

HealthyLife®

LETTER

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QUICK HEALTHY

heart habits

A heart healthy lifestyle doesn't have to be overwhelming. These little changes can make a big difference:

1. **Lower blood pressure with fruits and veggies.** High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease. Swap out sweets or deep-fried foods for fruits and vegetables. They contain plenty of potassium, which is a mineral that helps to naturally lower blood pressure. Try to get 2.5 cups of veggies and 2 cups of fruit each day.
2. **Favor healthy fats.** The right kind of fats can be good for your heart. Fatty fish such as salmon contain omega-3 fats, which may prevent sudden death from a heart attack. Olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds all contain heart healthy unsaturated fat that can help lower bad cholesterol and may raise good cholesterol.

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Bloated belly: *Ways to get relief*

Most people have felt a bloated stomach after a big meal. Usually, the belly feels overly full. It can make clothing feel tighter. The belly may look swollen. Bloating is usually caused by too much food or air and gas getting trapped in the intestines.

But some people get bloated even when they didn't eat too much. In some cases, it can be downright painful. The best way to address painful bloating is to find the cause and know how you can treat it.



BLOATING CULPRITS

The most common causes include:

- **Dairy foods.** If you notice bloating after eating cheese, ice cream, or drinking milk, you could have lactose intolerance.
- **Gum.** Swallowing air while chewing can cause bloating.
- **Eating too much fiber at once.** Fiber is great for you, but if your body isn't used to it, you can get bloated and uncomfortable. Increase the amount you eat gradually.
- **Bowel problems.** Being constipated or having irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) can cause painful bloating. Drinking plenty of water can help with constipation and fiber absorption.
- **Menstrual cycles.** Some women get bloated because their body holds extra water before or during their periods.



TREAT BLOATING AT HOME

Many times, bloating can be managed at home. Here's how:

- Write down what you eat and drink. Record when you get stomach pain or bloating.
- Cut back on gum.
- Avoid carbonated drinks.
- Drink plenty of water to keep the bowels moving. Don't use a straw when drinking.
- Eat enough fiber. Start with fruits and vegetables. Eat only small amounts of beans, lentils and other gas-causing foods until you get used to them.
- Watch out for sugar-free foods. Some artificial sweeteners can cause bloating and gas.
- Ginger, peppermint, chamomile or fennel herbal teas may help. Always ask a doctor before using herbs if you have a health condition or take any medicines.
- Over-the-counter anti-gas medicines with simethicone help move gas bubbles out of the body.



WHEN TO SEE YOUR DOCTOR

Call a doctor or seek immediate medical care if you notice bloating with:

- Blood with bowel movements (stool)
- Losing weight without making an effort
- Nausea or vomiting
- For women: menstrual bleeding between periods or after menopause
- Fever
- Severe pain that won't go away

These could be signs of a serious health issue that needs treatment.



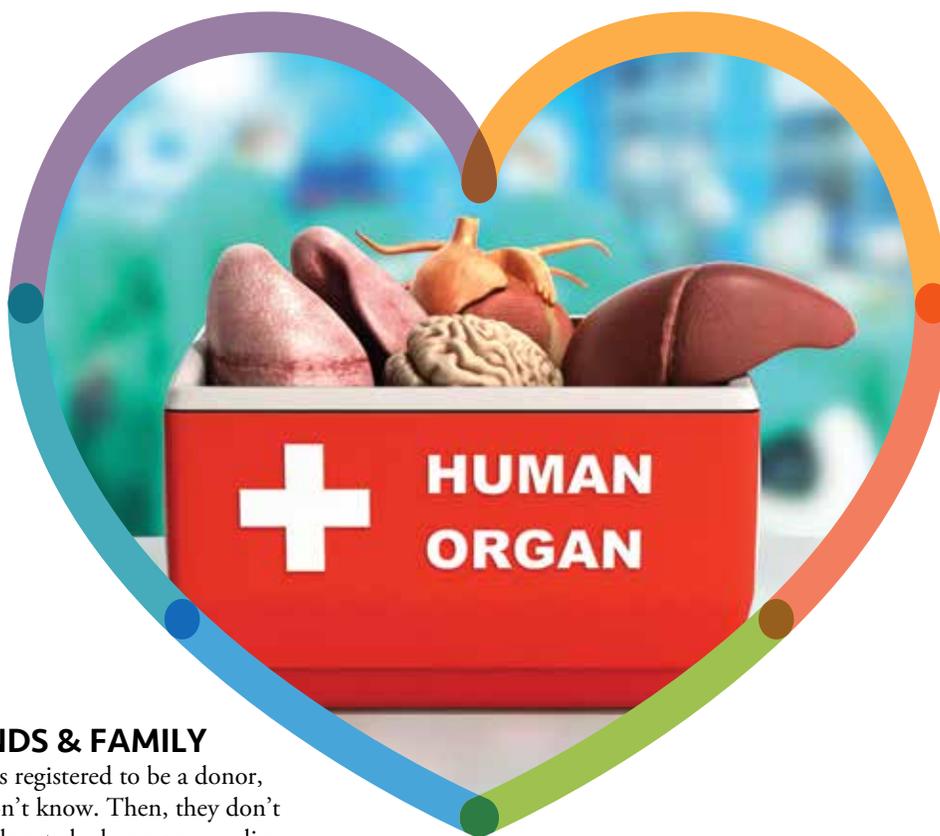
THE FACTS ABOUT donating organs

BEING AN ORGAN DONOR

Adults over the age of 18 can register at organdonor.gov. Select your state and register. Organ donors who are under age 18 will need authorization from their parents. You can always go back to the website later and change your organ donation status, too.

PEOPLE WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS CAN DONATE

Having a health issue doesn't mean you can't be an organ donor. People with many different health conditions have been successful organ donors. The transplant team can decide which organs can be used — and even one organ can save a life.



MEDICAL CARE

The medical team who cares for a person at a hospital is separate from the organ transplant team. Every possible effort is made to save a person's life, regardless of their organ donation wishes.

NO COSTS TO AN ORGAN DONOR'S FAMILY

Any costs related to an organ transplant are paid by the recipient. Their costs are usually paid by their insurance.

TELL FRIENDS & FAMILY

Sometimes a person is registered to be a donor, but their loved ones don't know. Then, they don't allow the organs to be donated when a person dies. If you're serious about donating your organs, make sure you tell your close relatives and friends.

ORGAN DONATION DOESN'T INTERFERE WITH FUNERAL WISHES

Organs are carefully removed with surgery. People who are organ donors can still have an open casket funeral.

Thousands of children and adults are in need of an organ transplant. The biggest needs are for kidneys, followed by livers.



ORGAN DONOR



Easy food swaps for a healthy heart

Eating better for your heart doesn't have to be complicated. In fact, making some small substitutions in your diet each day can add up to better health. It doesn't require a big investment of time or money to make these changes:

INSTEAD OF:
CRACKERS
OR CHIPS



TRY: UNSALTED NUTS
AND SEEDS



Crackers and chips are processed foods with few vitamins and minerals. They're often loaded with salt, sugar or excess fat.

Nuts and seeds, on the other hand, contain heart healthy unsaturated fats that can improve blood cholesterol levels. They also contain fiber, which can help lower cholesterol and fight constipation. They're convenient to take on the go and offer a satisfying crunch.

INSTEAD OF: WHITE
DINNER
ROLLS OR PASTA



TRY: WHOLE GRAIN
BREADS AND PASTA



White "refined" breads and pastas have much of the natural nutrients stripped out during processing. They usually have little to no fiber. This means they don't help you feel full and they can cause a drop in blood sugar a short time after they are eaten.

Instead of white pasta and bread, try a whole grain option. Whole wheat pasta, quinoa and brown rice contain fiber, nutrients and even protein that's great for your heart. Eating whole grains instead of refined grains may lower the risk of heart attack, stroke and obesity.

INSTEAD OF:
CHEESY
PASTA OR
SANDWICHES



TRY: AVOCADO
SLICED OR SPREAD



Cheese can be eaten in moderation as part of a healthy diet. But many processed cheeses contain saturated fat, salt and artificial ingredients.

Instead of processed cheese, try creamy avocado. Diced avocado pairs well with cherry tomatoes and herbs as a pasta topping. Try ripe avocado on a sandwich in place of sliced cheese. Avocado contains monounsaturated fats, which are heart health superstars. It also has antioxidants to help fight heart disease.

INSTEAD OF:
LUNCH
MEAT SANDWICHES



TRY: HUMMUS AND
VEGETABLE WRAPS



Most deli meats contain a large amount of salt. A diet high in salt can lead to high blood pressure, which increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. They may also contain saturated fat, which may raise the risk of heart problems.

Skip the meat and try a plant-based sandwich that still offers protein without the extra salt and unhealthy fat. Almond butter and peanut butter taste great on whole grain bread. Hummus offers protein and fiber, and pairs well with vegetables on whole grain wrap bread.

How walking can change your life

Many people don't exercise because they believe it takes too much time or money. They may think they need to spend an hour at the gym each day to get healthier. These myths could be standing in the way of a healthier life.

Exercise is a universal way to improve health. We know that physical activity can reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes and even cancer. It also boosts energy levels and can help you sleep better. But there's another benefit to exercise that many people may not know about: **better mental health.**

If you are thinking about being more active, a walking program is a tried and true favorite form of physical activity. As an exercise, walking is easy to begin and maintain. Plus, it needs no special skills or expensive equipment, and can be done year-round, outdoors and indoors.

For those who thought they didn't have time to walk or exercise, there's good health news. Even a small amount of exercise can help you feel better mentally by reducing feelings of depression and anxiety, and improving cognition.



GETTING A TREADMILL: *Questions to ask*

Treadmills have been a mainstay in gyms for years. Many people also get one for their homes. They're simple to use and can adjust to your fitness level. But should you buy one? Here's what to consider:

How much money do you want to spend?

A new treadmill can cost hundreds — or even thousands — of dollars. But many people can get used treadmills for a fraction of the cost. If you buy a used one, make sure to test it first to be sure it works. Ask the seller if they have the instruction manual.

Can you do other indoor exercise?

You don't need a treadmill to get a good workout inside. You can turn on music and dance or use a fitness video or interactive game. Consider how many days per year you would need the treadmill because of bad weather. Then, weigh that against the cost.

Will it "work" for you?

Do your research before making the investment. Check out online reviews of the exact treadmill you're considering. Find out if it's good for running, walking or both. Will it work with your height? Taller people often need a longer treadmill belt.



The power of POSITIVE THINKING

Many of us have heard — or given — advice about “looking on the bright side.” Or, you may have heard someone say, “the glass is half full, not half empty.”

These are ways of explaining optimism. An optimistic person is someone who expects good things to happen in their future. But does optimism really help us? Actually, it might.

Some medical research has found that a positive attitude can benefit a person’s health, in part by lowering stress. Some promising results suggest:

- People who are optimistic may have a lower risk of serious heart problems
- Optimism can improve quality of life, including emotional and social well-being, in people who have cancer
- Older adults who were optimistic had fewer health problems
- Being optimistic may help reduce the effects of stress

Of course, more research needs to be done in this area. Optimism is not a cure-all for any disease or condition. But, it’s one healthy way to help people cope with the stress of daily life without any known side effects.



STEPS TO BEING MORE OPTIMISTIC

Optimism and happiness are not the same thing. To be optimistic, you don’t have to be happy all the time. And being optimistic doesn’t mean you ignore stress or pretend that bad things don’t happen.

Becoming more optimistic isn’t as simple as “just doing it.” It takes time and practice. It may be something you have to keep telling yourself to do every day. Here are some ways to “train your brain” to be more optimistic:

- **Pick one good thing.** A bad day can make you feel like the whole day was a waste. But instead, make an effort to pick one good thing that happened that day, and reflect on it.
- **Avoid things that make you feel bad.** If the morning news is too negative, turn it off. Instead, listen to a podcast with a positive message or upbeat music.

- **Think about things you can control — and forget about things you can’t.** Being stuck in traffic is something you cannot control. But, you can choose to take deep breaths, meditate or relax in your car rather than get angry about the traffic.

If you or a loved one feels stressed all the time or hopeless, talk to a doctor. Mental health is just as important as physical health.



April 15 is Tax Day. Everyone must file their taxes by this day or file for an extension. Don't get overwhelmed. These tips can help you get started.

Tips for filing taxes



GET ALL YOUR PAPERS TOGETHER

You'll need all your income records. This may include a W-2 from each employer, a 1099 for other income you made, and records of any other revenue even if you don't have a form. You'll also need all the paperwork that supports your tax deductions. Try to gather all these papers early so you have more time to get them in order before you file your taxes.

CHECK IRS.GOV

The IRS website has help for people filing their taxes. There are FAQ's, forms you may need, and helpful interactive tools.

DOUBLE CHECK

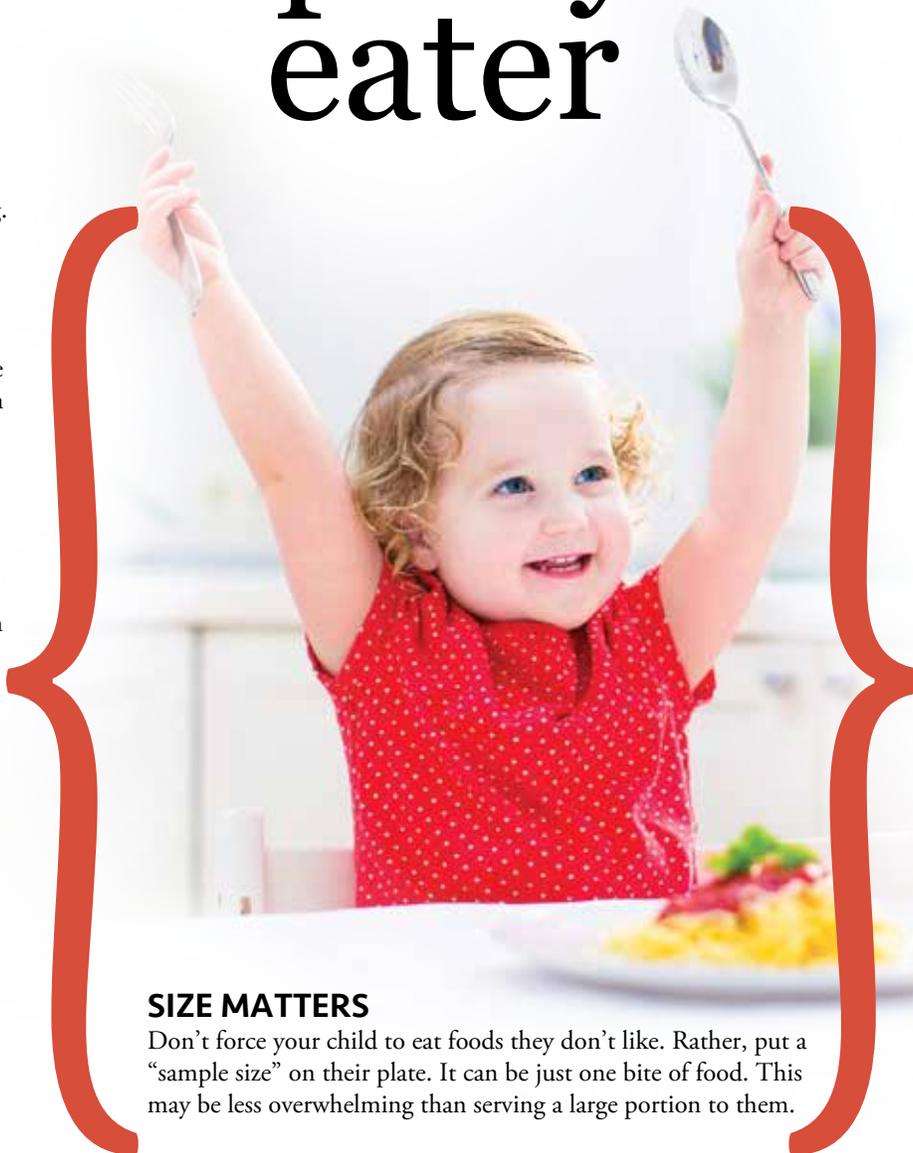
If there's a mistake on your taxes, your refund may be delayed. Double check social security numbers. The IRS says this is one of the most common mistakes.

If you owe taxes, but can't pay it all right now, don't panic. Go to [IRS.gov/payments](https://www.irs.gov/payments). You may be able to set up a payment plan or ask the IRS to delay tax collection.

Feeding the picky eater

PRE-DINNER TIPS

- Get your child involved. Many kids can help with shopping and cooking. Being involved in the process may make them more likely to try new foods. Have them choose a favorite fruit or vegetable from the store. Younger children can help pour ingredients or cut soft foods, like bananas, with a butter knife. Older children can help with measurements.
- Get some exercise. Kids who have been actively playing may be hungrier when dinner comes. The hungrier they are, the more likely they may try new things.
- Turn off devices. Make family mealtimes relaxing and unplugged. Ban cell phones, television or other devices from the table.



SIZE MATTERS

Don't force your child to eat foods they don't like. Rather, put a "sample size" on their plate. It can be just one bite of food. This may be less overwhelming than serving a large portion to them.

SANITY-SAVING STEPS

- Make healthier snacks to fill the gaps. Serve fresh fruit or vegetables as a snack to get in extra nutrients. Skip the processed crackers and chips.
- Don't have a battle. Forcing your child to eat could make them dislike their food even more.
- Don't use bribes or rewards for eating. Rewards teach your child to expect something every time he/she tries a new food.
- Make one healthy meal for everyone. Don't feel pressured to make "special meals" for picky eaters.
- Talk about your child's eating habits with their doctor. Most picky eaters are getting enough of the foods they need. But, ask their pediatrician just in case. Some children need supplements to help get extra nutrients that they're missing.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics