentration during exercise, which allows them to maximize their performance and improves their recovery time.

Some people understandably may feel that eating before exercising seems counterintuitive, as food may contribute to feelings of sluggishness that would make it hard to maximize a workout. But what people eat, and drink, prior to working out is important, as the right foods can make a positive impact while the wrong foods can have the opposite effect.

The American Heart Association and the ACSM rec-



ommend hydrating with water prior to working out. The ACSM recommends drinking between two and three cups of water two to three hours before exercising. Adults accustomed to working out in the early morning can try to wake up earlier so they can give their bodies time to hydrate before they begin exercising. It's also important to continue hydrating during a workout, as the ACSM recommends drinking between 1/2 and one cup of water every 15 to 20 minutes during

a workout (amounts can be adjusted based on variables such as the weather and individuals' body sizes). After a workout, the ACSM recommends drinking two to three cups of water for every pound lost during the exercise session.

Food also plays a vital role in maximizing a workout and improving recovery time. The AHA recommends fueling up on healthy carbohydrates, such as whole-grain cereals, whole-wheat toast or low-fat or fat-free yogurt,

two hours before exercising. Doing so might pose a problem for early morning exercise enthusiasts, and in such instances the AHA advises eating a piece of fruit such as an apple or banana five to 10 minutes before beginning a workout. Avoid saturated fats and a lot of healthy protein prior to working out, as it takes longer for these fuels to digest in the stomach. Until foods are digested, muscles may not get all of the oxygen and energy-delivering blood they need during a workout, so it's best to stick with foods that the body can digest more

quickly.

The Mayo Clinic notes that it's also important to make food a part of your post-workout routine. Eating a post-workout meal that contains both carbohydrates and protein can aid muscle recovery and replace glycogen stores that help increase energy levels after working out.

The most effective way to exercise involves healthy foods, which can improve performance and lead to quicker post-workout recovery.

Attack

From 8

Symptoms of heart attack

Symptoms of heart attack in women generally are more subtle than in men. These can include but are not limited to:

- shortness of breath as though you just ran a marathon
- a feeling of a squeezing rope tied around the upper back
- dizziness
- lightheadedness or actual fainting
- unusual fatigue
- neck, jaw, shoulder, upper back, or abdominal discomfort
- indigestion
- perspiration

How heart attacks are different for women
Women tend to have block-

ages not only in their main arteries, but in the smaller ones that supply blood to the heart. This is a condition called coronary microvascular disease, says the Mayo Clinic, and it may be why symptoms are more vague and not as apparent in women as they are in men.

Women also can have symptoms while resting or even when asleep, and emotional stress can trigger heart attack symptoms in women.

A woman's risk for heart disease increases if she has diabetes, has experienced mental stress or depression, smokes, has gone through menopause, has had complications during a pregnancy, has an inflammatory disease, and/or is physically inactive.

Women of all ages should take heart disease seriously and schedule a check-up with a doctor to discuss risk and heart health. Women who sus-

pect or notice any symptoms of heart attack should not hesitate to call for help. If you suspect you are having a heart attack, call 9-1-1 immediately; do not drive yourself.

Women can learn more about heart disease at www.heart.org.

Jay Dewell, M.D.

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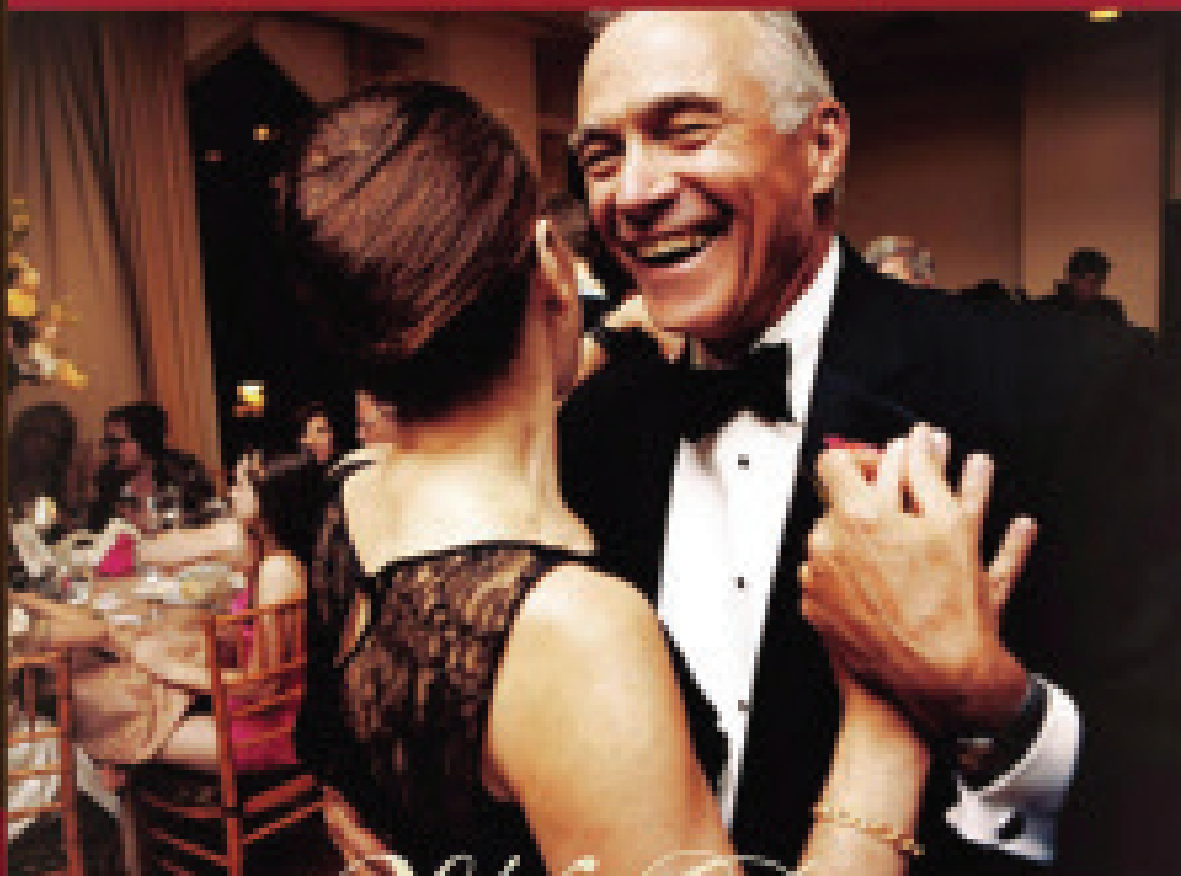


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