

AT FIFTY PLUS

News and Tips for Living Healthier From the Anne Arundel County Department of Health



Click For Health

How To Find Reliable Health Information On The Internet

More and more Americans are going online. And more and more look for health and medical information on the Internet. In fact, over 35 percent of those who “surf the Net” say they search for health topics. Seniors are the fastest growing group of these users and spend more

time on the Internet than any other age group.

But, there’s a stumbling block. The Internet has thousands of health Web sites, some reliable, some not. No one regulates the Internet, so be alert, and use caution and common sense when reviewing information.

The Department of Health offers these tips to help seniors access the most reliable health sources on the Internet:

- **Start with government sponsored health sites.** How can you tell? Government sites usually end in “gov.” But, some of them, like the Anne Arundel County Department of Health’s site, end in “org.” Government sites are generally reviewed, updated often and checked for accuracy before posting.
- **The Healthfinder search engine at www.healthfinder.gov is a good place to start.** It will guide you to many dependable government health sites. This site is a free gateway to reliable consumer health information. It is well organized and easy to use. This search engine can be accessed from the Department of Health’s Web site, www.aahealth.org.
- **Always check who publishes the site.** Is it a national organization, like the American Cancer Society? Or is it a coalition or individual? Or is it a profit-making business? One quick clue is that business Web sites end in “com” and Web sites of non-profit organizations most often end in “org.”
- **Find out when the site was last updated.** Health information changes all the time, so you need the latest facts. Most credible sites feature a “last updated” date on their home page.
- **Be aware of advertisements or sites cluttered with product promotions.** Government and other legitimate sites will not sell health items for profit.

- **Guard your privacy.** Think twice before you enter any personal information on the site and make sure there is a privacy statement that promises not to pass on information to other sources without consent.
- **Take the “too good to be true” test.** If the information sounds unbelievable, it probably is. Be wary of “guarantees” or “miracle cures” that don’t have adequate information to back them up. Check the claims against information on other sites.
- **Note: Information from the Internet should only supplement the information you get from your doctor, not replace it.** Don’t change any medications or treatments or change your lifestyle because of what you read online. Talk to your doctor first.
- **Visit the Anne Arundel County Department of Health’s Web site, www.aahealth.org.** Here you can find out more about many different health issues. You can also find information about health events in the community as well as the reduced cost and free services the Department of Health offers.

Learn To Live At Fifty-Plus is published by the Anne Arundel County Department of Health, 3 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401. For information, call the Learn To Live Line at 410-222-7979.

Take Your Bones For A Walk

Exercise Builds Bones For Better Health

Did you know that, like muscle, bone is living tissue that becomes stronger with exercise? It's true. In addition to the many health benefits you can get from regular exercise, you can also improve your bone health, no matter what your age.

After age 35, most adults begin to lose bone mass. But, you can slow this bone loss with regular weight-bearing exercise. This kind of exercise helps keep bones strong, reduces osteoporosis, prevents injury from falls and improves overall health.

Weight-bearing exercise means that your feet and legs are "bearing your weight." Examples are walking, jogging, stair-climbing, tennis and dancing.

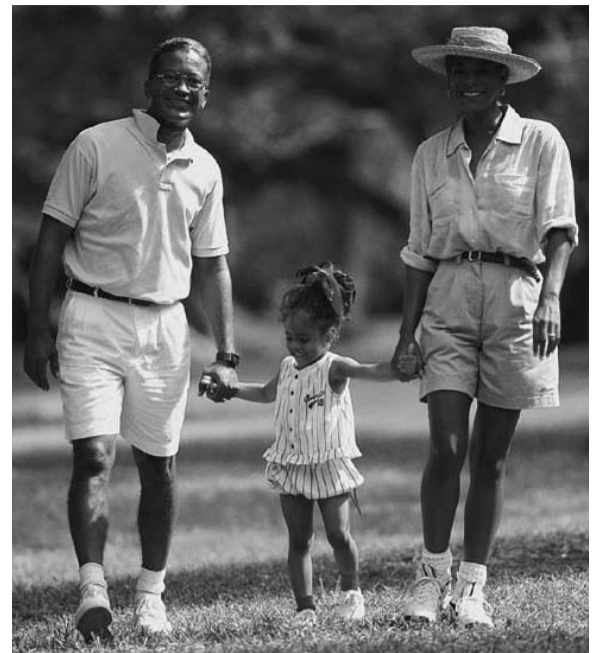
Some examples of non-weight-bearing exercise are swimming or bicycling. While they have

excellent cardiovascular benefits, these exercises aren't as good for bone health.

Another kind of exercise also helps build bones. This is called "resistance exercise." Working out with weights is a good example. Combining weight-bearing and resistance exercise is the best road to bone health.

Here are some tips for exercising safely:

- **The best exercise plan uses a variety of exercises.** Variety will keep you interested and enhance overall fitness. If you make sure to include some weight-bearing exercise, you'll be doing your bones a favor!
- **Take your bones for a walk.** Walking is great exercise at any age and can be done indoors at a local mall or track if the weather is bad.



- **Exercise every day.** Start slowly at first, maybe every other day. Once you get going, try to exercise for at least 30 minutes every day. Housework, gardening and climbing the stairs at home are all forms of exercise.
- **Listen to your body.** Don't overdo it. Pain is a sign that you are overexerting your body. Use the "talk test" guide. If you cannot talk easily during exercise, you may be working too intensely.
- **Eat right for energy.** Diet and exercise go together. Eating healthy foods maximizes health benefits. Include calcium-rich foods for better bone health.

Remember, always consult with your doctor before starting any exercise program.

If you have osteoporosis or have had a fracture, you should take extra caution with the type of exercise you choose.

Call the Learn To Live Line at 410-222-7979 for more free information about exercise and health or use the coupon on the back page of this newsletter. Information can also be ordered online at www.aahealth.org.

Watch Your Step!

Among Anne Arundel County residents over age 65, falls cause more hospital stays and deaths than any other kind of injury. Regular exercise is one way to prevent falling.

Another way is to fall-proof your home. Here are some tips:

- Call the Learn To Live Line, 410-222-7979 for a "Watch Your Step" brochure with a Home Fall-Prevention Checklist.
- Make sure all areas of your home have enough light. Add lamps or brighter light bulbs to help you see clearly.
- Throw rugs often cause falls. If you must use throw rugs, make sure they have non-slip backing.
- Make sure walk areas and stairs are clear of clutter and dangling electrical cords or phone cords.
- Keep a flashlight and your eyeglasses by your bed. Use a nightlight.
- To help avoid tripping, wear clothes that are no longer than ankle length. Also, wear supportive shoes, without laces if possible.
- Have your vision and medicines checked regularly. Some medicines can make you drowsy or dizzy.

Oral Cancer Alert

Signs You Should Look For

Although oral cancer isn't "in the news" as much as some other cancers, you should know the warning signs. Once the disease has spread it is hard to treat. This cancer of the mouth or tongue is most common in people over 45.

Here are some warning signs of oral cancer

Oral cancers can involve any area of the mouth – the tongue, lips, soft palate, tonsils, salivary glands and the back of the throat. People who smoke or use smokeless tobacco, especially those who also use alcohol, are at the greatest risk. Those who are out in the sun a great deal increase their risk of lip cancer.

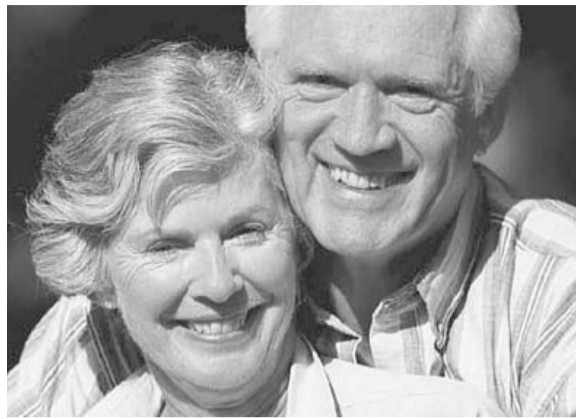
Here are possible signs you should know:

- A white or red patch in the mouth
- A sore, lump, or thickening tissue in the mouth
- Hoarseness or a feeling that something is caught in your throat
- Problems with chewing, swallowing, or moving your jaw or tongue
- Numbness of the tongue or other areas of the mouth
- Swelling of the jaw that causes dentures to fit poorly

If any of these symptoms lasts for more than two weeks, see your dentist or doctor.

How to lower your risk

Get regular dental exams. Problems that could lead to oral cancer can often be found at early stages. Regular dental exams are



important whether you have natural teeth or dentures.

If you have dentures, your dentist will check their fit and condition as well as the health of your gums and other tissues. Dentures that don't fit right can cause sore areas in the mouth. Sharp places on natural teeth can also cause sore areas. These sores can turn into cancer over time.

Along with dental checkups you should check your own mouth from time to time. Ask your dentist about how to care for your mouth at home. Keeping your natural teeth or dentures and your gums clean improves your general

health. A clean mouth also helps your speech, ability to eat, and your looks. If you notice a sore spot in your mouth with no apparent cause, see your dentist or doctor.

Here are some other ways to lower your risk of oral cancer:

- If you use tobacco products, stopping can lower your risk of oral cancer, as well as other serious health problems.
- If you drink alcohol, do so only in moderation.
- Eat a healthy diet with lots of fruits and vegetables.
- Be sure a routine head and neck exam is part of your regular dental or physical checkups.

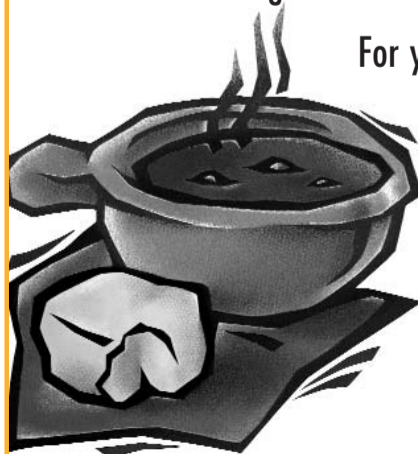
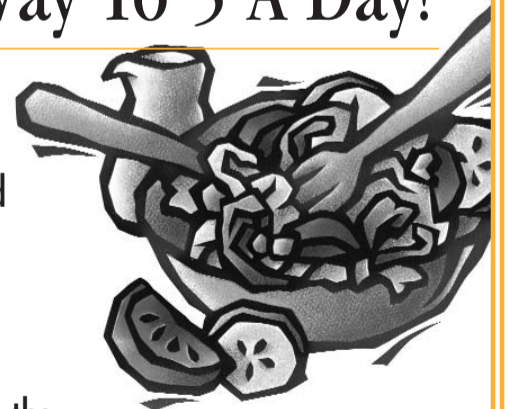
Each year nationwide more than 30,000 cases of oral cancer disease are diagnosed, and more than 8,000 people die. The 5-year survival rate is only about 50 percent, so ignoring signs of oral cancer can be deadly.

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Free! Healthy Recipes.

Make A Meal With Savory Vegetables And You're On Your Way To 5 A Day!

Tasty vegetables make healthy, low-fat meals. Try Sunshine Spinach Salad, Turkey and Asparagus Rollups, Harvest Squash Bake, Stuffed Cabbage Soup and more great ways to get 5 fruits and vegetables every day!



For your free recipes and a Healthy Eating Kit, call the County Department of Health at **410-222-7979**.

Learn To Live

Healthy Living From The Anne Arundel County Department Of Health
Order online at aahealth.org. Click on Learn To Live.

Oral Cancer Alert
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How to get more help

Call the Learn To Live line at 410-222-7979 for a free Fifty-Plus Health Kit or order online at www.aahealth.org. See the coupon below.

If you need help finding a dental service provider, call the Department of Health's Dental Health Services program in Annapolis at 410-222-7138 or in

Glen Burnie at 410-222-6861. For those who qualify, the Department of Health can provide referrals to private providers for discount dental services.

You can get more oral cancer information from the National Oral Health Information Clearinghouse, 1 HOHIC Way, Bethesda, MD 20892-3500. Telephone: 301-402-7364; TTY: 301-656-7581; Internet: www.nohic.nidcr.nih.gov

More Help

If you have questions or concerns about health, disabilities or other topics dealing with health and everyday living, here are some sources that may be able to help.

Anne Arundel County Department of Health

Learn To Live Line,
410-222-7979

Web site: www.aahealth.org

For Fifty-Plus Health information, click on Learn To Live, then on Fifty-Plus Health

Anne Arundel County Department of Aging

410-222-4464

Web site: www.aa-aging.org

Anne Arundel County Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

410-222-4464

This program offers one-on-one insurance information, help and group educational seminars on Medicare, medigap, private health insurance issues and long-term care insurance for seniors and their families.

American Cancer Society (local chapter)

410-721-4304

Web site: www.cancer.org

Medicare

1-800-444-4606

Web site: www.medicare.gov

The services and facilities of the Anne Arundel County Department of Health are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, political affiliation or opinion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, or disability.

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Here's a Prescription for Healthy Living

Rx You can request a free Learn To Live Fifty-Plus Health Kit by calling the Learn To Live Line, 410-222-7979, or use this coupon.

Please send me (qty.) _____ free Fifty-Plus Health Kits.
Include information on the health topics I have checked.

Fitness and Injury
Prevention

Women's Cancer
Prevention

Eating for Health

Quitting Smoking

Oral Health

Preventing Skin Cancer

Men's Cancer Prevention

Colorectal Cancer

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____

Mail this coupon to Learn To Live, Anne Arundel County
Department of Health, 3 Harry Truman Pkwy., Annapolis,
MD 21401, or fax to 410-222-7294.

Learn To Live

Healthy Living From The Anne Arundel County Department Of Health

410-222-7979 • www.aahealth.org

Now, you can order kits online! From the Department of Health's Web site, www.aahealth.org, click on Learn To Live, then on the Request Free Materials button at the bottom of the page.