

OnTrack to Wellness

Brought to You by the NYC Transit HR Benefits Wellness Team

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The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

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Don't Forget Fish

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

It's easy to choose meat or poultry for weeknight meals, but why not add fish to your rotation? It adds variety to the diet and lots of beneficial nutrients. Nutrition guidelines recommend eating fish at least twice per week (so you get at least eight ounces of seafood). Studies show that those two servings weekly are associated with lower risk of heart attack, stroke and congestive heart failure.

Shrimp, tuna and clams are the most commonly consumed options in the U.S., and there are many recipes for them.

Try shrimp scampi (with butter and garlic), tuna casserole or spaghetti with clams. Or, try a tuna sandwich, sushi roll or fish tacos. There are so many delicious ways to eat more seafood.

Fish and seafood offer protein, vitamin B₁₂ and vitamin D; plus, oily fish are also a source of heart-healthy omega-3 fats.

Worried about mercury? This hazardous substance sometimes steers people away from fish, and avoiding it is indeed important for young children and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding. But not all fish contain mercury, and it should not be a reason to avoid fish altogether. Only a few species are high in mercury, including marlin, orange roughy, shark, swordfish, tilefish, ahi tuna and bigeye tuna.

Many fish are low in mercury. They include tilapia, cod, haddock, shrimp, catfish, crab and flounder. For an extra health boost, choose those low in mercury and high in omega-3 fats, such as salmon, anchovies, Pacific oysters, mackerel, herring, trout and sardines.

If you like tuna, choose low-mercury varieties, such as skipjack (canned skipjack is called light tuna rather than white tuna), instead of ahi, bigeye or albacore tuna.

The Power of Friendship

Friendships make living more fulfilling.

They play an enormous role in our lives. We turn to our friends for emotional support and companionship as well as sources of joy and fun.

With friends, we can share special occasions and experiences in life, enriching our days and theirs in return. Our friends can strengthen and help us through tough times — as we provide the same for them.

Research has shown that close friendships promote greater happiness, self-esteem and sense of purpose, convey the most benefit during adolescence and old age, and are associated with physical outcomes, including lower blood pressure, faster recovery from certain illnesses and a longer lifespan.

True friendship is the foundation for any relationship, including our romantic partners. A strong friendship in your life can provide mutual support for years. You both view the relationship as one that enriches each other's lives and is always worth the time and energy.

Friendships require that both people share trust and honesty and can work through disagreements when they arise. Unfortunately, many people today tend to be achievement oriented, pouring their time into work and missing the regular pleasure and rewards of being with friends.



Four ideas for developing friendships include pursuing special interests with a group or club, taking a class, working out at a gym and volunteering.

Tip of the Month:

Wild vs. Farmed Fish and Seafood

Fish is a nutritious choice, whether it's wild or farmed.

A dwindling supply of fish has increased the need for fish farms, which now provide more than half of all the seafood we eat.

Both wild and farmed fish are excellent sources of protein, omega-3 fats and many vitamins and minerals, including vitamin D. Both types of fish may contain contaminants, so check local fish advisories or use [seafoodwatch.org](https://www.seafoodwatch.org) to get a better idea of what to buy.





Q: Multivitamins necessary?

A: People who don't get enough nutrients from food alone might benefit from a multivitamin and mineral supplement, according to the National Institutes for Health. Nutritional deficiencies are especially common among heavy drinkers, poor eaters, dieters, vegetarians, pregnant people and those older than age 50. People who have chronic diseases or take certain medications may also want to consider a supplement.

Ask your health care provider for personalized advice. You may need a multivitamin, or may benefit from taking individual vitamin or mineral supplements to treat specific deficiencies. For example, vegans may fall short on calcium and vitamin B₁₂. Your needs depend on your age, gender, health history, eating habits and lifestyle. Other factors to consider include your ability to digest and absorb nutrients from food and the nutritional quality of the food you consume.

If you are young, healthy and eat a nutritious diet, food is still the most effective and safest way to obtain essential nutrients. But for particular individuals and health conditions, multivitamin supplements may help fill dietary gaps.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD

Breast Health Boosters

While there's no certain method to prevent breast cancer, there are ways that may lower your risk, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS).

This can be especially helpful if you have some known risk factors for breast cancer, such as a strong family history of the disease or certain inherited gene changes. Commit to lifestyle changes you can make to lower your risk of breast cancer:

- **Lose excess pounds and maintain a healthy weight.** This is especially important if you have a family history of breast cancer or if you've had it.
- **Prioritize exercise.** Whether it's walking or hitting the gym, regular moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity is linked to lower breast cancer risk.
- **If you drink alcohol, limit yourself to one drink per day.** In fact, it's best not to consume any alcohol. Even small amounts are linked with an increase in breast cancer risk, according to the ACS.
- **Load up on nutrient-rich foods.** A plant-based diet that includes a variety of vegetables, fruit, beans and whole grains can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower your breast cancer risk.

Important: Get screened for breast cancer as your health care provider advises. Early detection using mammograms means treatment can begin during the initial stages of the disease.



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

QuikQuiz™: Flu Vaccine

Test your knowledge:

- T F 1. The flu vaccine is only given by injection.
- T F 2. The flu vaccine can give you the flu.
- T F 3. October is the best time to get your flu shot.
- T F 4. People 65 and older and those with chronic conditions, such as asthma, heart disease and diabetes, are at increased risk of complications from the flu.
- T F 5. You only need a flu shot every three to five years.
- T F 6. Everyone six months of age and older (except in rare cases) should be vaccinated yearly against the flu.



ANSWERS:

- 1. **False** — The nasal spray flu vaccine is approved for healthy people between ages five and 49, except for pregnant women.
- 2. **False** — You can't get the flu from vaccines.
- 3. **True** — October is the ideal time to get vaccinated, but it's never too late to get the flu shot.
- 4. **True** — If you're at higher risk, the flu shot can reduce your chances of flu complications, such as pneumonia, that require hospitalization.
- 5. **False** — The flu virus mutates every year, so a new vaccine is created annually to target the current and major flu strains.
- 6. **True** — Ask your health care provider about getting vaccinated.

Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Get a Move On**, is at personalbest.com/extras/22V10tools.



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