



## Protect Yourself From Germs on a Plane

Catching a flight to visit family and friends this holiday season? You need to be prepared for one sure thing that could spoil your vacation: Germs.

No one wants to spend the holidays nursing a stuffy nose or enduring a bout with the stomach flu. But with millions of people passing through airports during the holidays, you're bound to cross paths with the kind of germs that can end your stay, cold turkey.

In a recent study by published in the Journal of Environmental Health, researchers found that germs may be 100 times more likely to infect a traveler in the air than on the ground. Close quarters on the plane, low humidity, and poor air circulation create an environment ripe for the spread of germs. Hundreds of passengers also leave their germs on the seats, door knobs, seat belts, and on-board bathroom facilities during each flight.

So what can you do to prevent germs on a plane from creating a holiday memory you would rather forget?

**1. Stay hydrated.** Drinking water will keep you well-hydrated during your flight and help your body ward off any germs trying to join you at grandma's house.



**2. Use a nasal mist.** In the study of air travelers, researchers found that nasal mists also helped lower the chances of catching a cold by compensating for the low cabin humidity that makes you more susceptible to infection.

**3. Wear a face mask.** It may not be on your must-pack list, but researchers believe a mask is a good way to protect yourself from germs on a plane. You may also consider wearing a mask if you're one of those travelers boarding the plane with a cold.

**4. Wash your hands.** The National Institutes of Health says washing your hands with soap and warm water may be the best approach to fighting off flu-causing germs. Wash your hands before you board the plane and soon after your arrival. Use hand sanitizer if access to a sink and water isn't readily available.

*Hocking B, et al. Common cold transmission in commercial aircraft: Industry and passenger implication. Journal of Environmental Health Research (2004); 3.1:p200.*

*National Institutes of Health  
Centers for Disease Control*

Wash Your  
Hands the Right  
Way  
[www.cdc.gov/  
features/  
handwashing/](http://www.cdc.gov/features/handwashing/)

## Go Ahead and Gobble, But Not Too Much

It all looks so good on Thanksgiving Day. Turkey and gravy, dressing, sweet potatoes, and enough desserts to open your own bakery.

Go ahead and gobble, but not too much. The average person eats about 3,000 calories at the dinner table on Turkey Day. A 160-pound person would have to walk 30 miles to burn off that many calories.

You can still enjoy the feast. Just don't act like you're trying out for a competitive eating contest. Get your personal daily calorie limit at [www.choosemyplate.gov/downloads/MyPyramid\\_Calorie\\_Levels.pdf](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/downloads/MyPyramid_Calorie_Levels.pdf).

Then keep that number in mind when deciding what to eat.



The [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) concept also shows you the right portions of each food to put on your plate.

To keep your calories under control on Thanksgiving Day, try this basic action plan:

**Before** – Eat light, healthy meals and snacks during the day prior to the

big meal. Choose a green salad, soup, or fruits and vegetables. Then when the dinner bell rings, you won't be as hungry.

**During** – If you really feel the need to indulge, sample everything on the table, just in smaller portions. Track your daily calories with a food journal or smartphone application, and make adjustments if you're overeating.

**After** – Plan to take a walk and exercise to burn off a few of those extra calories after the big meal. With a little planning and self-control, you can still enjoy the Thanksgiving meal and be healthy.

*American Council on Exercise  
U.S. Department of Agriculture*



## Happy Thanksgiving – Vegetarian-style!

You don't have to roast a turkey to celebrate Thanksgiving. More than 7 million Americans follow a no-meat (or poultry or fish) diet – even on Thanksgiving Day.

A vegetarian diet can give you all the nutrients you need. Just be sure to choose your foods carefully.

Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and protein-rich foods like beans, lentils, soy, nuts, and seeds are great sources of nutrients. Also, a vegetarian diet has been proven to prevent and treat chronic conditions. These include heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure. With a little creative cookery, your guests will be thrilled to celebrate Thanksgiving, vegetarian-style.

“You may ask, ‘How can it still taste good?’” says Kathryn McLane, author of the recipe book, *Tastefully Vegan*.

“With just a little extra work, and some recipes you like, you'll see that it's possible for healthy food to taste delicious.”

If you're not sure how to cook up a Thanksgiving meal sans the turkey, you might need a little spice and inspiration in the kitchen. Last year *The New York Times* asked expert chefs and cookbook authors to send in their favorite vegetarian dishes fit for the big meal. In response, they received these 60-plus mouth-watering recipes for desserts, side dishes, and main course entrees: [www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/11/08/health/20101108\\_thanksgiving.html?ref=health](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/11/08/health/20101108_thanksgiving.html?ref=health)

(Note: Even veggie dishes can be unhealthy and fattening if they're made with lots of sugar or heavy cream.)

If you're ready to try something new this year, take a break from basting the turkey. Instead, serve a vegetarian feast that your guests will enjoy and remember.

*Vegetarian Times* (2008, April). *Vegetarian Times study shows 7.3 million Americans are vegetarians.*

McLane, Kathryn, and Gerard McLane. *Tastefully Vegan: Creative Vegetarian Cooking*. Brushton, N.Y.: TEACH Services Inc., 2001.

*American Dietetic Association*

### Stressed? Take It One Sigh at a Time

If you've ever felt the pressure of a deadline at the office or have been frustrated by a family member, you want relief. Take it one sigh at a time, and you'll be fine.

In a recent study, researchers found that when your body experiences stress, your muscle tension slowly increases, forcing you to sigh. You naturally take a deep breath and let it out.

Researchers also found that choosing to sigh or using breathing techniques showed similar stress-reducing results. However, the body's natural sigh produced the most relief.

Take a deep breath. Sighing relieves tension as a natural way of coping with everyday challenges.

*Vlemincx, E, et al. Take a deep breath: The relief effect of spontaneous and instructed sighs. Physiol Behav. 2010; 101(1):67-73.*



### If You Have Pink Eye...

You might wake up in the morning with puffy

eyes or notice the whites of your eyes look pink and wonder what the symptoms mean.

This could be the first sign of conjunctivitis, more commonly known as pink eye.

Pink eye is an inflammation of the outer layer of the eye and the inside of the eyelid. Your eyes turn red, feel scratchy and irritated, and might even have a weepy discharge. Pink eye is generally caused by viruses, bacteria, or allergies.

Conjunctivitis is typically spread from person to person through hand contact with someone who is infected. If someone at work, school, or home has pink eye, be certain to use separate towels. Disinfect toys, door knobs, and other shared objects. Make sure anyone who might be exposed washes their hands frequently to keep germs from spreading. Viral and bacterial pink eye are

very contagious for about two weeks from the first symptom.

Treatment for pink eye depends on its cause. If it's bacterial, your doctor may prescribe antibiotic drops or ointment. If it's viral, the infection will likely clear up on its own. If allergies are the cause, eye drops to treat the symptoms might help.

*National Institutes of Health*

### ASK THE DOCTOR *Wellness*

**Q:** How can I reduce my high triglycerides?

**A:** Go to [www.wellspring.com/wn/ask-triglycerides.pdf](http://www.wellspring.com/wn/ask-triglycerides.pdf) to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: [evan@wellspring.com](mailto:evan@wellspring.com), subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

**Health Challenge:** “Sleep On It For Better Health” available at: [www.wellspring.com/wn/hc-sleep.pdf](http://www.wellspring.com/wn/hc-sleep.pdf) Get 7-8 hours of sleep daily.



## Q. How can I reduce my high triglycerides?

**A.** Triglycerides is another name for fats in the blood. If your triglyceride level is above 200 mg/dL (with a fasting blood test), then it's definitely too high. A certain amount of fat in the blood is normal and even needed. If your blood fat level is too high, your risk of clotting and heart problems increases. In fact, the risk of a heart attack is 2 to 3 times higher for someone with high triglycerides compared to someone with low triglycerides. Fortunately, there are many ways you can bring your triglycerides down to a safe level:

- **First, see your doctor.** If your triglyceride level is high (200 mg/dL or higher), another health problem could be the cause. Your doctor can help you find out.
- **Be physically active.** Physical activity is one of the best ways to burn up fat in the blood. Even a one-hour walk in a single day can significantly lower your triglyceride level. Aim for 30-60 minutes of physical activity each day for best results. Keep in mind that within two days of not exercising, triglyceride levels will return to their high state. It's best to exercise every day.
- **Lose excess body weight.** Carrying excess body fat is a main cause of high triglycerides. Even losing 10-15 pounds can make a big improvement.



- **Stop smoking or using tobacco.** It's an excellent way to lower your triglyceride level and give your heart a break. If you need help quitting, ask your doctor for help.

- **Limit or avoid alcohol.** Alcohol is hard on the liver and can sometimes cause very high triglyceride levels. Avoid alcohol or if you choose to drink, keep your intake moderate. No more than one drink per day for women, and no more than two drinks per day for men.

- **Avoid refined carbohydrates.** Choose healthy, unrefined carbohydrates, such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables, legumes and seeds. Avoid refined carbohydrates such as white bread and flour products, sugar, soft drinks, sweets, snack foods. The American Heart Association recommends no more than 6 teaspoons of added sugar per day for women and no more than 9 teaspoons a day for men. Keep in mind that one soft drink may have 8-10 teaspoons of added sugar. Limit total carbohydrate intake to no more than 60 percent of your calories. Balance carbohydrates in your diet with healthy fats and healthy protein-rich foods.

If you've had a fasting blood test, the recommended triglyceride level is less than 150 mg/dL. A blood fat level over 200 mg/dL means you are at high risk. A blood fat less than 100 mg/dL is ideal.





# Sleep for Better Health

**CHALLENGE**  
Get 7 to 8 hours  
sleep daily.

## Requirements to Complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. On your monthly **Health Challenge™ Calendar**, record the number of days this month you get 7 to 8 hours of sleep.
2. Read "Why rest is important for your health" on this page.
3. To complete the Challenge, get 7 to 8 hours of sleep on at least 22 days this month.
4. Keep records of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

## Sleep 7–8 hours daily

Two large studies have looked at hours of sleep and health status. Both found that at least 7 hours per night of uninterrupted rest is the minimum needed for most people for good health. The first study (Cancer Prevention 2) included over 1 million people.<sup>1</sup> Best survival rates were found among those who got at least 7 hours of sleep per night. If people got less than this, mortality rates began to rise. Growing evidence shows that chronic lack of sleep increases the risk for developing obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, infections, cognitive difficulties, and mood problems. Yet today, an estimated 70 million people (about 30% of adults in the U.S.) are not getting enough rest to feel and perform their best.

The Good Health Practices study found similar results. Those who got 7 to 8 hours sleep per night lived significantly longer than those who got less. This gives a good clue to how much sleep we need. Sleep requirements seem to vary somewhat among people, but everyone should wake up fresh and feel rested during the day, not tired. Children need 9 to 10 hours and teens need 8 to 9 hours because their body and brain are still growing. Some adults also seem to feel and function best if they regularly get 8 to 9 hours. If you need more than that, you may have a health problem. Ask your doctor for help.

One-third of your day should be devoted to sleeping. Learn more about sleep and how to get adequate sleep.

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/sleep/healthy\\_sleep.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/sleep/healthy_sleep.pdf)

## Why sleep is important for your health

During the day the body's metabolism is in a state of actively coping with the many demands made upon it that often results in physical, mental, and emotional strain. This state is called catabolism. The body is breaking down stored energy and reserves to meet demands. At night when the body is resting, another form of metabolism takes place called anabolism. This involves repairing damaged tissues, strengthening the body, and building up health and energy reserves. Some of this restoring occurs during the day as well, but some repair and tissue building only occurs during sleep.

You can easily see that if sleep is inadequate, the body doesn't have the time it needs for repair and building back health reserves. Eventually the body becomes exhausted, fatigue sets in, and health and quality of life are seriously impaired.

## People who suffer from fatigue find...

- Their memory is impaired
- They are more easily upset and frustrated
- They are more difficult to get along with than when rested
  - They have less initiative, are less efficient, and productivity suffers
  - They are less alert, judgment is impaired, and more accidents occur (fatigue contributes to over 100,000 auto crashes yearly)
  - Their immune system is depressed and they are more likely to catch a cold, the flu, or other infection
- They are more likely to be depressed or unhappy with life

It's not a very pleasant list is it? Getting adequate rest each day is vital for physical and mental health. To feel your best, plan to get at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep daily! You will most likely live longer as well.

## Insomnia – improving sleep habits

Some people have difficulty sleeping. Worry and anxiety are often to blame. Don't add worrying about not sleeping to your other problems. It won't help. It is interesting to note that in the sleep study involving 1 million people,<sup>1</sup> those who complained of insomnia did not have any increased risk of mortality, but people who often took sleeping pills did. If you are bothered by insomnia, keep a diary of your sleep patterns and discuss it with your doctor.

## Here are some suggestions by the National Sleep Foundation to improve your ability to enjoy regular sleep habits.

- 1. Be physically active daily.** Exercise helps reduce stress and feelings of anxiety and helps you relax. People who exercise regularly fall to sleep faster and get more sleep than those who don't exercise. Get your exercise earlier than just before bedtime. Exercising 6 hours or less before bedtime makes you feel wider awake, not sleepy.
- 2. Be regular in your sleep habits.** The more closely you follow a consistent schedule, the better your sleep habits will be.
- 3. Your sleeping area should be quiet,** dark, comfortable, and cool. A TV or computer in your room can be a distraction. So can an uncomfortable mattress or pillow.
- 4. Develop a routine that works for you.** Do something just before you go to sleep each night that helps you relax and prepare for sleep. It may be a warm bath, reading a book, or listening to relaxing music. Enjoy the relaxing time and then fall off to sleep.
- 5. Avoid drinking coffee** or other caffeinated beverages several hours (6 to 8 hours) before bedtime. Smoking is also a stimulant. Avoid smoking before going to bed.
- 6. Avoid drinking alcohol.** While it may make you feel drowsy, it has a tendency to wake you up and can lead to a night of less sleep.
- 7. Avoid late meals.** Most people don't sleep well with a full stomach.
- 8. Don't watch exciting movies** just before you try to go to sleep.
- 9. Don't stay in bed too long if awake.** If you can't fall asleep within 15 to 20 minutes after turning out the lights, it's best to get up out of bed and do another relaxing activity such as reading until you feel sleepy. Just don't choose exciting stories that you can't put down.
- 10. Consider a midday nap.** Naps can't substitute for a good night's sleep, but if a short nap (one hour or less) midday refreshes you and makes you more alert, add it to your daily routine. It's generally best not to take long naps or nap close to bedtime, as it will disturb your sleep at night.
- 11. Avoid late hours.** Some sleep experts feel that the sleep you get before midnight may be your best sleep. Keeping late hours is generally not a good health habit.
- 12. Expose yourself to sunlight.** Try to get outside in natural sunlight 30 minutes each day. If you have problems falling asleep, get an hour of exposure to morning sunlight.
- 13. Avoid medicines that disrupt sleep** such as certain pain relievers, steroids, heart, blood pressure, and asthma medications, and over-the-counter or herbal remedies for coughs, colds, or allergies.

## Snoring and sleep apnea

An estimated 12 to 18 million American adults have sleep apnea. In sleep apnea, breathing is interrupted during sleep. Each interruption may last 10 seconds or more and the pattern can occur 20 or 30 times each hour. These breathing pauses are almost always accompanied by loud snoring. Restful sleep is nearly impossible under this condition.

Airways can be obstructed in your throat, soft palate, or by your tongue. Sleep apnea can be health-threatening. A study involving more than 6,000 adults, ages 40 and over, showed that the risk of hypertension increased with the severity of sleep apnea in all participants, regardless of age, sex, race, or weight. The risk was seen even at moderate levels of sleep apnea.

If you don't wake up in the morning rested, you fall asleep during normal daily activities, or your sleep is interrupted by loud snoring or interrupted breathing, ask your health care provider about a sleep apnea test. The most common treatment is continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), a procedure involving use of a facemask which forces air through the nasal passages. Behavioral changes, especially weight loss, are usually recommended as well.

### Mild snoring

If you snore occasionally, if your snoring annoys your partner, or if you want to reduce your snoring, try:

- Sleeping on your side instead of your back
- Avoiding alcohol before going to bed
- Avoiding sleeping pills, tranquilizers, or antihistamines before bedtime
- Avoiding smoking or using other tobacco products
- Losing weight, if overweight
- Sleeping with your head slightly higher than the rest of the body

If these home remedies don't work, a medical specialist, called an otolaryngologist, can specifically provide a professional examination and diagnosis, and help determine a course of treatment.

### References:

- 1. Mortality associated with sleep duration. Archives of General Psychiatry. 59:137-8. February 2002.*
- 2. National Sleep Foundation. www.sleepfoundation.org. 2006.*
- 3. Snoring: Not Funny, Not Hopeless. American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery. 2002.*
- 4. Study Shows Association Between Sleep Apnea and Hypertension. Press Release. National Institutes of Health. April 11, 2000.*





# Sleep for Better Health

**CHALLENGE**  
Get 7 to 8 hours sleep daily.

**Instructions**

1. Post this record sheet where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of hours you sleep each day. Use this calendar to also record your exercise program (min/day), weekly weight, and any other items you may want to track.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you got 7 to 8 hours of sleep. To complete the Challenge you must meet the goal at least 22 days out of the month. Then keep up this healthy practice for a lifetime of best health!
4. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>		
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ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____		

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I got 7 to 8 hours of sleep

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking

**Other wellness projects completed this month:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_