Welcome to HEALTHYROADS!

In this monthly newsletter, you’ll find a collection of articles on popular health and wellness topics. If you’d like additional guidance and support in your quest to lose weight, improve nutrition, develop an exercise plan, reduce stress, or quit smoking and haven’t discovered our Weight Management, Tobacco Cessation, and Wellness programs, we encourage you to call us today. Some or all of these programs may have been purchased for you by your employer. To take advantage of all that Healthyroads has to offer, visit us online at www.Healthyroads.com or call us toll-free at 877.330.2746.

Wellness and Healthy Living

How Do You Feel About Social Networks?

How many friends do you have in your network? A few years ago, that might have been an odd question. But for many people, adding people to their “friends list” is now part of daily life. Online social networks are a trend that could be here to stay. How do you feel about these new tools?

At first, there were mixed reports about this new way to keep in touch. Some experts thought it might distance us from real-world friendships. They hinted that our attention spans—and even our immune systems—might lose out as we got social online, rather than in person. But newer research shows the pros may outweigh the cons.

Recent studies support the idea that social network sites can be good for your mental health. One study found that looking at your own online profile can be self-affirming. Other research shows that joining a network can give you positive feedback and access to a wider support system. It’s true that not everything that happens online is positive. But studies show that negative social networks tend to break apart and fade, while more positive circles are more likely to remain.

One popular feature of online social networks is their ability to support positive and healthy behavior. Users who want to quit smoking, lose weight, and reach other healthy goals are now meeting online to share and cheer each other on. For many of them, watching others work through healthy changes has also turned out to be a source of learning and motivation.

As helpful as social networks can be, it is still important to be safe. Think twice before giving out or posting your name, address, phone number, or other personal information. And if you plan to meet face-to-face with someone you haven’t seen in a while, be sure to meet in a public spot.

With these rules in place—and keeping in mind that time away from the computer is also healthy—why not check out what online networks have to offer? No matter what your interests or goals are, there is likely an online group of friends waiting to connect with you.
COACH TIP:
To add more veggies to your diet, mix them into other dishes. Think vegetable soup or whole grain pasta with tomato sauce—or just add romaine lettuce to your sandwich.

Diet and Exercise
Eggplant: Give it A Try!

It may seem like a challenge to fill half of your plate with fruits and vegetables at each meal. But with a little effort, the unknowns of the produce aisle can give way to healthy, new favorites. One vegetable that can liven up your menu (and your taste buds) is eggplant.

Eggplant can be purple, white, or striped (purple and white). The flesh has a mild, earthy taste that works well with other flavors. If you grill or sauté eggplant, it has a firm, meaty texture. But when roasted, it comes out smooth and creamy.

When you choose your eggplant, look for a glossy skin. Pick it up and give it a soft squeeze. It should give just a little, but still feel firm. It should also be free of soft or brown spots. At home, store it in a cool spot, but not in the refrigerator. Be sure to wash it in cool water before you cut or cook it.

Now that you’re the proud new owner of a nutritious eggplant, what should you do with it? Well, cook it and eat it, of course. There are just 20 calories in one cup of chopped eggplant. Each serving has almost no fat, cholesterol, or sodium—but plenty of fiber and vitamins. Eat the skin to get more antioxidants and other nutrients. And keep in mind that eggplant soaks up oil quickly. For best results, brush or spray on oil just before you cook it.

Here are some ways to cook your new favorite veggie:

- **Grill it.** Brush slices lightly with olive oil, add seasoning, and grill.
- **Bake it.** Cut into slices or spears, then season and bake until tender (alone or in a casserole).
- **Sauté it.** Heat a small amount of olive oil, then toss in diced eggplant, onions, garlic, and peppers.

To season your eggplant, focus on spices, herbs, and other flavors that won’t add too much fat, salt, or sugar to your meal. Here are some combinations you may want to try:

- Tarragon, lemon, and diced onion
- Thyme, lemon, and black pepper
- Garlic, basil, and tomatoes
- Cumin, dried apricots, and almonds
- Ginger, low-sodium soy sauce, and sesame seeds

Sounds yummy, right? So what are you waiting for? Head to your grocery store or local farmers’ market now to give eggplant a try.
Almost 50 years ago, the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General issued its first report on tobacco use and health. Since then, there have been many efforts to get Americans to stop smoking and live healthier lives.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there have been some positive changes in smoking habits over the last few years. For example, studies show a 2 percent drop in the number of adult smokers between 2005 and 2010. That might not sound like a lot. But it means that the number of smokers went down by 3 million people in just 5 years.

Studies also show that adults who smoke seem to be smoking fewer cigarettes each day. But it is important to remember that there is no safe number of cigarettes. The only safe thing to do is to quit smoking completely.

Smoking causes 443,000 deaths in America each year. And it is the largest cause of preventable death in the United States. The price of smoking is not just the cost of a pack of cigarettes and a lighter. Each year, smoking costs Americans $96 billion dollars in direct medical expenses. Another $97 billion dollars are spent due to lost work time. This adds up to about $200 billion dollars each year spent on the harms of tobacco use.

Where do all those health costs come from? Tobacco smoke is known to raise the risk of heart disease and several types of cancer—for smokers and people who breathe in secondhand smoke. Smoking can also raise your risk of breathing problems, stroke, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

While we’re doing better when it comes to smoking, there is still room to improve. About 19 percent of Americans are still smoking. And even one smoker is too many. If you smoke and want to quit, ask your doctor about quitting methods that may be right for you. Your state quitline can also help (1-800-QUIT-NOW). If you have a loved one who wants to quit, help them by cheering them on. The goal is to keep the number of smokers going down in 2012. Success starts with you.
Low-Stress Living

What Happens When You Don’t Sleep?

Did you sleep well last night? How about the night before? If you have problems falling or staying asleep, you’re not alone. Most adults have sleep problems at one time or another. Losing a little sleep every now and then is normal. But if it happens too often, it can cause problems.

You may have noticed that just one rough night can take a toll on how you feel the next day. Thinking takes more effort, and you may feel crankier than usual. Some studies show that going without sleep can change the way your brain works. Just a slight lack of sleep can cause:

- Poor attention
- Slower reaction time
- Poor memory
- Slower verbal skills

Getting healthy sleep is a lot like filling your car’s gas tank. If you don’t get enough sleep each night, your body can lose energy and the ability to work as well as it should.

Over time, a lack of sleep may lead to health problems, such as:

- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Depression
- Anxiety

What’s more, the greatest risk of poor sleep is a higher risk of accidents. Drowsy driving is just as dangerous as drunk driving. In fact, one study found that people are 2–4 times more likely to have an accident if they haven’t had enough sleep.

Most adults need about 7–8 hours of sleep each night. If you sleep less than 6 hours for 3 or more nights each week, or don’t feel rested, talk to your doctor. A lot can be done to improve your sleep, from medicine to changing your sleep habits.

Today’s busy world can make sweet dreams a challenge. But sleeping isn’t just a nice thing to do. It’s something you really need to do. For your health, make time for healthy sleep.