

# healthkeys<sup>®</sup>

Winter 2009-2010


## A message from Choice Medical Group

**C**hoice Medical Group (CMG) has been serving the community for the past 20 years with the mission of "Doing our part in our community ... to keep you healthy." CMG offers you and your family access to more physicians in more locations than any other medical group in the High Desert.

Our panel of providers consists of approximately 40 primary care physicians and more than 150 specialists. Several specialists are exclusively affiliated with CMG to ensure that CMG members enjoy faster appointment times and better physician access.

CMG contracts with many health plans so that our members can choose the benefit package tailored to their needs. To expand our members' choices and options, our 2009-2010 open enrollment will offer additional health plans to the list of current plans.

No matter what health insurance plan you have, one thing is important to everyone when it comes to their healthcare—choices. At this open enrollment, give your family the security of a right choice. Call us today to hear more about our services and health plan options.

If you're interested in becoming a member of CMG or would like more information, please call our member services department at **(760) 242-7777, ext. 224.** 

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# Better with beans

Stock up on these nutritional gems

**W**hy eat beans? They're healthy, inexpensive—and delicious. No matter which type of bean you choose, they all contain ample amounts of vitamins and minerals. Here's the lowdown on beans and some helpful suggestions for getting your fill of these nutritional powerhouses:

## SLIM DOWN

Beans are low in fat and calories and high in protein and dietary fiber. Dietary fiber can slow the absorption rate of carbohydrates, which may help keep hunger at bay.

### → TRY: Kidney beans

Whether you choose to use dark or light kidney beans, substitute them for the meat in tacos, blend cooked beans with your favorite herbs and spices in a food processor for a quick spread or mix them with black beans, white beans and a light vinaigrette dressing for a tasty, healthy three-bean salad.



## DEFEAT DIABETES

Beans contain high amounts of soluble fiber, which helps to lower cholesterol. Fiber slows the passage of glucose from food into your bloodstream, helping you maintain normal blood sugar levels, an important goal for people with diabetes.

### → TRY: Pinto beans

They're especially high in fiber: A half-cup serving contains 8 grams of fiber. Experiment by using pinto beans instead of the usual kidney beans in your chili recipes or add them to cooked rice or a hearty vegetable soup.



## FIGHT CANCER

Eating plenty of cooked dry beans may protect against colon cancer, thanks to beans' many nutrients and their low glycemic index. Being low glycemic means these foods don't cause blood sugar to fluctuate as much as high-glycemic foods, such as white bread, do.

### → TRY: Navy beans

Usually the foundation for baked beans, you can also use them to complement a nutritious chili made with chicken, toss them into tomato soup or mix them with olive oil and garlic and serve on top of baked bread.



## HEAL YOUR HEART

Besides being low in total fat, saturated fat and sodium and high in soluble fiber, beans also contain lots of potassium, which can help maintain normal blood pressure.

### → TRY: Garbanzo beans, or chickpeas

These beans are the basis for tasty hummus, which you can make by pureeing them with olive oil, garlic, tahini paste and lemon juice; serve with whole-wheat pita chips. You can also try them tossed with a green salad or eat them with a sprinkling of your favorite herbs and spices.



# Benefiting your bones

How exercise can keep you strong



**Y**ou're young at heart, but your bones are probably feeling their age. Don't despair. You can keep your bones healthy through exercise. If you have osteoporosis or haven't been active before, talk with your healthcare provider before you begin exercising.

## EXERCISE DEFINED

Certain types of exercise are more beneficial for bone than others. To help build bone, you need to engage in weight-bearing activities, or those that make you work against gravity. If you have osteoporosis, low bone mass or are frail, try walking or

using elliptical trainers and stair-stoppers. Otherwise, consider high-impact exercises such as running or tennis.

Another good bone-builder is resistance exercise, such as lifting weights and using weight machines.

You might want to add balance and flexibility exercises to your routine. Tai chi and yoga, for example, can help you maintain your balance

**Aerobics and strength training can boost your bone health.**

and reduce the risk of a fall. If you have osteoporosis, be careful not to perform poses that cause you to twist your spine or bend forward at the waist.


## WORKING IT

Keep these pointers in mind as you get started:

- **Try to exercise for at least 30 minutes a day on most or all days.**

You can still get the same benefits if you break it up into three 10-minute workouts.

- **If you do resistance training, aim for two to three sessions a week.** Do one or two sets of eight to 10 repetitions each, resting for 30 seconds to a minute between each. If you can't do eight repetitions, use a lower weight; if you can do more than 10, increase the weight.

- **Pay attention to your body.** Muscle soreness is common when you start an exercise routine. But if you have pain or soreness that lasts more than two days, you need to slow down. 

## Eat your way to better bones

**E**xercise is an important part of the package, but it's not the only thing you need for strong bones. You also require:

CALCIUM	VITAMIN D	PROTEIN
<p>Find it in dairy products such as milk, cheese and yogurt. Calcium supplements are also available; try to take them in doses of 500 milligrams (mg) or less to allow for better absorption.</p> <p>→ <b>Recommended amount:</b> 1,200 mg daily</p>	<p>Find it in milk and fortified calcium supplements. You can also get your daily dose by spending just 10 to 15 minutes a day in the sun, three days a week.</p> <p>→ <b>Recommended amount:</b> 400-600 IU daily</p>	<p>Find it in meats, poultry, fish, dry beans, peas, tofu, eggs, nuts, seeds, grains, milk and milk products.</p> <p>→ <b>Recommended amount:</b> 56 grams (g) daily for men, 46 g for women</p>



# The impossible dream?

Conquer common sleep stealers and get the zzzs you need!

What you wouldn't give for a good night's sleep. But for reasons you're not quite sure of, shut-eye remains elusive.

If you're having trouble sleeping, talk with your healthcare provider. Your problems could signal an underlying health condition that needs to be treated. Here are some of the most common causes of sleep disturbances and what you can do about them:

## CAFFEINE

In moderate amounts, caffeine is safe for most people. But for some, even a little caffeine can keep them awake at night. Caffeine is a stimulant. Cut back if you find caffeine is affecting your sleep. The pick-me-up is found in coffee, tea, chocolate and in some pain relievers and cold medications.

## GET RELIEF

- Consume no more than 300 to 400 milligrams of caffeine—three or four cups of coffee—a day, less if you know you're sensitive to it.
- Cut back slowly to avoid headaches and feelings of tiredness and irritability. Start by substituting one drink a week with a caffeine-free counterpart, then slowly replace others.



## ACID REFLUX

That burning feeling in your chest may just be heartburn, but if it occurs more than twice a week it might be gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD. It occurs when the lower esophageal sphincter (LES) muscle doesn't close correctly and allows stomach contents to back up into the esophagus. In some cases, you may not even notice the symptoms, but they'll disrupt your sleep cycle.

## GET RELIEF

- Avoid citrus fruits, chocolate, caffeine, fried or fatty foods, garlic, onions, mint flavorings, spicy foods and tomato-based foods, all of which can make the problem worse.
- Quit smoking; lose weight; wear loose-fitting clothes; eat smaller meals; avoid lying down for three hours after a meal; and raise the head of your bed six to eight inches using blocks of wood.
- Over-the-counter antacids like Maalox or Tums may help, but some people need prescription or over-the-counter medications such as H2 blockers and proton pump inhibitors.
- Still no relief? Talk with your healthcare provider about your options. Surgery can help strengthen a weakened LES muscle.



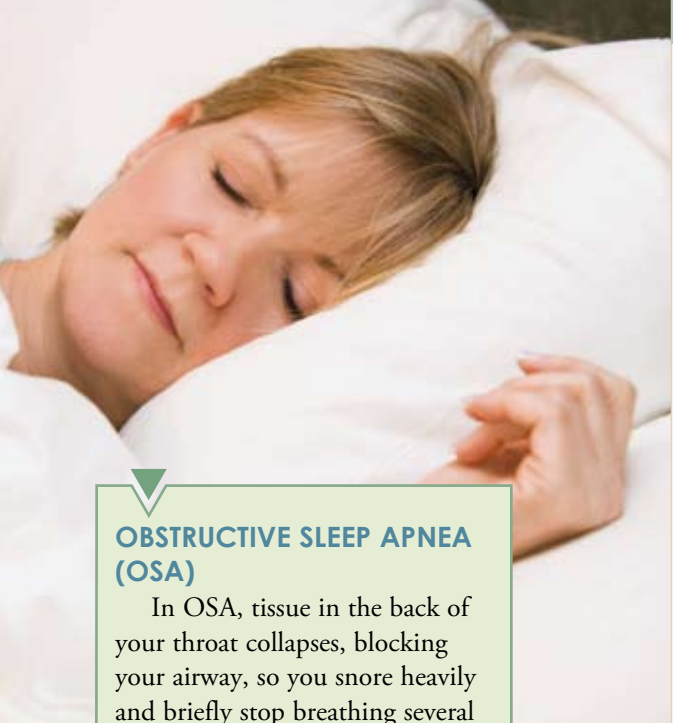
## RESTLESS LEGS SYNDROME (RLS)

RLS sufferers are tired and cranky thanks to the intense urge to move a limb when lying down to sleep. RLS causes sensations of tingling, itching, cramping or burning in your limbs. Relief only comes when you move. Low iron levels and chronic diseases such as diabetes, Parkinson's and peripheral neuropathy—a problem with the nerves that relay information to and from the brain and spinal cord—are sometimes to blame.

## GET RELIEF

- Ask your healthcare provider about taking a supplement, which could correct nutritional deficiencies in iron, folate and magnesium. People with these deficiencies may be more prone to RLS.
- Cut back on caffeine, alcohol and tobacco, which can trigger RLS symptoms.
- Engage in regular exercise, but don't overdo it, as this may aggravate your symptoms.
- Take a hot bath, massage your legs or use hot or cold packs.
- Talk with your provider about medications. Some, including ropinirole, have been used to treat Parkinson's and may provide relief.





## OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA (OSA)

In OSA, tissue in the back of your throat collapses, blocking your airway, so you snore heavily and briefly stop breathing several times a night. Excessive daytime drowsiness, poor judgment, memory loss, irritability, high blood pressure, depression and morning headaches can all point to OSA. Your healthcare provider can do a sleep test to make the diagnosis.

### GET RELIEF

- Lose weight. Dropping just 10 pounds can make a huge difference.
- Sleep on your side if you find that you snore more on your back.
- Skip alcohol, caffeine and big meals two hours before bed.
- Avoid sedatives, which can relax your throat muscles and lead to obstruction.
- Ask your healthcare provider about an oral appliance to keep your jaw in place and your tongue forward and out of the way.
- Seek out CPAP. A fitted mask goes over your nose and keeps a constant flow of air to keep the airway from collapsing.
- Look into surgery to change the palate shape or keep the tongue in place.



## Health & Wellness Center

Comprehensive services for our senior members

Choice Medical Group (CMG) is proud to offer comprehensive services at the Health & Wellness Center. The center, providing services to our senior patients, specializes in chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, chronic heart failure, dementia, hypertension, fall prevention and other conditions. Center classes include diabetes education, nutrition and a special senior flexibility class held twice a week in our health education center where a certified instructor leads everyone in yoga. Flu shots are also given twice a week.

CMG supports a large area of San Bernardino County, including Oak Hills, Hesperia, Phelan, Apple Valley, Lucerne Valley, Barstow, Adelanto and surrounding areas.

CMG is the healthcare leader in the High Desert. If you're interested in becoming a Choice member, contact our member services at **(760) 242-7777, ext. 224** or visit us on our Web site at **www.**

**ChoiceMG.com.** HK



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"Doing our part in our community ... to keep you healthy."

### Administrative Offices

18564 Highway 18, Suite 105, Apple Valley, CA 92307  
**(760) 242-7777, ext. 224** or **(800) 316-7836**  
**www.ChoiceMG.com**



## Quick quiz

Test your health savvy

When it comes to your well-being, knowledge is power. Brush up before your next checkup. Answers appear below.

- 1 Getting enough vitamin D may help prevent:
  - A. osteoporosis
  - B. adult rickets
  - C. muscle pain
  - D. all of the above
- 2 Which is not a cause of constipation?
  - A. medication
  - B. using too many laxatives
  - C. exercising too much
  - D. holding back bowel movements
- 3 Presbyopia is an eye problem that:
  - A. reduces your ability to see objects far away
  - B. reduces your ability to see objects close up
  - C. causes swelling of the eyelid
  - D. causes tiny specks in your line of vision
- 4 Prostate cancer is
  - A. usually slow-growing
  - B. very rare
  - C. common
  - D. a and c
- 5 Which of the following may be a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease?
  - A. being a man
  - B. low blood pressure
  - C. history of head trauma
  - D. none of the above

ANSWERS: 1. (D), 2. (C), 3. (B), 4. (D), 5. (C)



# The proof is in the pill

### Feel at ease with your generic medication

Your healthcare provider writes you a prescription for heart medicine, which your pharmacist fills with a generic form of the drug. Now you're wondering, "Is this as good as the name brand?"

According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), you have nothing to worry about. The organization requires that generic forms of drugs be just as strong as their name-brand counterparts and work in the same way and amount of time.

#### EQUALLY EFFECTIVE

In a 2008 study, researchers from Brigham and Women's Hospital looked at 38 trials involving various heart medications, including ACE inhibitors and statins, and found that the brand-name and generic drugs were equally effective.


So why do some people swear that generics don't work as well?

Both forms of drugs have the same active ingredients. But because generics aren't allowed to look like their equivalents, they use different coloring agents, binders and preservatives. Theoretically, these differences could potentially affect how a drug works for you, though it's highly unlikely.

There might also be the perception that since generics cost less than name brands, their quality must be inferior. But generics are often made at the same factories as name brands. They cost less because their makers don't have the costs associated with researching and developing the drug. Instead, manufacturers wait for the patent to run out on the name-brand medication—after 20 years on the market—and apply to the FDA for approval to sell a generic version. More and more companies are likely to try to sell the same drug following the patent expiration, which also keeps the cost down.

#### BIG SAVINGS

So just how much could you save from going generic? Take the cholesterol-lowering medication Pravachol. People buying the name-brand pill can expect to pay about \$168 a month. The generic? About \$90 a month, according to *Consumer Reports*.

However, if you're still concerned about the effectiveness of generic medications, talk with your healthcare provider. He or she can help you weigh your options. 

# Slow the pace

## Managing atrial fibrillation

**A**re you one of the more than 2 million Americans who suffer from atrial fibrillation (AF)? The disorder is the most common type of heart arrhythmia, which causes the upper chambers of the heart to quiver rapidly and irregularly.

AF isn't life-threatening, but it can increase your chance of having a stroke, heart failure, heart attack and chest pain, so it needs to be managed.

### CONTROLLING THE BEAT

Treatment for this condition depends on your heart's condition, how bad your symptoms are and whether you've had a stroke. Common therapies include:

- **Medications** such as beta-blockers and calcium channel blockers, which can slow down your heartbeat. Blood-thinning drugs such as warfarin, heparin or aspirin may be prescribed if you're undergoing electrical cardioversion (see below), if you've had a stroke or if your healthcare provider thinks you're at risk for having a stroke later.

- **Electrical cardioversion**, a procedure in which a brief electrical shock is delivered to the heart via special paddles or pads, is aimed at restoring a normal heartbeat.

- **Lifestyle changes** that go a long way in helping to control the problem:

→ If you're taking a

blood thinner, keep your intake of vitamin K constant to avoid bleeding problems. Fluctuations in vitamin K can counteract blood thinners' benefits. The recommended daily intake of vitamin K is 120 micrograms (mcg) for men, 90 mcg for women.

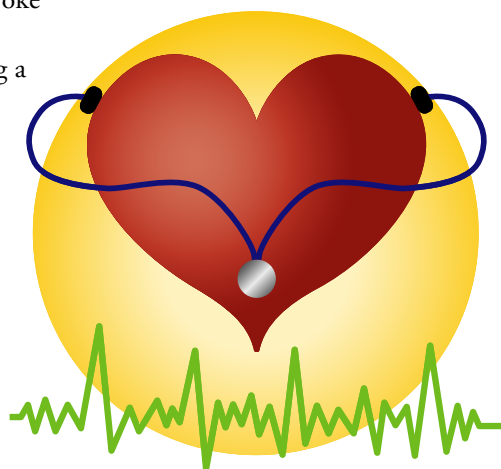
→ Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which can trigger AF.

→ Stick to a low-sodium and low-fat diet to control blood pressure and cholesterol. Use salt substitutes or herbs and spices instead of reaching for the salt shaker.

→ Talk with your healthcare provider about an appropriate exercise regimen, even if your heart rate needs to be slowed. Physical activity won't necessarily raise your heart rate if you're on medications.

→ Quit smoking.

→ Let your doctor know about any over-the-counter medications or supplements you're taking—especially if you take warfarin. HK



## Health dollars & sense

*Want to cut medical expenses without compromising your health? Try the following tips to help keep your costs in check.*

### Watch your supplement use

**D**o you really need that expensive supplement? Some supplements like calcium, vitamin D and iron can be very beneficial for those taking them. But every year Americans spend billions of dollars on supplements they may not need—\$2 billion alone on arthritis remedies such as shark cartilage, according to the Federal Trade Commission. Many supplements just haven't been proven effective or even safe. Before you take anything, talk with your physician.

### Focus on savings

**J**ust because your optometrist or ophthalmologist does your eye exam doesn't mean you have to buy your eyeglasses from him or her. By law, your physician is required to give you your prescription so you can comparison shop for eyewear. You may find a better deal at online stores, wholesale clubs and other discount retailers. If you go this route, stick to companies you know, and make sure there's a protocol in place should there be a problem with your order. Also, steer clear of any company that says you don't need a prescription.



## HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND MORE

For more than 20 years, Choice Medical Group (CMG) has been committed to our mission statement to “deliver superior medical services, ensuring health and quality of life to the people within the community they serve.” For more information about CMG or to request your free information packet, call our member services liaison at **(760) 242-7777, ext. 224**.

CLASS	DATE	TIME	NOTES
■ <b>Diabetes class for Choice members</b>	First and third Mondays of each month	1:30–4 p.m.	Ask your primary care provider for a referral to attend this class.
■ <b>Nutrition class for Choice members</b>	Third Wednesday of each month Third Monday of each month	4–8 p.m. 8:30–11:30 a.m.	Ask your primary care provider for a referral to attend this class.
■ <b>Open enrollment meetings</b> (Choice Medical Group is contracted with several health plans)	Various	Various	Call <b>(760) 242-7777, ext. 224</b> , for more details.
■ <b>Senior flexibility class for Choice members</b>  ■ <b>Senior flexibility class for nonmembers</b>	Every Tuesday and Thursday  Every Thursday	8:45–10:15 a.m.  8:45–10:15 a.m.	Call <b>(760) 242-7777, ext. 228</b> , for more details. There’s no charge for Choice members. A \$5 per-session fee applies to nonmembers.
■ <b>Clinically supervised weight management</b>	By appointment only	Various	Call the Health & Wellness Center at <b>(760) 242-WELL</b> for more details.
■ <b>Free physicals for Choice members</b>	Monday–Friday, by appointment only	8 a.m.–5 p.m.	Call the Health & Wellness Center at <b>(760) 242-WELL</b> for more details.