



Patoka Valley  
Health Care Cooperative

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A MONTHLY HEALTHLETTER FROM THE WELLNESS COUNCIL OF AMERICA

## WHAT'S REALLY MAKING YOU LOOK OLDER?

Aging is of course inevitable, but there are factors at play that can help determine how old you really look. Your inherited genes indeed play a role in your appearance as you get older, but maybe not as much as you think. In fact a study published in *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, the official medical journal of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons found that the major factors of skin aging (think wrinkles and crow's feet) involve lifestyle choices like smoking, eating and sun exposure.

The study's researchers noted that environmental factors and personal lifestyle choices more than genes can add years to a person's appearance. Bottom line: maintaining a healthy lifestyle that includes not smoking, eating lots of fruits and veggies, exercising and wearing sunscreen will help keep you radiant inside and out!



## GO ON... ACT LIKE A CHILD! THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF ACTING LIKE A YOUNGSTER

Believe it or not, behaving like a child can help you get and stay healthy. To be sure, adopting some of the natural habits and behaviors exhibited by children can benefit your health—from helping to manage stress to trimming your waistline.

### ACTING LIKE A KID CAN:

**HELP PROTECT YOUR BRAIN.** Children go to school every day and are constantly learning new things, whether it's a math concept or a new game on the playground. Unfortunately, as we age, this continual learning usually begins to decline. But there's good reason to keep your mind active and learn new things. Regularly challenging your mind with activities like reading books, doing crossword puzzles and/or playing board games can keep your brain fit as you age. Some studies even indicate that regular learning and mental stimulation can help protect you from Alzheimer's disease.

**HELP YOU STAY MINDFUL.** Mindfulness is the practice of focusing on the moment and staying present—and kids are (likely unknowingly) masters at this! Whereas adults often fret about future deadlines or past events or mistakes, kids are great at enjoying the now. Several studies show that practicing mindfulness can help you manage chronic stress and possibly fight off depression—so make like a kid and focus on the moment and enjoy what's in front of you!

**HELP YOU STAY SLIM.** Kids eat when they're hungry and they eat until they're full. Many adults, on the other hand, eat not because of true hunger but because of boredom or to fulfill an emotional need. Moreover, adults often indulge in large portions and eat until their plates are clean. Following the habits of children, whether it's having a smaller "kiddie" size meal or

eating "kid-like" snacks such as celery with peanut butter, frozen grapes or plain yogurt with fruit can help you manage your weight.

**HELP YOU KEEP MEANINGFUL SOCIAL CONNECTIONS.** Children are social creatures; they seek playmates and they love getting together for "play dates." Research shows that maintaining meaningful social connections can help fight depression and help your overall well-being. So, make sure you're putting your own play dates on the calendar.



This is an easy and scrumptious side dish that is filled with nutritional zip.

**INGREDIENTS:**

1 bunch of asparagus, trimmed and cut crosswise in half

5 scallions, white and green parts, sliced into one inch pieces

1 8 oz. container of mushrooms of choice, sliced

2 garlic cloves, minced

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Salt and fresh cracked pepper to taste

Juice of ½ lemon

**DIRECTIONS:**

Heat olive oil over medium high heat in a skillet. Add asparagus, onions, mushrooms, salt, and pepper, and sauté, stirring often. After 3-4 minutes, add garlic, reduce heat to low, and cover with a lid about 2 minutes. Squeeze in the fresh lemon juice, more pepper, and serve.

**SERVES:** 4-6 people

# ASPARAGUS, MUSHROOM & SCALLION *Sauté*



**Dr. Ann**  
WELLNESS

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).



## SUPERSTAR FOOD OF THE MONTH: MUSHROOMS

Make room for mushrooms! They are super low in calories (20 calories per ½ cup), but high in key nutrients, including B vitamins, copper, potassium, and selenium. As an added bonus, mushrooms are especially high in a class of beneficial polysaccharides that enhance immune function.

# DON'T JUDGE A FOOD BY ITS COLOR

We're often told to "eat the rainbow" when it comes to selecting produce. This is indeed good advice, but there's also ample reason to give pale fruits and veggies some love! Research published in *Advances in Nutrition* found that white produce packs some serious flavors and a hefty nutritional punch. In fact, some white fruits and vegetables contribute substantial quantities of nutrients that many adults simply don't get enough of like potassium, magnesium and fiber.

## HERE ARE A FEW OF THE SUPERSTARS:

**CAULIFLOWER:** This veggie is not only low in calories, it's also full of vitamins and minerals. If you have one cup of raw cauliflower as a side dish or as a snack, you'll get a hefty dose of vitamin C, which aids tissue growth and repair throughout your entire body. Cauliflower also offers a healthy dose of potassium, fiber and folic acid.

**ONIONS:** Onions are a good source of vitamin C, which can help your body combat the formation of free radicals known to cause cancer. Onions are also rich in the antioxidant quercetin, and Japanese researchers have found that onions may help combat hay fever, eczema and allergies.

**GARLIC:** Garlic produces a chemical called allicin, and this is what seems to give garlic its "magic." There have been several studies on the effects of garlic, and some have shown that garlic may be effective in slowing the development of atherosclerosis and may be able to modestly reduce blood pressure.

**POTATOES:** Potatoes often get a bad rap. But the problem usually isn't with the potato itself. The problem with potatoes is usually how we cook them (i.e., fried and/or loaded with cheese). One medium baked potato has only 161 calories, plus 4 grams of filling fiber. Potatoes are also loaded with potassium (even more than bananas!) which can help keep your bones strong. A medium baked potato topped with steamed veggies like broccoli can be a filling, nutritious and low-cal side dish.

**MUSHROOMS:** Mushrooms are high in key nutrients, including B vitamins, copper, potassium and selenium. The common mushrooms found on produce shelves at the grocery, like white buttons, criminis, and portabellas, provide more antioxidant power than most vegetables. Cooked mushrooms maintain their antioxidant capacity and make an excellent substitute for meat because of their unique, savory flavor and meaty texture. Throw them into salads, soups, stews, spaghetti and pasta sauces.

Onions get their distinctive flavor from sulfur, which is what makes you cry when you cut them. Try throwing them in the freezer for 15 minutes to reduce the amount of sulfur that's released. This will reduce your level of irritation while cutting an onion.





# 16 SIMPLE WAYS TO ACT LIKE A KID AGAIN!

Research shows that maintaining creative hobbies like painting and writing yields cognitive benefits and may even stave off diseases like Alzheimer's and dementia.

Do an Internet search or visit [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) for "adult coloring books." You'll find a wide variety!

**1. Smile at a stranger.** Some surveys suggest that children smile hundreds of times a day and adults, only around 15. Other studies have shed light on how the act of smiling can elevate your mood and the mood of those around you—so flash your pearly whites at a stranger—you'll both benefit.

**2. Watch one of your favorite childhood TV shows or movies.** The power of technology can bring your childhood faves to your fingertips. Watching old favorites can bring back happy memories and make you feel young again.

**3. Go outside for "recess".** Kids have recess for a reason—the fresh air and activity is rejuvenating and enables better focus when it's time to go back to class. Follow suit by taking your afternoon break outside. Take a quick walk and breathe in the fresh air.

**4. Relax with a coloring book.** It's a great way to stay in the "present" and you'll likely find it soothing.

**5. Let someone cut you in line.** OK, most kids don't do this. But the point here is to stop rushing all the time (most children know how to take their sweet time). Letting someone go ahead of you in the grocery store or coffee line is one easy way to slow down.

**6. Get your hands dirty.** Why are kids naturally drawn to dirt piles and puddles? Because playing in them is fun! Join in by making a sandcastle or jumping into a leaf pile.



7. Consider a slumber party. Just because you're a grown up doesn't mean you have to miss out on the fun of sleepovers. Set aside a Saturday night and invite friends over. Provide snacks, watch a movie, play some games and go out to breakfast the next morning.

8. Take a hike or go climbing. It's invigorating to conquer a trail or to be above ground level—maybe that's why kids are drawn to these activities. Go rock climbing or find a scenic trail. You'll find it exhilarating.

9. Turn a room in your house into an art studio. Paint, draw, build, write—do anything in this makeshift studio that allows you to be creative. Kids are inherently creative, but it's a skill that tends to drop off over time, as we take on adult responsibilities.

10. Visit a playground. Play some basketball or dodgeball, jump rope or simply play on the equipment with your kids. You may find that when you're having fun, it doesn't even feel like exercise!

11. Play a board game. Board games are prevalent in daycares and classrooms for a reason. They offer social interaction and engage your mind. Grab some friends and challenge them to a game of Scrabble!

12. Wear something fun. Be like a kid and give yourself the creative freedom to express yourself. It's amazing how one fun t-shirt or accessory can lift your spirits and boost your confidence.

13. Go to bed early. There's good reason your parents probably made you go to bed early. It's critical for your health and a great start to your tomorrow. Try to give yourself at least one early bedtime one night this week (you should always aim for 7-8 hours a night).

14. Pack a "throwback" lunch. It's a fun, simple and often healthy way to feel like a kid again. Pack a PB and J and grab a carton of milk.

15. Find a photo booth and have a silly photo session. Place the photos somewhere where you'll see them often, like your desk or on the refrigerator—they'll serve as an instant pick-me-up whenever you look at them.

16. Try to ask more questions. As we get older we often lose the inquisitive nature and habits we had as a child. But being curious can help spark creativity—so ask more questions when you can, like "Is this the best way to approach this?" or "How does this work?"

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



## BE PREPARED!

If you visit your doc due to hip pain, he/she will likely ask you some questions about your medical history and perform a physical exam. Your doctor also will want to know about any other health conditions you may have, such as osteoporosis, and what medications, supplements, or herbal treatments you are currently taking.

One of the best things you can do to help achieve a speedy and accurate diagnosis is to be prepared and ready to discuss your pain.

Be prepared to discuss:

- If the pain started as the result of an injury or accident
- How often you feel the hip pain—is it constant or just during specific times of the day?
- Where the pain occurs—does it radiate through your hips, lower back, legs, etc.?
- Whether pain is made worse by activity
- If the pain limits your ability to do any type of activity
- What, if anything, has helped to relieve the pain
- A description of the pain (for example: dull ache, sharp stabbing pain, burning sensation, or quick snapping sensation)

Your doctor may also ask you to rate your pain on a scale (i.e., from one to 10). Accurate and detailed answers to these questions can help your doctor diagnose the true cause of your pain and recommend the best plan for treatment.

# HIP POINTERS



## How to Spot & Treat Hip Pain

Your hips are among the most active joints in your body. A ball-and-socket joint, your hips help you move your legs during everyday activities such as walking and going up and down stairs. Although your hip joint is very stable, it's not uncommon to experience occasional hip pain.

### COMMON CAUSES & SYMPTOMS OF HIP PAIN

You may experience hip pain if you have arthritis, experienced a hip injury such as a dislocation, sprain or fracture, or if you have a pinched nerve. With hip pain, you may notice a reduced range of motion when you do things like turn or bend. Depending on what's causing your hip pain, you might feel discomfort in your:

- Thigh
- Inside of the hip joint
- Groin
- Outside of the hip joint
- Buttocks

for 10-15 minutes to help relieve pain and any swelling. Avoid high-impact activities like running or basketball until you feel better.

### SHOULD I SEE A DOCTOR?

If you ever have trouble walking or if it's been a few weeks and you're still experiencing pain, call your doctor. Additionally, if you experience any of the symptoms below, call your doctor, as they may indicate a more serious problem:

- Pain that causes you to alter your stride or causes you to limp
- A feeling that your legs are different lengths
- You have a difficult time going through regular motions, like crossing your legs or twisting when you put on your seatbelt
- Your hip feels extremely stiff

### SELF-CARE STRATEGIES

Most hip pain can be treated with over-the-counter pain medications like aspirin or ibuprofen. If you have arthritis, your doctor may prescribe a stronger anti-inflammatory medication. You can also try icing your hip



# How to Find the Best Fitness Device

Fitness devices like activity trackers, heart rate monitors and nutrition apps have become a multi-billion dollar industry, with more and more consumers getting comfortable using these devices by the second. People using trackers range from athletes to exercise novices. Most use these devices to keep them motivated and on track. Indeed, when you can see your movement, measurements and progress on any given day, you're much more conscious and motivated to keep up the good work (or get back on track if the data shows you're slipping).

If you're in the market for a fitness device or want to replace your current one, keep these key questions in mind:



**What are your fitness goals?** Before you buy, consider your goals. Are you trying to increase movement throughout the day? Improve your endurance? Train for a triathlon? If you want something that just tracks your steps, you can probably do just fine with a simple (and much less expensive) device. If you're a more experienced exerciser you may need something more sophisticated.



**How much data do you want?** Some activity trackers can provide data on your every move (even when you're sleeping) and can thus offer new insight into your health. Many devices can provide GPS technology to track your location, and can monitor your speed, heart rate and altitude (just to name a few). If this data is important to you, just be prepared to spend more.



**Are you comfortable using the technology?** Many activity trackers on the market today are very tech savvy. They can let you sync with external heart monitors, smart bathroom scales and even provide the ability to share data remotely with your doctor. Most are intuitive to use, but just be sure you're comfortable and know how to use the device before you take it home. Ask the salesperson to give you a demo and keep the user's manual handy.

Trackers are great tools to keep you aware and motivated. Moreover, they can give you great insight into the habits that make up your lifestyle. But do keep in mind that a fitness tracker is only beneficial if you use it. Make sure you select one that fits your goals and needs.

## Can I just use my Smart Phone?

An app downloaded to your smart phone can indeed offer many of the same benefits of an activity tracker. In a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, researchers noted that smartphone apps did a great job capturing the accuracy of steps taken.

During the study, researchers asked adults to walk wearing a variety of wearable trackers while also carrying their smart phones. The phones ran activity apps that tracked movement, and the phones actually came out on top over wearable devices when it came to accuracy of measuring steps. So, if you're looking for something that just measures steps, there's solid evidence that you don't have to look further than your phone.





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WHITE FRUITS & VEGGIES  
THAT ARE PACKED WITH  
NUTRITIONAL PUNCH



### ACTIVITY TRACKERS WHAT'S THE RIGHT ONE FOR YOU?

### SAVE TIME DURING YOUR NEXT DOCTOR'S VISIT

## DID YOU KNOW?

**20**  
CALORIES

MUSHROOMS ARE SUPER LOW IN CALORIES WITH ONLY 20 CALORIES PER 1/2 CUP.

**15**  
SMILES A DAY

SOME SURVEYS SUGGEST THAT CHILDREN SMILE HUNDREDS OF TIMES A DAY AND ADULTS, ONLY AROUND 15.

**7<sup>TO</sup>8**  
HOURS OF SLEEP

ADULTS SHOULD AIM FOR 7-8 HOURS OF SLEEP A NIGHT.

## CHILDISH HABITS YOU SHOULD KICK

There are several health benefits of "acting like a kid," but there are some childish habits you may still hold on to that aren't so good for you:

- ✗ **You still act like a college kid when it comes to sleep.** Staying up late and getting up early may have been somewhat sustainable in your younger years, but as an older adult, chronic sleep deprivation is simply devastating to your health. Research links it to high blood pressure, diabetes, weight gain, and even just looking tired and older. Aim for seven to eight hours every night.
- ✗ **You still regularly eat candies and sweets.** Candy is fun to eat, and it's why so many kids love it. But sugary snacks take a toll on everything from

your teeth to your waistline. And excessive sugar can actually make you look older too! Experts believe regular consumption of added sugar can make your skin dull and wrinkled. It's not easy to eliminate sugar completely, but try by limiting or cutting down on sugary snacks and drinks like soda and juice.

- ✗ **You still crank up the volume to full blast.** It's fun and exhilarating to listen to your favorite song blaring while you're wearing headphones, but prolonged exposure to loud noises can lead to hearing loss. Focus on keeping the volume low when you're listening to music on your headphones. If you can't hear people around you talking, it's likely too loud!

## WHAT'S IN A NUMBER?



**10 YEARS**

Unaddressed chronic stress could possibly make you appear **a decade older** than you really are! The constant frowning, squinting and other facial expressions that accompany tension can lead to premature wrinkles and lines. Yikes!



**60 SECONDS**

Simply taking **a minute** to slow down and take a few deep breaths can relax your entire body and help you feel calm. Good-bye frowns!

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