



WELCOA'S  
**spark16**  
IGNITE YOUR BEST YOU.

FEATURING  
16 GREAT WAYS TO...  
**HEALTHY  
AGING**  
Pages 4-5

A MONTHLY HEALTHLETTER FROM THE WELLNESS COUNCIL OF AMERICA

## How To Prep For Your Visit

Annual visits can help your doctor create a program to help you stay healthy. Of course, you need to do your part too by following their advice and choosing healthy behaviors.

To make the most of your next check-up, here are three key things to do before you go:

1. Make a list of your health concerns.
2. Bring all medications and supplements you are taking (this saves you the time of writing it all down).
3. Get a copy of your medical records and bring them to the appointment (you can get this by calling your current and previous doctors' office).

## The Price of Prevention...

Most health insurance companies pay for all or at least some preventive services. If you're not sure, read your health plan's patient manual or call the health plan's office. In the long run, annual screenings can probably reduce your total health care spending.

# Annual Check-Ups... Do Adults Really Need Them?

Most of us are right on schedule with our children's required check-ups, but when it comes to ourselves, we may not be as diligent. So, it begs the question, are annual physicals for adults really necessary? The answer is yes—absolutely yes.

Annual physicals establish a baseline of your personal health against which your doctor can detect unhealthy trends and risk factors before they develop into disease. Annual check-ups also help ensure that your doc detects and diagnoses disease early—and early detection is often the key to successful treatment.

### WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT

Your annual check-up can include the following:

- Tests (or screenings) to check your general health or the health of certain parts of your body
- Regular measurements of weight and blood pressure
- Advice about diet, exercise, tobacco, alcohol and drug use, stress and accident prevention
- Immunizations

### WHAT TESTS DO I NEED?

- The exams and screenings you need depend on your age, gender, family history and lifestyle choices such as what you eat, how much you exercise and whether you smoke. Your doc will let you know which tests you need and when. If in doubt, always ask your doc.
- To learn more about which tests are recommended for you, be sure to log on to:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/health-screening/W000112>



Quick and often simple health screenings can easily detect two of the most common chronic conditions—diabetes and high blood pressure—before they cause serious health complications.



**MORE HEALTH  
TIPS INSIDE**



## This Month's Recipe:

# Homemade Chicken Noodle Soup

Homemade chicken noodle soup is food for the body and soul—it will warm you inside and out! And with the time-saving use of a grocery store rotisserie chicken, you can prepare this recipe, soup-to-bowl, in under 30 minutes (minus much of the sodium you will find in the canned variety).

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 1 rotisserie chicken, skin removed
- 3 large carrots, diced
- 2 (32-oz) cartons of chicken broth
- 3 stalks celery, chopped
- 28-oz bag frozen peas
- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Bunch fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 Tbsp fresh thyme, chopped
- 2 cloves fresh garlic, chopped
- ½ box Barilla Plus penne pasta, cooked per package directions

### INSTRUCTIONS:

In a large stock pot, sauté onions and celery in extra virgin olive oil until tender. Pull as much chicken from bone as possible and add to pot with any drippings from bottom of rotisserie container. Add carrots and broth. Bring heat up to boil.

Cover, reduce heat to simmer/low and cook for about seven minutes until carrots are tender/crisp. Add frozen peas, parsley, garlic, thyme, cooked pasta and salt/pepper to taste. Stir and serve once peas are heated through.



**Dr. Ann**  
Ann Kulze, M.D.

With formal training in nutrition and medicine, plus hands-on experience as a mother of four and family physician, Dr. Ann is a unique nutrition expert for the real world.

The whole food ingredients found in Dr. Ann's recipes are the right foods for health and vitality. Nutritional excellence naturally follows.

For more, visit [DrAnnWellness.com](http://DrAnnWellness.com).



### QUICK TIP

Be sure to choose a multigrain form of pasta (I prefer Barilla Plus) for its superior nutritional profile and cook it al dente so it won't get mushy when you add it to the soup.



# It's Time To Put The Assault On Salt!

Our bodies require a small amount of sodium (or salt) to function properly. Of course, most of us consume too much salt, which unfortunately can contribute to high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke.

## What We Need & How To Eliminate What We Don't

Current U.S. guidelines recommend that you should limit sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day. This is equivalent to about one teaspoon of table salt. Of course, sodium overload for most Americans isn't coming from the salt shaker. Most of our salt intake comes from processed foods found at the grocery store.

To keep your sodium intake in-check, keep an eye out for these common (and commonly overlooked) salt offenders:

**Bread and rolls:** Believe it or not, these are the number one source of salt in the American diet—accounting for more than twice as much sodium as salty junk food like potato chips!

**Frozen meals:** They're certainly convenient, but they are loaded with sodium. Even seemingly healthy meals like turkey can pack close to 1,000 milligrams of sodium.

**Canned soups and sauces:** These standard pantry items pack a powerful sodium punch. For example, a can of chicken noodle soup has more than 1,000 milligrams of sodium, and a small jar of spaghetti sauce (14 ounces) has even more!

**Deli meats:** Pepperoni, salami, bologna, bacon, hot dogs—practically any processed meat is loaded with sodium.

## Quick Tips To Nix The Salt

**Always look at the label.** Every packaged food item at the grocery store must list its sodium content. Be sure to note the serving size—a can of soup usually has 2.5 servings, so you need to more than double the sodium you see on the label if you have the entire can.

**Substitute spices and herbs for table salt.**

**Eat lots of fruits and vegetables.** Fresh produce has essentially no sodium. If you buy canned or frozen fruits and veggies, read the label and opt for the lowest sodium versions you can find.

**Rinse canned foods to wash off some of the salt.**

**Don't be fooled by "healthy" or "lighter" versions.** Many foods with these labels often refer to fat content only. Even baked or fat-free foods can pack the same amount of sodium or more—so carefully read the label.

## Think About This

We are currently consuming 50 percent more salt than we did in the 70s and if each of us reduced our salt intake by just one gram a day (we currently average 10 per day) there would be 250,000 fewer new cases of heart disease and more than 200,000 lives saved over a decade.

## Super Star Food Of The Month: Red Cabbage



Any form of cabbage is great for you, but red cabbage is simply stellar. Like its green cabbage cousin, red cabbage is super low in calories (only 30 per cup), brimming with nutrients (especially vitamins C, K and A) and turbo-charged with some of the most powerful anti-cancer compounds ever identified in nature.

# HEALTH



## Run Away From Aging. Literally.

Some studies suggest that exercise appears to slow the shriveling of the protective tips on bundles of genes inside cells—perhaps keeping frailty at bay.



"You don't stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing."

-George Bernard Shaw

**1 Don't give into stereotypes.** Getting older does not automatically mean poor health or that you will be confined to a walker or wheelchair. Take charge of your health (i.e., follow the tips in this article) and you can look forward to a long, active and healthy life.

**2 Drink a cup or two of coffee.** A large-scale study of 400,000 participants suggests that drinking two cups of coffee a day cuts the overall risk of dying by 10 percent. But beware of the cream and sugar.

**3 Find a primary care doctor.** No matter what your age, you need a primary care doc. Not only do they treat you when you're sick, but regularly scheduled visits can help your doctor create a program to help you get and stay healthy.



**4 See your friends every week.** Research shows that those who live the longest and healthiest have deep social connections.

**5 Launch junk foods for "super foods".** Practically any fruit or vegetable can be classified as a super food. Spinach, broccoli, avocados, tomatoes and blueberries are just a few. A healthy diet is key to healthy aging—insert super food instead of your regular diet cola, bag of chips, candy bar. etc.

**6 Wear your seatbelt.** It's quick, it's easy, it's obvious, but many adults still aren't getting the message—most drivers and passengers killed in crashes are unrestrained.

**7 Volunteer.** Giving back to the community can give your life a positive meaning and perspective, which is essential to a healthy outlook. Visit [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org) for local volunteer ideas and opportunities.

**8 Move every day.** Hearing this advice may be getting old, but following it will help you from feeling that way. Exercise is one—if not the best thing—we can do to preserve our health. Aim for 30 minutes of movement a day.



# Tips For Y AGING

Remember to talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

**9 Try to eat fish two to three times a week.** Fish are a great source of omega-3 fatty acids which research shows may help with conditions common with aging like rheumatoid arthritis and depression. Good picks include anchovies, bluefish, herring, mackerel, salmon, sardines, lake trout and tuna.



**10 Find at least one healthy stress reliever and stick to it.** Chronic stress is a primary source of premature aging. Whether it's running, listening to music, spending time outdoors or going to the movies, find something healthy that helps you unwind—and stick to it.

**11 Wear sunscreen every day (yes, even in the winter).** Besides helping keep wrinkles at bay, wearing a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or more can help prevent skin cancer.

**12 Take 60 seconds to laugh.** Laughing helps release “feel good” chemicals called endorphins. In the long run, laughing can also improve your immune system, relieve pain and increase personal satisfaction.

**13 Sleep 7 to 9 hours every night.** Sufficient sleep is increasingly being recognized as an essential aspect of chronic disease prevention and health promotion.

**14 Stop holding a grudge.** Clinging to betrayals and disappointments is bad for the body and mind. Moreover, research has found that optimism and forgiveness can lower blood pressure and heart rate, and reduce depression.

**15 Do a crossword puzzle.** Or exercise your brain by playing memory games or taking classes. Constantly challenge your mind and learn new things to keep your mind and cognitive abilities sharp.

**16 Swap corn and partially hydrogenated oils with fish, flax, olive and nut oils.** The research is overwhelming that eating more fish, flax, olive and nut oils and less processed oils contributes to a healthier and longer life.

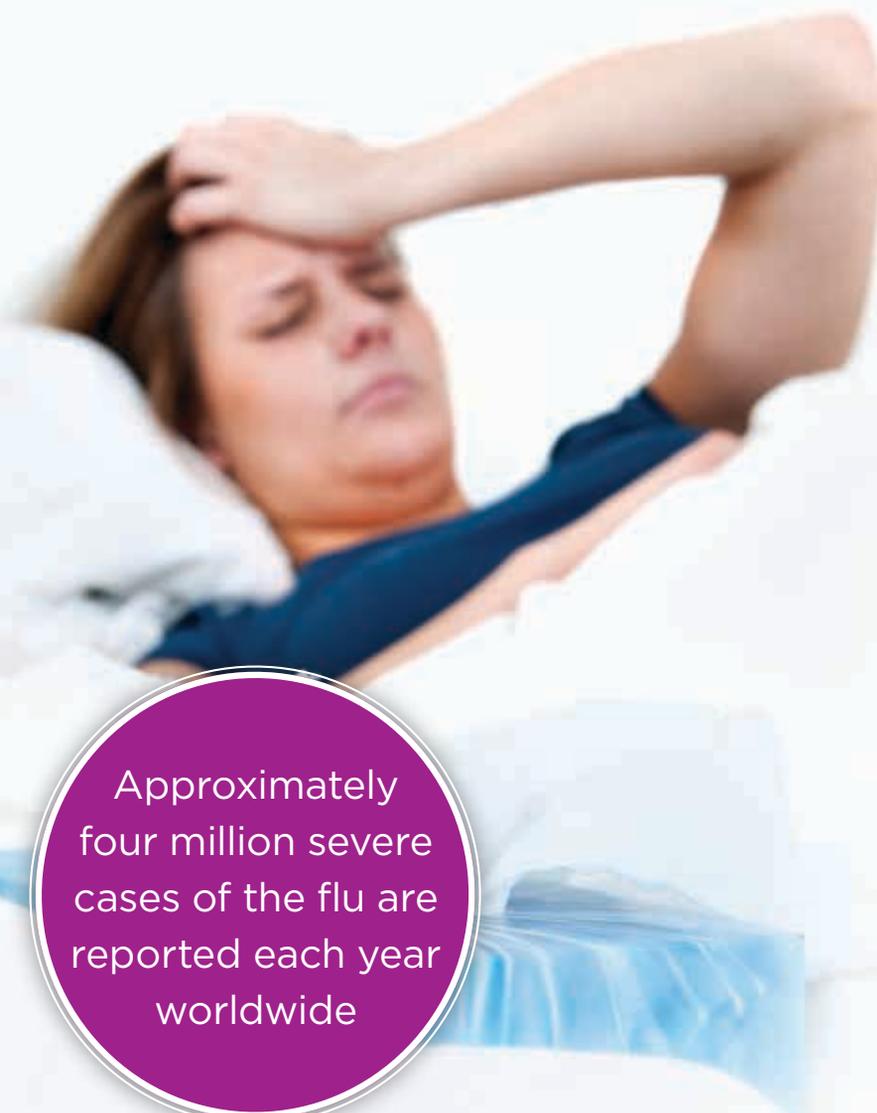


Get Away, Give Back & Feel Great!

Volunteer Vacations Across America is a great resource that details over 200 unique trips for volunteering. Visit them at [www.immersiontraveler.com](http://www.immersiontraveler.com).



# Do You Know What To Do... When You Have The Flu?



With all the medical advances we witness every day, it's disappointing that we still haven't figured out how to defeat the common cold and flu. These maladies have been with humanity at least since written history began. The average American will suffer through two to four colds each year, and millions will also endure at least one bout of the flu. Each episode can represent a week or two of lost productivity and enjoyment. Even though there is no cure, there are things you can do to reduce your chances of catching one of these nasty conditions. And if you do catch a cold or flu, there are self-care techniques you can employ to ease your misery and feel better fast.

## Signs & Symptoms

One of the first things you'll need to determine to get on the road to recovery is whether you have a cold or the flu. Although they can feel similar, cold and flu are very different illnesses.

## Is It A Cold Or The Flu?

Both colds and flu are caused by viruses, and both share the symptoms of fatigue, cough, and nasal congestion. Colds, however, are restricted to the nose, throat, and surrounding air passages. Most colds are not accompanied by fever, chills, or the more severe symptoms identified with flu, and recovery is faster. Flu is almost always more severe than a cold. It hits suddenly with aches, a high fever, and chills. The flu typically runs its course in about a week, although you may feel uncomfortable for several weeks.

Approximately  
four million severe  
cases of the flu are  
reported each year  
worldwide

 Don't forget to get your flu shot!

## When To Seek Care

The symptoms described here can be signs of a condition much more serious than an average cold or flu. See your health care professional if you're experiencing any of the following.

- If your symptoms last for more than 10 days.
- See a health care provider if the pain or swelling over your sinuses gets worse when you bend over or move your head.
- If your cold is accompanied by trouble breathing or wheezing.
- If you experience swollen, painful neck glands or pain in the ears.
- If you have a sore throat that is very red or has white spots.
- A cough with phlegm that is green, gray, or yellow means you may need to see a health care provider.
- Seek medical care if a temperature is: higher than 100.4°F in newborns up to 12-weeks; higher than 102°F in a 3-month to 3-year-old child; or a fever that rises to 104°F in a child of any age.
- Seek medical care if a temperature is over 103°F in a 3 to 64-year-old; or 102°F or higher in someone age 65 or older.
- If a foul smell comes from the throat, nose, or ears.

## Home Treatment

Check out the following tips to feel better fast when you are battling a cold or flu.

- **Drink Fluids**—drinking at least eight, 8 oz. glasses of fluid daily thins your mucus, helping it to flow. Hot drinks and soups are especially effective.
- **Humidify Your Environment**—moisture helps. Use the shower, a humidifier, or breathe over a bowl of hot water.
- **Get Rest**—going to work with a cold isn't necessarily going to make it worse, but keep in mind you are most contagious in the first 48 hours.
- **Cough And Blow**—blow your nose gently and often, and cough as needed. You want to keep the phlegm moving, not suppress it.
- **Gargle**—gargle three times daily with salt water to soothe your sore throat. Salt helps sterilize the bacteria in the back of your throat and promotes the healing of inflamed tissues. To make a salt solution, stir ½ teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water and gargle for 30-60 seconds.
- **Don't Take Antibiotics**—unless there's solid medical evidence that you have a secondary bacterial infection. If you are unsure, see your health care provider.
- **Take An Over-The-Counter (OTC) Remedy**—Take single-ingredient products like Sudafed or Robitussin only as needed and as directed. Make sure you read the label warnings and only take something if you really need it. Be careful about interactions between over-the-counter and prescribed medications.

SYMPTOM	COLD	FLU
Fever	rare	102-104°+, 3-4 days
Headache	rare	prominent, sudden onset
General aches and pains	slight	usual, often severe
Fatigue or weakness	mild	can last 2-3 weeks
Extreme exhaustion	never	early and prominent
Stuffy nose	common	sometimes
Sneezing	usual	sometimes
Sore throat	common	sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	mild to moderate	common, can become severe

*With colds and flu, you're most contagious during the first 48 hours.*



In every issue you'll find 16 ridiculously simple ways to stay healthy!

## IN THIS ISSUE

- » Salt: How Much Is Too Much?
- » How Old Are You Really?
- » Flu Or Cold? How Do You Know?
- » Comfort Food That's Good For You?



## DID YOU KNOW?

**60**  
seconds

LAUGHING FOR ONE MINUTE IS ALL YOUR BODY NEEDS TO RELEASE "FEEL GOOD" CHEMICALS CALLED ENDORPHINS.

**6**  
months

EVERYONE 6 MONTHS OF AGE AND OLDER SHOULD GET A YEARLY FLU SHOT.

**2,300**  
mg

YOUR DAILY SODIUM INTAKE SHOULD BE NO GREATER THAN 2,300 MILLIGRAMS. KEEP IN MIND THAT A CAN OF SOUP HAS MORE THAN 1,000 ON ITS OWN!

## Healthy Habits To Live By

Healthy habits not only reduce your risk for developing chronic disease, but they also make you feel better and improve your overall quality of life. Here are the key habits to live by:

**Don't smoke and avoid second hand smoke.** Smoking is the major cause of lung cancer and is a major risk factor for heart attack and stroke. It's never too late to quit and reduce your risk.

**Move every day.** Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity (i.e., walking) a day.

**Eat fruits & veggies every day.** They're full of disease-fighting agents called phytochemicals. Aim for five to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

**Achieve a healthy weight.** Talk to your health care provider to determine your personal healthy weight and work out a plan for achieving or maintaining it.

**Know your numbers.** Knowing your blood pressure and total cholesterol, and more importantly, keeping them in check can help prevent heart damage and failure.

**Get your yearly checkup.** Your doctor will let you know when and what preventive screenings you need.

## What's In A Number?

COST OF

**GETTING A  
FLU SHOT =**

**\$0 to \$30**

Many health insurance plans cover the cost of a flu shot. If it's not covered, the vaccine can range between \$5 and \$30.

COST OF

**GETTING THE  
FLU =**

**\$150 to  
\$1,000+**

Getting the flu is costly. Aside from over-the-counter and possibly prescription medications, you may have to use a big chunk of paid time off (PTO) while you're recovering.

