

HEALTHY RECIPE.....	2
SELF-CARE.....	3
THE TRUTH ABOUT TOBACCO USE.....	4-5
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.....	6
FINANCIAL WELLNESS.....	7

# The Well WORKPLACE

## Taking Wellness To New Heights



A PUBLICATION OF THE WELLNESS COUNCILS OF AMERICA AND ITS AFFILIATED WELLNESS COUNCILS

## Lifestyle Changes

Many times, GERD can be managed through simple and straightforward lifestyle modifications. Here are the most common lifestyle suggestions for addressing GERD:

- ✓ If you smoke, stop.

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- ✓ Do not drink alcohol.

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- ✓ Lose weight if needed.

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- ✓ Eat small meals.

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- ✓ Wear loose-fitting clothes.

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- ✓ Avoid lying down for 3 hours after a meal.

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- ✓ Raise the head of your bed 6 to 8 inches by putting blocks of wood under the bedposts—just using extra pillows will not help.

Source: <http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/gerd/index.htm>

## got gerd?

**G**astroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD, occurs when the lower esophageal sphincter (LES) does not close properly and stomach contents leak back, or reflux, into the esophagus. The LES is a ring of muscle at the bottom of the esophagus that acts like a valve between the esophagus and stomach. The esophagus carries food from the mouth to the stomach.

When refluxed stomach acid touches the lining of the esophagus, it causes a burning sensation in the chest or throat called heartburn. The fluid may even be tasted in the back of the mouth, and this is called acid indigestion. Occasional heartburn is common but does not necessarily mean one has GERD. Heartburn that occurs more than twice a week may be considered GERD, and it can eventually lead to more serious health problems.

Anyone, including infants, children, and pregnant women, can have GERD.

### What are the symptoms of GERD?

The main symptoms are persistent heartburn and acid regurgitation. Some people have GERD without heartburn. Instead, they experience pain in the chest, hoarseness in the morning, or trouble swallowing. You may feel like you have food stuck in your throat or like you are choking or your throat is tight. GERD can also cause a dry cough and bad breath.

### What causes GERD?

No one knows why people get GERD. A hiatal hernia may contribute. A hiatal hernia occurs when the upper part of the stomach is above the diaphragm, the muscle wall that separates the stomach from the chest. The diaphragm helps the LES keep acid from coming up into the esophagus. When a hiatal hernia is present, it is easier for the acid to come up. In this way, a hiatal hernia can cause reflux. A hiatal hernia can happen in people of any age; many otherwise healthy people over 50 have a small one.

### How is GERD treated?

If you have had heartburn or any of the other symptoms for a while, you should see your doctor. You may want to visit an internist, a doctor who specializes in internal medicine, or a gastroenterologist, a doctor who treats diseases of the stomach and intestines. Depending on how severe your GERD is, treatment may involve making lifestyle changes, taking medications or having surgery.

### What are the long-term complications of GERD?

Sometimes GERD can cause serious complications. Inflammation of the esophagus from stomach acid causes bleeding or ulcers. In addition, scars from tissue damage can narrow the esophagus and make swallowing difficult. Some people develop Barrett's esophagus, where cells in the esophageal lining take on an abnormal shape and color, which over time can lead to cancer.

Also, studies have shown that asthma, chronic cough, and pulmonary fibrosis may be aggravated or even caused by GERD.

Source: <http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/gerd/index.htm>

# Guiltless Potato Chips

## Preparation & Ingredients:

Wash and slice unpeeled potatoes. A mandoline works the best. There are a number of different types, ranging in price from \$30 to \$200. Save your money, an inexpensive model works well. The key is to get a uniform cut in order to brown the potatoes evenly.

The best potatoes for chips are russet potatoes. Place sliced potatoes on a microwave-safe sheet. Flavor with favorite seasonings...(no salt), Mrs. Dash's, rosemary, or dry ranch dressing. Microwave on high until brown, 4-8 minutes. Cool and store in an airtight bag.

## Nutrition

A usual 15-ounce bag of potato chips has 2,250 Calories, 150 g Fat, 225 g Carbohydrates and 15 g Protein. Guiltless potatoes have 445 Calories, 1.5 g Fat, 101 g Carbohydrates and 10.5 g Protein. The net savings: Fried potato chips have 150 Calories per ounce versus 30 Calories. Enjoy.



RICHARD COLLINS, MD



A leading authority and speaker on the prevention and reversal of heart disease, Dr. Collins emphasizes the connection between eating well and living long. His delicious low-fat recipes have been shared with millions through his cookbook, videos, and his nationally-renowned cooking seminars. For more information, visit Dr. Collins' website at [www.thecookingcardiologist.com](http://www.thecookingcardiologist.com).

A HEALTHY RECIPE BY RICHARD COLLINS, MD

# ITALIAN SAUSAGES

with  
Roasted  
Peppers



## ITALIAN SAUSAGES with ROASTED PEPPERS

### Measure Ingredients

4	Boca® Italian Sausages
1	chopped red pepper
1	chopped onion
1	chopped green pepper
4	whole wheat hot dog buns
1 T	oil

### Preparation

Mark Twain once said, there are two things you should never watch being made in this world...laws and sausages. Sausages and hot dogs were once labeled variety meats, using up all of the unwanted trimmings. In recent years, manufacturers have "cleaned" up the recipes. However, no need to worry with these links. They are completely vegetarian. The only lips in these doggies are yours!

In a large sauté pan, add peppers and onions. Sauté until softened. Add sausages. Cook until warmed. The sausages are already pre-cooked.

### Nutritional Analysis

Serving size: 1 Italian sausage. Analysis does not include bun.

Calories 130, Fat 6g, Carbohydrates 6g, Protein 13g.

For a change of pace, use smoked sausages and replace the peppers with sauerkraut.

Serving Size:

1

# QUICK TIPS: When Getting Medical Tests

**D**octors order blood tests, x-rays, and other tests to help diagnose medical problems. Perhaps you do not know why you need a particular test or you don't understand how it will help you. Here are some questions to ask:

## How is the test done?

- + What kind of information will the test provide?
- + Is this test the only way to find out that information?
- + What are the benefits and risks of having this test?
- + How accurate is the test?
- + What do I need to do to prepare for the test? (What you do or don't do may affect the accuracy of the test results.)
- + Will the test be uncomfortable?
- + How long will it take to get the results, and how will I get them?
- + What's the next step after the test?
- + One study found that anywhere from 10 percent to 30 percent of Pap smear test results that were called "normal" were not. Errors such as this can lead to a wrong or delayed diagnosis. You want your tests to be done the right way, and you want accurate results.

## What can you do?

- + For tests your doctor sends to a lab, ask which lab he or she uses, and why. You may want to know that the doctor chooses a certain lab because he or she has business ties to it. Or, the health plan may require that the tests go there.
- + Check to see that the lab is accredited by a group such as the College of American Pathologists (800-323-4040) or the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (telephone, 630-792-5800; Web site, [www.jcabo.org](http://www.jcabo.org)).
- + If you need a mammogram, make sure the facility is approved by the Food and Drug Administration. You can find out by checking the certificate in the facility. Or, call 800-4-CANCER 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. EST to find out the names and locations of certified facilities near you.

## What about the test results?

- + Do not assume that no news is good news. If you do not hear from your doctor, call to get your test results.
- + If you and your doctor think the test results may not be right, have the test done again.
- + Remember, quality matters, especially when it comes to your health. For more information on health care quality and materials to help you make health care decisions, visit the link below.

Internet Citation: *Quick Tips—When Getting Medical Tests*. AHRQ Publication No. 01-0040b, May 2002. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. <http://www.abrq.gov/consumer/quicktips/tiptests.htm>

## What's Up, Doc?

Research has shown that patients who have good relationships with their doctors tend to be more satisfied with their care—and to have better results. Here are some tips to help you and your doctor become partners in improving your health care.

### Give Information. Don't Wait to Be Asked!

- ✓ **You know important things about your symptoms and your health history. Tell your doctor what you think he or she needs to know.**
- ✓ **It is important to tell your doctor personal information— even if it makes you feel embarrassed or uncomfortable.**
- ✓ **Bring a "health history" list with you, and keep it up to date. You might want to make a copy of the form for each member of your family.**
- ✓ **Always bring any medicines you are taking, or a list of those medicines (include when and how often you take them) and what strength. Talk about any allergies or reactions you have had to your medicines.**
- ✓ **Tell your doctor about any herbal products you use or alternative medicines or treatments you receive.**
- ✓ **Bring other medical info, such as x-ray films, test results, and medical records.**

Internet Citation:  
*Quick Tips—When Talking with Your Doctor*. AHRQ Publication No. 01-0040a, May 2002. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. <http://www.abrq.gov/consumer/quicktips/doctalk.htm>

# THE TRUTH ABOUT

- ↘ Every year, tobacco-related disease kills over 178,000 women.
- ↘ There are 8.5 million people sick with diseases caused by smoking.
- ↘ In the U.S., about 440,000 people die a tobacco-related death every year.
- ↘ By the year 2020, tobacco is projected to kill about 10 million people a year worldwide.
- ↘ Carbon monoxide is in tobacco smoke.
- ↘ Cigarette smoke contains more than 4,000 chemical compounds.
- ↘ Cigarettes and other smoking materials are the number one cause of fire deaths in the U.S.
- ↘ Every 8 seconds, someone in the world dies from a smoking-related disease.
- ↘ Every day, about 1,500 youth become daily smokers.
- ↘ Every year, cigarettes leave about 12,000 kids motherless.
- ↘ Every year, cigarettes leave about 31,000 kids fatherless.



# QUIT TOBACCO USE

- ↘ Every day, about 3,900 youth ages 12 to 17 try a cigarette for the first time.
- ↘ In the U.S., about 50,000 people die each year from secondhand-smoke-related disease.
- ↘ Tobacco kills more Americans than auto accidents, homicide, AIDS, drugs and fires combined.
- ↘ Cigarette smoking is the number one cause of preventable death in the U.S.
- ↘ Since 1964, there have been 12 million tobacco-related deaths in the U.S.
- ↘ Smoking can lead to cataracts, the number one cause of vision loss in the world.
- ↘ Because of the tobacco industry's products, about 339 people in the U.S. die of lung cancer every day.
- ↘ The tobacco industry increased its spending on advertisements and promotions by \$2.7 billion between 2002 and 2003.
- ↘ Maternal smoking during pregnancy and exposure to secondhand smoke in infancy doubles the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Source: <http://www.thetruth.com>

If you smoke, does thinking about quitting make you anxious? Here's how to get **STARTed**:

- S**et A Quit Date
- T**ell People Of Your Plan To Quit
- A**nticipate The Challenges Ahead
- R**emove All Tobacco Products
- T**alk to Your Doctor

For more information about quitting, simply log on to <http://smokefree.gov>.

# It Ain't Easy Being Green

Cities with lots of good air, healthy practices, and recreational spaces such as parks and bike paths are often known as green cities.

## What Makes A City Green?

According to the Green Guide Institute, an independent media service whose mission is to provide objective, responsible and accurate environmental and health information, ten cities top the list in meeting Green criteria: Good water and air quality, efficient use of resources, renewable energy leadership, accessible and reliable public transportation, and green building practices.

Also parks and greenbelts, and access to locally-grown fresh food through farmers' markets and community supported agriculture groups.

Finally, affordability, since the health benefits, public parks, and other amenities of living in a greener city need to be available to more than just the wealthy. Here are the top ten, in alphabetical order.

- 🌿 Austin, TX
- 🌿 Boulder, CO
- 🌿 Chicago, IL
- 🌿 Honolulu, HI
- 🌿 Madison, WI
- 🌿 Minneapolis, MN
- 🌿 Oakland, CA
- 🌿 Portland, OR
- 🌿 San Francisco, CA
- 🌿 Seattle, WA

Source: *The Green Guide Institute*

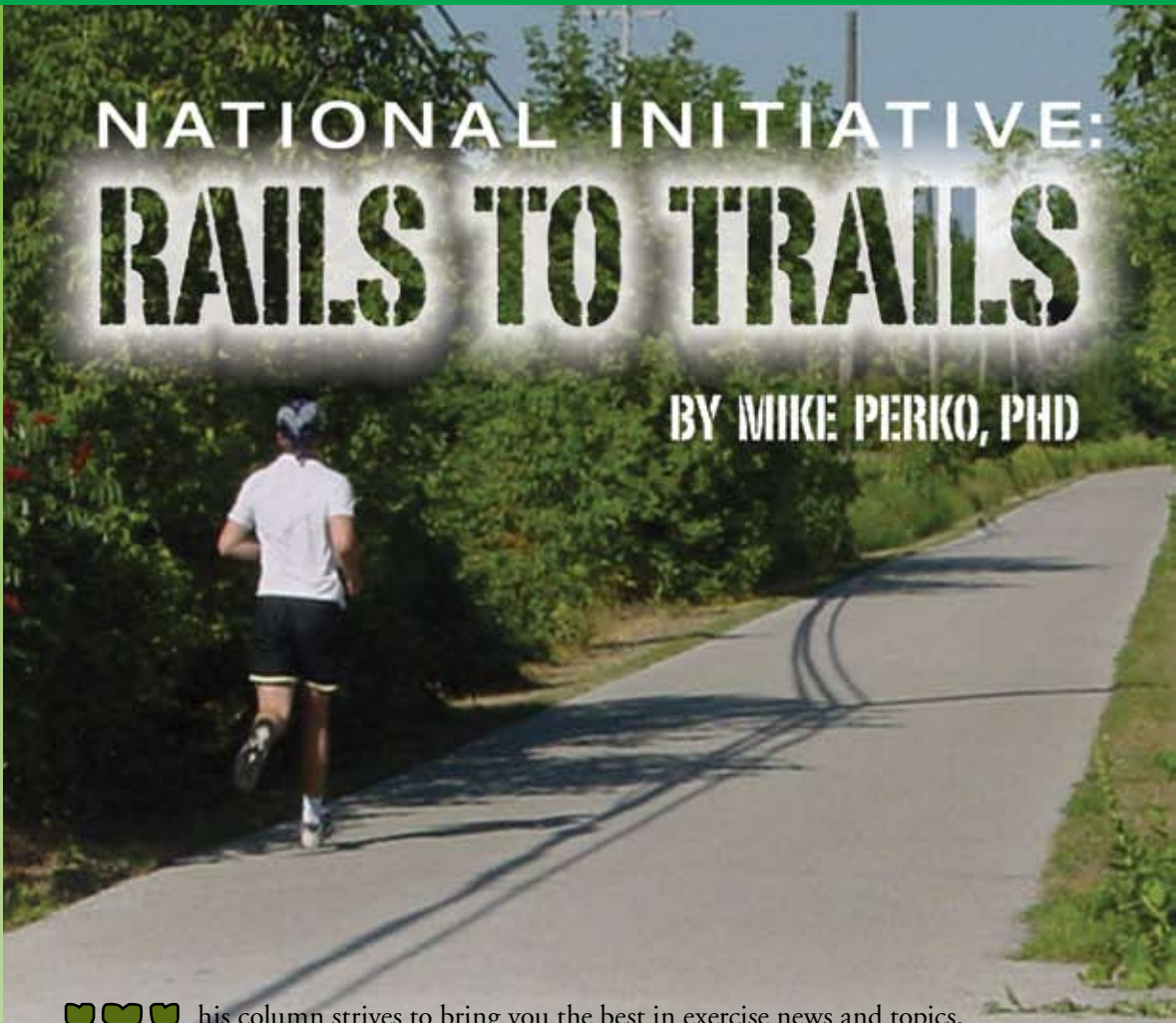
### MIKE PERKO, PHD



Dr. Mike Perko is a leader in the field of health education and fitness. Dr. Perko is author of the book "Taking One For The Team: The New Thinking on Young Athletes and Dietary Supplements." He can be reached at [mperko@bama.ua.edu](mailto:mperko@bama.ua.edu).

# NATIONAL INITIATIVE: RAILS TO TRAILS

BY MIKE PERKO, PHD



This column strives to bring you the best in exercise news and topics.

This month, I go a step further in highlighting a truly important movement. With the growing popularity of lifetime recreational activities, such as cycling, inline skating, walking and running, there is an increased need for quality recreational facilities. One such national initiative is the Rails to Trails program (Rails-trails). Rails-trails are multi-purpose public paths created from former railroad corridors. Flat or following a gentle grade, they traverse urban, suburban and rural America. Ideal for many uses, such as bicycling, walking, inline skating, cross-country skiing, equestrian and wheelchair use, rails-trails are extremely popular as recreation and transportation corridors. Since the 1960s, 13,150 miles of rails-trails have been created across the country. Rails-trails also serve as wildlife conservation corridors, linking isolated parks and creating greenways through developed areas, and as a means of preserving historic landmarks. They often stimulate local economies by increasing tourism and promoting local business.

Rails-trails provide places for cyclists, hikers, walkers, runners, inline skaters, cross-country skiers and physically challenged individuals to exercise and experience the many natural and cultural wonders of the nation's urban, suburban and rural environments. Rails-trails not only serve as independent community amenities, they also enhance existing recreational resources by linking neighborhoods and schools to parks, waterfronts, recreational centers and other facilities.

There is no doubt about the strong link between exercise and good health. By providing a place for so many types of recreational use, rails-trails can greatly help to improve public health. For more information visit [railstrails.org](http://railstrails.org).

Source: *Rails Trails Conservancy.*

# COMPANY BENEFIT PLANS:

## Do You Know What's Offered?

By Jeff Rubleski, MBA

I've been involved with company benefit programs for over 20 years. In my evaluation of plans, one of my biggest concerns is that many people don't understand their available benefit options. More employers are offering benefit plans for both health and retirement that involve employee choices regarding participation and coverage choices. Informed choices can result in satisfaction and maximization of company benefits. But poor choices can last a lifetime!

Just a decade ago, most employees didn't really have to make many choices when it came to company benefit plans. Many companies offered a "one size fits all" benefits program for employees. Due to escalating benefits cost and a desire for employees to have benefit plans that address differing lifestyles, companies of all sizes are moving to benefit plan options that place more responsibility for the employee to make choices concerning investments in 401 (k) plans and healthcare coverage.

When it comes to company-sponsored benefit plans remember this: Knowledge is power! Take the time to find out what your company offers for benefits and what your options are. For example, if your company offers a matching contribution on your retirement savings program, are you getting the full company match? Remember when an employer offers a matching contribution for a benefit plan, failure to take advantage of this option is literally like leaving "money on the table!" Don't let this happen!

Now more than ever, it is crucial for you to know your benefit plan options. Take the time to ask your human resources or benefits representative for information regarding all company sponsored benefits. If you do this, chances are you'll learn something that will be beneficial to you. Company-sponsored benefits change rapidly. Make sure you stay current with benefit plan choices to know what's available so that you can maximize company-sponsored benefit options.

## Getting The Most From Your IRA

April 15th is around the corner. Most of us are looking for ways to minimize our current or future tax bite while preparing for the future. IRAs offer virtually everyone the opportunity to save for retirement. Individual IRAs come in these two primary forms:

**1. Traditional IRA**—available to anyone with earned income, before the age of 70 and a half. The maximum contribution for 2005-2007 is \$4,000. Individuals over the age of 50 can contribute \$4,500. Contributions may be deductible based on factors related to income and whether an individual or spouse is covered by an employer's retirement plan. IRS Publication 590 provides additional details regarding deductibility of IRA contributions.

**2. Roth IRA**—full contributions are available to individuals with adjusted gross income (AGI) up to \$95,000 and married couples with AGI up to \$150,000. Annual contribution maximums follow the same rules as Traditional IRAs. There is no tax-deduction for Roth IRA contributions. However, contributions and earnings grow and can be withdrawn tax free when IRS rules are followed.

Is an IRA contribution right for you? Take the time now to assess your options.

### JEFF RUBLESKI, MBA



Jeff Rubleski is Sales Team Manager for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. Jeff has over 15 years of financial management experience and is an expert in the area of corporate benefits and financial education. Jeff serves in the Grand Valley State University Finance Department as an adjunct instructor. For more information, call 616-494-6610.

# Obesity And Aging: Do You Have A Choice?



If it seems that you and your friends are getting heavier as time passes, you are like most Americans. Over half of American adults are overweight, and one-third are obese. Is this just part of aging, or are your behaviors adding “weight” to your life? While getting fatter with age is part of your biology (some change from muscle to fat happens to everyone with age), gaining ten or more pounds per decade is not your genetics. You do have a choice of how much you are going to gain, but it requires your daily attention to control weight gain as you age.

## Why Weight Gain Appears To Be Part Of Aging

Past 35 years of age, you begin to lose some muscle and add fat as a natural part of your aging process. But, because most of your work, both at home and on the job, is not very physically demanding, you increase the rate of muscle loss and fat buildup.

Muscle is lost if it is not used. And, if you are typical of most workers today, you eat approximately 300 to 400 more calories per day than you burn up. So, over time, your body stores those excess calories as fat. Your weight slowly “creeps” up, and one day you look in the mirror and ask, “How did I gain all this weight?”

## You Know It's Time To Lose Weight When...

- You are shopping for loose-fitting clothes
- You have trouble bending or moving around
- You look in the mirror and see a larger person than you remember

### DAVID GOBBLE, PHD



Dr. David Gobble is Professor and Director of the Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana. He has worked in the health promotion and wellness field for over 30 years. His latest published work is a chapter focusing on the aging worker appearing in *Health Promotion in the Workplace* (2002), edited by Michael O'Donnell, PhD.

# The Well WORKPLACE

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Information is reviewed by a prestigious Medical Advisory Board comprised of physicians and healthcare professionals and is intended to help you make smart health decisions for yourself and your family. Although editorial content is based on sound medical information, we ask that you consult a healthcare professional for all matters of concern. This newsletter is printed on environmentally-friendly paper and using soy-based ink, but we encourage you to keep your copies to build a handy home-medical reference or recycle issues to friends and family.

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## INTERACTIVE MINDS

### Managing Your Weight As You Age

Controlling your weight as you age requires two things—assertive monitoring of amount and type of foods eaten, and regular physical activity to maintain muscle strength. If you want to lose weight, you must reduce the number of calories eaten, and significantly reduce carbohydrates (sugars) in your diet. And, to maintain any weight loss, you must add exercise to your daily routine. This combination leads to long-term weight management.

### Eating Patterns For Weight Management

- Reduce portion/serving size
- Split meals with your significant other when eating out
- Don't clean your plate at restaurants; take some home for another meal
- Eliminate or reduce soft drinks and other high-sugar drinks
- Eat a balanced diet high in complex carbohydrates (vegetables)
- Eat lean meat

### Exercise Patterns For Weight Management

- Do something physical every day
- Build activity into your daily work routine
- Look for opportunities to walk and take the stairs
- Start and maintain a weight lifting routine
- Enjoy a hobby that requires physical activity