



CareLink

Staying Well

Take Medicine...Carefully

To get well or stay well, patients should have prescriptions filled and take them according to the directions.

- * 49 percent forget to take it
- * 39 percent forgot they took it and took it again
- * 31 percent did not fill a prescription
- * 29 percent stopped taking the medication before the supply ran out
- * 18 percent took someone else's prescription
- * 11 percent received a prescription but substituted an over-the-counter drug.
- * 8 percent didn't understand how to take the medication
- * 6 percent took more than the recommended dosage.

If everyone took their medicine as prescribed, more people would get well and their conditions wouldn't turn into something worse.

The Sleep-Deprived Eat More

Researchers at Columbia University have conducted a test to find out for sure if sleep deprived people actually do consume more calories. Study subjects slept seven to nine hours, or four hours. At first, they ate a controlled diet for four days, then they could eat as much as they wanted on the remaining two days of the study. They did the study twice with subjects getting a different amount of sleep.

Participants consumed an average of 296 calories when they were sleep-deprived. Most of the extra calories came from high-fat foods, such as ice cream and fast food. Ice cream was the preferred food during the sleep-deprived state.

Health Habits and AMD Risk

New research on the Women's Health Initiative shows that women who eat right, exercise and don't smoke are 71 percent less likely to develop age-related macular degeneration (AMD), the leading cause of blindness in older Americans. The Research was done at the University of Wisconsin.



Babies Need 39 Weeks to Fully Develop

Obstetrics groups say for an unborn baby to develop fully, it takes 39 weeks and not a day less.

National Institute of Health studies show infants born at 37 or 38 weeks face problems with brain development and function, including psychological, behavior and emotional problems.

- * They are more likely to have vision and hearing problems .
- * Babies born before 39 weeks often can't learn to suck and swallow well. They may not be able to stay awake long enough to eat.
- * Their lungs may not be fully developed until 38 weeks, 6 days. Those born a few days before have increased risk of respiratory problems.
- * Important growth in the liver occurs during the last weeks of pregnancy.

The March of Dimes is leading a national campaign to reduce early induced deliveries.

About 18 percent of babies electively born at 37 and 38 weeks require expensive neonatal special care for 4.5 days.



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New Guidelines Slash Salt Intake Advice

The most recent federal dietary guidelines for Americans call for salt consumption to be reduced from 2,300 to 1,500 milligrams (mg).

The lower figure was already recommended for 70 percent of American adults, including those with hypertension, all African Americans and everyone over age 40. The prestigious Institute of Medicine wants a crack-down on added salt in foods, arguing that past public-education campaigns have failed.

The institute considered the results in the Interstroke study, which compared data on 6,000 people from 22 countries, half of whom had suffered a stroke and half had not. The study discovered that high blood pressure (hypertension) was the strongest predictor of stroke.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 77 percent of dietary sodium comes from processed foods and restaurant items. Also:

- * Grain mixtures, 530 mg/day: from pizza, burritos, tacos, egg rolls, packaged pasta dishes and frozen dinners.
- * Ham, sausages, bacon, lunch meat, 423 mg/day: all have high salt content.
- * Breads, 354 mg/day: two slices can contain 300 mg. of sodium.
- * Meat, poultry and fish, 286 mg/day: all from salt shakers.