

A full-page background image of Tiger Woods in a red polo shirt and a dark blue baseball cap, captured in the middle of a golf swing. The background is a blurred green field.

total HEALTH & wellness

For Members of
United Service
Association
For Health Care
FALL 2009

**Tiger's
Tale**
World's
Top Golfer

plus
Food Facts
& Fiction

and What's
Bugging You
This Fall?



United Service Association
For Health Care

CONTENTS

FALL 2009

- 3 Promoting Healthy Habits in Your Child
.....
- 4 What's Bugging You This Fall?
.....
- 6 Is There Room in Your Diet for Chocolate?
.....
- 7 Food Facts and Fiction
.....
- 8 As Economy Worsens, So Does Stress
.....
- 9 Tiger's Tale—World's Top Golfer, His Knee Surgery, and Lessons from Dad
.....
- 12 Kids and Mental Health
.....
- 13 Loneliness: Harmful to Mental and Physical Health
.....
- 14 Injury Prevention: Keep Your Body out of the Shop
.....
- 15 Roadmap to a Healthy Heart
.....
- 16 How to Avoid Common Drug Interactions
.....
- 17 Medication Matters: The Do's and Don'ts of Cutting Drug Costs
.....
- 18 New: The USA+ Scholarship Program!
.....
- 19 Herbal Helpers: A Brief History of Herbal Medicines
.....
- 20 Planning Ahead Eases Grief
.....



[cover story]
Tiger's Tale
→ page 9

TOTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

Executive Director: M. Cranon

Quality Assurance: T. Barton

Account Supervisors: B. Mayer and R. Davis

Compliance Analyst: C. Mangrum

Total Health & Wellness is published by United Service Association For Health Care. This information is intended to educate the public about subjects pertinent to their health, not as a substitute for consultation with a personal physician. © 2009 Printed in the U.S.A.

United Service Association For Health Care is an organization that provides privileges and services that promote the health and welfare of its members.

For more information, please contact:

United Service Association For Health Care

P.O. Box 200905

Arlington, TX 76006-0095

800-USA-1187

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

David S. Alkek, M.D., Clinical Professor of Dermatology, The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX

Joseph D. Beasley, M.D., Director, The Institute of Health Policy and Practice, Amityville, NY

Kathie Davis, Executive Director, IDEA Health & Fitness Association, San Diego, CA

Sidney Friedlaender, M.D., Clinical Professor of Medicine, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

Charles M. Ginsburg, M.D., Professor and Chairman of Pediatrics, The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX

Susan Johnson, Ed.D., Director, Continuing Education, The Cooper Institute, Dallas, TX

Julie Waltz Kembel, M.S., Ed., CHES, Education Director, Canyon Ranch, Tucson, AZ

Don R. Powell, Ph.D., President and CEO, American Institute for Preventative Medicine, Farmington Hills, MI

Charles F. Seifert, Pharm.D., Director of Clinical Pharmacy Services, Rapid City Regional Hospital, Rapid City, SD

Kathryn K. Waldrep, M.D., F.A.C.O.G., Medical City Dallas, Dallas, TX

Arthur H. White, M.D., Medical Director, San Francisco Spine Institute, Daly City, CA

Cover photo: AP Photo/Al Goldis

Promoting Healthy Habits in Your Child

LEARNING HOW TO BE HEALTHY FROM A YOUNG AGE WILL HELP YOUR CHILDREN GET THE MOST OUT OF THEIR SCHOOL YEARS AND SET THEM UP FOR SUCCESS IN THE FUTURE. READ ON FOR TIPS ON SOME KEY WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD STAY HEALTHY.



→ CHILDREN + EXERCISE = ALERT, CONFIDENT STUDENTS.

Of course, regular physical activity helps kids build healthy bones and muscles and maintain a healthy weight. But exercise also promotes self-esteem, lessens depression and anxiety, and helps kids stay alert in school.

How much does a kid need? At least 60 minutes a day, experts say. There are simple ways to sneak in this time. Take a longer walking route to the school bus in the morning. After school, visit the park and shoot some hoops. Or go for a family bike ride after dinner.

Electronic Amusements, Unplugged

Most pediatricians believe that too much screen time—time spent watching TV and playing video and computer games—can harm a child's academic performance. School-age kids shouldn't get more than one to two hours of screen time a day.

To help pull your child away from the screen, offer some options. Crafts, hobbies, and books are all worthy distractions. Another hint: Keep TVs out of your kids' bedrooms, and keep the tube off during homework time.

Fuel Efficiency

Breakfast is the “most important meal of the day” for good reason. Eating a good breakfast can sharpen a child's memory and improve school test scores.

Children also need help making healthy food choices beyond breakfast. Try these tactics at home:

- Avoid junk food in the house, and skip the soda. Also, limit juice intake!
- Practice healthy snacking. Good snacks include low-fat yogurt, veggies and low-fat dip, and dried or fresh fruit.

Keep offering finicky eaters nutritious items. Children may need to be exposed to a new food up to 10 times or more before they accept it.

Role Models

Most importantly, remember that setting a good example by eating healthy and getting plenty of exercise is key to getting your kids to adopt healthy lifestyles. •

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development offers a wealth of information on how to keep your little ones healthy. Visit the Institute online at www.nichd.nih.gov.

We value your membership and are here to assist you should you need us. Please contact us at 800-872-1187.

What's Bugging You This Fall?

EVERY AUTUMN, IT'S THE SAME OLD STORY. THE LEAVES CHANGE COLORS, THE TEMPERATURE DROPS—AND YOU GET A STUFFY NOSE AND A MASSIVE CASE OF THE SNEEZES.



in your sinuses, the areas behind your nose and eyes. You may have a sinus or ear infection requiring antibiotics.

The Flu: One Virus, Many Symptoms

The influenza virus spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Signs of the flu include:

- Fatigue and weakness
- High fever
- Severe aches and pains
- Headache
- Cough

Beat the flu with lots of rest, plenty of fluids, and pain relievers to soothe body aches. Get medical help if you are 65 or older, have a chronic medical condition, or are pregnant. Antiviral drugs can prevent pneumonia and other flu complications.

Getting a flu shot in October or November can help you stop the flu before it starts. Anyone older than 6 months can get vaccinated, but it's especially recommended for those who are 50 and older, younger than 19, pregnant, or living with a chronic disease or in a nursing home.

Allergies: Something in the Air

Fall allergies are usually a bad reaction to pollen from the ragweed plant. This powdery substance hangs in the air from late August until the first frost. It can cause:

- Itchy or watery eyes
- Stuffy, runny nose
- Cough
- Sneezing
- Sleep problems

Reduce your exposure by showering after going outside and keeping home and car

windows closed. Medications, including over-the-counter antihistamines and prescription nasal steroids, also can help.

If drugs don't work, your allergies interfere with your daily life, or you have another condition such as asthma, call your doctor. He or she might recommend a treatment like allergy shots. These are given before allergy season begins to get your body used to ragweed. •

→ **COLD, FLU, AND ALLERGIES ALL ARE COMMON IN THE FALL.** Telling them apart is tough. But doing so can help you feel better faster.

The Common Cold: Many Causes

Together, Americans suffer 1 billion colds each year. Most strike between late August and early April. That's when people spend time in school and indoors, close to others who may be infected. You might be the latest victim if you have:

- A stuffy, runny nose
- Sneezing
- A sore throat
- A hacking cough

Cold symptoms can be caused by one of more than 200 different viruses—that's part of why there is no cure. However, many treatments are available.

Try gargling with warm saltwater to relieve a sore throat. An antihistamine can help a runny nose, while a decongestant can help clear a stuffy one. For your cough, ask your pharmacist to help you choose an over-the-counter antitussive medication. Be sure to consult your doctor before giving any cold medications to children.

Call your doctor if your symptoms last more than two weeks or you have severe pain



What You Should Know About H1N1 Flu

The new H1N1 influenza virus, referred to as swine flu during the initial breakout, caused a recent global outbreak. Researchers believe it spreads the same way that seasonal flu spreads—from person to person, through coughing or sneezing. It can also spread when people touch infected surfaces and then touch their noses or mouths. Symptoms include sore throat, headache, chills, and fatigue. Diarrhea and vomiting also can occur. Protect yourself and your family by taking the following precautions:

- Wash your hands with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when you don't have soap and water.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Put the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Keep surfaces clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant.
- Don't get too close to people who are sick. People who have this flu are considered contagious starting one day before they show symptoms and up to seven or more days afterwards.

For the latest updates on H1N1 flu, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at www.cdc.gov/swineflu/.

Is There Room in Your Diet for Chocolate?

MANY WOMEN DON'T CONSIDER CHOCOLATE A PART OF A WELL-ROUNDED DIET. HOWEVER, THIS "DECADENT" TREAT MAY HAVE BENEFITS BEYOND SIMPLY TASTING GOOD.



→ EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT A FEW CHOCOLATES MAY HAVE SOME OF THE SAME DISEASE-FIGHTING ANTIOXIDANTS found in fruits, vegetables, red wine, and soy products.

Antioxidants come from plant-based foods. As natural byproducts of the cocoa bean, both chocolate and cocoa contain high concentrations of antioxidants.

These include:

- **Polyphenols.** Found in highest amounts in dark chocolate, as well as in milk chocolate and cocoa, polyphenols may help ward off cancer.
- **Flavonoids.** Women who had 4½ tablespoons of cocoa powder and about half an ounce of dark chocolate daily for a month had higher HDL, or "good," cholesterol levels compared with when they didn't eat it. HDL protects the heart by carrying excess cholesterol away from the arteries.

Also, chocolate may not raise LDL, or "bad," cholesterol as much as meat and high-fat dairy products. Why? Chocolate—all kinds—contains cocoa butter. Though still a saturated fat, this butter isn't easily absorbed by women's bodies.

Here are healthy ways to enjoy chocolate's "goods":

- Use cocoa powder instead of chocolate in recipes.
- Opt for miniature chocolate bars or chocolate chips instead of full-size candy bars to satisfy cravings. •

brownie kisses

Ingredients

2 oz. unsweetened chocolate
1 stick butter or margarine, softened
1 c. Splenda
1 large egg

½ tsp. vanilla
¾ c. whole wheat flour
¼ tsp. baking soda
½ c. semisweet chocolate chips
½ c. chopped walnuts

Directions

1 Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Melt chocolate in small bowl in microwave oven on high for one minute. Stir until chocolate is completely melted.

2 In a large bowl, beat butter with Splenda. Beat in egg and vanilla. Stir in melted chocolate, then flour and baking soda. Add chocolate chips and nuts.

3 Drop by rounded teaspoons onto an ungreased baking sheet. Bake about eight minutes. Bottom will be firm. Cool on a wire rack.

Makes about 36 cookies.

Nutrition Facts: Each cookie contains about 65 calories, 1 g protein, 5 g fat (if made with butter), 13 mg cholesterol, 4 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, and 29 mgs sodium.



Food Facts and Fiction

HAVE YOU EVER BLAMED CHOCOLATE FOR THOSE PESKY PIMPLES OR ATTRIBUTED A CHILD'S FRISKINESS TO SUGAR OVERLOAD? WELL, IT'S TIME TO SAY GOOD-BYE TO THESE AND OTHER FOOD MYTHS.

→ **MYTH: CERTAIN FOODS—SUCH AS CHOCOLATE, PIZZA, OR FRENCH FRIES—CAUSE ACNE.**

Reality: Studies don't show a link between foods and the development of acne. However, some people who already have acne believe that certain foods cause their condition to flare up. Those foods should be avoided.

Myth: Children who eat too much sugar are hyperactive.

Reality: There's no known association between eating sugar and hyperactivity in children.

Myth: Eating too much sugar is a risk factor for diabetes.

Reality: Sugar doesn't cause diabetes. But for those who have the disease, moderating sugars in the diet is crucial.

sources of saturated fat. Saturated fat raises total blood cholesterol levels and heart disease risk.

Tips for Healthy Eating

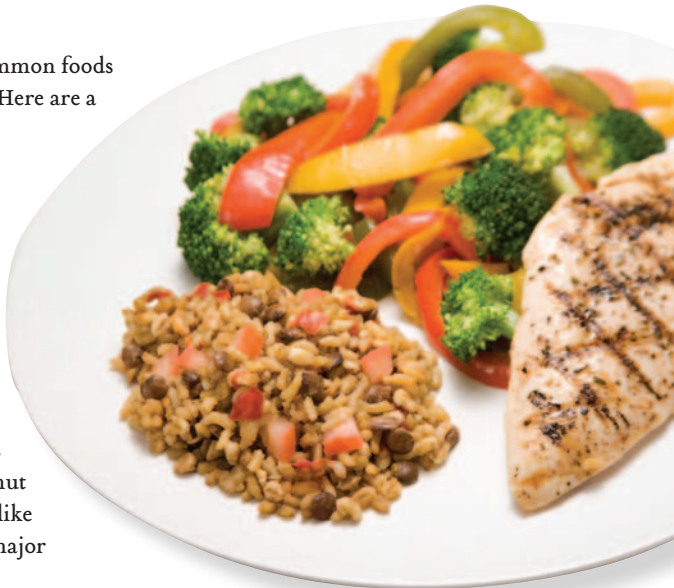
Try these tactics to keep your eating habits on track:

- When you're thirsty, reach for water, skim milk, or fruit juice. Avoid drinking soda.
- Choose low-sodium or no-salt varieties of canned soups and processed lean meats.
- Reduce your intake of saturated fats by choosing fresh fruits and vegetables, skinless chicken, and lean meat. Olive oil is another good choice—it's low in saturated fat and may help lower heart disease risk. •

Hidden Dangers

On the other hand, some common foods may harbor health hazards. Here are a few examples:

- Soda contains phosphoric acid, which may deplete bone and raise the risk for fractures.
- Processed meats, frozen pizzas, and canned soups are loaded with sodium—a risk factor for high blood pressure.
- Store-bought baked goods are often made with coconut and palm oils. These oils, like red meat and butter, are major



Need nutritional advice? Check out the website for the Food and Nutrition Information Center, located at the National Agricultural Library of the United States Department of Agriculture. It features information on obesity, food safety and labeling, dietary guidance, and more. Just visit www.nal.usda.gov.

Conquering Diet Pitfalls in the Workplace

We spend a lot of time at work. Between vending machines, fast-food lunches, and employee parties, the office can be pure diet sabotage.

One survey found that 30 percent of employees head to the vending machines for snacks and 20 percent roam office hallways seeking catering leftovers. But there are better ways to satisfy your appetite during the 9-to-5 hours. Here are helpful solutions to common job-related eating woes:

THE PROBLEM: The vending machine stocks only candy bars and potato chips.

THE SOLUTION: Stash healthy snacks in your desk drawer. Precut fruits and veggies are a fast, easy option. Or try dried fruits, nuts, high-fiber cereal, or unsalted pretzels.

THE PROBLEM: Boredom and stress drive you straight to your coworker's candy dish.

THE SOLUTION: Ask yourself if you're really hungry. Write down how you feel and what you eat in a daily food log. Identify your eating triggers and healthy alternatives, like taking a walk.

THE PROBLEM: Lunch deals encourage you to order more food than you need.

THE SOLUTION: Your best bet? Pack a healthy lunch the night before. At restaurants, say "no" to the value meal. With extra calories and fat, it's no bargain. Avoid cheeseburgers or all-you-can-eat buffets. Instead, try grilled chicken, chef salads with low-fat dressing, or a baked potato topped with veggies. Or you can check the prepared foods section of your local supermarket for a salad bar.

As Economy Worsens, So Does Stress

ECONOMIC TURMOIL AND MONEY WOES HAVE BECOME TOP STRESSORS FOR EIGHT OUT OF 10 AMERICANS, ACCORDING TO SURVEY FINDINGS OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (APA).

→ **DESPITE THE ONSLAUGHT OF NEGATIVE NEWS, THE APA AND OTHER MENTAL HEALTH EXPERTS RECOMMEND** that patients focus on building resiliency.

Resiliency is a learned, “bounce-back” skill that protects against stressors and helps patients cope with current and future life changes, including those in the work environment. Knowing that change is inevitable will help you adjust your life around what you can and cannot alter.

Here are some tips from the APA, Mental Health America (formerly known as the National Mental Health Association), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for strengthening resiliency and safeguarding work-life balance in today’s economic pressure cooker:

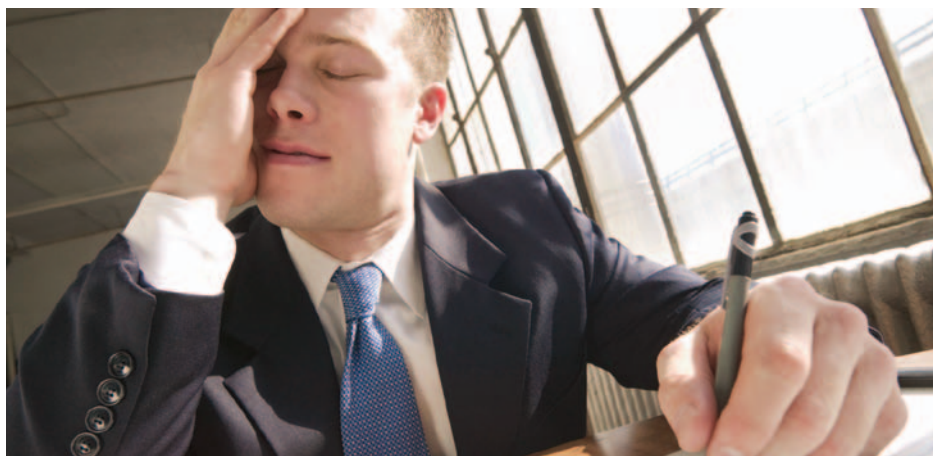
1. **Maintain realistic expectations, and divide and conquer.** Have an understanding with your boss and colleagues about your job responsibilities. Be sure to prioritize what’s important, and divide large jobs into small ones. Acknowledge when you need help with your workload.

2. **Know when you’re under stress and manage it.** Are you anxious, short on patience, or feeling overwhelmed? Are you overeating, getting headaches, or smoking again? Changing old habits is hard. Try to replace one unhealthy behavior with one activity that’s good for you.

3. **Make a financial plan.** Identify ways to cut costs and commit to your budget. Seek out specific resources for help with foreclosure, re-employment, or debt reduction.

4. **Stay connected.** Being close with family members, friends, and colleagues bolsters resiliency and helps keep things in perspective. In the event of job loss, reach out quickly to people you know, including contacts on online social networks, former coworkers, and classmates. This may yield your next job opportunity or provide support in your search.

5. **Take this opportunity to manage your life in more meaningful ways.** Your choices may help you develop new skills, discover a new job, or build closer family ties. •



Soothe Stress in Minutes with These Simple Tips

Money woes, job pressures, family cares—the world is full of stressful situations. Luckily, help is available, and it’s often fast-acting. Try these methods for on-the-spot relief.

- **TALK IT OUT.** Discuss your problems with friends or loved ones. Expressing your feelings can boost your mood right away. And social networks provide valuable ongoing support.
- **WRITE IT DOWN.** Keeping a journal also allows an emotional outlet. Read past entries to remind yourself how you’ve dealt with similar problems before.
- **BREATHE DEEP.** Sit or lie down with your hands on your belly to feel it rise and fall. Count to four while you inhale through your nose. Hold for a second; then count to four while you exhale through your mouth. Repeat five to 10 times.
- **GET PHYSICAL.** Working out releases tension. Plus, your body produces feel-good chemicals called endorphins when you exercise.
- **TAKE A SNIFF.** Studies show that certain aromas—including lavender, rosemary, and peppermint—have calming powers. Place drops of essential oils near your nose and breathe in or dilute them in bathwater.

[COVER STORY]

Tiger's Tale

World's
Top Golfer,
His Knee Surgery,
and Lessons from Dad

IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST THRILLING MOMENTS IN
THE HISTORY OF MODERN PROFESSIONAL GOLF. And
it happened in front of a worldwide television audience.

[read more →](#)



→ **GOLFING LEGEND TIGER WOODS WAS ON THE 72ND AND FINAL HOLE OF THE U.S.**

Open at Torrey Pines, California. He was in the middle of lining up a critical, 12-foot putt.

The stakes on that afternoon in June of 2008 could not have been higher. If the 32-year-old Woods could sink this difficult shot, he would tie the hard-hitting Rocco Mediate after 72 holes of play, forcing an 18-hole playoff on the following afternoon. But if he missed, the U.S. Open title would go to his opponent.

For nearly two minutes, the hawk-eyed Woods studied the terrain around the cup. Then, as the vast throng surrounding the hole fell silent, he went into his famed putting stance. With his feet evenly spaced and his 185 pounds carefully balanced on the emerald-green turf, Woods drew back his favorite Titleist putter and fired off the shot that would determine his fate.

The little white ball rolled slowly across the grass and trembled for a moment at the lip of the cup. Then it dropped cleanly in. He'd done it!

With laser-like precision, the world-renowned Eldrick Tont "Tiger" Woods—often described by sports writers as "the greatest golfer in the history of the sport"—had just forced the stunned Mediate into a one-day playoff.

The next afternoon (June 16, 2008), while a worldwide TV audience held its breath, the two golfers would emerge from an 18-hole tie and go on to decide

the U.S. Open on a single "sudden death" hole. Woods won that hole by a single shot, thus solidifying his number-one ranking in the world of professional golf.

He left the rattled Mediate shaking his head and telling sports reporters from all across the globe: "This guy does things that are just not normal by any stretch of the imagination!"

Indeed, even Woods seemed surprised by his come-from-behind triumph that day, and later described it as "my greatest-ever championship." The Woods victory at Torrey Pines surely ranks as one of the most exciting sudden-death golf showdowns of modern times.

A Little Help from Surgery ...

Even more amazing than Woods' driving and putting, however, was the fact that on the day of the playoff, his left knee was still healing from arthroscopic surgery. Only two months before (on April 15th), this extraordi-

nary athlete had undergone a high-tech, "minimally invasive" surgical procedure designed to repair torn cartilage caused by the immense pressure he puts on his left knee while hitting tee shots that often reach speeds of more than 125 miles an hour.

Thanks to the quicker healing time that usually occurs in state-of-the-art arthroscopic surgery, Woods had not only recovered from the procedure in 60 days. He had also found the strength and stamina to outplay the world's best golfers in a grueling, 91-hole match.

For Woods, undergoing minimally invasive and fast-healing knee surgery was a crucial ingredient to his success at Torrey Pines.

But there's also no doubt that his victory there, like others, was the product of an extraordinary character—and of a highly positive, upbeat attitude that's always been relentlessly focused on forgetting problems and failures in order to zero in on the next challenge.



“One of the best lessons my father taught me was not to get stuck thinking about the shot I might have just missed—but to immediately move on and start playing the next shot ...”

... And a Lot of Help from His Dad

Ask Woods how he developed the winning attitude that defines his game, and the golf legend will readily explain that he learned it from his father, Earl Woods, a former U.S. Army lieutenant colonel who set a high standard for self-discipline and achieving personal goals.

“One of the best lessons my father taught me was not to get stuck thinking about the shot I might have just missed—but to immediately move on and start playing the next shot,” Woods explained during a recent interview in Washington, D.C. “Whenever I made a bad shot, he would tell me that I had exactly 12 steps [during which] to think about it . . . and then I had to start thinking about the direction of the wind and the lay of the land for the next shot I would be taking.

“Looking back, I realize now that he was very wise,” Woods said. That ‘12-step’ concept of his—that was his way of saying: ‘Get over it and move on!’ And I think that lesson has stood me in good stead over the years—not just on the golf course, but also in life.”

Born in Cypress, Calif. in 1975 and raised in middle-class suburban Los Angeles, Woods was a golfing “child prodigy” who started playing the game at the tender age of two. Astonishingly gifted, he was a high-ranking California amateur player by the time he hit high school, where he

soon became the U.S. Junior Amateur champion.

From there, it was an easy step to the professional ranks. He played in his first pro tourney in the summer of 1996, where he was soon displaying both the enormous driving power and the exquisite putting skill that have long been his competitive trademarks.

Having won 14 major golf championships and 68 PGA Tour events so far in his Hall of Fame career, Woods now earns an estimated \$100 million a year and has clearly earned the title that most of the nation’s sports aficionados long ago awarded him: Best Golfer on the Planet Today—and maybe the best who ever lived.

But still, he remains a quiet, unassuming man who spends many hours each year raising scholarship funds and other cash awards for the Tiger Woods Foundation (established jointly with his father). The foundation provides college scholarships to needy youngsters, along with funds to support numerous programs aimed at helping children and young adults overcome learning disabilities.

Character. For Woods, who credits his family and several inspiring teachers and coaches with helping him succeed in what has been a fabulous sports career, “giving back to society” is a key motivating force in 2009, along with the desire to win that

next big tournament on the PGA tour.

“As a professional athlete, I know I’ve been very fortunate,” says Woods, “and if I can help some other young people get started down the road toward successful professional careers—

and toward successful lives as fathers and mothers—then I’ll feel I’ve achieved a good outcome. That’s the best way I know to say ‘thanks’ for all I’ve been given.” •

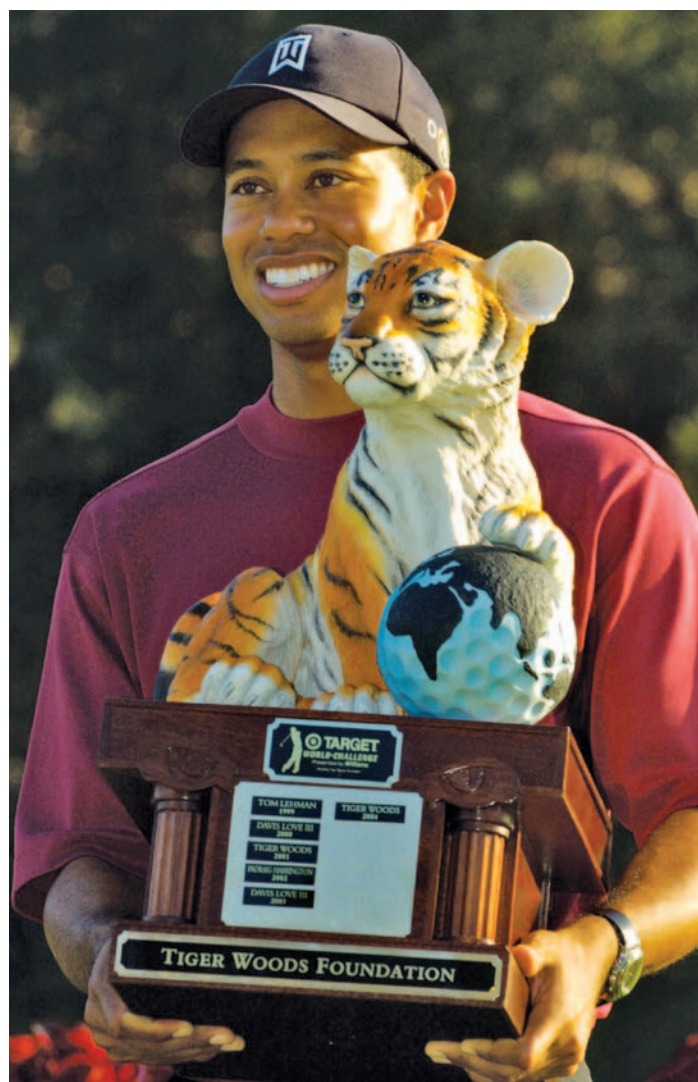


Photo courtesy of the Tiger Woods Foundation

Kids and Mental Health

One in 10 kids has an emotional or mental problem, but treatment helps.

LIKE ADULTS, KIDS CAN HAVE MENTAL DISORDERS THAT AFFECT THE WAY THEY THINK, FEEL, AND ACT. WHILE SOME BEHAVIORS ARE JUST PART OF GROWING UP, OTHERS NEED EXPERT HELP.

→ **CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH IS AS IMPORTANT AS THEIR PHYSICAL HEALTH. ACT IF PROBLEMS ARE SEVERE,** persistent, and affect daily activities. Don't feel embarrassed or ashamed.

Seek help if your child:

- Often seems sad, worried, or fearful
- Has dramatic shifts in appetite or sleep needs
- Spends most of the time alone instead of with friends or family
- Has falling grades or interest in school
- Is hyperactive, impulsive, or can't concentrate
- Is self-destructive or too aggressive toward others

Start by calling your child's doctor. Describe the behaviors that worry you and ask if your child needs to see a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or behavioral therapist. The top mental problems that affect children and teens include:

- **Anxiety.** One large study of 9- to 17-year-olds found up to 13 percent have an anxiety disorder, according to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
- **Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).** Up to 5 percent of school-age children have ADHD, says the HHS. They often can't pay attention or concentrate. They're easily distracted and impulsive.

- **Depression.** Up to 2 percent of children and up to 8 percent of teens suffer from depression, says the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Mood, energy, interests, sleep, appetite, and overall performance can suffer.

- **Bipolar disorder.** This illness affects about 1 percent of teens, the NIH says. It causes extreme shifts in mood, energy, and functioning.

In some cases, talk therapy and family support may be all a child needs. In other cases, a child needs medication.

Most children who receive the right kind of help improve and go on to live full and healthy lives as adults. Seeking help early is key to a positive outcome. •

ONE LARGE STUDY OF
9- TO 17-YEAR-OLDS FOUND
UP TO **13 percent** HAVE AN
ANXIETY DISORDER.

To learn more, visit the online home of Mental Health America at www.nmha.org/children.

Opening Up Lines of Communication with Your Teen

Sure, the "KEEP OUT!" sign on your teenager's door isn't very subtle. While every adolescent needs space, in reality, your teen probably doesn't want to shut the door on communication with you. She wants to know what you think, according to experts. Here are a few ways to thaw an adolescent's cold shoulder:

- If your teen seems grumpy, find out what's bugging him. Something simple may work. Try

to say something like, "I can see you're upset. What's on your mind?"

- If your teen doesn't want to talk, try bringing up the topic again in a few days. Let her know you're not trying to be nosy. You just want to understand her.
- Accept that arguments are common during the teen years. If things get heated, take a break and revisit the issue after you both have cooled off.

Loneliness: Harmful to Mental and Physical Health

LONELINESS IS LIKE BEING INVISIBLE TO THE REST OF THE WORLD. BEING LONELY CAN FEEL LIKE BEING ABANDONED, UNIMPORTANT, OR UNLOVED. IF THIS SOUNDS PAINFULLY FAMILIAR, REALIZE ONE THING: YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE ALONE.

→ **LONELINESS IS ONLY NATURAL WHEN YOU LOSE SOMEONE IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE. GIVE YOURSELF** time to grieve. But don't lose touch with other loved ones, who can provide needed support.

Why is it important to beat loneliness? Besides adding more enjoyment to your life, having solid relationships may help you fight off illnesses—and maybe even live longer.

Friends Add Up to a Happier Life

Older people who have strong social networks tend to live longer than peers with fewer friends, according to one recent study. The researchers think this might be because friends have beneficial effects on mood and self-esteem.

There's also some evidence that loneliness may impact the body's response to disease. A recent study in *Health Psychology* found that the immune systems of lonely college students didn't respond as well as they should have to flu shots. This backs up other studies that have linked loneliness to a decreased ability to fight infection.

Use the Buddy System

Often, the prescription for loneliness is to reach out to others. So, stay connected with people who are already in your circle.

If you're interested in meeting new people, try these tips:

- Go to places where you can meet people, such as concerts, bookstores, and sporting events.
- Volunteer for a political cause or another group that includes people who share common interests.

Let Fido Chase Away the Loneliness

A dog can ease the loneliness that sometimes accompanies aging, suggests a recent study.

Thirty-seven older adults living in long-term care facilities interacted with a dog for half an hour weekly for six weeks. These visits took place either alone or in a group. Both the individual and group sessions helped to ease loneliness. However, those who interacted one-on-one with the dog were less lonely than those in the group setting. Plus, the people who were loneliest at the beginning of the study reaped the greatest benefit from spending time with their furry friends.

Considering a dog? There's

more good news. You may end up walking more, says a new study that compared dog owners to non-dog owners. But that's not all. Walking your dog reduces stress better than walking without a dog, suggests a small study of Japanese older adults published recently. In fact, research shows that simply petting and chatting with a dog is relaxing.

- Set small goals that will help you make and keep friends. For example, commit to calling or writing someone once a day.

Making the Most of "Me" Time

Also, remember to be a good friend to yourself. If you don't feel good about yourself, take some time to work on you. For example, make a list of at least five things you

do well. Or read a book on building self-esteem.

When you are alone, find ways to make the time enjoyable. Develop a hobby, such as writing in a journal or playing an instrument, that you do at least once a week. If you feel an overwhelming sense of loneliness, consider getting professional help. Talking about your problem with an expert may help. •



Injury Prevention: Keep Your Body out of the Shop

JUST LIKE YOUR CAR, THE MUSCLES AND BONES IN YOUR BODY CAN GET WORN OUT FROM OVERUSE. HERE'S A FEW WAYS THAT YOU CAN STILL PERFORM SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE ACTIVITIES—WHILE MINIMIZING PAIN.

→ **THE HUMAN BODY IS A FINELY TUNED MACHINE. MORE THAN 200 JOINTS WORK TOGETHER, CONNECTING YOUR** more than 200 bones, allowing you to walk around the block, give your child a hug, and dance to your favorite tune.

But just like a car's pistons and gears, your tendons, muscles, and bones sustain wear and tear from repeated use. Overuse injuries usually occur over time.

Pain, numbness, and having trouble doing the activity that caused the

problem—whether it's running, tennis, or typing—are red flags.

Shin Splints Shouldn't Ruin Your Workout

Pain in your shins during and after

exercise, known as shin splints, is a common overuse injury. Runners are often victims. But doing any activity that involves your feet continually hitting the ground—even walking or dancing—can put you at risk.

Several factors can increase the risk of shin splints. These include:

- Trying to do too much, too quickly
- Flat feet
- Exercising on hard surfaces
- Wearing old or insufficiently padded shoes
- Not stretching or warming up enough

If you think you have shin splints, stop or cut back on the activity that's causing harm. To relieve pain, try icing your shin or taking anti-inflammatory medications.

You can resume your old routine once the activity no longer causes pain. But build up gradually and be diligent about warming up and stretching. In addition, stick to softer surfaces and make sure your shoes are well-padded.

If these self-care measures don't help and the pain persists, make an appointment with your doctor.

Take Steps to Prevent Stress Fractures

If your shin splints don't respond to treatment—or if you develop pain in your foot when you exercise—you might have a stress fracture. These tiny bone cracks develop when tired muscles transfer their stress to bones. They most often occur below the knees.

Treatment includes six to eight weeks of rest from the activity that caused the cracks.

To prevent these painful breaks:

- Never increase the amount of physical activity you do by more than 10 percent each week. This applies to the number of miles you walk or run, how much time you spend exercising, or how much weight you lift.
- Cross-train. If you're a walker or runner, incorporate biking and swimming into your routine. Add some strength and flexibility exercises for the optimal balance.
- Eat a healthy diet. Include a lot of calcium and vitamin D for strong bones.
- Replace your running or walking shoes if they're worn.

Finding Relief from 'BlackBerry Thumb'

Too much texting on the tiny keys of a personal digital assistant (PDA) can leave your thumbs and hands sore, swollen, or numb.

Thumbs, the least dexterous of our digits, are not designed for the fast, repetitive, and limited range of movements needed in typing.

These strategies can help you avoid pain:

- To reduce stress, type with the PDA on a pillow or other support in your lap to keep wrists more upright.
- Make messages brief and take frequent breaks.
- Use other fingers to type.
- Stretch your hands periodically.

Repetitive stress injuries like this can aggravate underlying arthritis, especially in middle-aged or older adults. See your doctor if pain doesn't subside. •

Roadmap to a Healthy Heart

LET'S SAY LIFE IS A ROAD TRIP. AND, LET'S SAY A HEALTHY HEART IS ONE OF THE MAJOR DESTINATIONS. WOMEN JUST GOT BETTER DIRECTIONS—PLUS AN IMPROVED GPS SYSTEM. FOLLOW THESE ROAD SIGNS.

→ HEART DISEASE—NOT BREAST CANCER—IS THE NUMBER-ONE THREAT TO A WOMAN'S LIFE.

And, while your risk may be low when you're young, it's your *lifetime* risk that the American Heart Association (AHA) wants you to consider.

To keep you heading in the right direction, the AHA recently updated its heart disease prevention guidelines. Read the road signs and sample a few of the new AHA recommendations:

Go!

- **Move it and lose it.** To lose weight, you need 60 to 90 minutes of moderate activity daily. Walk around your neighborhood, use the stairs, ride a bike—it all adds up to lower heart risks.
- **Rev up on fish.** Eat salmon, tuna, mackerel, herring, or trout at least twice a week.

Caution!

- **Slow down on fats, salt, and alcohol.** Cut saturated fat to less than 7 percent of your daily calories, and trans fats to as low as possible. Limit sodium to about one teaspoon, and alcohol to one drink.

Stop!

- **Quit smoking.** Ask your doctor about nicotine replacement, counseling, and medication to help you get out of Nicotine Alley. Over time, you will gradually have the same risk of heart disease as a nonsmoker.
- **Pass on folic acid, hormone therapy, and antioxidants as preventives.** These won't protect you from heart disease. Neither does aspirin before age 65. Women older than 65, or at high risk, should ask their doctors about daily aspirin. •



Check Your Coordinates

What's your risk for heart attack or stroke in the next 10 years? The Reynolds Risk Score can tell you. This heart disease "GPS" tool, based on previous research, was validated in a recently published study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* examining about 25,000 women health professionals. A user-friendly version is available at www.reynoldsriskscore.org.

Reynolds begins with standard heart-disease risk factors: age, blood pressure, total and HDL

cholesterol levels, and smoking status.

Then, it also factors in two other numbers to

fine-tune the calculation. One is your blood level of

high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hsCRP), a substance that may be linked to increased heart risks. The other is family history. If either parent had a heart attack before age 60, your risk is higher.

Talk with your doctor about your Reynolds Risk

Score. Together, you can decide how you can best take charge of your heart health.



How to Avoid Common Drug Interactions

MEDICINES CAN HELP TREAT AND CONTROL A RANGE OF CONDITIONS, BUT THEY HAVE RISKS AS WELL AS BENEFITS. DRUGS CAN INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER OR WITH FOODS OR BEVERAGES YOU CONSUME, CAUSING SIDE EFFECTS.



→ **NEARLY HALF OF ALL AMERICANS TAKE AT LEAST ONE PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE—PILLS, LIQUIDS, CREAMS,** and other therapies that can be harmful when other medicines enter the mix. Even the foods we eat can affect certain medicines.

That's why it's always a good idea to tell your doctor about everything you take. This includes:

- Over-the-counter and prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Herbs
- Other dietary supplements

The Dangers of Mixing Medicines

Drug interactions can cause medicines to stop working. Or they can make medicines more toxic to the body. In some cases, mixing medicines can be quite dangerous—even life-threatening. For example, the number

of medicines believed to interact with the anticlotting medicine warfarin continues to grow. It can be dangerous when mixed with antibiotics, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), cholesterol medicines, and many others. It may also interact with herbs like danshen and green tea. The primary risk is increased bleeding.

Herbs can present problems when it comes to interactions. Ginkgo biloba, one of the top-selling herbs in the United States, is used to boost memory, ease anxiety, and help other ailments. But when used with aspirin or ibuprofen, it can increase the risk of bleeding. It also can weaken the effect of omeprazole, a medicine for ulcers.

A Capsule of Good Advice

Before you add something new to your medicine cabinet, be sure you get the answers to these questions from your doctor or pharmacist.

- Can I take this with other medicines?
- Do I need to avoid certain foods, herbs, or medicines?
- What signs of possible drug interactions should I watch for?
- How can I reduce the risk of side effects?

Besides checking with the experts, you can protect yourself by becoming “well-read.” Be sure to read the labels on everything you take. •



Medicine	Other Medicine, Herb, Food	Common Reactions
Statins	Grapefruit juice	Higher blood levels of medicine
Tetracycline	Milk or food	Weaker antibiotic
Diabetes medicines	Alcohol	Rapid heartbeat, blood pressure changes
Decongestants/ antihistamines	Antidepressants	Higher blood pressure
Broad-spectrum antibiotics	Antacids or calcium supplements	Weaker medicines
St. John's wort	Birth control pills	Less effective contraception
Kava kava (<i>herb to reduce stress</i>)	Muscle relaxants	Increased strength of medicine
Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (<i>antidepressants</i>)	St. John's wort	Agitation, tremors
Warfarin	Ginseng	Less effective warfarin

Medication Matters: The Do's and Don'ts of Cutting Drug Costs

AMERICANS ARE LOOKING TO CUT EXPENSES WHEREVER POSSIBLE. FOR MANY, THAT MEANS SCRUTINIZING THE COST OF MEDICATIONS. IF YOU'RE TRYING TO STRETCH YOUR PHARMACEUTICAL DOLLARS, PROCEED WITH CAUTION.

→ WHEN IT COMES TO ESSENTIAL MEDICINES, SOME COST-CUTTING STRATEGIES ARE SENSIBLE, WHILE others are risky. Here are some quick tips for keeping your drug costs affordable without sacrificing your health and safety.

- **Embrace generics.** Generic versions of many prescription and nonprescription medicines are readily available—and cost 30 to 80 percent less than their brand-name counterparts. Generics are guaranteed to include the identical active ingredients as brand-name drugs and to provide the same therapeutic effects. Rather than asking your doctor or pharmacist, “Does my prescription come in a generic form?” rephrase your inquiry like this: “Is there a generic drug that treats my health condition?” This may prompt the health professional to research a low-cost generic in the same class of drugs as your brand-name prescription.
- **Don't skip doses.** Resist the urge to extend your bottle of pills by taking a lower-than-recommended dose. To maximize the protection and healing benefits of your medicine, you must take it exactly as your physician directs. Skimping on doses can worsen your condition or lead to dangerous, costly complications.
- **Compare prices.** The costs of both prescription and nonprescription medications can vary widely from store to store. Make sure you're getting the best price. When purchasing over-the-counter drugs, look for cheaper store-brand versions of familiar brand-name products.
- **Get permission to split pills.** If your recommended medication dose is 10 mg, your physician may consider prescribing 20 mg



pills, which you must slice in half. But take heed: Many pills, tablets, or capsules must be swallowed whole in order to work effectively. Others do not have a shape conducive to easy, accurate splitting. Talk with your physician or pharmacist before taking action.

- **Don't keep money worries to yourself.** Your physician is your advocate, and it's OK to explain that affording medication is difficult. Some physicians have free samples so patients can try out new pharmaceuticals before investing in a month's supply. Your physician may want to review and modify your drug treatment plan, eliminating some medications or suggesting lower-cost alternatives. Likewise, if consulted, your

pharmacist or health plan representative may suggest cost-cutting measures, such as prescription discount plans or a reputable, affiliated mail-order pharmacy.

- **Learn more.** The Partnership for Prescription Assistance (PPA) offers free information online at www.pparx.org or toll-free at 888-477-2669. PPA brings together pharmaceutical companies, physicians, patient advocacy organizations, and community groups to help qualified consumers without prescription coverage afford vital medicines. PPA links patients to more than 475 patient-assistance programs. ●

Need Money for College? Let Us Help!

THINKING ABOUT PURSUING A DEGREE IN THE MEDICAL FIELD? WE'D LIKE TO HELP YOU PAY LESS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION. THAT'S WHY WE STARTED OUR NEW SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

→ **UNITED SERVICE ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTH CARE (USA+)** IS A NONPROFIT CORPORATION CHARTERED IN Washington, D.C., in 1983. It was formed to promote the adoption of an equitable health care policy in the United States.

We usually reserve this space to communicate legislative activity that may be of interest to you. But with all the media coverage of federal health care reform, we thought that, perhaps, you'd like a break from the debate.

So we thought this was a good time to introduce our new scholarship program!

We're committed to the promotion of equal access to health care for all Americans—and it's important that there are enough medical providers available to serve the public. That's why we're offering scholarships to high school seniors who show promise of continued academic performance, as long as they pursue a course of study in the medical field. This

program is only available to dependent children and grandchildren of USA+ members and will allow deserving students to attain their educational goals.

Award

USA+ will award five scholarships each academic school year. The scholarships are payable at \$1,250 per semester and \$2,500 per school year, for a total of

four semesters (fall and spring) and a total award of \$5,000.

Eligibility

Members who have maintained good standing for at least six consecutive months are eligible to submit a scholarship application on behalf of their dependent children and grandchildren. Members in good standing need to have all USA+ dues paid and up-to-date. Any member whose USA+ dues currently are or have ever been past due is not eligible. If a member does not pay required dues in any given month, that member is not eligible.

Criteria

Applicants' scheduled courses of study must be related to the medical field (for example, nursing, radiology, medical school, nuclear medicine, etc.) Recipients must be full-time students (minimum of 12 hours per semester). Selection criteria includes:

- Academic achievement, including grades, rank in class, standardized test scores, and achievement test scores (minimum 3.0 GPA)
- Community/extracurricular involvement
- Leadership
- Participation in specific activities
- Awards and recognition
- Work history
- Personal or family attributes

Scholarship Notification Process

A committee will review applications and make final award decisions by July 23, 2010. Notification letters will be sent via U.S. mail, with checks payable to the college or university.



How to Apply

Applications are available year-round. For an application, just call USA+ at 800-872-1187 or visit WWW.USAHC.COM. Please submit the following with your application:

- ACT or SAT scores
- High school diploma
- Letter of acceptance from the educational program director
- High school transcripts

MAIL APPLICATIONS TO:

United Service Association For Health Care
Scholarship Review Committee
P.O. Box 200905
Arlington, TX 76006

Remember: Applications must be submitted by **JUNE 30, 2010**.

Employees of USA+ and contracted marketing companies and their dependents are not eligible for this program.

Scholarship Renewal Award Criteria

After the initial award is extended for the first semester, the student must provide a certified copy of his or her transcript that reflects a minimum GPA of 3.0 (with at least 12 hours earned) to continue receiving awards for the following semesters. This process must be completed for the three semesters that follow the initial application and award process.

Award recipients will be listed in a future issue of *Total Health & Wellness*. •



Herbal Helpers: A Brief History of Herbal Medicines

HERBAL REMEDIES APPEAR TO BE GAINING POPULARITY IN AMERICA—BUT THEY'RE NOT NEW TO THE MARKET.

→ LONG BEFORE RECORDED HISTORY, MEDICINAL PLANTS, OR HERBS, WERE USED TO TREAT ILLNESS AND

improve health. In fact, herbal remedies were uncovered at a prehistoric burial site in an Iraqi cave, dating from 60,000 years ago. Similarly, medicinal plants were found with the preserved, frozen body of the 5,300-year-old “Iceman” in the Alps in 1991 (it appears that he used them to treat intestinal parasites). Following is a closer look at how herbal remedies began—and where they stand today.

Ancient Knowledge

As the first writing systems evolved, healers documented their herbal formulas. An ancient Egyptian papyrus lists more than 700 herbal compounds in hieroglyphs. Greek, Roman, medieval, and Renaissance scholars compiled “herbals”—catalogues of plant lore with an emphasis on medicinal uses. In fact, the ancient Greeks knew that juice from white willow bark and leaves relieved pain and fever. The juice contains salicylic acid, which is aspirin’s active ingredient (in a synthetic version).

Many plants that were valued in the distant past are now ingredients in contemporary pharmaceuticals. Plant-derived substances are active ingredients in about 25 percent of the drugs prescribed today. For example, for more than 2,000 years, the Chinese used the herb Qinghao (sweet wormwood) to treat fever. Scientists isolated its active ingredient, artemisinin, in 1971 for use in powerful antimalarial drugs.

Herbal Medicine Today

According to the World Health Organization, herbal medicine is a robust, profitable international industry. Eighty percent of people in parts of Asia and Africa rely primarily on traditional medicine, including herbal remedies. In China alone, spending on herbal treatments amounted to \$14 billion in 2005.

In many developed countries, up to 80 percent of the population uses some form of complementary or alternative medicine (CAM). In the U.S., CAM encompasses an array of ancient to new-age medical practices—such as herbal remedies, acupuncture, and movement therapies—that are not considered part of conventional medicine because experts lack proof of their safety and effectiveness.

Popular remedies include:

- **Echinacea (tea, juice, or extract).** Believed to strengthen the immune system and treat colds, influenza, and other infections. Some scientific studies have found it helpful for treating upper respiratory infections.
- **Flaxseed oil (capsule or liquid).** Commonly taken to improve arthritis and high cholesterol levels. As a rich source of alpha-linolenic acid, it may have cardiac health benefits; preliminary evidence also suggests that it may relieve symptoms of menopause and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- **Ginseng (capsule, extract, tea, or topical cream).** Although it is used to treat a long list of



conditions, ginseng’s medicinal claims tend not to be scientifically proven. Additional research may confirm some key potential benefits: It may lower blood glucose in patients with type 2 diabetes and have antioxidant properties that help the heart. It may also boost the immune system and body’s response to the flu vaccine and antibiotics.

- **Ginkgo biloba (leaf extract).** This is taken for a variety of conditions, including asthma, bronchitis, and fatigue. Studies indicate it may treat intermittent claudication (leg pain caused by narrowing arteries). Recent studies show that it does not prevent Alzheimer’s disease and dementia, although studies of its effect on memory enhancement have had mixed results. Current studies are examining its role in treating multiple sclerosis symptoms, sexual dysfunction, and other ailments. ●

Hunting for more herbal medicine information? Try the American Botanical Council. This organization’s website offers facts on supplements, an extensive online library of herbal medicines and more. Direct your Web browser to www.herbalgram.org.

Articles in this magazine are written by professional journalists or physicians who strive to present reliable, up-to-date health information. Our articles are reviewed by medical professionals for accuracy and appropriateness. No magazine, however, can replace the care and advice of medical professionals, and readers are cautioned to seek such help for personal problems.

5426M

Planning Ahead Eases Grief

USA+ OFFERS FUNERAL, CREMATION, AND CEMETERY BENEFITS.

→ **CERTAINLY, NO ONE WANTS TO THINK ABOUT THEIR DEATH OR THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE ANY SOONER THAN they must.** But most people agree that planning for what happens after death can reduce stress for grieving loved ones. It's easy to understand how making decisions now about your funeral arrangements can help assure those left behind that your wishes are being honored.

More people today view advance funeral planning as a natural continuation of will and estate preparation, according to the Dignity Memorial network of funeral, cremation, and cemetery service providers. Still, there are many more who could benefit from the financial and emotional security that advance planning provides.

Eliminate guesswork for your family. When you prearrange your funeral and cemetery services, you'll alleviate your family's burden of making difficult decisions at what will be an already difficult time. They won't be left to guess or argue over your final wishes.

Personalize your service. Advance planning allows you to influence all elements of your services, including songs, readings, or other important personal details.

Avoid emotional overspending. By communicating exactly which merchandise and services you want, you can keep your family from

purchasing expensive or unnecessary additions while influenced by their grief.

Find your "best cost" funeral. Comparison shopping for options, prices, and quality of service allows you to find the right funeral and cemetery provider for your budget and your wishes.

Lock in today's prices. If you choose to fund your prearrangement, you can lock in today's prices for products and services that likely will be more expensive in the future. It is important to work with a funeral professional to understand the laws and regulations that protect preneed funds in your state.

With the Dignity Memorial funeral, cremation, and cemetery benefit included with your USA+ membership, you'll receive savings and benefits when you use a Dignity Memorial provider to make funeral and cemetery arrangements for yourself or someone else. Exclusive benefits include:

- **National Transferability**, which allows prearranged funeral services to be fully transferable to any Dignity Memorial provider should you move more than 75 miles from where original arrangements were made.



- **Bereavement Travel Services**, which provide assistance with airfares, hotel accommodations, and car rentals so family and friends may attend the funeral services of a loved one.
- **Access to a nationally recognized grief management library** of materials about coping with loss.
- **Access to the Compassion Helpline**, a 24-hour toll-free helpline staffed with professional grief counselors.
- **The Aftercare® Planner**, a comprehensive estate management guide to help finalize the business and personal affairs that arise when a death occurs. •

To learn more about these or other Dignity Memorial benefits or to locate a Dignity Memorial provider near you, visit www.DignityMemorial.com.