

# good health report

SUMMER 2014

YOUR FAST TRACK TO LIVING WELL



## Take Control

Manage and prevent  
chronic conditions

## Sun Safety IQ

Test your summer  
health knowledge



Embrace better health.

## Good Health Report To Your Health



Summer is the season to be fit and live healthier. At AvMed, our priority is to help you stay active and feeling great. And we give you all the tools to make it easy at [www.avmed.org](http://www.avmed.org).

To help you be your healthiest, AvMed has gathered some innovative options, including the Activity Planner, Workout Library, Cardio and Strength Program and Dietary Planner (with customized meals, daily suggestions and healthy recipes making it easier than ever to watch what you eat so you can stay on track).

And there's plenty of help available if you have specific areas to address. We offer access to Weight Watchers® and smoking cessation programs, as well as nutrition counseling and yoga.

To access these great tools, visit your Wellness Portal powered by Healthyroads®. Simply go to [www.avmed.org](http://www.avmed.org), log into your account, then select "Health and Wellness" for all this and more!

To your good health and an enjoyable summer,  
Sincerely,

Michael P. Gallagher  
President & Chief Executive Officer

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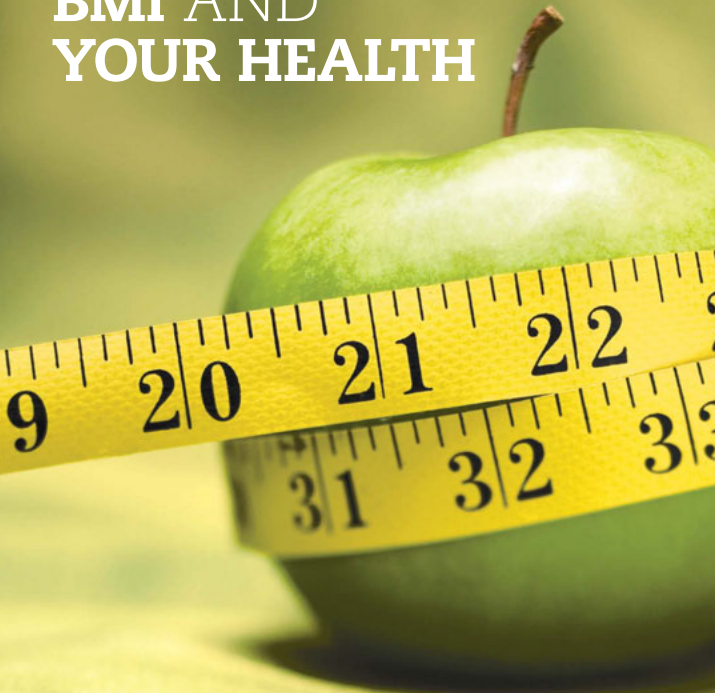
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# BMI AND YOUR HEALTH



**B**ody mass index (BMI) uses a ratio of your height to weight to approximate your body fat. Some medical professionals feel that BMI is a more reflective and important number to consider when assessing your weight.

Carrying too much weight can cause many serious health problems, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and pregnancy complications. According to experts, fat is more important to measure than weight since excessive fatness is the true definition of obesity.

For most of us, BMI offers a good gauge as to how we're doing weight-wise. By using an online calculator like the one at [www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi) you can simply plug in your height and weight and get your BMI.

Here are the general BMI ranges for adults:

- **Less than 18** means you are underweight.
- **Less than 18.5** indicates you are thin for your height.
- **A BMI between 18.6 and 24.9** indicates you are at a healthy weight.
- **A BMI between 25 and 29.9** suggests you are overweight for your height.
- **A BMI of 30 or greater** indicates obesity.

## Get Your Flu Shot Early

What steps will you take to prevent the flu this year? True, it may be summer, but it's not too soon to plan ahead for flu season. The flu vaccine is our most effective means of prevention, and it is available beginning in August. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone 6 months and older receive an annual flu vaccine. Not being vaccinated for the flu can also be risky for college students. Even healthy students who will be living in close proximity to one another and attending large classes will have a significant risk of exposure to the influenza virus during flu season, which begins in the fall and ends in the spring. Vaccinating early will protect your students all season long.

The CDC advises that people get vaccinated early so they are protected before flu season begins in the fall. It takes about two weeks after vaccination to be protected. The flu shot is free and widely available. You can get the vaccine at doctors' offices, pharmacies and retail clinics (bring your AvMed ID). Always speak to a healthcare provider or pharmacist about whether you would benefit from the flu vaccine.

# Defining Chronic Illness

A look at the numbers and how to lessen risk.



If seven out of every 10 times you swung a hammer, you hit your thumb instead of the nail, you would change the way you were doing it. Who would continue doing something that hurt?

Yet, in a broader sense, that's exactly what Americans are doing to themselves. Chronic diseases are among the most common and preventable of all health issues.

Seven out of every 10 deaths among Americans each year result from chronic illnesses. More than 50 percent of all deaths each year are from heart disease, cancer and stroke.

Even chronic diseases like arthritis and diabetes that are not necessarily fatal can take a large toll. About one-fourth of people who have chronic conditions report having

limitations in their daily activity. And more than 19 million Americans suffer from arthritis alone.

The good news is that the four behaviors that lead to many chronic diseases—lack of activity, poor nutrition, use of tobacco and excessive consumption of alcohol—can be modified.

More than one-third of all adults don't get the recommended level of aerobic activity each day, and only 25 percent reported eating the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death, and cigarette smoking causes a majority of cases. About one in five American adults smoke.

Excessive consumption of alcohol is a contributing factor to more than 54 diseases, including cancer of the mouth, throat, liver and colon. It also can cause cardiovascular and neurological disorders.

When you are living with a chronic disease, AvMed's highly trained care team works closely with your doctor and family to help manage diabetes and other conditions. Call AvMed's Healthy Living number at 855-81-AVMED (286333).

## THE ROLE OF OBESITY

It doesn't take a great detective to uncover the root cause of many chronic diseases. Obesity is the culprit, and its footprints are everywhere. One in three adults are obese.

Obesity contributes to coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes. It is also a contributing factor in breast and colon cancer cases.

It's a big problem, but small changes in

daily routines can make a big difference. Here are some things you can do today:

- Pack an apple instead of chips.
- Drink water instead of sugary sodas.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park in the farthest spot of the lot. (Those extra steps add up.)



## Time for a Checkup?

Get your children caught up this summer.

**T**he middle of the school year can be the busiest time for children—and their parents. There are so many schedules to juggle: everything from homework to soccer practice, and of course, the holidays.

The relative freedom of summer can be prime time to catch up on matters that may have slipped through the cracks—like scheduling a doctor's office visit for your child.

Vaccinations are one of the best ways to protect children from many dangerous and highly contagious diseases.

These vital shots need to be doled out according to an established schedule. Doctors can protect children from 14 preventable diseases—things like hepatitis B, polio and whooping cough—before they turn age 2.

It is important for older children, too. Between the ages of 4 and 6, children should get a checkup once a year. During this time, your child will receive additional doses of vaccines to strengthen their protection.

It's never too late. If anything has been missed, the ages between 7 and 10 are a good chance to catch up. You do not have to start over.

Even those in their teens are not through with vaccinations. Before heading off to college or military service, teenagers should be inoculated with the meningococcal conjugate vaccine. Young adults through age 21 have the highest rates of meningococcal disease, and colleges can be prime places for its spread.

Adults need boosters of some vaccines, so the vaccine conversation is an important one to have with the doctor at any age.

### MOVEMENT MATTERS

It may sound like a surprisingly large amount of time, but it is true: children and adolescents should be getting 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

Most of it should be spent in aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking or playing tag. Muscle-strengthening activities, like pushups and gymnastics, should be part of the routine three days a week.

Another three days a week should include bone-strengthening activities, such as jumping or running. The summer is a perfect time to do it together and set an example. Take a family walk to discover new places or frequent a local park. Exercise should be fun for kids so try not to make it a chore.



## Test Your Sun Safety IQ

Enjoy the warmest months and protect your health

Summer is a season begging to be spent outdoors throwing barbecues, going hiking and floating around a swimming pool on a big inflatable palm tree. But before you head out under the sun, read this quick refresher. It can help prevent some potentially life-threatening conditions related to sun exposure.

### What's the difference between heat exhaustion and heatstroke, and what should I do if I notice symptoms of either?

Heat exhaustion and heatstroke share some symptoms—nausea, dizziness, headache and high body temperature—but a person with heat exhaustion is usually perspiring heavily, while someone with the more severe condition of heatstroke has lost the ability to sweat. If you are overheated or out of breath or your heart is racing, stop what you're doing, move indoors and rest—especially if you feel lightheaded or faint.

With heatstroke, the body has lost the ability to cool itself, so only cool water can bring down body temperature quickly. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends placing a person afflicted with heatstroke in a cool tub or shower, or wrapping him or her in a cool, wet sheet and fanning the person to bolster evaporative cooling. Seek medical attention immediately.

### What are ways to stave off heat-related illnesses?

Keep cool and use common sense. Wear loose-fitting, lightweight and light-colored clothing and avoid the midday heat as much as possible. If you must exert yourself in a hot environment, drink 16 to 32 ounces of fluids, such as water, fruit juices or sports beverages, each hour. Make sure you spend most of your day in an air-conditioned space.

### How can I minimize the risk of skin cancer?

Three simple tools—good clothing, a good hat and good sunscreen of at least SPF 30—can dramatically cut down the risk of pre-skin cancers. When exercising outside, wear clothing designed to wick away moisture and shield the sun's rays. Remember that hats you can see through are also letting the sunlight in.

# Strep Throat Awareness

Recognize and recover from this common illness.

**S**trep throat is painful and highly contagious—but it's also easy to treat. The key to a quick recovery is a prompt visit to your doctor.

## ❖ HOW TO TELL YOU HAVE IT

Symptoms of strep throat may include the sudden onset of a sore throat, pain with swallowing, a fever of 101 degrees or higher, swollen tonsils, white patches in the throat, headache, body aches and nausea or vomiting. Strep throat is an infection in the throat and tonsils. It is caused by a bacteria that is easily spread through close contact with an infected person. The germs can be transmitted through coughing, sneezing or sharing cups.

Doctors can diagnose strep throat with a simple throat culture. They will examine a patient's throat to look for telltale symptoms like white patches and swollen tonsils. However, the only way to know for sure whether a condition is strep is by swabbing the back of the throat to test for the strep bacteria. If the test is negative, your doctor will consider other sources of sore throats, such as viruses or allergens. If the test is positive for strep, though, the solution is simple: a prescription for antibiotics.

## ❖ HOW TO TREAT IT

Antibiotics will significantly reduce the intensity of your symptoms and the duration of your illness. They can also prevent common complications like sinus infections and rare conditions like acute rheumatic fever. It is important to take your antibiotics precisely as directed and to take all the prescribed pills, even if you start to feel better.

The best way to protect yourself from being infected by strep throat is to practice good hygiene. Wash your hands frequently in soap and hot water, and avoid contact with anyone who is sick. If you become infected, stay home from work or school, and be sure to cough and sneeze into your elbow.

### ▶ LEARN MORE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers more information here: [www.cdc.gov/features/StrepThroat](http://www.cdc.gov/features/StrepThroat).

# Baked Salmon

## With Thai Vegetable Salad

Looking for a healthy dinner option? Try this recipe for a fresh, uncooked salad-style vegetable sauce to top hot baked salmon. The contrast in temperatures and textures is extremely satisfying. The richness of the salmon and the herbal, citrus flavors of the vegetable mixture make a refreshing summer meal.

- 1/4 c. fresh lime juice
- 4 tsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 2 carrots, shredded
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into thin slivers
- 4 skinless salmon fillets (4 ounces each)
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp. chopped cilantro
- 2 Tbsp. chopped mint

**1** Preheat the oven to 450 F. In a medium bowl, whisk together 3 tablespoons of the lime juice, the soy sauce and sugar. Add the carrots and bell pepper, and toss to combine. Refrigerate until serving.

**2** Place the salmon fillets on a baking sheet. Sprinkle the fish with the remaining 1 table-



### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION PER SERVING

217 calories, 8.9g total fat (1.5g saturated), 68mg cholesterol, 2g dietary fiber (.8g soluble), 12g carbohydrate, 23g protein, 536mg sodium. Serves 4.

**GOOD SOURCE OF:** beta carotene, niacin, omega-3 fatty acids, selenium, vitamin B12, vitamin C, vitamin D.

spoon lime juice, the coriander and the salt. Bake for about 10 minutes, or until the fish just flakes when tested with a fork.

**3** Stir the cilantro and mint into the carrot-pepper mixture and spoon over the hot salmon.

Source: [avmed.wholehealthmd.com](http://avmed.wholehealthmd.com)

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