

HEALTHY *You!*

Your Source for a Happy and Healthy Lifestyle

March 2022

THIS EDITION FEATURES:

**SPRING
BACK INTO SHAPE**

**BE KIND TO
YOUR KIDNEYS**

**FUEL FOR
YOUR GUT**

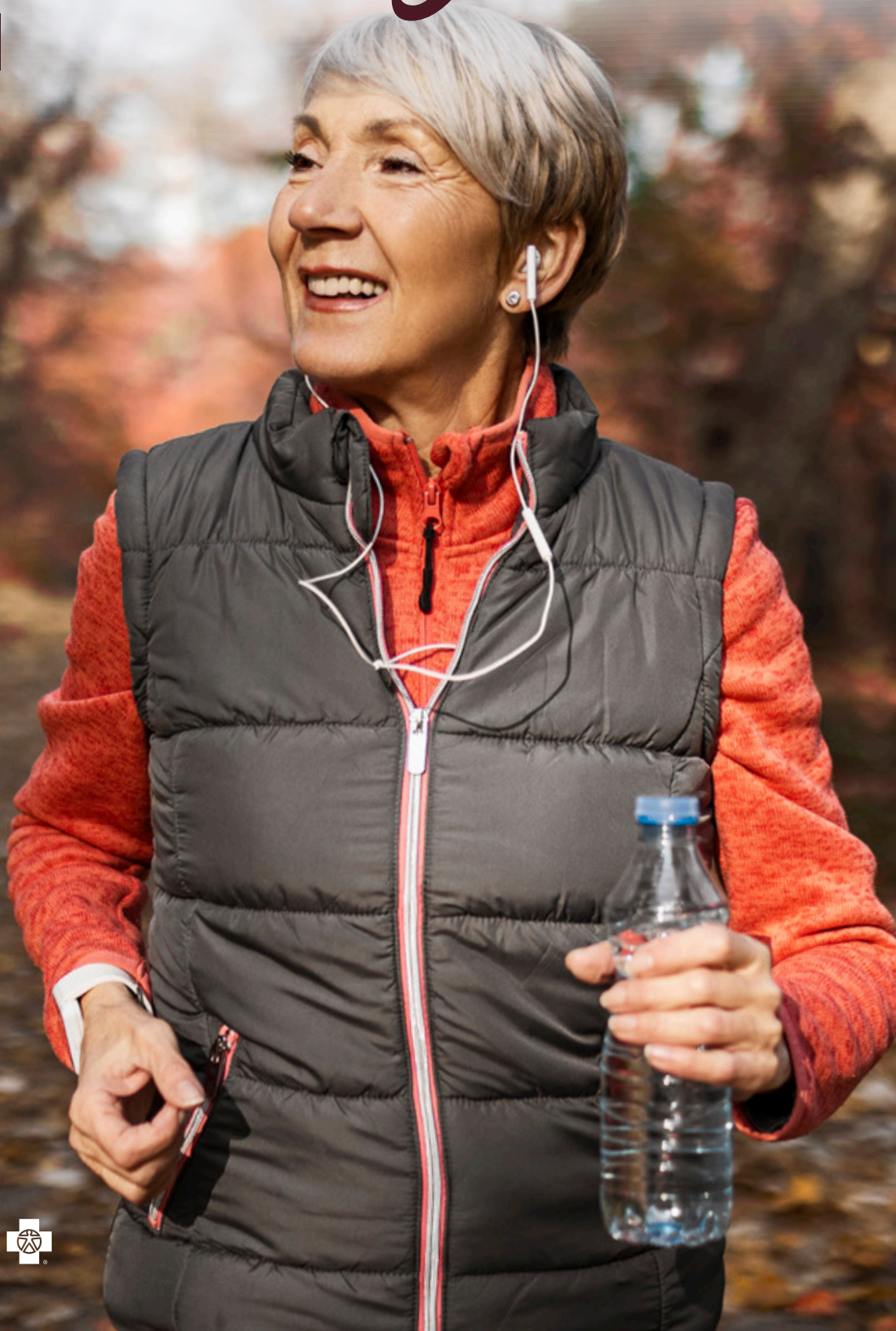
Early Detection is Key
**COLORECTAL
CANCER**

TIME TO FEEL

**Honesty is
the Best Policy**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Independence 



SPRING BACK INTO SHAPE

Your lower back is the anchor of the core support system for your entire body. Keeping it strong and stable provides support for everyday tasks and movements like standing, lifting, and bending; it also helps prevent lower back pain. Try these three exercises to strengthen your lower back:

Partial crunches

To get started, lie on your back with your legs bent, feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart. Put your hands on the base of your head or crossed in front of your chest. Breathe in to begin; as you exhale, tighten your stomach muscles and lift your shoulders up off the floor. Hold the raised position for two seconds, and then return slowly to the floor as you inhale. Repeat 10 to 12 times.

Supermans

To perform this exercise, lie face down on the ground and stretch both arms out in front of your body, keeping your legs stretched out and flat on the ground. Raise both hands and feet, aiming to create a gap of about six inches between them and the floor. Stretch hands and feet outward as far as possible, and hold the position for two seconds. Return to starting position, and repeat ten times.

Knee-to-chest stretches

Start this stretch by lying on your back on the floor. Bend your knees, keeping both feet on the floor. Use both hands to pull one knee in toward your chest. Hold for five seconds (be sure to keep your abdominals tight and press your spine into the floor). Return to starting position, and repeat with the opposite leg. Repeat with each leg two to three times.

Sources:

facty.com/ailments/body/10-exercises-for-lower-back
medicalnewstoday.com/articles/323204



BE KIND TO YOUR KIDNEYS



Healthy kidneys are more important to your overall health than you may realize. The kidneys are two bean-shaped organs that remove waste and extra fluid from your body. They also help maintain the proper balance of water, salts, and minerals in your blood to ensure that your nerves, muscles, and other tissues work normally.

Here are four ways to keep your kidneys healthy:

Drink water

It helps the kidneys remove waste from your blood in the form of urine and helps get important nutrients to your kidneys.

Eat well

Studies show that whole grains, nuts, fruits, and vegetables can help support healthy kidneys.

Manage diabetes and high blood pressure

These are the two most common conditions that affect your kidneys. Eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise can help you control both.

Watch your salt intake

Eating too much salt can make it harder for your kidneys to remove fluid, which can eventually build up in your system. This can lead to kidney disease and kidney failure.

Sources:

[kidney.org/nutrition](https://www.kidney.org/nutrition)

[medicalnewstoday.com/articles/325390](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/325390)

[niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/kidneys-how-they-work#:~:text=The%20kidneys%20are%20two%20bean,extra%20water%20to%20make%20urine](https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/kidneys-how-they-work#:~:text=The%20kidneys%20are%20two%20bean,extra%20water%20to%20make%20urine)

[webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/ss/slideshow-keep-kidneys-healthy](https://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/ss/slideshow-keep-kidneys-healthy)

FUEL FOR YOUR GUT

Your body needs nutrients (proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and water) from food and drinks to function properly. Your digestive system is made up of the gastrointestinal tract, liver, pancreas, and gallbladder. It is responsible for breaking down the nutrients for your body to absorb and use for energy, growth, and cell repair, and eliminating waste.

A healthy digestive system is essential to ensure that you get the proper nutrients and to help avoid uncomfortable symptoms such as abdominal pain, bloating, indigestion, and more. Here are five foods and drinks to improve your digestive health:

- 1. Dark, leafy greens.** Foods like spinach and kale are loaded with nutrients like folate and vitamins A, C, and K. They also fuel the growth of healthy gut bacteria.
- 2. Fruit, such as berries, citrus fruits, and bananas.** Many fruits are rich in fiber and contain many vitamins and minerals that are good for digestion, such as vitamin C and potassium.
- 3. Water.** It helps break down food so that your body can absorb the nutrients.
- 4. Whole grains.** Whole grain foods provide lots of fiber, which is necessary for optimal colon function, and important nutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids.
- 5. Yogurt.** Some yogurts contain probiotics that can help strengthen the digestive tract. Look for one that contains live, active cultures.

Sources:

[healthline.com/health/digestive-health/colon-cleanse-diet](https://www.healthline.com/health/digestive-health/colon-cleanse-diet)

[hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/5-foods-to-improve-your-digestion](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/5-foods-to-improve-your-digestion)

[mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/expert-answers/digestion/faq-20058348](https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/expert-answers/digestion/faq-20058348)

[medicalnewstoday.com/articles/319759](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/319759)

[medicalnewstoday.com/articles/326596#foods-that-help-digestion](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/326596#foods-that-help-digestion)

[niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/digestive-system-how-it-works](https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/digestive-system-how-it-works)



Lemon Raspberry Muffins

1 1/2 cups fresh raspberries
1 lemon
1/2 cup sugar
1 cup non-fat buttermilk
1/3 cup canola oil
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup whole-wheat flour
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Coat 12 muffin cups with cooking spray or line with paper liners. Use a vegetable peeler to remove zest from lemon in long strips. Combine the zest and sugar in a food processor. Add buttermilk, oil, egg, and vanilla, and pulse until blended. In a separate large bowl, combine flours, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Add the buttermilk mixture, and fold until almost blended. Gently fold in raspberries. Divide the batter among the muffin cups. Bake 20–25 minutes or until edges and tops are golden. Enjoy!

Sources:
eatingwell.com/recipe/251934/lemon-raspberry-muffins/

Early Detection is Key

COLORECTAL CANCER

Colorectal cancer is the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in men and women. But the good news is that it's highly treatable if detected early. March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, so take a moment to learn how you can protect your health.

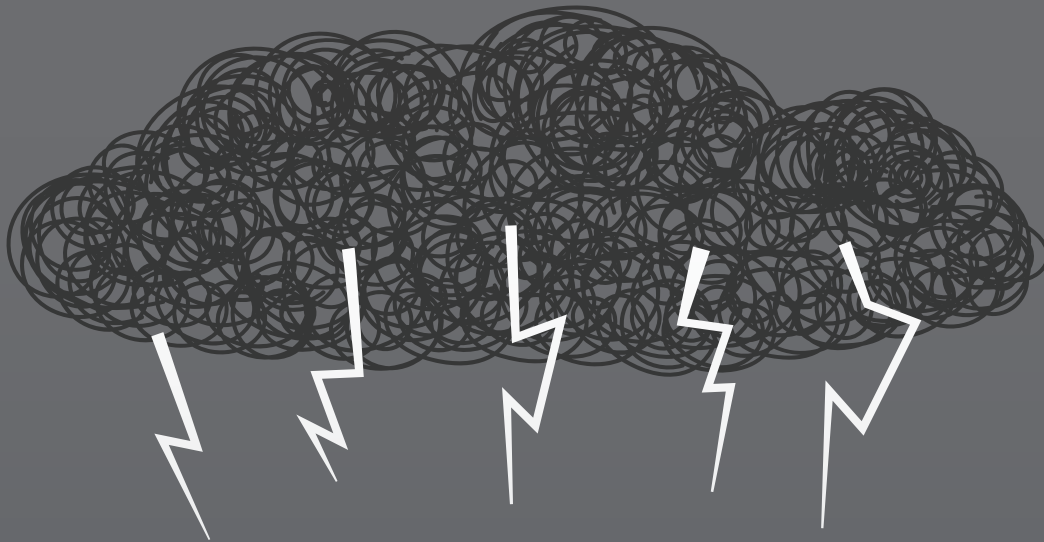
Here are six ways to reduce your risk for colorectal cancer:

- 1. Get screened.** Regular colorectal cancer screenings are recommended for adults ages 45 to 75. Talk to your doctor about your risks and if you'd be a candidate for earlier screening.
- 2. Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight or obese increases your risk of colorectal cancer.
- 3. Exercise regularly.** Aim to get some moderate to vigorous physical activity each day.
- 4. Eat a healthy, balanced diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.** Limit red and processed meats, which are associated with a higher colorectal cancer risk.
- 5. Quit smoking.** People who smoke are more likely to develop colon or rectal cancer and to die from these cancers.
- 6. Avoid alcohol.** If you do drink, men should have no more than two drinks a day, and women should have no more than one drink a day.

Sources:

cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/prevention.html
cancer.org/latest-news/six-ways-to-lower-your-risk-for-colon-cancer.html
cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic_info/screening/tests.htm





TIME TO FEEL

Life is full of emotional challenges, such as the pressure to succeed, financial issues, or the loss of a loved one. That's why it's important to learn how to cope and deal with your emotions in a healthy way. If not, you may find yourself turning to unhealthy numbing behaviors, such as alcohol or prescription drug use, excessive screen time, or compulsive shopping, to avoid or suppress your feelings. In turn, it can cause physical, emotional, and mental distress.

Here are four ways to stop emotional numbing so you can get through challenging life experiences:

1. Recognize any numbing behaviors you may have.
Seek help, if necessary.
2. Allow yourself time to feel and release your emotions.
3. Acknowledge that your feelings are valid and worthy.
4. Talk about your feelings with your spouse, a friend, or a therapist.

Sources:

ahealthysliceoflife.com/how-to-stop-emotional-numbing/
psychcentral.com/blog/weightless/2018/02/8-steps-to-stop-numbing-your-emotions#3
time.com/5163576/ignoring-your-emotions-bad-for-your-health/

Honesty is the Best Policy

You may have heard that “honesty is the best policy.” While telling the truth is important, it can also be difficult, especially when it comes to relationships. Honesty is necessary in any healthy relationship. It allows a relationship to thrive by signaling to the other person that they can trust you; it also facilitates good communication.

Here are three ways to build honesty in a relationship:

- 1. Prioritize communication.** Have a conversation with the other person and agree that you’ll both be honest.
- 2. Be sincere.** Being honest doesn’t mean we have to be hurtful. Aim to be vulnerable with the other person when describing how you think or feel.
- 3. Accept feedback.** Just as you should be honest with others, you should also be willing to accept others’ honesty towards you and see things from the other person’s point of view without getting defensive.



Sources:

mindbodygreen.com/0-5775/5-Reasons-to-Be-Honest-in-Love.html

psychologytoday.com/us/blog/actionable-advice-help-kids-thrive/202202/why-honesty-is-often-difficult?collection=1171581

psychologytoday.com/us/blog/compassion-matters/201506/5-ways-build-trust-and-honesty-in-your-relationship

MONTHLY QUIZ

1. True or False:
Strengthening your
lower back can help
alleviate back pain.

- A. True
- B. False

2. Which of the following
are good for your
digestive health?

- A. Dark leafy greens,
fruits, and water
- B. Potatoes, waffles,
and ice cream
- C. Celery, cauliflower,
and chocolate

3. Which of the following
can help reduce your risk
for colorectal cancer?

- A. Exercising regularly
- B. Quitting smoking
- C. Maintaining a
healthy weight
- D. All of the above



1. A, 2. A, 3. D

Independence Blue Cross is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your health care providers, not replace it. Before making any major changes in your medications, diet, or exercise, talk to your doctor.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Independence 

