Press the button in an elevator. Hold on to the stair rail. Grab a door handle. Some nasty germs have probably joined you on your journey. In a recent study, researchers found 549 kinds of bacteria in a typical office, most of which came from the mouth, nose, or intestinal cavities of another person. Touch your mouth or your eye with bacteria on your hands and you could be calling in sick with a cold, the flu, or worse.

Do not fret, there’s a secret to avoid getting sick, and it’s not a pill, fad diet, or bleach-cleaning frenzy. One of the best ways to prevent bacteria from making you sick is washing your hands the right way. It’s one of the most important things you can do to help stop the spread of infection and stay healthy. Here’s how to wash your hands:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water and apply soap.
2. Rub your hands together to make a lather, and scrub them well. Be sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Continue rubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel, or air dry them. If soap and running water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
The Healthy Workplace Project
Leafy Greens Deliver Powerful Punch

Cartoonist Elzie Segar created a comic strip about a sea-hardy sailor almost a century ago and he never imagined it would encourage people to eat healthy foods. That is exactly what happened. Every time the spinach-loving character named Popeye gobbled some leafy greens, he received a boost of super-human strength. The more bad guys he battled, the more readers ate spinach.

Pop open a can or twist the cap on a soft drink. The fizzy sound can trigger a gulping reflex for some people. The average American drinks 44 gallons of soda a year. That’s the same as drinking about 470 cans of soda and tossing back 41 pounds of sugar. It’s one reason why health experts believe one in three people could have type 2 diabetes by 2050. Just one can of soda a day may increase the risk for this disease that can lead to poor circulation, kidney problems, blindness, and early death.

Researchers recently studied soda consumption habits of more than 28,000 people. They found drinking one can of sugar-sweetened soda a day raised the risk for type 2 diabetes by 22 percent. There was no significant increase in diabetes risk for those who only drank pure or diluted fruit juice.

Although don’t bank on switching to diet soda as the answer. A separate study followed 66,118 people for 14 years also found a link between type 2 diabetes and diet soda. Maybe it’s time to rethink your drink. Drink more water, add a lemon or lime for flavor. Or replace soda with 100-percent fruit juice. Anything you can do to reduce your risk of developing diabetes is worth the effort.

American Journal of Clinical Nutrition
Journal of Diabetologia
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Walk the Path to Wellness with a Pedometer

Did you Know? The average human walking speed is 3.1 mph.

Did you Know? When you take one step, you are using up to 200 muscles.

Dozens of infomercial hosts want you to believe that their pills, powders, or programs will transform your life. Many promise to help you get fit and lose weight. Improving your health shouldn’t require a payment plan. You can shed extra pounds and improve your fitness level by just taking a few more steps each day. All right, maybe more than a few, but you get the idea.

In a recent study, people measured the number of steps they took per day with a pedometer. At the end of each day they logged their steps. By the end of the 18-week study, participants averaged a 27-percent increase in physical activity. They were walking about one mile more per day compared to when they started. They also lost weight, lowered their blood pressure, and reduced their risk for heart attack and stroke.

Sedentary people average 1,000 to 3,000 steps per day. That’s walking to the car, the refrigerator, and the couch. You need more exercise than that (30 to 60 minutes a day) to manage your weight and improve your fitness level. Use a pedometer to track your steps and set a goal to increase your steps per day. Then get moving. Use the stairs instead of the elevator. Take a walk break. Be sure to keep a log of your progress to see your success and stay motivated. Aim for 7,000 to 8,000 steps daily for good health, 10,000 steps for excellent health. With a few more steps per day, you will be on your way to better health. Track your steps with a free pedometer app: such as www.accupedo.com.

Journal of the American Medical Association
Harvard School of Public Health

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Journal of the American Medical Association
Harvard School of Public Health
Cut open the perfect onion, and the sulfuric compounds will bring tears to your eyes. A few tears are worth the trouble to tap the vegetable’s savory taste.

“It’s hard to imagine civilization without onions,” the late celebrity chef Julia Child once said. That’s because onions are a rich source of flavor used in a wide range of recipes and nearly every ethnic cuisine. They’re a required ingredient in salsa, soups, and sauces. They’re also commonly found on sandwiches and salads.

Onions add a lot of flavor to the foods we enjoy. They’re healthy too. Onions are low in calories. They contain no sodium, fat or cholesterol. They’re a good source of vitamin C, fiber and other nutrients. Studies show that flavonoids, found in the outer layers of an onion, may help reduce your risk for heart disease, bowel problems, and certain types of cancer.

Whether ordering out or cooking at home, use onions generously to flavor and season your favorite dishes. Skip the deep-fried onion rings and other cooked-in-fat onion creations. Fresh onions –chopped, minced, thinly sliced, or cooked – are healthy for you and taste great. Julia Child was right. It would be hard for most of us to imagine life without onions. After all, the average American eats about 20 pounds of onions a year.

An estimated 25 percent of adults in the United States have high blood pressure. This condition increases the risk for heart disease, stroke, and other serious health problems. Heart disease claims the lives of 17.3 million people in the world every year.

If your blood pressure is higher than 120/80, you should take action. If it is 140/90 or higher, your doctor may recommend medication and weight loss. One effective way to lower your blood pressure is low-intensity exercise. Just taking a short walk a few times a week could make a difference.

In a recent study, researchers found as little as 20 minutes of low-intensity exercise three to five times a week helped lower blood pressure. The results started to show up almost immediately. You can lower your blood pressure by doing low-intensity exercise most days of the week with activities such as:

- Light walking
- Stretching or beginner’s yoga
- Gardening
- Vacuuming
- Mopping
- Washing the car

Exercise is an effective way to lower your blood pressure. It’s also a good way to prevent high blood pressure, before it becomes a problem. It doesn’t take a lot of work. When you make the effort to move a little more, your heart will be healthier. Just remember to be active daily when possible.

If your diet does not include the right vitamins and nutrients, your brain health might be at risk.

Your brain needs omega-3 fatty acids for its best health. Omega-3s are found in flax meal, canola oil, pumpkin seeds, walnuts, tofu, soy products, and fish. Studies show low levels of omega-3s may be linked to memory problems and Alzheimer’s disease.

In one study, researchers looked at the healthy brains of 1,575 people. Each person performed a memory test. They also provided a blood sample to measure levels of omega-3s. Those with higher levels scored better on memory tests. Another study found that fish-eaters had healthier brains and were less likely to develop Alzheimer’s.

If you want to keep your brain healthy, eat foods with omega-3 fatty acids. The Institutes of Medicine recommends adults get about 1-1.6 grams of omega-3 fatty acids per day. A 1-ounce handful of walnuts contains 2.6 grams of omega-3 fatty acids. A tablespoon of ground flax meal contains 1.8 grams of omega-3 fatty acids. Plant-based sources for omega-3 fatty acids include nuts, seeds, and soy products. Fish is also a good source for omega-3s. If you are a vegetarian, you can take an omega-3 supplement to make sure you get enough DHA and EPA (two types of omega-3).

Keeping your mind healthy is not the only benefit. Omega-3 fatty acids also reduce the risk for heart disease, cancer, and arthritis.
As the health and well-being of our patrons is of the upmost importance, the Athletics & Wellness Center will be closed beginning Monday, March 16, 2020 through Sunday, May 3, 2020. During this time, the facility will be closed, not accessible and all programming will be cancelled. Pending the status of COVID-19, the facility will re-open with reduced hours and services, such as group fitness, based on staff and instructor availability. All membership will be extended for the length of the closure. Remaining swim lessons and personal training sessions will be rescheduled upon re-opening.