

# eHouseCall

2008

A Monthly Electronic Newsletter from HealthLink

## Doctor's Bag



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### Did you remember to eat your breakfast today?

According to the Mayo Clinic, "People who eat a healthy breakfast are more likely to:

- Consume more vitamins and minerals and less fat and cholesterol
- Have better concentration and productivity throughout the morning
- Control their weight
- Have lower cholesterol, which reduces the risk of heart disease."

So what constitutes a healthy breakfast? Basic fare should include fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain bakery and cereals, low-fat dairy products and protein – eggs, lean meats and fish. If you're in a hurry, opt for high-fiber cereal with low-fat milk and grab a banana. If you consider breakfast to be a bore, think outside the cereal box and make yourself a low-fat, fresh fruit smoothie, munch on whole wheat crackers with a little low-fat cheese or wrap up some veggies and salsa in a multi-grain tortilla.

Bottom line, don't skip breakfast, and don't let your kids skip it either. The Mayo Clinic and the American Dietetic Association concur: "Children who eat a healthy breakfast are more likely to have better concentration, problem-solving skills and eye-hand coordination. They may also be more alert, creative and less likely to miss days of school."

## HLInfo YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO HEALTH CARE AWARENESS

AUGUST

### Un-Slump Your Afternoon

*The following is an excerpt from WebMD Health & Balance Center, "Afternoon Energy Boosters" by Gina Shaw, December 2007.*

"Does this sound familiar? You're going full steam ahead in the morning, plowing through work assignments or household tasks. You take a quick break for lunch – or maybe just grab something at your desk – and plan on getting right back to your routine. Instead, at about 2 p.m., you find your attention wandering and your focus flagging, and all you really want to do is take a nap.



#### What's Causing the Afternoon Slump?

First, you should understand where that sudden crash probably came from. "There seems to be a natural rhythm or set clock in our bodies, so many people tend to feel a little sleepy around 2 or 3 in the afternoon," says Lona Sandon, RD, MEd, a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association and an assistant professor of nutrition at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. "There seems to be something natural about this lull. Some cultures have the siesta, and people find they're more productive and better able to concentrate if they take time off after lunch and come back later.

WebMD's sleep expert, Michael J. Breus, PhD, explains that midday sleepiness is like a miniature version of the drowsiness you feel just before bedtime. "It has to do with a dip in your core body temperature," Breus says. "Right before you go to sleep at night, your core temperature begins to drop, which is a signal to the brain to release melatonin. The exact same thing happens on a smaller scale between 2 and 4 in the afternoon. It's a mini-signal to your brain to get sleepy."

How can you get a quick energy boost to keep you going? Check out the perk-up tips to the right.

To read this article in its entirety, visit WebMD on line. Go to: <http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/afternoon-energy-boosters>

The American Dietetic Association publishes "Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids," available for HealthLink members through plan participant pages of the HealthLink web site, [www.healthlink.com](http://www.healthlink.com).

## DidUKnow?

### P.M. Perk-Up Tips

- Take a 15-minute walk during your lunch break or step outside for a few minutes of fresh air and sunshine.
- Drink more water. Dehydration can make you tired.
- Avoid high-fat or high-carbohydrate lunches. Think green. Think protein.
- Stand up and stretch. Roll your head forward – and then back. Take three deep breaths. Shrug your shoulders up, then down. Repeat as necessary.
- Have an afternoon snack but avoid junk food high in sugar. Try peanut butter on whole wheat crackers, cut-up veggies, string cheese and apple slices, soy nuts or peanuts.
- If you can, take a short nap. 15-20 minutes may be all you need.
- Avoid "computer fatigue" and eyestrain by taking a visual rest from the computer screen every 20 minutes. Give your eyes a break.
- Lift your spirits by stepping out of your rut. Call a friend or loved one to say hi. Write a thank-you note.
- Tame the monster. If you have a monster task that's eating up your energy, break it down into smaller do-ables and then go for it. Sometimes just getting started is all it takes to make real progress.
- And for something completely different – rub a drop of peppermint oil into your hands and take a good, long sniff. Keep a rosemary plant in your office and rub one of the sprigs between your fingers when you need a boost. Both aromas can be energizing.

#### INFORMATION SOURCES:

WebMD: [www.webmd.com/balance/features/afternoon-energy-boosters](http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/afternoon-energy-boosters)

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MayoClinic.com Tools for Healthier Lives, "Healthy Breakfast: The best way to begin your day," February 2007, [www.mayoclinic.com/print/food-and-nutrition/NU00197/METHOD=print](http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/food-and-nutrition/NU00197/METHOD=print)

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