



Be careful of sitting disease

Are you sitting down? That's not good news if you have been sitting for quite some time.

You're probably inactive for more of your day than you realize. Do you sit in your car while commuting to an eight-hour-a-day desk job and then unwind in front of the television for most of the evening?

Does your definition of "running errands" mean turning on your computer to check your email, pay your bills and do some shopping?

If so, then you could be susceptible to "sitting disease", the buzzword for a sedentary lifestyle that may put your health at risk.

A sedentary lifestyle or long periods sitting over time can take a toll on your health. Researchers have found that a sedentary life could be just as dangerous, if not more so,

than smoking. People who work in sedentary jobs for 10 or more years double their risk of bowel cancer and are more likely to develop heart disease, obesity and diabetes.

Extended periods of sitting, typically at work, can have serious effects. When you sit for long stretches of time, your body stops working as effectively as it can.

The problems of being sedentary are avoidable even if you're a desk jockey. This doesn't mean you have to take out a membership at the local gym. The key to avoid being sedentary is to include low-impact movements during your work day to keep your metabolism humming and your circulation flowing. Cooking qualifies, or gardening, or even taking a walk around the office. The key is to move around as often as you can.

The obvious remedy to sitting disease is standing—while you are at your desk or doing any number of activities. While standing all day may not be healthy or practical—people naturally want to sit at times to rest or when intensely concentrating - you should try to add movement or standing to your day for 10 minutes every waking hour according to osteopathic.org.

For example, take the stairs instead of the elevator, or walk even one flight of stairs before taking the elevator. A recent study published by the CDC indicates adjustable sit-to-stand products are an effective solution for reducing prolonged sitting. You can instantaneously sit or stand as you choose while remaining effectively engaged with your computer.



Inside this edition

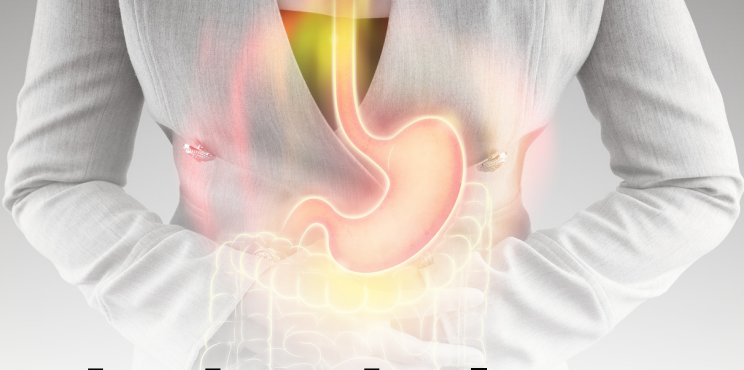
- Foods that help with acid reflux
- Decoding your food label
- How meditation can boost confidence
- Benefits of Vitamin E oil
- Calm those restless legs
- Tips to clean up your workspace

- Prebiotics explained
- Dementia and communication
- Health supplements
- Stick to your resolutions this year
- Energy zone: Moringa



Smart Workplace

health and safety communications partners



Foods that help with acid reflux

The eating season is behind us. And now the days of dealing with indigestion and heartburn set in, especially if you suffer from an ulcer, acid reflux, or the dreaded GERD (Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease).

Acid reflux is a common medical condition that can range in severity from mild to serious. GERD is the chronic, more severe form of acid reflux. In Canada, GERD is the most prevalent acid-related disorder. Approximately 13% of Canadians suffer from GERD symptoms weekly. Almost one quarter of the population (24%) experiences heartburn daily or more frequently.

If you are dealing with a stomach acid imbalance that is causing you to; have continuous heartburn, feel a burning sensation in your throat, belch constantly, have chest pain, and have a consistent dry cough, it might time to visit your doctor to discuss your condition.

If you suffer from occasional acid reflux, doctors recommend losing excess weight, eating smaller meals, and avoiding alcohol and nicotine.

Dietary tweaks also can be key when trying to alleviate symptoms. Here are a few foods to try:

Bananas. This low-acid fruit can help those with acid reflux by coating an irritated esophageal lining and thereby helping to

combat discomfort. Due to their high-fibre content, bananas also can help strengthen your digestive system — which can help ward off indigestion. One soluble fibre found in bananas is pectin, which helps move stomach contents through your digestive tract. And that's a good thing — because food that sticks around will only continue to generate acid.

Oatmeal. Like other high-fibre foods, oatmeal may help stave off acid reflux symptoms. Fibre not only promotes intestinal health, but it also reduces constipation and makes you feel full a long while after eating it. And, of course, when you feel full, you are less likely to overeat and therefore less likely to regurgitate what's in your stomach into your esophagus.

Green vegetables. Asparagus, spinach, kale and brussels sprouts all are highly alkaline, meaning they're good for your stomach and digestive system. Being naturally low in fat and sugar, vegetables also help lessen stomach acid.

Speak with your health care provider to come up with an individualized plan that's right for you, and if you have questions about what kinds of foods should be part of your diet. Some foods may help alleviate symptoms in one person but aggravate them in another.

How to decode your food label

(NC) Eating right is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle, but it can be hard to achieve without understanding exactly what all the information on a food label means.

The next time you check out the nutritional value of your favourite food, know what you should be paying attention to with these top tips for decoding food labels:

1. Serving size: This tells you the amount of food or drink the Nutrition Facts Table is based on. You can use it as a guide and compare the serving on the package to the amount you eat. When comparing products, be sure that you are comparing the same serving sizes.

2. Calories: They give you an overall impression of a food and how many calories one serving of that food provides. Labels are based on a 2,000 calories-per-day diet, but your needs will vary depending on your age, gender, activity level and other individual factors.

3. % Daily Values: % Daily Values help give you a good sense of the nutrition a product provides. Less than 5% is a little, and more than 15% is a lot*. This can help you choose the best product for you. Nutrients you may want to eat less of include saturated and trans fats and sodium. Nutrients you may want to get more of include fibre, vitamin A, calcium and iron. It can also be a good way to compare products.

4. Ingredients: Don't forget to look at them. Ingredients are listed in descending order of quantity and can tell you not only what products are made with but how much of a particular ingredient is in the food.

5. Your uniqueness. Remember that everyone has different needs when it comes to nutrition, so this affects what you should be looking at in a food label. If you're unsure about your specific requirements, talk to your healthcare professional or dietitian to make sure you're getting everything you need from your food.



Publisher & CEO: Stefan Dreesen

Editor: Kate Van Hoof-Peeren

H&S Communication Specialists:

Alan Haycroft, Liz Slobodin,
Kevin Harvey

TOLL FREE: 1-888-655-4800

Mailing Address: 2010 Winston Park Drive, Suite 200,
Oakville, ON L6H 5R7

www.smartworkplace.ca | info@smartworkplace.ca

The information presented in Wellness Zone has been compiled from sources believed to be reliable. However, it cannot be assumed that all acceptable measures are contained in this article nor that additional measures may not be required under particular or exceptional circumstances, or your own company procedures, or by federal, state/provincial and local law.

Application of this information to a specific worksite should be reviewed by a wellness professional. Anyone making use of the information set forth herein does so at his/her own risk and assumes any and all liability arising therefrom. Specific medical advice should be obtained through consultation with a physician or other trained health care practitioner. Wellness Zone is published monthly by Smart Workplace Inc. www.smartworkplace.ca. All rights reserved.

© 2024. No part of this publication is to be copied without permission from the publisher.



How meditation can boost confidence

Confidence plays a pivotal role in people's lives, empowering them to overcome challenges, pursue their goals, and unlock their full potential. However, in the hustle and bustle of daily life, confidence can waver, often affected by stress, self-doubt, and external pressures. This is where meditation can be a powerful tool in nurturing and boosting your confidence.

One of the primary benefits of meditation is its ability to quiet the constant chatter of our minds, including the self-critical voice that undermines our confidence. Through regular meditation, you learn to observe your thoughts without judgment, gaining insight into the negative patterns and self-limiting beliefs that hinder your self-assurance. By creating space for self-reflection and self-compassion, meditation allows you to challenge and transform these limiting beliefs, replacing them with empowering thoughts and affirmations.

Here are a few other ways meditation can help boost confidence:

Cultivating present-moment awareness

Confidence often falters when you dwell on past mistakes or worry about future outcomes. Meditation helps cultivate present-moment awareness, grounding you in the here and now. By focusing on your breath, bodily sensations, or a specific point of focus, you develop mindfulness, which helps to anchor your attention to the present. Through this practice, you

learn to detach yourself from the burdens of the past and the anxieties of the future, allowing you to approach situations with clarity, composure, and confidence.

Managing stress and anxiety

Stress and anxiety can significantly erode confidence, leaving you feeling overwhelmed and incapable. Regular meditation has been shown to reduce stress levels by activating the body's relaxation response. As you engage in deep breathing and relaxation techniques during meditation, your body releases stress-reducing hormones, such as serotonin and endorphins. This calm and centered state, carried over into daily life, allows you to navigate challenges with a greater sense of ease and self-assurance.

Developing a positive mindset

Positive affirmations and visualization are powerful tools for cultivating confidence, and meditation provides an ideal platform for their integration. By incorporating positive affirmations into our meditation practice, you condition your mind to embrace empowering beliefs and self-talk. Through visualization, you can vividly imagine yourself succeeding and embodying confidence in various scenarios. Over time, this rewiring of your mental landscape creates a positive mindset, reinforcing your belief in your abilities and bolstering self-assurance.

Why vitamin E oil is good for your skin

Vitamin E oil has gained popularity as a skincare staple. Here are a few reasons why using vitamin E oil might be good for your skin:

Moisturizes and nourishes - One of the primary benefits of vitamin E oil is its excellent moisturizing properties. The oil acts as an emollient, penetrating deep into the skin layers and sealing in moisture. This helps to prevent water loss and keeps the skin well-hydrated.

Enhances healing and repair - Vitamin E oil can aid in regenerating damaged skin cells and promotes faster wound healing. Whether you have scars, burns, or minor cuts, applying vitamin E oil may help minimize the appearance of scars. Additionally, the oil's anti-inflammatory properties could help reduce redness and inflammation.

Improves skin texture - Regular use of vitamin E oil can contribute to smoother and more even-textured skin. The oil helps to strengthen the skin's natural barrier function, which is essential for maintaining its integrity and preventing moisture loss. This can be particularly beneficial for individuals with rough or uneven skin.

Fights signs of aging - By protecting the skin from free radicals and promoting collagen production, vitamin E oil might help reduce the appearance of wrinkles and fine lines. Additionally, its moisturizing effects may improve skin elasticity.

Using vitamin E oil in your skincare regimen can lead to a wide range of advantages for your skin. From moisturizing and nourishing to protecting against environmental damage and promoting healing, the oil's properties can be an asset for achieving and maintaining healthy-looking skin.





Calm those restless legs

You're tired enough to hit the sack. But as you wait for sleep, your legs don't seem ready to call it a day. You have this urge to move them about to tire them. You might experience a crawling sensation, cramps, itchiness, numbness--or even pain--and you wonder what's ailing your lower limbs.

What you're suffering from is called Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS). Although it's not known for sure what causes it, doctors believe it is brought on by stress, vitamin deficiency, an imbalance in the brain chemical dopamine, or genetic factors. However, RLS is neither life-threatening nor a symptom of a neurological condition, and there are steps you can take to deal with it.

Give your legs a workout

Choose an exercise regimen that you can stick with. If you're not into jogging, high-intensity training, or weight-lifting, you'd do fine with a brisk 30-minute walk every day. You'll burn fat, sweat out all those toxins and excess salts, and come through feeling good about yourself. What's more, walking would give your legs a good workout, leaving them relaxed and less RLS-prone.

Healthline.com advises against exercising too close to bedtime as this might actually prevent sleep. Whatever your exercise plan, ensure you wind up at least one hour before lights-out.

Cut down on sugar

There is enough research to indicate that those who are overweight face a

greater risk of RLS. And since sugar intake has been directly associated with weight gain, it follows that cutting down on sugar will make you less RLS-prone.

But even if you're well within your weight range, it's advisable to minimize sugar consumption to 10% of your daily caloric intake, especially if tests reveal that you have elevated sugar levels.

Avoid foods with added sugar, including candy, cookies, cakes, baked items, chocolate, ice-cream, sweetened cereals, and all sweetened beverages. Focus on nutrient and fibre-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, fish, and whole grains, as these will help prevent RLS.

Say no to tea and coffee

You don't have to give up these beverages for good. Just be sure you don't pick up a pick-me-up late in the day, and definitely not close to bedtime. Tea and coffee contain the stimulant caffeine, which will keep you charged up when it's time to sleep and further exacerbate your RLS problem.

For some, RLS might be merely bothersome, occurring only occasionally. For others, it might be chronic, affecting sleep (leading to daytime drowsiness), undermining the quality of life and, over the long term, causing depression. If RLS is not a big issue with you, try some of these measures and see if they make a difference. Chronic sufferers should speak with their health care advisor.

Tips to clean up your workspace

It's a brand new year, and that usually gives a feeling of a "fresh start" or a "clean slate". So why not take advantage of this feeling and make a fresh start at your desk? Whether at home or your office, your workspace can always use tidying up. Germs love the phone and your keyboard too!

Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

Clean your keyboard regularly

Dirt and grime can cause the keys to stick and feel unresponsive. Yuck! Clean it by shutting down your computer and unplug your keyboard (if it is wired). Carefully turn your keyboard upside down and gently shake it over a garbage can. This should get rid of any noticeable crumbs and debris. Use cotton swabs and cotton buds to clean the keys and in between the keys. It will take time, so remember; patience is a virtue.

Clean your screen

Over time, your monitor will get dusty. With everything switched off and shut down, move your monitor and wipe the surface it stands on. Use a microfibre cleaning cloth and a little water to make the cloth damp. Do not spray water directly onto the monitor, but apply a small amount of water on the corner of the microfiber cloth. Avoid using cleaning fluids, wax, or chemicals.

Degripe your telephone

Your phone is a hotspot for bacteria and needs regular cleaning. Wipe your phone with anti-bacterial wipes. The ear, mouth piece and the keypad require special attention as they have the most concentration of bacteria. Wipe the whole unit and any wires and cables.

Disinfect your trash can

Even if your under-the-desk trash can has a plastic liner, take the time to regularly clean it with disinfectant in a little warm water. Dry completely with a cloth before adding a new bin liner.

Reduce clutter

You are probably all too aware that clutter builds on your desk depressingly easily. Clutter attracts dust and makes regular cleaning more difficult. Try to keep your desk minimalist.

Eat food away from your desk

If you really want to minimize the mess on your desk, eat snacks and lunch elsewhere. Food crumbs and spills can easily build up without you noticing. Taking a lunch-break away from your workstation is actually good for your productivity.



Prebiotics: What they are and why you need them

You may have heard of probiotics, the beneficial bacteria that live in your gut and help with digestion, immunity, and overall health. But did you know there is another type of nutrient called prebiotics that can boost your gut health while supporting your probiotics?

Prebiotics are specialized plant fibres that are needed by the bacteria located in your digestive tract, consisting of fibre or complex carbohydrates that you can't digest.

Prebiotics are found in plant foods like garlic, asparagus, bananas, artichokes, onions, and root vegetables. They act as food for your gut bacteria. Prebiotics can improve digestion, ease constipation, increase mineral absorption, regulate cholesterol, and strengthen the immune system.

Prebiotics have many potential benefits for your health, especially if you suffer from digestive disorders or metabolic diseases.

Here are some of the ways that prebiotics can help you:

- **Improve digestion:** Prebiotics are known to reduce symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), such as bloating, gas, pain, and diarrhea.
- **Enhance mineral absorption:** Prebiotics can increase the absorption of minerals like calcium, magnesium, iron, and zinc from your diet. This may improve bone health and delays osteoporosis.

• Lower cholesterol and blood pressure:

Prebiotics can lower your cholesterol levels by regulating overall fat metabolism and increasing the excretion of bile acids. They improve blood flow through lowering inflammation and supporting optimal dilation. Prebiotics are one of the best defences against metabolic syndrome, a common condition that can lead to diabetes and heart disease.

• **Improve brain function:** The communication between your gut and brain are enhanced by prebiotics via the vagus nerve. Prebiotics are known to regulate the production of neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine, and GABA, which are involved in mood regulation, memory, learning, and cognition.

• Lower cholesterol and blood pressure:

Prebiotics may lower your cholesterol levels by regulating overall fat metabolism and increasing the excretion of bile acids. They might improve blood flow through lowering inflammation and supporting optimal dilation. Prebiotics are one of the best defences against metabolic syndrome, a common condition that can lead to diabetes and heart disease.

If you want to increase your prebiotic intake, first discuss it with your medical advisor. Start by adding more prebiotic-rich foods in your diet.

Tips for communicating with someone living with dementia

(NC) Chances are you've had an opportunity to talk with someone living with dementia at the grocery store, your place of work or at home. A person living with dementia may have challenges with understanding others as well as being understood. Keep these tips in mind to help make it easier to communicate:

Minimize distractions

Before you begin a conversation, turn off any background noise such as the radio or a running dishwasher. This may help the person living with dementia to focus. If you're in a crowded public space, try to find a quieter area to communicate. It also helps if you stay still during your conversation so they can focus on you.

Keep communication clear

Speak slowly in a friendly tone and use short, simple sentences that focus on one idea at a time. When asking questions, try to use yes or no options, or questions that offer one choice: "Would you like to go on a walk now?" or "Would you like coffee?" If the person living with dementia repeats themselves or says something that is not accurate, avoid correcting them as this may lead to feelings of frustration and confusion.

Be aware of your body language

Calm and friendly body language such as eye contact and smiling may help the person living with dementia feel at ease. Try to avoid body language that indicates frustration or anger, such as crossed arms, rolling your eyes or letting out a loud sigh. You can also use gestures to help reinforce the message you're trying to deliver, such as pointing at the thing you're talking about.

Aim to be an active listener

Active listening means giving time for the person living with dementia to finish speaking. You might also want to nod your head, make eye contact or repeat back some of what you heard so the person knows you are listening.

Communication is more than words

For some people living with dementia, it may be difficult to get their message across. Listen and respond to the feelings of the person living with dementia, not just the words. Watch for cues such as facial expression, tone of voice and posture to help you understand and respond with care.

Learn more about dementia and find advice for caring for someone living with dementia at canada.ca/dementia.

Work out to strengthen your immune system



A little bit of exercise can go a long way in boosting your immune system. Engaging in just 30 to 60 minutes of moderate exercise daily can improve your body's immune response.

Exercise helps flush out bacteria from your lungs and airways, improves circulation, causes mild fluctuations in body temperature to fight infection, and releases stress-reducing endorphins. In fact, even a daily brisk walk can stave off those unwanted colds.

If you have thought about trying natural health supplements to boost

your workout, talk to your health care professional first to see if this is a good solution for you. **The Canadian Health Food Association offers these suggestions:**

Krill oil: When coupled with exercise, krill oil supplementation could help increase white blood cell production, which helps sustain immune function.

Vitamin D: Vitamin D supplementation in some athletes has been shown to limit infections. If you're engaging in winter sports or plan to hit the gym hard, consider adding this vitamin for immune health and overall well-being.

Echinacea: This herbal supplement has been shown to improve the immune function of high-intensity and endurance in some athletes, such as marathoners and triathletes. It can also decrease the number of chest colds you may experience.

energy zone

Moringa is a plant native to India and other countries. It contains proteins, vitamins, and minerals, making it useful to fight malnutrition. It is one of the up and coming super food trends for 2024.

Moringa is rich in vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, calcium, iron and protein. The leaves contain more vitamin C than oranges, more

Moringa

magnesium than eggs, more vitamin B3 than peanuts and more vitamin B2 than bananas, more potassium than bananas and more vitamin A than carrots.

Moringa leaves can be consumed in powder form, added to smoothies, soups, and salads, or used as a supplement.



How to stick to your new year's resolution this year

(NC) Seeing any New Year's resolution through to completion is tough for many of us, but it's a good way to push yourself towards important goals.

Whatever your resolution is this year, here are a few tips to help you stay on track:

Make a plan

Creating a realistic step-by-step action plan makes it easier to pursue your goal when the going gets tough. If you're quitting smoking, for example, decide on the date of your last cigarette and choose tools and methods to manage cravings. Include your reasons for quitting to come back to for motivation. Plan out how you'll avoid situations that will make you want to smoke again and come up with ideas of what you'll do instead of reaching for a cigarette – maybe brushing your teeth or going for a brisk walk – so you don't have to come up with an alternative action on the spot.

Ask for accountability and support

Tell someone about your goal and how you plan to achieve it. If you want to work out more often, you can enlist a gym buddy or send them a photo of every session you complete.

Having someone to cheer you on and be proud of your accomplishments can go a long way to help you move any goal along. This support might look different for everyone. It could come from a friend, family member or a health professional.

Try multiple methods

There probably isn't one right way to achieve your goal, so why not try a few strategies at once? A combination of tools and support is actually proven to increase the chances of quitting smoking for good. Health Canada says quit aids like nicotine replacement gum and/or prescription medication alongside counselling can double your chances of triumph.

Know that every step is a success

If you're like most people, you may not be able to stick to your resolution without a few hiccups the first time you try. But every step you take towards your goal is more experience under your belt and something worth being proud of. Learn from your slip ups to plan your next attempt.