The best of all possible worlds

There’s no shortage of ethnic restaurants to satisfy your taste buds. Whether Chinese, Italian or Mexican, different types of ethnic cuisine can offer you a tasty treat even if you are counting calories and fat. The key to healthy dining out at ethnic restaurants is to be menu-savvy.

For example, when choosing Chinese fare, look for options that are steamed, jum (poached), kow (roasted), shu (barbequed). Also, it’s best to choose steamed rice or brown rice rather than fried and to look for dishes without MSG added. Healthy Italian entrees to look for include red sauces, primavera (no cream), piccata (lemon), sun-dried or crushed tomatoes. Try menu items that are lightly sautéed or grilled. It’s hard to resist Mexican food, and it is possible to dine out while avoiding fat-laden, high-calorie foods. Add spice to your meal with choices like salsa or picante, spicy chicken, rice, black beans and soft corn tortillas.

If you want to eat healthy and still have lots of different choices, take a taste adventure with ethnic foods. It will do you a world of good.

Source: The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

Ten minutes to better health

Can’t find the time to dedicate to exercise? Are you too tired to work out? If you answered yes to either or both of these questions, you should try breaking your workout into three 10-minute segments each day. Taking three short walks during the day may seem easier and less tiring than one 30-minute workout, and it’s just as good for you.

Source: National Institutes of Health

Have fun in the sun!

Don’t fall victim to summer heat. Take the following precautions to reduce your risk of heat-related injuries:

- Drink plenty of water or other non-alcoholic beverages.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing that is light in color.
- Reduce strenuous activities or do them during the cooler parts of the day.

Source: Centers for Disease Control

Add immunizations to your back-to-school checklist

Parents will soon be busy getting their kids ready for a brand-new school year—buying new clothes, books and supplies, and making doctor appointments for annual physicals. Back-to-school time is also the perfect time to get caught up on important immunizations for the whole family. Checking off immunizations on your back-to-school to-do list helps ensure you and your children make a commitment to better health.

Source: National Foundation for Infectious Diseases

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**Planes, trains and automobiles**

If you have allergies, you may want to plan ahead before traveling since the climate at your destination may be different from where you live. Keep these tips in mind:

- Plan to travel in the early morning or late evening when the air quality is better.
- Keep your car windows closed and use the air conditioner if needed.
- Find indoor activities to keep you busy on windy days when dust and pollen are more likely to be in the air.
- Take a shower after spending time outside to wash away pollen that may collect on your skin and hair.
- When in your lodging, turn on the air conditioner instead of opening up windows.

**Help your back by reducing stress**

When you’re under stress, your muscles tense up, and this can increase your chance of a back injury. Plus, the more stressed out you are, the lower your pain tolerance becomes, so you can really begin to feel the effects. Try to reduce your stress—both on the job and at home. Look for ways to relieve tension, like deep breathing exercises or walking during your breaks at work.

**The average person has about 60,000 thoughts a day**

How many of yours are positive? Studies show that the personality traits—optimism and pessimism—can affect how well you live and even how long you live. Researchers continue to explore the effects of optimism on health.

Those who look at the “glass as half full” may experience:

- Decreased stress
- Greater resistance to catching the common cold
- Reduced risk of coronary artery disease
- A sense of well-being and improved health
- Living longer
- Better coping skills

Take steps today to reverse negative thoughts and accentuate the positive for improved quality of life.

**The ultimate screen saver**

When used with other protective measures, sunscreen can shield your skin from sun-related damage and the dangers of skin cancer. It’s a real lifesaver you’ll want to keep on hand, and on your body.

With all the sunscreen products available, it can be mind boggling to understand which one to choose. Consider these answers to your burning questions about sunscreen:

**Q: Does the kind of sunscreen I use matter?**

**A:** Whether lotion, gel or spray form, be sure to use one that blocks both UVA and UVB rays and offers at least Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 15.

**Q: What does a sunscreen’s SPF rating mean?**

**A:** The SPF number indicates the product’s effectiveness in offering protection from UV rays. Use higher SPF for more protection.

**Q: Do sunscreens need to be reapplied during the course of a day?**

**A:** Always follow the manufacturer’s directions regarding reapplication, and still reapply frequently during peak sun hours or after swimming or sweating. For maximum effectiveness, apply sunscreen generously 20 to 30 minutes before going outside.

**Not getting your 40 winks?**

Then you’re one of the 63 percent of Americans who don’t sleep the recommended eight hours needed for good health. Try these tips for a better night’s sleep:

- Maintain a regular bed and wake time schedule, including the weekends.
- Establish a standard, relaxing bedtime routine, such as soaking in a hot bath, reading a book or listening to soothing music.
- Create a sleep-conducive environment that is dark, quiet and comfortable.
- Finish eating at least two to three hours before your regular bedtime, and avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol.
- Exercise regularly, but complete your workout at least three hours before going to bed.

**Sources:**

- Mayo Clinic
- American Cancer Society
- Asthma and Allergy Foundation
- The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center; Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research
- National Sleep Foundation
- Sources: National Sleep Foundation