

# healthmatters

Summer 2024

## 4 ways to boost your energy level



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**O**ne minute, you're alert and ready to go. The next, you feel like a smartphone with a draining battery. The problem could be what you're eating.

Your body breaks down most of your food into glucose, its main energy source. It then releases the glucose into your bloodstream to power your body. Keeping your glucose level steady can help you beat fatigue. Follow these tips for long-lasting energy.

### 1. BALANCE YOUR MEALS

At each meal, include foods of various types. Whole grains, fruits, and veggies contain complex carbohydrates that convert quickly into energy. Lean proteins and healthy fats from foods like nuts, meanwhile, provide staying power.

### 2. STAY STEADY

Try to eat a meal or snack every three to four hours. Pair lean protein with healthy carbs—for instance, an apple with nuts. That way, you'll have a good supply of fuel throughout the day.

### 3. LIMIT ENERGY SPIKES

Some drinks provide a quick power surge, followed by a crash. Watch out for soft drinks, sweetened coffee, and energy drinks. Instead, choose water, low-fat milk, or unsweetened tea.

### 4. STAY HYDRATED

Dehydration can leave you feeling depleted. So drink plenty of water throughout the day. Women need about nine cups of fluid daily and men need about 13.

# Love your heart: Essential care tips for every stage of life

**H**eart-healthy habits not only boost your well-being now, but they also set you up for better health later in life. These simple steps can help you and your loved ones maximise health at any age.

## CHILDHOOD (AGES 6–11)

This is the ideal time to build positive habits that last a lifetime. What to do:

- Get ideas for healthy foods at [www.gov.bm/eat-well-bermuda-dietary-guidelines-bermudians](http://www.gov.bm/eat-well-bermuda-dietary-guidelines-bermudians).
- Set aside a time to plan the coming week's meals and grocery shop.
- Move as a family. For example, go for walks or play in the backyard.

## ADOLESCENCE (AGES 12–19)

Adolescents tend to eat a lot of junk food. They also spend more than eight-and-a-half hours per day using electronic devices. What to do:

- Create a routine that prioritises school, friends, exercise, and sleep over screen time.
- Encourage teens to get involved in cooking nutritious, delicious family meals.
- Keep healthy snacks on hand, such as nut butter with apple slices, popcorn, and hummus with carrot sticks.

## AGES 20–59

Many people put on excess pounds over the years, increasing the risk for heart disease. High blood pressure; high low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or “bad,” cholesterol; and

type 2 diabetes also become more common in midlife. Drinking too much alcohol and smoking take a toll on your heart as well. What to do:

- Move more during your day. Squeeze in five- to 10-minute blocks of activity whenever you can.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation—no more than one drink per day for women or two drinks per day for men.
- Avoid smoking and be aware that vaping is not a safe alternative. Talk with your healthcare provider if you need help quitting.
- Have your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels checked regularly.

## AGES 60 AND BEYOND

It's never too late for changes that lower your risk for heart disease and other health problems. What to do:

- Sample a variety of fitness activities to find ones that are a good match for your interests and abilities.
- Call a friend, join a club, or take a class. Loneliness increases the risk for heart disease in older adults.
- See your healthcare provider for a yearly checkup, even if you're feeling fine.

## BE HEART-HEALTHY

Visit the [Bermuda Heart Foundation](http://BermudaHeartFoundation.com) at [bermudaheartfoundation.com](http://bermudaheartfoundation.com) for more information on heart health.



## Sun vs. skin:

### What you need to know

Besides causing skin cancer, exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light—from either the sun or tanning beds—causes skin changes that make us look older as we age. UV exposure can cause wrinkles, dry skin, and age spots.

To reduce your risk for skin cancer and to keep your skin looking younger, you should:

- Cover all exposed skin with a liberal amount of a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Reapply it about every two hours, even if it's cloudy, and after swimming or sweating.
- Wear protective clothing, such as a long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses.
- Seek shade. Remember that the sun's rays are strongest from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Use extra caution near water, snow, and sand. They reflect and worsen the damaging rays of the sun, increasing the odds for sunburn.
- Check your birthday suit. If you notice anything on your skin changing, bleeding, or itching, see a dermatologist.

## PROTECT YOUR SKIN

Visit [ewg.org/sunscreen](http://ewg.org/sunscreen) to find the best sunscreen for you and your family.





# What you need to know about the latest **weight-loss drugs**

**W**eight-loss drugs have helped many people meet their goals and improve their health. But like any medicine, there are some risks. Here's a closer look at these treatments.

## WHAT ARE THE NEWEST MEDICINES FOR WEIGHT LOSS?

The three latest medicines making headlines are called GLP-1s. Wegovy and Zepbound have been approved for weight loss. The other, Ozempic, was first used to treat diabetes. Now, some providers prescribe it for weight loss, too.

These medicines work by causing food to move through your stomach more slowly. You may have less of an appetite and feel fuller, sooner. For some people, this leads to weight loss.

## WHAT ARE THE DOWNSIDES?

For one thing, these drugs aren't a quick fix. While most weight loss occurs within six months, you may have to stay on them for a while to keep it off.

These medicines can also drop your blood sugar too low, leaving you feeling weak. Other side effects include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, bowel obstructions, and stomach paralysis. Overdoses have become more common, leading to severe gastrointestinal effects.

## ARE THERE OTHER OPTIONS?

Sometimes, healthy lifestyle changes such as changing eating habits and getting more exercise aren't enough. You may need extra help to reach your weight goals.

Talk with a trusted healthcare provider. They're your partner in reaching health goals. Together, you can decide what will work best for your body and lifestyle.



## Easing *summer allergies* and sinus problems

Seasonal allergies can cause symptoms such as congestion, coughing, weakness, and wheezing. In summer, the culprits can be outdoor molds and pollen from grass and trees. In late summer, ragweed pollens can aggravate allergies for several weeks.

## AT-HOME REMEDIES

For many people, allergies are a source of lingering sinus problems. Allergic reactions can cause the swelling and pus to build up inside these hollow areas around your nose. If your sinuses are bothering you, try inhaling steam from a cup of hot water. Applying a hot, wet towel against your face also may help. Drinking fluids can help thin your nasal discharge.

Your local pharmacy may help, too. Over-the-counter saline nasal sprays or solutions can rinse out your sinuses. Antihistamines and decongestants may ease your symptoms. Your healthcare provider can also recommend treatments.

## DODGING ALLERGY TRIGGERS

You can reduce your symptoms by limiting your outdoor activities in the early morning hours, before 10 a.m. This is when pollen levels can be high. Also, keep windows closed and the air-conditioning running. You may want to avoid drinking alcohol, too. Alcohol can make the swelling in your sinuses worse.



## Preventative healthcare matters.

Remember to schedule the screenings and healthcare provider appointments to which you are entitled under your coverage, because preventative healthcare matters.

Learn more online at [bfm.bm/preventativehealthcare](https://bfm.bm/preventativehealthcare)

With **BF&M** you can.

\* LiveWell is intended to complement rather than substitute for proper medical advice or treatment.

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