Do Your Body Good
Simple ways to incorporate more fruits and veggies into your diet

Pain But No Gain
Signs you might be overtraining

Ducking Diabetes
How to lower your risk for type 2 diabetes
Simple ways to incorporate more fruits and veggies into your diet

Parents imploring their children to eat their fruits and vegetables is a nightly occurrence at many dinner tables. Reluctant youngsters may have a seemingly innate resistance to vegetables, but parents should stay the course, as the importance of making fruit and vegetables a routine part of one’s daily diet is hard to overstate. Children might be seen as the most resistant to fruits and vegetables, but reports indicate they’re not alone. A 2017 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that just 12 percent of adults in the United States are meeting the standards for fruit consumption as established by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which are determined by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Even fewer people (9 percent) are meeting the standard for vegetables. The picture is somewhat better in Canada, where the Canadian Community Health Survey, 2017, found that 28.6 percent of Canadians age 12 and older report consuming fruits and vegetables more than five times per day. However, that figure steadily declined since 2015. That’s unfortunate, as fruits and vegetables have been linked to a host of health benefits.

Why eat fruit and vegetables?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture notes that fruits do not contain cholesterol and are naturally low in fat, sodium and calories. In addition, fruits contain a host of essential nutrients, including potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin C, and folate, that are historically underconsumed. Similarly, studies have shown that vegetables, which also are great sources of vitamins and minerals, can help people reduce their risk for a variety of conditions, including heart disease, stroke and certain types of cancer.

How can I include more fruits and vegetables in my diet?

Routine is a big part of many people’s lives, and some may find it hard to change their dietary routines. But people who aren’t eating enough fruits and vegetables likely don’t need to completely overhaul their diets in order to include more fruits and vegetables. In fact, the American Heart Association notes that the following are some easy ways for people to sneak more fruits and vegetables into their diets.

**Breakfast:** When sitting down for a bowl of cereal, add some bananas, raisins or berries to your bowl. When making eggs or breakfast potatoes, add chopped up onions, celery, green or red bell peppers, or spinach.

**Lunch:** Forgo sandwiches in favor of fruit or vegetable salads at lunchtime. If you must have a sandwich, top it off with vegetables like cucumbers, sprouts, tomatoes, lettuce, and/or avocado.

**Dinner:** Replace less healthy side dishes with fruit or vegetable salads, and don’t forget to include steamed vegetables, even frozen ones, on your dinner plate every night. Add chopped vegetables, such as onions, garlic and celery, when creating soups, stews or sauces.

A few simple strategies can help people eat more fruits and vegetables and reap the many rewards that such foods provide.
Dietary trends typically exhibit varying degrees of staying power. So-called “fad diets” may not withstand long-term scrutiny, while approaches like the Mediterranean diet appear to be more effective and beneficial to short- and long-term health.

Low-carb diets tend to garner lots of attention. One such diet making waves of late is the keto diet. Keto diets may vary, but many are built on a foundation of low carb intake and high protein consumption. While these diets are referred to as “keto diets,” the Harvard Medical School notes that a true ketogenic diet is different from the keto diets that have become so popular.

What is a ketogenic diet?
A ketogenic dietary plan focuses on fat rather than protein. A ketogenic diet is low-carb and relies on fat to supply as much as 90 percent of a person’s daily calories.

How does a ketogenic diet work?
The ketogenic diet tries to force the body into using a different type of fuel known as ketone bodies, which are a type of fuel produced by the liver from fat stores. This differs from other diets, which rely on glucose from carbohydrates to fuel the body.

Getting the liver to create ketone bodies and reach a state of ketosis, in which the body is breaking down protein and fat for energy, isn’t necessarily easy, as it requires people to consume fewer than 20 to 50 grams of carbs a day. To put that in perspective, the Harvard Medical School notes that a medium-sized banana typically contains 27 grams of carbohydrates. In addition, WebMD notes that reaching ketosis typically takes three to four days, and eating too much protein can interfere with the body’s ability to get there.

Is a ketogenic diet safe?
The Harvard Medical School notes that a ketogenic diet is typically recommended to reduce the frequency of epileptic seizures in children. People considering a ketogenic diet to lose weight may end up disappointed and could even be putting their health in jeopardy.

“While (the ketogenic diet) also has been tried for weight loss, only short-term results have been studied, and the results have been mixed,” said registered dietitian Kathy McManus, director of the Department of Nutrition at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women’s Hospital. “We don’t know if it works in the long term, nor whether it’s safe.”

Others may look to a ketogenic diet to combat heart disease, certain brain diseases and even acne. However, WebMD notes that there is not enough research to support the idea that a ketogenic diet can help with any of these conditions.

Ketogenic diets carry certain risks. The Harvard Medical School notes that such risks include nutrient deficiency, liver problems, kidney problems, and constipation. In addition, the sugar from carbohydrates aids brain function, so a low-carb diet like the ketogenic diet can have an adverse effect on the brain, potentially contributing to confusion and mood swings.

People considering ketogenic diets or other popular low-carb approaches to nutrition should consult with their physicians before making any changes to their existing diets.

The Mediterranean diet has been associated with a reduced risk for various diseases, including heart disease, cancer, Parkinson’s, and Alzheimer’s diseases. According to the Mayo Clinic, the Mediterranean diet emphasizes eating primarily plant-based foods, such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts. The Mediterranean diet also emphasizes replacing butter with healthy fats, such as olive oil and canola oil, and using herbs and spices instead of salt to add flavor to foods. Consumption of red meat is limited to no more than a few times per month when following the Mediterranean diet, while eating fish and poultry at least twice a week is encouraged.
A healthy lifestyle can help people live life to the fullest. There are many components to a healthy lifestyle, and few may be as influential as prevention.

Preventive measures to reduce one's risk for various diseases can have a long-lasting effect, helping people maintain their independence well into their golden years. In addition, a proactive approach that focuses on disease prevention can improve the chances men and women will get to spend their retirement years doing whatever they please.

One disease that can be especially limiting is type 2 diabetes. According to the National Institute on Diabetes and Digestive Kidney Diseases, diabetes occurs when blood glucose levels are too high. Blood glucose, sometimes referred to as “blood sugar,” comes from the foods a person eats and is the main source of energy for his or her body. Insulin helps glucose from food get into the body’s cells so they can use it for energy. However, in certain instances, such as when a person has type 2 diabetes, the body does not make enough — or any — insulin. When that occurs, glucose stays in the blood, never reaching the cells it’s supposed to help. The NIDDK notes that, over time, excessive levels of glucose in the blood can cause a host of health problems.

Type 2 diabetes, the most common form of the disease, occurs when the body does not make or use insulin well. While it might seem as though people are helpless to stop this from occurring, the NIDDK notes that type 2 diabetes can be delayed or even prevented. In fact, the NIDDK cites three key ways that people can lower their risk for type 2 diabetes.

**Lose weight and keep extra pounds off.** People should speak with their physicians about their body weights to determine if they’re currently overweight or obese or maintaining healthy weights. If the doctor suggests losing weight, doing so can help prevent or delay diabetes. Each individual is different, but the NIDDK notes that losing between 5 and 7 percent of your starting weight may help delay or prevent diabetes.

**Become more physically active.** The NIDDK lists a sedentary lifestyle among the many factors that can increase a person’s risk for type 2 diabetes. By embracing physical activity, getting at least 30 minutes of exercise five days per week, people can delay or prevent diabetes. People who have been physically inactive for a long period of time should ask their physicians to recommend appropriate activities that can help their bodies adjust to being physically active.

**Eat less and eat healthy.** A diet that’s high in vitamins and nutrients can help people delay or prevent type 2 diabetes. Small portions can help people control their caloric intake, reducing the likelihood that they will become overweight or obese.

Prevention is a great way for people to reduce their risk for type 2 diabetes, a potentially debilitating yet often preventable disease.
How much exercise does a person need?

Exercise is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle. Exercise helps people maintain healthy weights, improves mood, reduces the risk for various health ailments, and much more. But how much exercise is necessary for optimal health? Research indicates that the answer to that question depends on the person and his or her individual health goals.

According to David Bassett, Jr., PhD, a professor of exercise physiology at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, having a clear set of exercise goals can help a person determine just how much exercise he or she needs, particularly if a person is exercising to control his or her weight or reduce his or her stress.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that most healthy adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity, or a combination thereof, every week. Try to engage in strength training for all major muscle groups at least two times per week. The Mayo Clinic says a general goal for most people is to aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day.

Health experts say that this exercise needn’t all occur at once, either. If a 30-minute walk is not possible, split that up into a few 10-minute walks throughout the day. Any activity is better than doing nothing at all.

For those with specific fitness goals, it could be wise to speak with a trainer or a doctor about which types of exercises (and durations) are effective. Physicians may be able to map out a fitness plan that works.
A disease once thought to have been eradicated in developed countries has become a newsmaker once again, with reported cases affecting various areas of North America.

The American Red Cross says the United States is presently experiencing the highest number of measles cases since the disease was considered eliminated in the country back in 2000. Seventy-five new cases were reported in one week in May 2019, bringing the total confirmed cases to 839 across 23 states at that point. Canada reported six confirmed cases at the same time.

In recent months, measles has been reported in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington. Even though all 50 states require measles vaccinations prior to children entering school, there are some medical exemptions, and exemptions for religious and philosophical reasons, according to the Red Cross.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that measles outbreaks are linked to travelers who bring measles back from other countries. Measles outbreaks have been documented in Israel, Ukraine and the Philippines.

In New York, state senators and other politicians have pushed to end non-medical exemptions, including religious waivers from vaccinations. Roughly 530 cases of measles were confirmed in an area of Brooklyn, New York, between October 2018 and May 2019, leading Mayor Bill de Blasio to declare a public health emergency and ordering mandatory vaccinations under the threat of $1,000 fines.

Schools in Lakewood, New Jersey, were shuttered for many days due to measles cases. Some schools sent the message that children will not be able to attend without proof of vaccination.

Measles is a highly contagious virus that lives in the mucus of infected people. It is spread through coughing and sneezing. Measles is so contagious that if one person has it, 90 percent of those close to that individual who are not immune will be infected, says the CDC.

Early symptoms include a high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. Within two or three days of such symptoms surfacing, small white spots may appear in the mouth before a red measles rash on the face and body develops.

The best protection against measles is a measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, which provides long-lasting protection. Children typically receive two doses of MMR — one as an infant and one between the ages of four and six.

Those concerned about measles can speak with their doctors about a measles booster and the various risk factors for the virus.
What is an autoimmune condition?

Autoimmune conditions can present a variety of symptoms, and many people may not even be aware that they are experiencing one until they visit a doctor when they aren’t feeling quite right.

John’s Hopkins Medicine says that autoimmune diseases occur when the body’s natural defense system cannot tell the difference between the body’s own cells and foreign cells, causing the body to mistakenly attack normal cells. Researchers believe there are more than 80 different types of autoimmune diseases that affect many body parts. Hashimoto’s thyroiditis, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, and lupus are some examples of autoimmune conditions.

Individuals should see a doctor when they have unexplained symptoms that do not resolve themselves over time, such as pain or inflammation. However, it can be challenging for doctors to diagnose an autoimmune condition because there is no single test to do so.

A side effect of autoimmune disorders is that they can result in a decrease in the body’s ability to fight invaders, making people vulnerable to infections, advises the health and wellness resource WebMD. So inability to recover from general illnesses may indicate the presence of an autoimmune disease.

Researchers are not completely sure what causes autoimmune diseases. John’s Hopkins says that theories point to an overactive immune system attacking the body after an infection or injury. Certain other risk factors, such as being overweight, family history, certain medications, as well as smoking, also may increase a person’s chances of developing an autoimmune disease.

Treatment for autoimmune conditions typically involves reducing immune system activity. This can involve the use of certain medications that suppress the immune system so that it will not attack itself. In addition, different medications may be needed depending on the condition. For example, a synthetic thyroid hormone will be prescribed for thyroiditis, and topical steroid creams may help relieve the scaling associated with psoriasis.

The concern with autoimmune conditions is that they generally do not go away and may have to be managed for life. Patients are urged to discuss all treatment options with their doctors to find the right regimen that will work for them and their particular conditions.
Cold-weather workout tips

Workouts are a part of many people’s daily routines. Some look forward to their exercise sessions, while others only commit after finding ways to make them as enjoyable as possible. For people who don’t enjoy working out indoors, finding ways to exercise in the great outdoors can provide the incentives necessary to commit to daily workouts.

Exercising outdoors is a great way to get some fresh air, but what about those days when the weather isn’t so inviting? Lengthy periods of cold or inclement weather, which is common in fall and winter in many parts of the world, can interrupt daily routines and derail one’s fitness goals. However, there are ways to overcome inclement weather so outdoor workouts can be enjoyed year-round.

Warm up for longer periods of time. Muscles typically require more time to warm up in cold weather than they do in warm weather. The Canadian Chiropractic Association notes that many people feel as though their muscles are noticeably stiffer in cold weather than in warm weather. This can make people who exercise in such weather more vulnerable to musculoskeletal injuries. One way to reduce that risk is to warm up for longer periods of time than you might in warm weather. For example, runners might want to walk slowly outdoors for several minutes before they begin jogging. Doing so can loosen and warm up muscles that are naturally stiff in cold weather.

Dress appropriately. The gear outdoor exercise enthusiasts wear can go a long way toward making cold weather workouts more enjoyable and safe. Layering clothing during cold weather workouts allows people to maintain steady body temperatures throughout a workout by removing layers as they heat up if they need to. Even though it’s cold, your body will still sweat, so look for a wicking material that draws moisture away from your body. This is especially important for your core, as the outdoor recreation retailer The North Face notes that blood pulls toward the chest and abdominal area, making this the warmest part of your body. Focus on keeping the extremities, including fingers, toes and nose, warm with materials like gloves and tall socks. Face masks can be helpful to cover the nose and neck, but make sure they’re made from breathable materials that won’t hold moisture.

Reconsider your footwear and other support to improve balance. Frozen ground is not as easy to traverse as unfrozen ground, so look for footwear that provides added traction. Winter running shoes that come with studded soles might be necessary. Trekking poles also can help hikers gain traction on frozen or snow-covered trails.

Outdoor workouts don’t have to end when the weather gets cold. A few simple tricks can help people exercise outdoors throughout the year.

Did you know?

People looking for a good cardiovascular or aerobic exercise may not need to invest in a gym membership or treadmill. According to Rally Health, a digital health experience that helps you make simple changes in your daily routine, walking can be an effective cardio exercise if one goes at a brisk pace of at least three miles per hour. Walking at this pace can effectively push the heart and lungs to work hard without adversely affecting the joints in the way that other aerobic exercises might. Harvard Health says that walking of any kind can help people maintain healthy weights, lower their risk for various diseases, keep blood pressure in check, lift mood, and strengthen bones. A number of studies also show that walking can help people improve memory and avoid age-related memory loss.
Understanding and living with sciatica

The largest nerve in the human body is the sciatic nerve, which originates in the lower back and travels through the back of each leg. Injury or pressure on this nerve can lead to a type of pain known as sciatica.

Sciatica can have an adverse effect on everyday life, causing pain that can radiate from the lower back through the hips and buttocks and down the legs. People experiencing pain in these areas should consult a physician immediately, as the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons notes that between 80 and 90 percent of people diagnosed with sciatica get better over time without surgery. Many typically feel better within several weeks of beginning treatment.

The first step toward diagnosing sciatica begins at home. People who learn to recognize potential symptoms of sciatica may be more likely to seek immediate treatment than those who might mistake their pain for something else.

What are the symptoms of sciatica?
The AAOS notes that sciatica may feel like a bad leg cramp that lasts for weeks before it goes away. According to Spine-health.com, a property of the health publisher Veritas Health, sciatica pain is often described as burning, tingling or searing as opposed to a dull ache. In addition, pain resulting from sciatica may be worse when sitting, even though sharp pain associated with sciatica can make it difficult to stand up or walk. Numbness characterized by a “pins and needles” feeling, weakness or a burning or tingling sensation down the leg are some additional symptoms of sciatica.

Does sciatica affect both legs?
WebMD notes that sciatica usually affects only one leg, though the buttock or leg on the affected side may feel like it is in constant pain.

What causes sciatica?
Spine-health.com notes that the following five lower back problems are among the most common causes of sciatica:

**Lumber herniated disc:** This occurs when the soft inner material of the disc herniates, or leaks out, through the fibrous outer core, irritating or pinching the nerve root.

**Degenerative disc disease:** Discs in the back can degenerate naturally with age and never contribute to a problem like sciatica. However, degeneration in one or more discs in the lower back can sometimes irritate a nerve root and lead to sciatica.

**Isthmic spondylolisthesis:** This occurs when a small stress fracture allows one vertebral body to slip forward on another. The combination of collapsing disc space, a fracture and the slipping forward of the vertebral body can pinch the nerve and cause sciatica.

**Lumbar spinal stenosis:** In this condition, which is relatively common among people older than 60, a narrowing of the spinal canal can contribute to sciatica.

**Piriformis syndrome:** A muscle found deep within the buttocks, the piriformis connects the lower spine to the upper thighbone, running directly over the sciatic nerve. Spasms in the piriformis can put pressure on the sciatic nerve, triggering sciatica.

Treating sciatica
Sciatica often can be treated successfully without surgery. Doctors may recommend applying heat and/or ice packs for acute sciatic pain. In addition, over-the-counter and prescription pain medications can effectively reduce or relieve sciatic pain. Doctors also may explore other treatments, including chiropractic manipulation, acupuncture, massage therapy, and surgery.

More information about sciatica can be found at www.orthoinfo.aaos.org.
Signs you might be overtraining

Exercise is a vital component of a healthy lifestyle. Many people find that pairing a nutritious, well-balanced diet with routine exercise is a successful formula for a long and healthy life.

People typically know when to stop eating. In fact, the brain signals when the stomach is full to prevent the body from eating too much. Exercise can be a little trickier, as men and women may be inclined to ignore certain warning signs of overexertion during a workout. The well-known workout motto “no pain, no gain” implies that rewards await those who push through their pain during a workout. However, ignoring signals that the body is being overtrained can have a detrimental effect on both short- and long-term health.

According to the American Council on Exercise®, there is a tipping point in regard to how much exercise the body can take. ACE notes that, when people pass that point, the exercise they engage in can actually do more harm than good. ACE refers to the tipping point as overtraining syndrome, or OTS, which can actually contribute to a reduction in overall fitness and increase a person’s risk for injury.

People dealing with OTS may not recognize its symptoms as readily as they would a full stomach. As a result, it can be easier to overtrain than overeat. For instance, people focused on living healthy often know when to call it quits at the dinner table, but might not know when to end a workout. Overtraining can be just as harmful as overeating, and athletes can help themselves by learning to recognize various signs of overtraining.

**Decreased performance**: ACE notes that a lack of improved performance, despite an increase in training intensity or volume, is a telltale sign of OTS. Athletes who recognize a decrease in their agility, strength and endurance might be dealing with OTS.

**Increased perceive effort during workouts**: OTS can make seemingly effortless workouts seem difficult. An abnormally elevated heart rate during exercise or even throughout the day may indicate OTS.

**Excessive fatigue**: Too much training can contribute to fatigue because the body is not being given ample time to recover between workouts.

**Agitation and moodiness**: Overtraining can contribute to a hormonal imbalance that affects stress levels, potentially making people more irritable and contributing to moodiness.

**Insomnia or restless sleep**: The overproduction of stress hormones that can occur when overtraining can adversely affect a person’s ability to get adequate sleep.

Additional signs of overtraining include loss of appetite, chronic or nagging injuries, metabolic imbalances, and stress and/or depression. More information about OTS and how to avoid it is available at www.acefitness.org.

Did you know?

The American Academy of Family Physicians notes that children should get at least one hour of physical activity per day. The AAFP notes that many kids easily achieve that marker simply by being children and engaging in the activities kids are drawn to each day, such as running, climbing and playing games like tag with other youngsters. The Canadian Paediatric Society notes that exercise needs change as children advance through various stages in life, and that means activities should change along with them. For example, the CPS recommends that physical activities for toddlers should be fun and encourage children to explore and try new things. Unstructured physical activity or free play can benefit toddlers. As toddlers become preschoolers, physical activities can become more structured, though the CPS notes that children this age may not understand the rules of organized sports nor are they necessarily coordinated enough to participate in them. However, structured activities like games of tag and throwing and catching may be appropriate for some preschoolers. As children enter kindergarten and advance through elementary school, physical activities can be moderate to vigorous in intensity. Organized sports can become part of the fitness regimen at this time, though the CPS recommends short instruction times, flexible rules, free time in practices, and a focus on fun rather than competition. Parents who want to learn about age-appropriate physical activities can encourage their children to embrace fitness and are urged to speak with their children’s physicians.
Well visits are an important part of child healthcare

Expecting parents will soon discover that having a child sparks many changes in their lives. As infancy rolls into toddlerhood and beyond, there is usually one constant in the busy lives of new families: the pediatrician. Children visit their pediatricians at regular intervals, and these doctors are invaluable sources of support and care.

Pediatricians provide well-child services throughout youngsters’ childhoods. Health checkups start from the day the baby is born and continue until a child reaches adulthood. JAMA Pediatrics says there are many benefits of well-child visits. One of the key aspects of these checkups is tracking a child’s growth and development, including physical, cognitive, emotional, and social progress.

Another component of well-child visits is to prevent injury and illness. When parents come in for these visits, the staff will likely go over the appropriate safety protocol for that child’s age and milestone. This may include car seat safety checks, preventing falls, choking hazards, and safety when entering school.

Bright Futures/American Academy of Pediatrics developed a set of comprehensive health guidelines for well-child care, and many pediatricians follow these schedule and screening guidelines. Visits often start at one-month intervals, and then increase by two- and three-month durations until the child is two years old. After 2.5 years of age, annual visits become the norm. The reason that earlier visits occur so often is because early childhood is a period of rapid development. In addition, various vaccinations are recommended to protect children from communicable diseases. These immunizations must be administered according to schedule to be most effective.

Well-child visits are also opportunities for screening tests and physical examinations. Exams typically involve checking blood pressure, vision, hearing, and general blood tests and urinalysis. Many parents use checkups as an opportunity to ask questions about development and ensure that children are safe to participate in school sports and extracurricular activities as well. Parents can come equipped with questions to ask the doctor during well-child appointments to make the most of their visits.

The AAP says well-child visits should begin from three to five days old. Therefore, expecting parents should find a pediatrician for their child as soon as possible to ensure that well-child visits can begin immediately after the child is born.
There are lots of good reasons to get a lung cancer screening, but you really only need one. And if your not exactly sure what that is, just ask the people who love you. Because with early detection of lung cancer you’ll have a better opportunity to live the moments they don’t want you to miss.

Contact SOMC to learn more about our lung screening program at 740-356-LUNG.