

BE WELL™

A wellness newsletter provided by EMI Health

“Life Is a Journey. Have Some Fun.”

September is Whole Grains Month. 

Grains: The Whole Truth

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

If you love oatmeal, brown rice and whole-grain bread, you're in luck. Whole-grain foods are fiber-rich, loaded with vitamins and good for overall health.

However, most Americans choose refined grains (such as white bread or white rice) instead of nutrient-dense whole-grain options. What's the difference? All grains start out whole with three nutrient-dense parts:

- Bran: contains fiber, B vitamins and minerals.
- Germ: contains vitamin E, antioxidants and healthy, unsaturated fats.
- Endosperm: contains carbohydrate with some protein.

Removing the bran and germ turns a whole grain into a refined grain product, such as white rice and white flour.

The problem? This refining process removes most of the fiber, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and healthful fats from the grains, leaving mostly carbs behind.

Statistics show that about 80% of consumers think whole grains are healthful.

Yet whole grains only account for about 16% of our total grain intake on any given day. If they are so nutritious, why aren't we eating them more often? It comes down to availability, convenience and habit.

White bread, pasta, crackers and white rice are readily available at restaurants and grocery stores. It may take a bit of effort to switch to more whole grains, but it's worth it for their health benefits. Studies show that eating about three daily servings of whole grains may help reduce the risk of developing heart disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes.


Get more whole grains by requesting whole-grain bread or brown rice at restaurants, and by adding these whole grains and pseudo-grains to your grocery cart: pot barley, brown or wild rice, sorghum, buckwheat, quinoa, oats, popcorn, millet and whole-grain wheat options, including wheat berries, farro, bulgur and freekeh.


The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Help Prevent Medical Errors**, is at personalbest.com/extras/21V9tools.




Volume 41 • Number 9 • September 2021

BESTbits

 **■ Celebrate Healthy Aging Month in September with these ever-well reminders:** Staying **positive** in your attitude, actions and conversations is a major factor in feeling and aging well, studies show. If you aren't already, start walking; maybe enlist a favorite canine partner. Set up your annual medical screenings or dental checkup. Feeling depressed or can't sleep well? Visit your health care provider; both conditions are treatable.

 **■ National Recovery Month in September** is sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), now celebrating the gains made by those achieving and enjoying recovery. In its 31st year, SAMHSA helps enable those with mental and substance use disorders to live healthier lives. To learn more and access SAMHSA webinars, visit recoverymonth.gov.

 **■ Get ready for the 2021-2022 flu season.** Everyone should receive a yearly flu vaccine starting at age six months. Vaccination not only protects you from potential serious illness — it also helps reduce the strain on our health care systems. The safety of flu vaccines is backed by 50 years of extensive research. Get updates at cdc.gov/flu/prevent/vaccinations.htm.

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 pandemic information visit coronavirus.gov.

Not only do we have to change the food we eat ... we have to educate people about what they can eat appropriately.

— Indra Nooyi



TIP of the MONTH

Cooking Grains

Some whole grains, such as pot barley and farro, can take up to an hour to cook. Save time by making double batches and freezing leftover cooked grains. When ready to use, simply microwave or steam with some water until hot. You can also buy quick-cooking grains that take less than 20 minutes to prepare. Try oats, quinoa, bulgur, buckwheat, teff, millet and parboiled brown rice.



eating smart Food Close to Home

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Supporting local farmers has gained momentum in the past ten years. Here's what you need to know about buying locally grown food.

Local food doesn't always have a predetermined distance, but it's generally accepted that it's produced within your area or state. From fresh produce to locally raised meat, choosing local has several benefits. It helps create jobs and economic growth in your community, helps the environment by decreasing the carbon footprint, and builds relationships between food growers and consumers.

Local food often tastes great because it's likely fresher than food that comes from more than 1,000 miles away. Plus, in-season food is usually available in surplus volumes, which means it may come at a good price.

Ask about locally grown food in your grocery store, and check your area for farmers markets. Of course, that market may not have everything you need to stock your fridge. And if you live in the contiguous U.S., you're not going to find locally grown bananas or coffee beans. One of the limits of buying local is that not all communities have the habitat or farmland to grow or raise the ingredients they want.

Check your local state growing guide to see what's harvested in each season — it will differ based on where you live. For example, fresh blueberries are picked in April and May in Florida, but are picked in June through September in Oregon. Some foods are grown locally year-round, making them easier to access in all seasons. Tomatoes, peppers, mushrooms and cucumber can grow in indoor greenhouses, while herbs, lettuce and microgreens thrive in indoor vertical farms.

The bottom line? It's great to support locally grown food when you can. To learn more, search for **National Guide to Finding Local Food** at sustainableagriculture.net.



Farro Salad with Chive-Citrus Vinaigrette

EASY recipe

1 cup farro (substitute wheat berries, pot barley or quinoa)
1 carrot, diced
1 stalk celery, diced
1 red pepper, seeded and diced
1 cup cooked green peas
4 cups baby spinach or kale

3 tbsp orange juice
3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp rice wine vinegar
¼ tsp salt
¼ cup freshly chopped chives
¼ cup salted sunflower seeds
2 tbsp dried cranberries

Cook farro according to package directions. **Remove** from heat, rinse to cool and add to a large serving bowl. **Add** carrot, celery, pepper, peas and spinach to the bowl. **Toss** well. **In** a small bowl, whisk together orange juice, oil, vinegar, salt and chives. **Pour** dressing over salad. **Sprinkle** with sunflower seeds and cranberries. **Toss** and serve.

Makes 6 servings. Per serving: 244 calories | 8g protein | 10g total fat | 1g saturated fat | 6g mono fat | 3g poly fat | 33g carbohydrate | 6g sugar | 8g fiber | 185mg sodium

Unity is strength ... when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved.

— Mattie Stepanek



If you have trouble falling or staying asleep, here's news to help you snooze. Regular exercise, even just a daily 20-minute walk, can help beat insomnia and improve your quality of sleep, according to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI). But work out or take a brisk walk five to six hours before going to bed. Exercising closer to bedtime can make it harder to fall and stay asleep.

work&life

Understanding Teens

By Eric Endlich, PhD

Teenagers go through massive changes, and their developing brains don't fully mature until their mid-twenties. Here's a quick guide to what constitutes typical teen behavior, and red flags for serious problems.

- 1. Sleep patterns:** Teens need eight to ten hours of sleep. They are often night owls, likely due to having different biological clocks than adults. Sleep is vital for their physical and mental health and development. **Warning signs:** persistently failing to get up for school, daytime drowsiness, trouble sleeping or isolating from others.
- 2. Mood swings:** Hormones and changing bodies can lead to mood changes, irritable behavior and difficulty managing emotions. Insufficient sleep can worsen these problems. **Warning signs:** sudden personality changes, falling grades and persistent anxiety/depression or thoughts/comments about suicide.
- 3. Rebellious behavior:** It is generally healthy for teens to seek independence. They may butt heads with others as they sort out whom they want to be and where they fit into the peer social order. **Warning signs:** escalation of arguments and fights, violence, skipping school and problems with the law.
- 4. Risk taking:** Due to incomplete brain development, teens don't often register dangerous situations as most adults do. They are prone to experimentation and may try alcohol or other drugs. **Warning signs:** habitual substance use or repeatedly putting themselves in dangerous situations.

Talk to your teen or seek professional advice if they are exhibiting any of these or other worrisome behaviors.



Advice for At-Home Workers

If you work from home, the lines between your professional and personal lives can often become blurred and challenging. Here are some practical ways to help maintain your work effectiveness and boost your attitude:

Manage your routine with fairly consistent start and end times.

Do you often end up working past quitting time? Do you habitually check work email after hours? Try to leave your job at the door, even if you don't go out your door. Notify coworkers and family members when you are and aren't available.

Focus on your most important work during regular work hours to ensure easy access to coworkers. When faced with extra-demanding job projects while also juggling routine at-home tasks, prioritize your available time. Advance planning can help you avoid feeling like you're always on call.

Reminders:

- Designate an official home workspace.
- Maintain your worksite boundaries to limit distractions.



- Focus on your job during work hours.
- Arrange regular, virtual check-ins with coworkers.
- Recharge during breaks with walks or other exercise.

Trends in working remotely: The number of regular at-home workers in the U.S. has grown 173% since 2005, faster than the rest of the U.S. workforce, which grew 15%. Nearly five million workers work from their homes at least part-time. This figure has increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A smile is a curve that sets everything straight.

— Phyllis Diller



Whether pain is acute (short term) or chronic (long term), it can interfere with your life. Low back pain is the most common type of chronic pain, followed by headaches, neck and facial pain. Observe **Pain Awareness Month** by learning about pain's causes and treatments (e.g., physical therapy, nerve blocks and medication, when needed). Don't ignore or self-medicate chronic pain. Talk to your health care provider and find the right treatment for your pain. Learn more at theacpa.org.

body&mind

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. 

Q: Prostate health advice?

A: Every year more than 170,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer, and more than 30,000 die from the disease. The main risk is age greater than 65; other risks are family history of prostate cancer and African American descent. The survival rate is high when prostate cancer is caught early.

The American Cancer Society recommends talking with your health care provider about the benefits and risks of prostate cancer screening starting at age 50 if you're at average risk and expected to live for at least ten more years. Men at increased risk should have the discussion at age 40 or 45, depending on level of risk. Screening can be done with a PSA blood test and digital rectal exam.

The best ways to prevent prostate cancer are to eat plenty of vegetables and fruit, lose excess weight and, with your provider's okay, get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, such as brisk walking, every week.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD



Exercise: Rx for Childhood Obesity

Almost 20% of American children are obese, according to the CDC. Significantly overweight children are at elevated risk for chronic health problems, including asthma, sleep apnea, elevated blood pressure and joint problems. Obese youngsters often suffer from self-esteem problems and from bullying.



September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, an opportunity to learn strategies to help overweight children achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle, which can help ensure they reach the right weight for their own body type. Remember, kids come in all shapes and sizes, and should not be put on strict weight loss diets while they are still growing. A child's weight is a concern when it rapidly changes, but not when they are growing steadily and predictably. Your health care provider can help you know the difference.

Practice positive lifestyle habits with your children, including healthy eating, sufficient sleep, positive self-talk and ample physical activity. Remember, children thrive on routine. Offer nutritious foods with a consistent daily pattern (say, breakfast, lunch, dinner and a snack) rather than allowing constant grazing.

Children ages three through five years should be active throughout the day and youngsters from ages six through 17 should be physically active at least 60 minutes daily. It's a challenge to limit your child's screen time, but it's crucial for weight control.

Encourage participation in school or community sports activities and share information with other parents about physical activity opportunities in your neighborhood's parks and community centers. And remember, children imitate adults, so add physical activity to your life. Encourage your kids to join you in activities you all enjoy.

Time and health are two precious assets that we don't recognize and appreciate until they have been depleted.

— Denis Waitley



No matter your age, daily physical activity is good for your health.

National Women's Health and Fitness Day on September 29

is an opportunity for women to learn about improving their fitness. Even if you haven't exercised in years, you'll build stamina and become healthier by committing to a daily walk or joining a friend in a beginner's exercise class. The CDC has comprehensive resources for physical activity. Get started at cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults.

body&mind

National Suicide Prevention Week is September 5-11.



Q: Suicide prevention advice?

A: Suicide is a leading cause of death in the U.S. While preventing all suicides may not be possible, knowing the warning signs and effective strategies can help.

Red flags include:

- Obtaining means of self-harm (e.g., pills, guns).
- Reading online about suicide.
- Saying goodbye and giving away valuables.
- Focusing on revenge.
- Expressing intense guilt or shame, or feeling like a burden on others.
- Talking about suicide, hopelessness or death.
- Agitation.
- Increased risky behavior (e.g., reckless driving).
- Sudden mood swings.

Helpful steps include:

- Asking, "Are you considering suicide?" People are sometimes relieved to discuss it.
- Removing lethal options whenever possible.
- Showing you care through empathic listening.
- Providing the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number (800-273-8255) or bringing the person to a crisis center.
- Staying in touch until the crisis passes.

— Eric Endlich, PhD



September is National Cholesterol Education Month.



Cholesterol: Highs and Lows

High blood cholesterol is a major risk for heart disease, the leading cause of death in the U.S.

Cholesterol in the blood is a waxy substance produced by your liver. It makes hormones and builds cells. But in excess it can lead to heart disease and stroke. Everyone age 20 or older needs to have their cholesterol levels checked every four to six years. People with heart disease or at high risk for it need more frequent checks.

A blood test measures total cholesterol and different types of cholesterol individually: HDL

(high-density lipoprotein, heart-protective good cholesterol) and **LDL** (low-density lipoprotein, harmful cholesterol linked to heart disease). **Triglycerides**, a fat associated with heart risk, are also measured. Total cholesterol for adults should be less than 200 mg/dL, with LDL less than 100 mg/dL and HDL 40 mg/dL or higher for men and 50 mg/dL or higher for women; triglycerides should be less than 150 mg/dL.

More than 35 million Americans have a total cholesterol of 240 mg/dL or higher, putting them at extra-high risk for heart disease. Other risk factors, including smoking, hypertension or diabetes, increase the risk of cardiovascular problems.

For a quick risk assessment, enter your cholesterol numbers, along with some personal information (including age and medical history), in the AHA's **Check. Change. Control. Calculator** at ccccalculator.cctracker.com.

Discuss your cholesterol levels with your health care provider. Work on lifestyle changes and, if needed, medication to lower too-high cholesterol to a healthier level.



dollars&sense

Teach Your Teen Money Smarts

By Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, AFC

For children, the teenage years are the perfect time to learn about budgeting and living within their means. In a few short years, your teen will make financial decisions on their own.

Below are ideas to get teens started on a financially healthy life:

- Establish a set allowance amount.
- Determine if your teen will need to do chores to earn the allowance.
- Give the allowance on the same day of every week.
- Use the allowance to teach money management, not to punish or reward.
- Determine if they have to save a portion each week.
- Discuss past spending mistakes and what was learned from them.
- Determine which expenses your teen must pay (e.g., gas, clothing, makeup, entertainment).
- Open a checking account to teach about daily spending and budgeting.
- Open a savings account for future goals and expenses. Teach how to use online services.
- Teach your teen about credit: scores, card statements, minimum payment, interest rates and total balance. Discuss paying more than the minimum payment or paying balances in full each month.

Note: If your teen works, learning money management is crucial, especially if they're saving for college or a big expense, such as a car.

safety solutions

September is National Preparedness Month. 

Building a Safe Room — Is It for You?

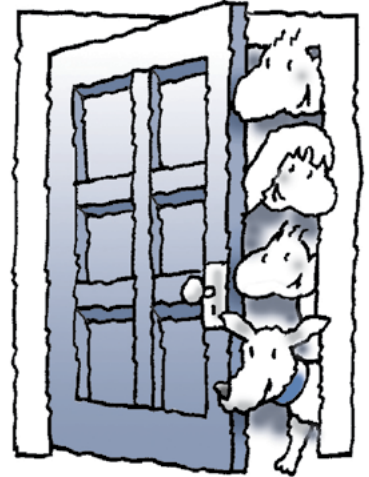
Preparation is always great, but in some parts of the country, it is a necessity for survival — especially if you live in an extreme weather area. You must always evacuate when instructed, but when there isn't time, where do you go? For some, a basement isn't an option. That's where **safe rooms** come in, and FEMA has tips for building one:

Research what type of shelter best suits your needs: basement, in-ground or above ground.

Ensure the shelter meets FEMA's criteria to provide **near-absolute** protection in extreme weather events. That means it should withstand an EF-5 tornado with winds exceeding 200 mph.

Hire a professional to build a shelter or purchase a pre-manufactured building that meets the National Storm Shelter Association standards. **Tip:** If you decide to do it yourself, make sure that everything meets FEMA standards.

Learn more at fema.gov about storm shelters, standards and resources.



SAFETY CORNER



September is National Food Safety Education Month.

Organic Food Safety

The organic method of growing food appeals to many people, but you need to take the same precautions when buying organic foods and preparing organic produce as you do with conventionally grown foods.

Make sure that the organic products you purchase have the USDA Organic seal. **Note:** **Natural** doesn't mean organic. The federal government doesn't regulate the term **natural**.

Discard outer leaves of leafy vegetables before eating to reduce contaminants.

Wash all produce with warm water before you eat it. While it's true that organic crops aren't grown with synthetic pesticides, they are cultivated with natural pesticides. They also use natural fertilizers, which could contain dangerous bacteria. Scrub items hard or peel them (e.g., squash or potatoes). **Tip:** Always wash produce before peeling.

When you shop for organic food, buy in season to get the freshest produce available.

Tip: Organic vegetables and fruits are more expensive than conventional foods, so keep your budget in mind. Also, the term **organic** refers to a growing method. It doesn't indicate nutritional quality. Eat any vegetables and fruits — fresh, canned or frozen — that you can access and afford, whether grown conventionally or organically.



Headache Relief

By Diane McReynolds, Executive Editor Emeritus

Tension headache is a common condition often triggered by our everyday physical activities and mental stressors. For example, you may develop tension headaches following long periods of staring at a computer screen, feeling anxious, or coping with family demands.

Tension headache pain is typically mild or moderate in the head, scalp or neck, causing muscle tightness in these areas. It can become intense and last for hours. In this case, you might confuse your tension headache with migraine, a type of headache that produces throbbing pain on one or both sides of your head. But tension headaches usually don't have all the symptoms of migraines, such as nausea and vomiting.

Common tension headache triggers:

- Ongoing physical or emotional stress.
- Too much alcohol or caffeine.
- Jaw clenching or teeth grinding.
- Eyestrain.
- Fatigue.
- Snoring or impaired sleep.
- Colds, flu or sinus infection.



Long-term or frequent symptoms can make life miserable. While traditional pain medications are often necessary, there are some natural and effective ways to prevent and treat tension headaches. If you are experiencing them weekly, here are some effective measures.

Watch your everyday habits. Getting enough sleep, not skipping meals and trying to pace yourself to reduce stress and fatigue are all effective. In addition:

- **Watch your posture.** If you're seated for long periods, stand up and stretch frequently.
- **Apply a cold compress** to relieve pain in the back of the neck or temples.
- **Be aware of potential dietary triggers**, including alcohol, caffeine, chocolate and citrus fruits.
- **Accumulate at least 150 minutes per week** of moderate-intensity activity, such as brisk walking.
- **Avoid medication overuse.** Taking headache medications, including over-the-counter options, more than twice a week can increase the severity and frequency of your headaches.
- **Try relaxation therapies.** Stress management through relaxation techniques, breathing meditation and other forms of tension relief can help treat and prevent chronic and frequent headaches, including migraine. Relax with yoga to relieve stress and pain, increase flexibility and improve your overall quality of life. Routinely strengthening and stretching the neck and shoulder muscles throughout your day can significantly help reduce tension.

When to see your health care provider:

- You usually have two or more headaches a week.
- You take a pain reliever for your headaches more than twice a week.
- You require increased pain remedies to relieve your headaches.
- Your headaches are disabling or worsen.

Seek prompt medical care if your headache is sudden and severe or follows a head injury; is accompanied by fever, stiff neck, confusion, seizure, double vision, weakness, numbness or difficulty speaking; or gets worse despite rest and pain medication.

September Fill-in-the-Blank Puzzle

Find out how well you know the topics covered in this issue of the newsletter.

- 1 Some whole grains, such as pot barley and _____, can take up to an hour to cook.
- 2 Adolescence is characterized by incomplete _____ development.
- 3 The number of regular at-home workers in the U.S. has grown _____ since 2005.
- 4 For better sleep, avoid _____ close to bedtime.
- 5 Every year more than 170,000 men are diagnosed with _____ cancer.
- 6 Youngsters from ages six through 17 should be physically active at least _____ minutes daily.
- 7 Everyone age 20 or older needs to have their _____ levels checked every four to six years.
- 8 You may develop _____ headaches following long periods of staring at a computer screen.



You'll find the answers at personalbest.com/extras/Sep2021puzzle.pdf.

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Help Prevent Medical Errors**, is at personalbest.com/extras/21V9tools.

Dr. Zorba's corner

Gums and Blood Pressure

New research from the American Heart Association indicates that people with severe gum disease are more likely to have hypertension. Previously published research showed a connection between heart disease and gum disease. What does this mean for you? Take care of your teeth. Best cleaning tips: Use an electric brush and make sure it has a two-minute timer — that's how long you should brush twice a day. Floss once a day with regular or waxed floss, or the easy-to-use floss picks. You can also use an equally effective water pick if you don't like to floss. Better gums will lower your risk of a heart attack and stroke.

— Zorba Paster, MD

Stay in Touch. Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

Email: PBeditor@ebix.com

Website: hopehealth.com

Executive Editor: Susan Cottman

Advisers: Patricia C. Buchsel, RN, MSN, FAAN; Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, AFC, MBA, MS; Eric Endlich, PhD; Mary P. Hollins, MS, JD, CSHM; Kenneth Holtyn, MS; Reed Humphrey, PhD; Gary B. Kushner, SPHR, CBP; Diane McReynolds, Executive Editor Emeritus; Zorba Paster, MD; Charles Stuart Platkin, PhD; Cara Rosenbloom, RD; Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP; Margaret Spencer, MD

Editor: Aimie Miller

The content herein is in no way intended to serve as a substitute for professional advice. Sources available on request. © 2021 Ebix Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction in any form of any part of this publication is a violation of federal copyright law and is strictly prohibited. Hope Health® is a registered trademark of Ebix, LLC.

1 Ebix Way, Johns Creek, GA 30097

Phone: 800-871-9525 • Fax: 205-437-3084.