



the

CommonHealth Compass



Get A Grip Coming Soon!

Whether it's an aching shoulder, creaky knee or stiff back, many Virginians are dealing with joint pain each and every day. All too often we assume joint pain is a normal part of aging that we just have to learn to live with.

According to the experts, nothing could be further than the truth. We are used to the body healing itself naturally but in reality there are many useful techniques available that most people simply aren't aware of.

Starting in July 2016, CommonHealth will be offering its latest campaign designed to help you **GET A GRIP ON JOINT PAIN**. Our focus will be to offer you the best strategies to protect your joints. These tips should help you live your life to the fullest by allowing you to participate in the activities that you enjoy the most.

Ask your agency CommonHealth coordinator to schedule an on-site training. Remember to check our website at www.commonhealth.virginia.gov for related videos, resources and past program topics.



Chickpea and Brown Rice Salad



This hearty, healthy salad is great warm or cold. It's even better the next day, after the flavors have had a chance to mingle.

Minutes to Prepare5
Minutes to Cook.....5
Servings Per Recipe.....4

Nutritional Info

Amount Per Serving

Calories 332.2
Total Fat.....8.9 g
Cholesterol..... 0.0 mg
Sodium..... 307.7 mg
Total Carbs..... 56.2 g
Dietary Fiber.....8.1 g
Protein 9.0 g

Ingredients

- 2 cups prepared brown rice or other cooked grain
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 green onions, whites and greens chopped
- ¼ cup raisins or dried cranberries
- ¼ cup slivered almonds
- ¼ cup bottled or homemade vinaigrette dressing

Directions

- Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and toss gently.
- Serve immediately or refrigerate for up to two days.
- About 1¼ cups per serving.

Tips

Take help from the supermarket with bagged shredded carrots, canned chickpeas, slivered almonds from the baking aisle, and your favorite bottled dressing.

Created by SparkRecipes.com editor Stephanie Romine



Top Summer Steps for Healthy Living

In the warmer, longer, lazier days of summer, the living may not be easy, but your life probably feels less chaotic. Even adults tend to adopt a “school’s out!” attitude in summer. That’s why this is a perfect time to improve your health in a fashion so seasonally laid back you’ll barely notice the effort.

To get you started, CommonHealth shared WebMD’s research from eight health experts in fields such as diet, fitness, stress, vision, and oral health. Here are the top tips to boost your personal health this season.

Give Your Diet a Berry Boost

If you do one thing this summer to improve your diet, have a cup of mixed fresh berries – blackberries, blueberries, or strawberries – every day. They are tops in fiber and will help you load up on antioxidants, which may help prevent damage to tissues and reduce the risks of age-related illnesses.

Get Dirty – and Stress Less

To improve your stress level, plant a small garden, cultivate a flower box, or if space is really limited, plant a few flower pots – indoors or out.

Just putting your hands in soil is “grounding.” And when life feels like you’re moving so fast your feet are barely touching the stuff, being mentally grounded can help relieve physical and mental stress.

Floss Daily

You know you need to, now it’s time to start: floss every single day. Do it at the beach (in a secluded spot), while reading on your patio, or when watching TV -- and the task will breeze by.

Flossing reduces oral bacteria, which improves overall body health.

Get Outside to Exercise

Pick one outdoor activity – going on a hike, taking a nature walk, playing games such as tag with your kids, cycling, roller blading, or swimming – to shed that cooped-up feeling of gym workouts.

And remember, the family that plays together not only gets fit together – it’s also a great way to create bonding time.

Vacation Time!

Improve your heart health: take advantage of summer’s slower schedule by using your vacation time to unwind. Vacations have multiple benefits: They can help lower your blood pressure, heart rate, and stress hormones such as cortisol, which contributes to a widening waist and an increased risk of heart disease.

There they are: Super simple ways to boost your health this summer. Try one or try them all. They’re so easy you won’t even know they’re – shhhh – good for you.



Source: Kathleen Doheny, WebMD (Reviewed by Louise Chang, MD) <http://www.webmd.com/women/features/8-summer-steps-for-healthy-living>



Family Corner Summer 2016

Looking for something fun and active for you and the kids to do together this summer? CommonHealth has you covered with the Healthy Families section of our website (www.commonhealth.virginia.gov/healthyfamilyideas.htm). Whether you are looking for ideas for outdoor games, a visit to a state or national park, ways to get kids who don’t particularly like sports moving, or even fun family recipe ideas... we’ve got it all! Share what your family likes to do to stay healthy on our [Facebook page](#) today.



Stop the Cravings! Eat Right!

The kids are asleep and you've got a great movie lined up to watch and the craving hits: Chocolate. Now. Does it matter that you've stuck to healthy eating all week? No. Chocolate! Or, that you haven't consumed chocolate in weeks? Chocolate! Chocolate! The craving grows stronger every second. Resistance is futile, and soon you're digging around a cupboard for the bag of semi-sweet chocolate chips you bought for baking emergencies. Soon after, competing feelings of relief, guilt and remorse begin to swirl around your mind. Crisis averted... or was Pandora's box opened?

Some dieters may believe a craving — an intense desire for a certain food — is a signal their bodies need the nutrients that food provides. A craving for chocolate, for example, would signal a physiologic need for more antioxidants. However, a bowl of red beans, which is higher in antioxidants than chocolate, would better meet that supposed physiological need; yet, red beans are low on the craving scale.

"It's an age-old question whether cravings are physiological or psychological," says Bethany Thayer, RDN, MS. "I'm not sure we definitively know what causes a craving; it could be a little bit of both." She points out that when children are sick, a bowl of mom's chicken soup makes them feel better; it relieves congestion and has proven antibacterial properties. And when that child grows up and falls ill, what does he crave? A bowl of chicken soup, not just for its curative powers, but it brings back comforting memories of being cared for by mom.

What happens when your cravings become overwhelming and lead to overindulgence and feelings of guilt? When people follow overly restrictive diets or completely cut out groups of foods, cravings can become more intense and can lead to a vicious cycle of indulging, overeating and guilt. A diet that allows small amounts of foods you enjoy — even high-fat, high-calorie foods — will be easier to maintain since you aren't eliminating that food outright from your life.

If you sometimes crave chocolate, keep some dark chocolate on hand. Dark chocolate contains phytochemicals that may aid in the prevention of heart disease and may decrease the effects of sugar on your teeth. But enjoy it in moderation. Calories do add up. When looking for dark chocolate, read the label to make sure that cacao is the first ingredient on the list rather than sugar.



Here are other tips for handling food cravings

- **Put your craving off.** Tell yourself you'll deal with the craving in 20 minutes. Food cravings are typically short-lived, and while the desire for chips, chocolate or cake feels overwhelming now, it will wane, especially if you can find a healthier food substitute or distract yourself.
- **Choose alternatives for your cravings.** Yearn for potato chips? Buy a brand that's low-fat or baked. Desire something crunchy? Skip the chips: try fruit or a salad packed with crisp greens and veggies. Want something sweet? How about baking an apple or even roasting some veggies? Roasting brings out the sweetness in many foods.
- **Buy single servings of foods you crave.** "Instead of buying a whole box of cookies," says Thayer, "buy just one cookie from a specialty bakeshop."
- **Schedule your snacks.** Plan for nutritious snacks to prevent between-meal hunger. Keep portable, healthy snacks in your desk, backpack or car.
- **Take a walk, work on a hobby or call a friend.** Thayer points out that what you really may be craving is social support. A chat with a sympathetic friend can get you through a tough craving.
- **Keep a craving journal.** Note the time of day your craving appeared, how long it lasted, the food you craved, and how you handled the situation. Thayer says you'll start noticing patterns so you can be better prepared to handle cravings in the future.

Keep Your Heart Healthy

Take steps today to lower your risk of heart disease and heart attack. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States.

To help prevent heart disease, you can:

- Eat healthy and get active.
- Watch your weight.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Control your cholesterol and blood pressure.
- If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation.
- Manage stress.

You are at higher risk for heart disease if:

- You are a woman over age 55
- You are a man over age 45
- Your father or brother had heart disease before age 55
- Your mother or sister had heart disease before age 65.

As you get older, your risk for heart disease and heart attack increases. But the good news is that heart disease can be prevented.

- Know your numbers. High blood pressure and high cholesterol can cause heart disease and heart attack. If your blood pressure or cholesterol numbers are high, you can take steps to lower them.
- Get your cholesterol checked.
- Get your blood pressure checked.

CommonHealth offers free confidential health checks every two years for all Local Choice groups. At the screening, participants will instantly learn their blood pressure, cholesterol, Diabetes Risk Assessment, and Body Mass Index (BMI).

- Know your family's health history. Your family history affects your risk for heart disease. Use this family health history tool to keep track of your family's health. Share the information with your doctor or nurse.
- Eat healthy. Eating healthy can help lower your risk of heart disease. A heart-healthy diet includes foods that

are low in saturated and trans fats, added sugars, and sodium (salt). Heart-healthy items include high-fiber foods (whole grains, fruits, and vegetables) and certain fats (like the fats in olive oil and fish). Use this shopping list to find heart-healthy foods.

- Drink alcohol only in moderation. If you choose to drink alcohol, limit your drinking to no more than 1 drink a day for women and no more than 2 drinks a day for men. Drinking too much can increase your risk of heart disease.
- Get active. Getting active can help prevent heart disease. Adults need at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity each week. This includes walking fast, dancing, and biking. If you are just getting started, try walking for 10 minutes a day, a few days each week. Then add more activity over time.
- Watch your weight. Extra weight can lead to high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes. If you are overweight or obese, losing just 10 pounds can lower your risk of heart disease.
- Quit smoking. Quitting smoking helps lower your risk of having a heart attack. **CommonHealth's Quit for Life program is provided at no cost to employees, spouses and dependents over age 18 who are eligible to participate in The Local Choice benefits program. Once you call 1-866-784-8454 to enroll, you will be assigned a Quit Coach who will work with you to create a personal quitting plan, which may include nicotine replacement patches, gum or covered smoking cessation drugs. Your Quit Coach can help you decide if one of these products will work for you.**
- Manage stress. Managing stress can help prevent serious health problems like heart disease, depression, and high blood pressure. Deep breathing and meditation are good ways to relax and manage stress.



Source: Article information adapted from healthfinder.gov:

<http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/heart-health/keep-your-heart-healthy>



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