



# AVIATION MEDICAL

## BULLETIN™

PUBLISHED BY HARVEY WATT & COMPANY BECAUSE HEALTH AND FITNESS MATTER TO AVIATORS

January 2018

### THE ITCHING HOUR

Your skin comprises about one-seventh of your total body weight and is a “sophisticated and dynamic organ,” in the words of a recent scientific paper. Your skin is a barrier between you and the outside world. Among other essential functions, it helps maintain your body temperature and is a first line of defense for your immune system. It is also the most visible indicator of age—a fact that gives rise to much anxiety and a huge sector of the cosmetics industry. And as you grow older, your skin becomes thinner, produces fewer oils, and retains less moisture—and thus is more likely to become dry and itchy.

This natural drying of the skin (called xerosis) is the most common cause of itching—and few people manage to avoid the problem. Of course other conditions can cause itching: from allergies and foods to medications and various skin disorders such as eczema. If your itching is persistent, general, and painful—so bad that it interferes with your sleep, for example—see a doctor to rule out any underlying problems.

#### But, here are some smart ways to deal with dry skin:

- ✓ Avoid long sessions in the tub or shower, since water washes off the natural oils in the skin. A brief shower is much less drying than a long bath. Bath oils may feel soothing, but can leave a residue that contributes to itching. Bubble bath products may contain alcohol, perfumes, or menthol—all potential irritants.
- ✓ Use a moisturizer after your bath or shower.
- ✓ Try not to scratch, as this irritates skin further.
- ✓ Hot water may dry the skin, so keep the water lukewarm.
- ✓ Use soap without ingredients such as deodorants, antiseptics, and perfume, which can be irritants. Use all soap sparingly.
- ✓ Avoid scrubbing—no rough washcloths or loofahs. Use a soft towel to blot or pat yourself dry.

- ✓ Use sunscreen daily on skin exposed to the sun. Sun dries the skin.
- ✓ Wear cotton next to your skin, or synthetics you know are not irritating. Be wary of wool, which is often an itch-promoter.
- ✓ Use mild unscented laundry detergent when washing clothing, towels, and bed linens. Use only the amount recommended, or less. Try rinsing an extra time. Fabric softeners can also be irritating, especially those used in the dryer, which don't rinse out.
- ✓ Avoid extremes of heat and cold—both can be drying. Maintain a comfortable humidity level in your surroundings (30% to 50%). Use a humidifier if necessary. Keep the thermostat as low as is comfortable in the winter (68° to 72° F). Your skin will be better off if you wear warm clothing rather than overheating the room.

### Inside This Issue ...

When Exercise Takes Your Breath Away	2
Protecting Your Heart By The Decade	3
Anatomy Of A Doctor's Bill	4
When 8 Isn't Enough	5
Help Your Kids To Not Smoke	6
Booze And High Blood Pressure	7
<b><u>We Help Keep You Flying (From Harvey Watt &amp; Company)</u></b>	<b><u>8</u></b>

## GET WELL SOON

Don't hesitate to bring flowers when visiting a sick person in the hospital for fear of health hazards. It's a myth that flowers compete for patients' oxygen, and there's no evidence that contaminated flower water can cause hospital infections. Nor do flowers pose any more risk to high-tech medical machinery in the room than bedside food and beverages.

## AVOIDING THE BUG

Researchers at the University of Arizona found that, in order, the top five germ-contaminated office spots are: phone, desktop, water-fountain handle, microwave-door handle, and computer keyboard.

One way to stop the spread of cold and flu germs is to frequently clean your desk, telephone, computer keyboard, mouse, and other office items.

Just like doorknobs, shopping cart handles, or shaking hands with someone, these are places where germs spread easily from one person to another.

## 3 REASONS IT'S EASIER FOR MEN TO LOSE WEIGHT

Why does it seem easier for men to lose weight? It may be all in our heads.

1. Women simply obsess about food more. According to a recent survey, "25% of women think about food every half-hour, only 10% think about sex that often. When it comes to men, 5% think about sex once a minute and 36% find their minds wandering to it every 30 minutes."
2. Women tend to relate emotionally to food while men do not. The book Conquering Heart Attack & Stroke references a brain-scan study in which "researchers flashed tempting foods in front of men and women who hadn't eaten for a day, then told them to fight their hunger. The men's brains showed far less activity in areas of emotional regulation, memory, and motivation than the women's – as if men were more easily able to 'switch off' their cravings for favorite foods, which included fried chicken, lasagna, ice cream, and pizza."
3. To top it all off, men also have faster metabolisms. According to Weight Watchers, "Research has found that on average the metabolism of a man is 5 to 10 percent higher than that of a woman of the same weight and height."

## WHEN EXERCISE TAKES YOUR BREATH AWAY

Millions of Americans are affected by some degree of

exercise-induced asthma (EIA), including most people with chronic asthma and perhaps one-third of people with allergies, such as hay fever. The symptoms—tightness in the chest, shortness of breath, coughing, and wheezing—usually begin during exercise or shortly afterwards.

Aerobic exercise is most likely to set off an attack, especially when the air is cold and dry. Some people are able to continue exercising after an EIA attack abates—usually within an hour or so—but others have to end their workouts and/or take medication. Some may get discouraged or scared and simply give up on exercise.

EIA may occur because when you breathe rapidly during exercise, you replace warm, moist air in your bronchial tubes with cold, dry air. This can trigger the release of chemicals (similar to those involved in inflammation) that cause constriction of the airway, making breathing difficult. Or an allergen or air pollutant, such as chlorine by-products from swimming pools, combined with rapid breathing, may set off the attack.

### Strategies: don't give it up

If you think exercise is causing you to have asthma attacks, consult a doctor to make sure that's what it is. If you're middle aged or older and have never had an attack before and suddenly start having symptoms such as tightness in the chest while doing any kind of exercise, seek medical help, since it may be heart-related.

**You don't have to give up exercise if you have EIA. It can be treated and controlled.**

The following steps may help:

- ✓ If you exercise outdoors in cold weather, breathe through your nose when possible, since that helps warm and humidify the air you inhale. Wearing a face mask or scarf around your face can also accomplish this. When it's very cold, avoid outdoor exercise.
- ✓ Check the air quality when exercising outdoors. If pollen or air pollution levels are high, exercise indoors.
- ✓ If you have EIA, talk to your doctor about a quick acting bronchodilator. Used 15 to 30 minutes before exercising, it can help prevent symptoms.

## HEALTHY AGING

Experts recommend four types of exercise for healthy aging:

1. Balance
2. Endurance
3. Strength
4. Flexibility

## WHOLE GRAINS FOR GOOD HEALTH

Over the past two decades whole grains have garnered a sparkling reputation for broad-spectrum disease protection. In one of the largest review studies to date that focused on whole grain intake and the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity, the results were telling. People who consumed the most whole grains or cereal fiber were 18 to 40 percent less likely to get type 2 diabetes and 14 to 26 percent less likely to get heart disease vs. those consuming the least. Consuming fiber-rich whole grains was also associated with a healthier body weight.

Whole grains offer a treasure trove of nutrients including generous amounts of fiber, the secret weapon for metabolic health. For best results, choose physically intact, whole kernel whole grains like oatmeal, brown rice, quinoa, etc. or high fiber cereals as your top choice.

## HOW MUCH PROTEIN IS TOO MUCH?

Most Americans eat enough protein—in fact, many eat more than they need. Here are some guidelines to help you maintain protein portion control. Most adults need five to seven ounces of protein a day.

One ounce of protein can be found in each of the following servings:

- 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry or seafood
- 1 egg
- ½ cup cooked beans or peas
- ½ ounce nuts or seeds
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter

Keep in mind that one ounce of meat or poultry is a very small serving size. To give you reference, a three-ounce serving of meat, poultry or fish is about the size of a deck of playing cards.

## QUOTABLE

"The only really good place to buy lumber is at a store where the lumber has already been cut and attached together in the form of furniture, finished, and put inside boxes." - Dave Berry

## PROTECTING YOUR HEART BY THE DECADE

### Prevention In Your 40s

**Find a medical ally.** "Many women in their 40s haven't had any primary care other than their ob-gyns," says Johnson. Now is the time to work with an internist on your general health. Your doctor will identify factors that may be raising your heart-disease risk, counsel you on how to lower that risk, and administer tests and medication as needed.

**Consider medications.** Lifestyle changes alone may still be enough to cut your risk to normal. But, medication to control blood pressure, lower cholesterol, and manage blood sugar may be necessary, too.

**Don't get stuck in the middle.** That pudge around your waist increases your heart risk. This layer of intra-abdominal fat spikes blood pressure and cholesterol. Fortunately, a little strength training is effective at helping to stave off this type of fat.

### Tests In Your 40s

**Blood pressure:** Annually.

**Body-mass index (BMI), waist circumference, and/or waist-to-hip ratio measurement:** Annually.

**Lipid panel:** By age 20; repeat annually or more often if your lipids are in an unhealthy range, or every five years if they're in a healthy range.

**Fasting blood glucose:** Only if you're diabetic, pregnant, or at risk for diabetes (this includes anyone with a BMI of 25 or higher; those with a family history of diabetes; and African-Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics).

### Plus:

- ✓ **Electrocardiogram:** In your early 40s, if your risk is high.
- ✓ **Stress test:** In your early 40s if your risk is high.
- ✓ **Fasting blood glucose:** Every three years starting at age 45, if there are no risk factors, or more often if you are overweight or have other risk factors.

### Prevention In Your 50s

**Get moving.** Women who enter their 50s have usually become progressively less active and have gained weight. Your risk may be higher, since menopause depletes levels of heart-protective estrogen, making blood vessels less flexible (exercise helps counteract this).

**Monitor your risk factors.** Blood pressure and triglyceride levels may edge up, especially if you have put on weight or are taking an oral estrogen replacement.

**Know the signs of heart attack.** In addition to the typical male symptoms (pain or pressure in the center of the chest radiating to the neck and arms), women may feel severe indigestion, lower-chest and upper-abdominal pain, unexplained shortness of breath, sweating, nausea, upper-back pain, shoulder pain, or severe fatigue. If you experience any of these, head to an ER.

## Tests In Your 50s

Everything as in your 40s:

**Plus:**

**High-sensitivity C-reactive protein, homocysteine, and/or lipoprotein:** As indicated by your doctor, based on your risk factors.

**CT test for coronary calcification:** As indicated by your doctor, based on your risk factors.

## IF IT DUCKS LIKE A QUACK...

Quackery costs billions annually. Worse than the money it wastes, it can cause harm and lead people away from the medical help they really need. Here are some warning signals:

- Words such as "miraculous," "instant," "secret," or "amazing."
- Vague claims such as "purifies your body," "raise your energy level," or "boosts immune system."
- Testimonials and anecdotes that are the sole or primary support for the claims.
- Ad copy that tries to diagnose health problems: for example, an ad that leads you to believe you have vitamin deficiencies, and then offers to sell you a cure.
- Claims that doctors don't want you to know about "cures" because they would lose business.
- "Spot-reducers" or any gadget promising to reduce weight without exercise—or while you sleep!
- Diet plans "guaranteed" to take off a pound a day. A diet that rigorous would be dangerous.
- Health-related products sold via multi-level (network) marketing, which turns customers into salespeople.
- Claims about curing arthritis, cancer, or AIDS.
- Claims that a product will cure a wide variety of illnesses. Cure-alls seldom cure anything.

## TOP TEN REASONS FOR EXERCISING

Why do you exercise? Well, here are the reasons given from a sampling of men and women fitness center users:

### Women

Weight control  
Feeling good afterward  
Increased energy  
Muscle tone  
Cardiovascular  
Maintain flexibility  
Reduce stress  
Time for self  
Enjoy exercise  
Self esteem

### Men

Muscle tone  
Increased energy  
Cardiovascular  
Weight control  
Feeling good after  
Reduce stress  
Build strength  
Enjoy exercise  
Maintain flexibility  
Time for self

## ANATOMY OF A DOCTOR'S BILL

Just how much of the \$100 your doctor charges for taking 30 minutes to investigate your stomach pain goes into his pocket? After paying the bills, he gets less than half. The breakdown, according to Medical Economics:

- \$3.50 for malpractice insurance
- \$3.50 for equipment, repairs, and maintenance
- \$6 for supplies, including gowns, tongue depressors, and copy paper
- \$7 for rent and utilities
- \$11 for office expenses, such as telephones, accounting fees, advertising, medical journals, licenses, and taxes
- \$28 for secretary, office manager, and medical assistant salaries and benefits
- \$41 Amount that goes into the doctor's paycheck

Over the course of a year, that adds up to \$155,000, the annual salary of the average family physician. That number rose just 3.3% between 2014 and 2016, while expenses increased nearly 25% over the same period.

## LITTLE LEAGUE PITCHING

When should a Little League Pitcher start throwing various pitches? The American Sports Medicine Institute in Birmingham, Alabama gives these guidelines for young pitchers.

Fastball	Age 8
Change-up	Age 10
Curve	Age 14

All other pitches should not be thrown until high school age.

A spokesperson for ASMI says that fully 50 percent of young pitchers suffer some kind of elbow injury or pain during their little league play. At ages 11 and 12 there are a half-dozen different growth areas in the elbow that are susceptible to long-lasting damage from excessive pitching motions.

### **KEEP THE WEIGHT OFF**

Another reason to maintain a healthy weight: Being obese appears to increase the chances that a man with prostate cancer will die from it, according to two new studies in the journal *Cancer*.

In a National Cancer Institute study, men with prostate cancer who were mildly obese had a 46% higher risk of dying from it within five years than those with normal weight, and very obese men were twice as likely to die from it. Weight did not affect the chance that a man will develop prostate cancer, only that he will die from it if he does get it.

The second study, from the Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, found that obesity triples the likelihood that prostate cancer will spread and more than doubles the mortality rate. Most, but not all, previous studies have linked obesity with progression of prostate cancer.

### **EXERCISE? NOT!**

- ◆ My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was sixty. She's 97 now, and we don't know where the heck she is.
- ◆ The only reason I would take up jogging is so I could hear heavy breathing again.
- ◆ I joined a health club last year, spent about 400 bucks, and haven't lost a pound. Apparently, you have to show up.
- ◆ I have to exercise in the morning before my brain figures out what I am doing.
- ◆ I don't exercise at all. If God had meant for us to touch our toes, he would have put them further up our body.
- ◆ I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.
- ◆ I have flabby thighs, but fortunately my stomach covers them.
- ◆ The advantage of exercising everyday is that you die healthier.

### **LOW CARB DIET BEST FOR WEIGHT CONTROL, CHOLESTEROL**

The Atkins and South Beach diets may have proved themselves after all: A low-carb diet and a Mediterranean-style regimen helped people lose more weight than a traditional low-fat diet in one of the longest and largest studies to compare the dueling weight-loss techniques.

A bigger surprise: The low-carb diet improved cholesterol more than the other two. Some critics had predicted the opposite. The study is remarkable not only because it

lasted two years, much longer than most, but also because of the huge proportion of people who stuck with the diets — 85 percent.

### **WHEN 8 ISN'T ENOUGH**

If you're active, 8 glasses of water isn't enough. Even mild dehydration can make you tire easily, says Susan Kleiner, Ph.D., writing in a recent issue of the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*.

To compute your daily water needs, she suggests multiplying your weight in pounds by 0.8 to determine the number of ounces you should be drinking each day.

### **FOOD LABELS: CAN YOU TELL FACT FROM FICTION?**

When you're at the supermarket, how do you choose what goes into your cart? If you're judging a food by what it says on the front of its package, you may be shortchanging your health. Packaging is actually part advertising and part fact.

Do you know which is which?

You're shopping for cereal and you see lots of boxes with phrases that sound healthy. Which of these should motivate you to buy?

- A. 100% whole wheat
- B. Made with real fruit
- C. Made with whole grains
- D. All natural

**The answer is:** A, 100% whole wheat. "Whole' is the magic word for a good food," says childcare expert Bill Sears, M.D. "Even better is 100% whole wheat." When a label says "made with," that means the manufacturer may have started out with a particular ingredient but there's no way to tell how it was processed or even how much of it went into the final product. And, although "natural" sounds healthy, it really doesn't mean anything in terms of nutrition. For example, the fat on bacon is natural, but it's certainly not good for your heart.

### **HOW TO HELP YOUR KID NOT TO SMOKE**

When it comes to helping your child not to smoke, there are some things that work and some that don't, says Amy Dickinson, writing in *Time* magazine.

She cites that latest statistics that show that one in three adolescents is a daily smoker, an increase of 50% in the last decade.

Everyday, 6,000 will try their first cigarette. She adds that while your high schooler may not smoke, you can bet he or she is likely to be hanging around those who do,

making it more likely that he or she will start.

So what can you do to lessen the chances that your kids will start smoking?

**1.** Lecturing on the risks of smoking won't help. Kids think they are bulletproof. And, their defiant attitude makes them think that smoking is cool.

**2.** Ads that try to educate don't work either. They're already educated about the dangers of tobacco.

**3.** Ads that look at the cynical manipulation behind tobacco-marketing campaigns do help. Kids don't like being lied to. Websites like [thertruth.com](http://thertruth.com) and [cdc.gov/tobacco](http://cdc.gov/tobacco) have been found to be eye-opening to teens.

**4.** Teens who wear apparel, such as T-shirts and caps, with tobacco logos plastered all over them are three times as likely as other kids to try cigarettes.

**5.** If you suspect your teenager is smoking, confront him or her immediately and directly. Expect them to deny it, but reiterate your rules and the consequences of disobeying them.

**6.** Trying to bribe your kids won't work. Never pay a kid for not doing something he or she shouldn't be doing anyway.

**7.** If you smoke, quit. Otherwise all that you say will fall on deaf ears. Seventy-five percent of teen smokers come from a family where one or more parents smoke.

### LIQUID CALORIES

If you're trying to lose weight, look at your liquid calories. Beverages supply more than 20% of the calories in the average American's diet, a percentage that has risen over recent decades. Some liquid calories come from healthy beverages, such as nonfat or low-fat milk (a leading source of calcium and vitamins D and A) and fruit juices (vitamin C). But most come from soda or alcoholic beverages and are "empty"—that is, accompanied by few or no nutrients.

### SMOKING AND INJURIES

A U.S. Army study shows that recruits who smoke a pack of cigarettes a day are twice as likely to sustain an injury during the eight weeks of basic combat training.

### HOW TO LOSE 10 POUNDS

There are any number of ways to lose 10 pounds. After all, it's only a matter of burning extra calories; 35,000 to be exact. Here are some of them:

### To lose 10 pounds in ...

**6 months** Swim for one hour, 2 times a week

**4 months** Cycling for one hour, 3 times a week

**3 months** Play basketball for one hour, 4 times a week

**2 months** Run for one hour, 5 times a week

**1 week** Walk for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

### A FLOSSED CAUSE

Dental floss plays an important part in keeping teeth and gums healthy, but most people don't use it—and some use it in interesting ways.

From an issue of American Heritage:

- When: commercial floss was first manufactured: 1882.
- Material: it was first made of: silk.
- Material used starting in the 1940s: nylon (invented 1935).
- Amount bought by Americans per year: more than 3 million miles.
- Amount bought per person: 18 yards (that's enough for only one flossing per week, assuming 12 inches for each use).
- Amount that should be bought per person: 122 yards minimum a year for daily flossing.
- Proportion who say they feel guilty about not flossing: almost half.
- Proportion who lie to their dentist about flossing: one-third.
- Criminal use: one prison inmate used floss to cut through a wire fence; another reportedly sawed through bars in his cell with floss; and one braided floss into a rope to help scale a wall and escape.
- Other non dental uses: shoelaces, kite string, cheesecake cutter, bead string, ukulele string, fishing line, picture hanger, replacement for chain inside toilet tank.

And by the way: Use it, but don't flush it down the toilet. The nearly indestructible threads can gum up municipal sewer systems and pumping stations, according to the Toronto Star.

### POPCORN

You would have to eat two quarts of plain, unbuttered popcorn to get the calories in one ounce of potato chips

(about 15 chips). Eat one cup of plain, un buttered popcorn instead of a one-ounce bag of potato chips and you'll avoid 135 calories and 10 grams of fat.

### MICROWAVE YOUR SPONGES?

To kill germs in your kitchen sponges, microwave them at full power for two minutes. A study in the Journal of Environmental Health in December found that this reduces microbes by more than 99%. Sponges are a common source of microbes, including Salmonella, especially when they remain wet. Air-drying sponges does not significantly reduce germs, and though putting them in the dishwasher cleans them, it doesn't sufficiently decontaminate them. To guard against fire, make sure sponges contain no metal and are wet before you microwave them. Be careful when removing them, since they will be very hot.

### BOOZE AND HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

If you have high blood pressure, it's okay to drink moderate amounts of alcohol, at least if you're a white man. A recent Harvard study of nearly 12,000 male health professionals with hypertension found that those who had a drink or two a day had a slightly reduced risk of heart attacks and no apparent increased risk of stroke. Heavy drinking, however, is known to raise blood pressure, and thus people with hypertension, in particular, should not drink heavily. There were few black men in the study, and previous research suggested that even moderate amounts of alcohol may raise their blood pressure.

### FITNESS: TIMING IS EVERYTHING

How fit you were years ago is of little consequence; what's important is how fit are you today.

You may have worked out regularly when you were younger, but it's the workouts you are doing now that make a difference in how long you live. This should encourage couch potatoes to get up and get moving. Even if you can't remember the last time you exercised, you can change your destiny by getting started today.

According to Scott Sherman, lead author of a UCLA study of the exercise habits of 2,400 people over a period of several decades, "The way exercise works is a here-and-now benefit." And, he adds, "It's never too late to get started."

### FLAXATIVE

It's been called the "world's best laxative." Two tablespoons of nutty-tasting flaxseed is a natural remedy for constipation and is also good for you. The insoluble

fiber keeps you regular and it also lowers cholesterol, reduces the risk of breast cancer, and it contains omega-3 fatty acids.

Flaxseed can be used in muffins, orange juice, and on top of cereals. It should be refrigerated to keep it from oxidizing.

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

We are often asked, "If we have Long Term Disability (LTD) coverage for our pilots, why do we/they need Loss of License (LOL) coverage"? The answer lies in an explanation of the difference between LTD and LOL.



Traditional LTD carriers don't recognize what we call the licensing risk. That's the risk of an FAA licensing grounding that can extend well beyond the resolution of the health issue/problem that initially triggers a disability benefit. Further, they generally don't recognize at all, those health related licensing safety issues that cause a pilot's loss of income, but never trigger an LTD benefit. Below is an example:

A pilot has to have a stent. After 45 days, his cardiologist releases him to go back to work. The LTD carrier reasons that his health problem has been solved, and his doctor released him, so they deny or cease further payment of benefits.

Here's the problem: The FAA won't even consider letting him fly until at least six months has elapsed between the event and his request to go back on flight status. And, it's incumbent on the *pilot* to prove to the FAA that he/she is fit to fly after the six month mark. So, he has to know the FAA requirements, have extensive testing, and have his case presented to the FAA Cardiac Review Board for a "Special Issuance". (And, by the way, the board only meets every other month.) So, in the real world of aviation, it can be seven to twelve months before this pilot can fly again even though the LTD carrier stopped benefits after 45 days. A LOL contract would continue to pay him long after the LTD plan stopped.

The bottom line is that traditional disability insurance will not typically consider a pilot disabled once your treating doctor or the insurance company's doctor say "he's good to go." Hence the reason Loss of License Insurance was created and our experience shows it pays nearly 1 in 20 covered pilots every year.

With 65 years experience, Harvey Watt & Co provides the *only* US pilot disability plans for individuals and small groups we know with a FAA Medical Licensing definition of disability for commercial pilots.

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