

When to Get a Second Opinion

If you have concerns about a medical diagnosis, consider a second opinion.

A second opinion from a different health care provider, especially one who specializes in your diagnosed condition, can increase confidence in your current diagnosis and treatment plan. Or it might uncover a possible misdiagnosis or offer a different treatment.



Second opinions are frequently sought, so don't hesitate because you are concerned your current provider will be upset. Experienced providers won't take your interest in a second opinion as a reflection on their expertise and should encourage you to see other specialists if necessary.

Reasons to consider a second opinion:

- Your provider can't find the cause of your symptoms.
- You have a rare or serious condition and want a provider with expertise in your diagnosis.
- You are concerned that some of your symptoms were dismissed.
- You have multiple treatment options, including surgery, and want another opinion about what's best for your condition.
- Your current treatment can have serious side effects or it's not working.

Prepare for a second opinion consult. Find out if your insurance covers second opinion visits and make sure the specialist accepts your insurance. Write down questions and concerns for the provider. For example, what are the risks and benefits of the treatment options? Are there any treatment options or enrollment in clinical trials that could be an option for your condition? And does the consulting provider think your diagnosis is correct or is there another possible diagnosis?

If your second opinion produces a different diagnosis or treatment option, you can discuss it with your current provider, transfer your care to a new specialist, or consider a third opinion. The good news is you'll have more information about your condition and options.

BEST bits

• What should you do if an earthquake strikes?

Participating in **International ShakeOut Day on October 17** can help. Never assume there's no reason to worry about that possibility. Even if you aren't in a high earthquake risk area (such as Alaska, California and Washington State), earthquakes can strike without warning, causing fires, tsunamis, landslides and collapsed buildings. Earthquakes can be so powerful you can't run or crawl away when one hits. **ShakeOut Day** is an opportunity to practice earthquake drills in person or online, and learn how to protect you and your family during an earthquake. Learn more at shakeout.org.

• **October is Halloween Safety Month.** Halloween is full of trick-or-treating fun — and potential dangers. Make sure costumes are fire-resistant and that your child is visible at night on dark sidewalks and roads. Add reflective tape to costumes and opt for glow-in-the-dark T-shirts or accessories. Pocket-sized flashlights can come in handy, too. Make it clear kids cannot enter any unknown houses, and they cannot eat any treats they collect before you check them. Remind teens and adults to be extra careful driving on Halloween; the National Safety Council warns it's a dangerous time of the year for accidents when excited children dart into streets.

• **Turn back your clocks: Daylight Saving Time (DST) ends on Sunday, November 3, at 2 a.m.** It was first used in Canada, the UK and Europe in the early 1900s. About 40% of countries worldwide use it to make better use of daylight and to conserve energy; start and end dates vary across the globe. To help your body ease transitioning back an hour, reverse your bedtime 15 to 20 minutes each night two to three nights before DST ends. DST isn't observed in Hawaii and most of Arizona.

PROTECT Your Teeth

 October is National Dental Hygiene Month.

Regular dental care can go far to protect your teeth and health. **Brushing** twice a day for two minutes and **flossing** daily are essential. And having regular dental checkups is also key.

If your dentist spots a problem early, treatment can be easier and less costly than if you wait until you have obvious symptoms, such as bleeding gums or a severe toothache. An oral health exam can reveal risks or signs of other medical conditions, too.

Some people need a checkup once or twice a year. Others may need more visits, depending on the condition of their teeth and gums and whether they have other health issues.

Your oral health is an essential part of your overall health. Your dentist will ask about your medical history, any recent problems, diagnoses or symptoms, and what medications you're taking.

During a checkup, your dentist examines your mouth and tongue for any signs of oral cancer and checks for cavities, damage to fillings or crowns and signs of gum disease. (Dental X-rays

are typically not ordered more than every two years or so.)

Gum disease develops when plaque, tartar and bacteria build up on teeth, causing swollen and sometimes bleeding gums. *Gingivitis* is the milder form of gum disease, and it can usually be prevented and often reversed if you brush and floss daily.

But if left untreated, gingivitis may progress to a more severe type of gum disease, periodontitis. This can result in the loss of teeth and even cause bone loss in your jaw. Regular dental exams can identify the condition, which is usually treated with antibiotics. If periodontitis is severe, scaling and planing of the teeth (deep cleaning below the gumline to help the gum reattach to teeth) may be needed. Other risk factors include smoking and diabetes.

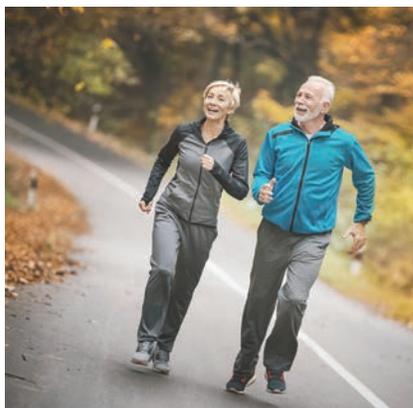


If periodontitis remains untreated, bone loss continues, your teeth may become loose and can potentially fall out. People with periodontitis have a higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease, stroke, dementia, and other serious health problems.

Exercise Guidelines

Are you getting enough physical activity to maintain good health? Odds are you aren't, according to the updated federal Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. Only one in five U.S. adults is getting enough exercise. The good news is there are research-backed ways to get moving, feel your best, and help prevent future health problems.

The guidelines recommend most adults should aim for at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity exercise, or at least 75 minutes to 150 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity exercise (spreading exercise throughout the week is best).



Additional health benefits can be gained by even more physical activity a week. Adults should also include muscle-strengthening activities involving all major muscle groups on two or more days weekly. Consider lifting weights (starting with very light ones if you are new to this activity) or resistance training.

Of course, if you've been working in an office for years and spent most of your off-work hours sitting, it may seem daunting to exercise that much. Just start with 10- or 15-minute sessions, and gradually work up to 30 minutes and longer. Be patient. Get your health care provider's okay before starting.

Some physical activity is better than none. In fact, adults who sit less and do any amount of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity gain some health benefits. While adults with chronic conditions or disabilities may not be able to meet the recommended exercise goals, they can work with their health care provider to find a way to increase activities they can do.

National Depression Screening Day on October 10 is an opportunity to learn about this serious mood disorder which affects one in six Americans at some time in their lives. Take the depression test at [screening.mhanational.org](https://www.mhanational.org) to check for depression symptoms. These can include persistent sadness, irritability, unexplained fatigue, and difficulty sleeping. **Good news:** Depression is highly treatable. Contact your health care provider if you have depression symptoms.



Plant-Based Proteins

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

When someone chooses to eat more plant-based foods, the first question they hear is, “But how will you get enough protein?”

Climbing stairs is associated with a longer life.

Research presented at the European Society of Cardiology Congress suggested that climbing stairs as a form of physical activity can help reduce risks of cardiovascular disease and death. The investigators collected the most reliable data available and conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis. Ultimately, studies involving 480,479 participants, comprised of healthy individuals and those with a history of heart attack and peripheral arterial disease, were incorporated into the final assessment. Participants ranged from ages 35 to 84 and women constituted 53% of the study.

Report of the research results:

Compared to not climbing stairs, stair climbing exhibited a 24% reduction in the risk of all-cause mortality and a 39% decrease in the likelihood of succumbing to heart disease. Additionally, stair climbing was associated with diminished risks of heart attack, heart failure and stroke.

To be heart-healthy take the stairs as often as you can (with your health care provider’s okay). Whether at work, home or anywhere else, if there are stairs, climb them to improve your heart and lung functions.

TIP of the MONTH

The Dessert Effect

Have you ever felt full after dinner but still found room



for dessert? It’s a scientific phenomenon called **sensory specific satiety**. It happens when our taste buds get bored with a certain food, but get excited by the thought of a new food. It’s something to watch out for since it causes you to eat more even when you’re full. Over time, it can lead to overeating and weight gain. **One solution?** Eat a small dessert alongside dinner instead of overeating afterward.

We think of protein foods as meat, chicken and fish. While it’s true these animal-based foods are excellent sources of protein, many plant-based foods offer plenty of protein, too.

Plant-based protein is found in beans, lentils and soy foods, such as tofu, tempeh and edamame. There is also some protein in nuts, seeds and whole grains. When eaten in the right amount, it is easy to get enough protein from plant-based foods alone.

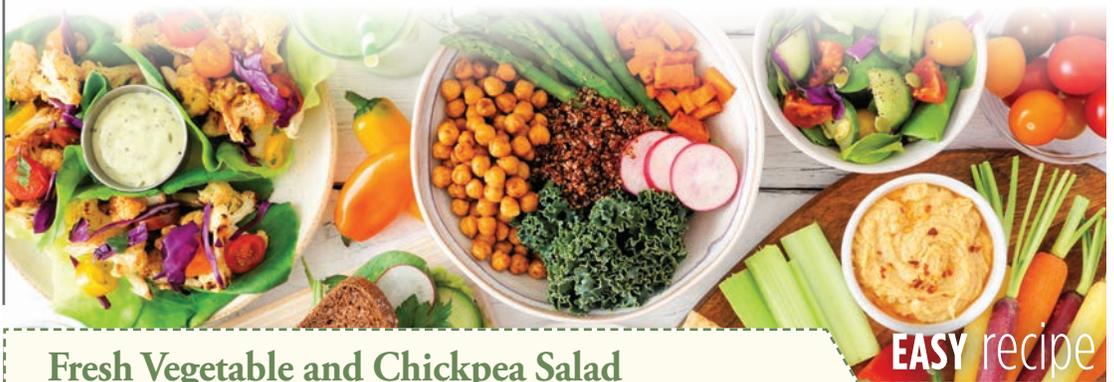
You can also choose to eat mostly plant foods, but add in dairy, fish or meat occasionally. You make the decisions for your dietary pattern. Whether it’s fully plant-based or you sometimes eat animal foods, any pattern that’s mostly plants can help reduce the risk of developing heart disease and some cancers.

As plant-based eating has grown in popularity, food companies have jumped on the trend. They created more ultra-processed foods made from plants, such as veggie bacon, deli meat alternatives and soy burgers. While these are fine to eat occasionally, they are not what health care professionals mean when they recommend eating more plants. Stick most often with less processed plant-based protein options, such as chickpeas, lentils and tofu.

Aim for 20 to 30 grams of protein per meal.

Here is the protein content for some plant-based foods (all cooked, one cup unless otherwise stated):

Tempeh: 34 grams
Pinto beans: 22 grams
Firm tofu: 20 grams
Edamame: 18 grams
Lentils: 18 grams
Black or kidney beans: 18 grams
Chickpeas: 14 grams
Quinoa: 8 grams
Pasta: 8 grams
Soy beverage: 8 grams
Walnuts or cashews (2 oz.): 8 grams
Peanut butter (1 tbsp): 7 grams



Fresh Vegetable and Chickpea Salad

EASY recipe

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tsp lemon juice + zest
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 can (15 oz.) unsalted chickpeas, drained and rinsed

- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 English cucumber, diced
- 1 yellow pepper, seeded and diced
- 3 oz. soft goat cheese, crumbled
- ¼ cup freshly chopped mint

In a small bowl, whisk together oil, garlic, lemon and salt.

Set aside. **In** a large bowl, add chickpeas, tomato, cucumber, yellow pepper and goat cheese. **Top** with dressing and mint. **Toss** and serve.



Makes 6 servings. Per serving: 289 calories | 12g protein | 12g total fat | 3g saturated fat | 6g mono fat | 2g poly fat | 34g carbohydrate | 2g sugar (0g added sugar) | 7g fiber | 344mg sodium

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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EXPERT advice

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Q: What is a diagnostic mammogram?

A: Diagnostic mammograms are X-rays designed to evaluate breast symptoms or signs. They may be ordered to investigate breast abnormalities, such as a lump, a painful area, a nipple discharge, or a thickening or change in the skin's appearance. They can also be used for women whose breasts have changed shape or size.

In contrast to *diagnostic* mammograms, *screening* mammograms are designed to detect breast cancer in asymptomatic people. If a screening mammogram spots breast changes that could indicate cancer, a diagnostic mammogram can be done as a next step. This often includes additional images or special techniques to zoom in on a suspicious area.

Further evaluation may be needed.

The radiologist who reads the diagnostic mammogram may compare it with the patient's previous mammograms. Other imaging tests, such as an ultrasound or MRI, are sometimes used to investigate a potentially cancerous area. A biopsy may be recommended if necessary.

Tips for Beginning Investors

By Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, CFP, AFC, MBA

Have friends told you about making money with investments, and you are ready to dive in? Investing can be exciting, but like most things, it carries risks.

Here are a few questions to consider before investing:

1. How long before you need the money?
2. How much risk can you handle?
3. How much money do you have available to invest?

Suggestions for building a good portfolio:

- ✓ Buy stocks in different industries.
- ✓ Don't invest all your money at one time. Stock prices and the overall market move daily. Start slowly and add money as your budget allows.
- ✓ Avoid social media. Listening to others vent about their investments can cause anxiety and doubt.
- ✓ Don't look at your portfolio daily.

- ✓ Maintain your equity investments for at least seven years.
- ✓ Keep current by reading reputable online sources.
- ✓ Pay down debt. Focus on high interest-bearing debt first, and commit a monthly amount above your minimum payment to speed up the process.
- ✓ Think about how you handle risk and how much you are comfortable with.



What happens to expired or unwanted prescription medications?

If they're left around your house or thrown in the trash, they can end up in the wrong hands. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) says unwanted drugs that are disposed of improperly contribute to drug abuse, overdoses or accidental poisonings. And flushing drugs adds to contamination of the public water supply. **October 24 is Prescription Drug Take Back Day**, when you can safely drop off drugs at DEA-approved collection sites. Find one near you at dea.gov/takebackday.