



EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA  
HEALTH CARE QUALITY UNIT

# IT'S YOUR HEALTH FALL 2013

*the Advocacy Alliance*  
Toll Free 1-877-315-6855  
www.theadvocacyalliance.org



## October Is Dental Hygiene Month Healthy Habits For a Health Smile

### BRUSH, FLOSS, RINSE, CHEW

Dental care should begin as soon as we get our first tooth by using a clean damp cloth, or a very soft brush to clean teeth. After the age of two, we should brush our teeth twice a day for 2 minutes. We have 32 teeth and it takes time to make sure we brush all of them.

**Brushing twice a day is the single most important method for reducing plaque, preventing cavities, and gingivitis and gum disease.**

Remember to use a soft bristle brush and frequently replace your toothbrush with a new one...especially after you have had a cold or virus. If you have arthritis, or difficulty holding a toothbrush, you may want to use an electric toothbrush.



Daily flossing helps to remove food and plaque in between your teeth and under the gum line that you would not be able reach with your toothbrush. Food and plaque left in these areas may lead to tooth decay or gum disease. You may find it challenging when you first begin to use dental floss, and you may even have some gum irritation or bleeding. Stick with it things will get better and your gums will toughen up!

Brushing and flossing cannot get all the germs and plaque that surrounds our 32 teeth so rinsing our mouth each day with an anti-microbial mouth rinse is important. You may want to talk to your dentist or dental hygienist about which rinse to use.



It has been proven that chewing sugar-free gum after eating meals or drinking has a positive impact on oral health. Chewing gum stimulates the most important natural defense against tooth decay, saliva, which in turn helps fight cavities and neutralize acids. Remember to chew sugar-free gum, regular gum will just coat our teeth with sugar and cause a sugar attack.

Following these simple steps, along with a routine dental exam and cleaning by your dentist every 6 months, will help keep your mouth healthy and happy.

*Did you know that the American Dental Hygiene Association has joined with the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company, the makers of Orbit gum to help promote dental awareness and ways to keep our mouths healthy?*





# HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

It is a challenge to eat healthy and exercise in our current culture. Yet it is so important to our health and sense of wellbeing that we feel the effects of not doing these things almost immediately. Our consumers also are often snagged by computers, television, and other passive activities, and they do not feel the need to be physically active. Unfortunately these habits do not bode well when it comes to disease prevention and healthy aging. In our middle age

we really begin to see the effects of our health practices in our earlier years.

## So what are we to do???



### Eat healthy

A healthy lifestyle involves making informed choices for ourselves, and encouraging our consumers and family members to do the same. Eating foods that not only taste good but are good for our bodies. Increasing the number of fruits and vegetables that we eat. Choosing whole grain food over processed food. These foods are delicious and have the nutritional

qualities that our bodies need. Eating lean protein, and smaller portions, and increasing the amount of plant based fats will also contribute to overall health.

By making the right choices we will help balance the number of calories a person takes in and by adding additional exercise we can increase how many calories the body uses. Staying in control of our weight can contribute to good health as a person ages.

## Understand the process of body metabolism and know about how many calories you need.

Our body gets the energy it needs from the food we eat through a process called metabolism. Metabolism is the chemical reaction that converts that food into the energy the body needs. A calorie is a unit that measures how much energy a particular food provides to the body. The body can only use a certain amount of calories/energy at one time. If a person takes in more calories than the body needs those extra calories accumulate and are stored as excess body fat. So weight gain is most commonly caused by eating more calories than a person burns.

### Increase Your Physical Activity



A good choice for using, or “burning up” those extra calories is by physical exercise. The more active a person is, the more calories he or she will burn. Aerobic exercise like walking, running, swimming and bicycling for 30 minutes daily is the most effective way to burn calories. Keep in mind that you do not need to exercise for 30 minutes at a time, but you can break it up into a 10 minute walk in the morning, at lunch, and after dinner with the same effect!!!

Strength training exercise, like weight lifting helps to build muscle tissue. Muscle tissue burns more calories than fat tissue, so more muscle is a key factor in weight loss.

In addition finding additional resources can give us reliable and useful information that can help us in our quest to eat healthier, be more physically active, assist us in helping our consumers to lead healthier lives, and in being a healthy role model for our children and families.



## **These are some websites that we have found to be beneficial to maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle:**

**My Fitness Pal: Track your daily intake of calories and keep track of the calories you burn while exercising**

<http://www.myfitnesspal.com/>

**Web MD Metabolism Checker: Learn how many calories you need on a daily basis to maintain your present weight**

<http://www.webmd.com/diet/healthtool-metabolism-calculator>

**Healthy Recipes from American Heart Association**

[http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/Nutrition-Center\\_UCM\\_001188\\_SubHomePage.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/Nutrition-Center_UCM_001188_SubHomePage.jsp)

**Article from American Heart Association regarding Healthy Lifestyle**

[http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/Diet-and-Lifestyle-Recommendations\\_UCM\\_305855\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/Diet-and-Lifestyle-Recommendations_UCM_305855_Article.jsp)

**How to recognize and create a healthy plate of food**

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

**The risks of obesity**

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/obe/risks.html>

**Healthy Aging**

[www.nihseniorhealth.gov/category/healthyaging.html](http://www.nihseniorhealth.gov/category/healthyaging.html)

**Metabolism and Weight Loss—How you burn calories**

[www.mayoclinic.com/health/metabolis/WT00006](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/metabolis/WT00006)

## NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL SEXUAL AWARENESS MONTH

Often, in our culture, people understand sex to mean sexual activity. While this is a part of sexuality and sexual health, there is much more included in this concept. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines sexual health as ***a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity.*** Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

Sexuality is a part of who we are as a person, and it influences many of our behaviors. We have biological functions that are affected by our sexuality, whether or not we ever choose to become sexually active. We all have gender identity and we take on roles associated with that identity. We all have a need to give and receive love and have intimacy with another person (with or without sexual activity). We develop values in all of these areas of our lives and those values influence who we are and how we interact with others.

Sexual health cannot be achieved and maintained without respect for human rights. According to the WHO, some of the rights critical to the realization of sexual health include:

- Rights to equality and non-discrimination
- Right to be free from torture or to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment
- Right to privacy
- Right to the highest attainable standard of health, including sexual health
- Right to information, as well as education
- Right to freedom of opinion and expression

**For more information on this topic, you can go to the following sites:**

### **World Health Organization website**

[http://www.who.int/topics/sexual\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/sexual_health/en/)

### **American Sexual Health Association website**

[http://www.ashasexualhealth.org/sexual\\_health/what-is-sexual-health.html](http://www.ashasexualhealth.org/sexual_health/what-is-sexual-health.html)



## CHECK OUT THESE WEBSITES MENTIONED IN THIS EDITION OF “IT’S YOUR HEALTH”

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**How to Recognize and Create a Healthy Plate of Food**

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

**The Risks of Obesity**

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# Diabetic Retinopathy

**Diabetic Retinopathy** is one of the many complex diseases that can occur with diabetes and may cause blindness. It can arise in anyone with type 1 or type 2 diabetes and if the patient's blood sugar is not controlled over a long period of time, the more prone they become to the disease. It occurs

in the part of the eye called the retina, which is a light sensitive tissue behind the eye. This causes the blood vessels in the retina change.

**There are 2 different types and both can cause vision loss:**

1. **Macular Edema** causes swelling and leaking of fluid into the center of the eye where sharp vision occurs.
2. **Proliferative Retinopathy**, which is the most advanced stage of the disease where new abnormal blood vessels grow and leak blood into the center of the eye causing the patient to see Cobb-Web like appearances or big black spots all around their vision.

## Normal Vision



## Diabetic Retinopathy



## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

There are not many symptoms that occur with this disease, in fact, until the early stages, you may not even know you have it. Blurred vision may occur if there is swelling and leaking of fluid into the macula. You may also experience one or more blackish/gray splatters somewhere in or around your line of vision. If these spots occur, seek an eye care professional quickly to prevent more serious bleeding. The earlier you receive treatment, the more effective.

## TREATMENT

During the early phase of diabetic retinopathy, no treatment is needed. An eye specialist will continue to monitor the person's eyes for any abnormal blood or changes in the retina. Consequently, it is imperative to get your blood sugar, cholesterol, and blood pressure under control to prevent more damage. If a patient is diagnosed with macular edema or proliferative retinopathy, there is one of three beneficial procedures.

### Scatter Laser Treatment

Shrinks abnormal blood vessels, used for Proliferative Retinopathy.

### Focal Laser Treatment

Several hundred small laser burns in the areas where the retina is leaking. Each burn slows the leakage of fluid and reduces the amount of fluid in the retina.

### Surgery (Vitreectomy)

This is the last option and is only used if all others have failed. When bleeding in the eye is severe, a doctor makes a tiny incision into the eye where a small instrument is inserted to remove the vitreous gel that is clouded with blood. At the end, a silicone gel or gas is put back into the eye to restore normal intraocular pressure. The procedure is done in a sterile operating room and either local or general anesthesia is used.

## PREVENTION

- If you have diabetes, make sure to keep your blood sugars well under control.
- Maintaining normal blood pressure and cholesterol can reduce the risk of vision loss.



- Exercise and diet may also assist in keeping these levels within range.
- Avoid smoking which constricts the blood vessels.
- Last but not least, try to keep all scheduled appointments with your eye care professional and if you experience any sudden changes make an appointment sooner.

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The logo for The Advocacy Alliance, featuring the text "the Advocacy Alliance" in a stylized, cursive font. Above the word "Alliance" are three wavy lines representing water or a stylized wave.

## Ideas for Our Newsletter?

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