

1ST QUARTER 2021

Live Well, Work Well



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In The News

Catch up on the latest developments of the biggest health care news that happened in the past three months.



COVID-19 Vaccines on the Horizon?

Worldwide, more than 1.3 million people have died of COVID-19. As we close in on the one-year mark of the pandemic, early data is looking promising for a COVID-19 vaccine.

The Vaccine Trials

Drugmakers continue to conduct large clinical trials for a COVID-19 vaccine. Pfizer Inc. [announced](#) that early data from its two-dose COVID-19 vaccine trial indicated that the vaccine candidate demonstrated high efficacy. Early results were found to be more than 90% effective in preventing COVID-19 in participants without evidence of prior SARS-CoV-2 infection. Additionally, Moderna Inc. [said](#) its experimental two-dose COVID-19 vaccine was 94.5% effective in preventing the infection, and AstraZeneca PLC [reported](#) their two-dose vaccine was as much as 90% effective based on dosage.

The Latest Updates

Although these early results are an advancement toward an approved vaccine, promising data results do not mean that a vaccine is imminent. These vaccine candidates still have required steps to take before receiving approval, as studies need to meet safety milestone criteria.

On Dec. 11, the Food and Drug Administration authorized the emergency use of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine rollout began Dec. 14 as the first doses were administered to health care workers and nursing home staffers—and experts anticipate to administer vaccines to 100 million people by the end of the first quarter of 2021.

What's Next?

According to the World Health Organization, there are 52 COVID-19 vaccines in human trials, and 162 vaccines in preclinical development. Once a vaccine is approved, vaccine distribution would prioritize specific populations, such as people with certain medical conditions, health care professionals and other designated essential employees.

Early vaccine data and approval arrived just as the number of COVID-19 cases in the United States continued to rise around the holiday season. Because of that, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that the public should continue to take steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 with practices such as avoiding large crowds and people who are sick, social distancing, wearing a mask and frequent hand-washing.



Preventing Hospital Overcrowding

The number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 has increased significantly, straining health care systems that have fewer resources to handle surges. Along with an overwhelming demand, the CDC believes deaths will soon begin to increase again too. Some health experts say that preventing hospital overcrowding is crucial to reducing COVID-19 deaths.

How to Help

Doctors are becoming more familiar with treating COVID-19 and know what to do to treat patients faster. That can put patients on a recovery path quicker—however, doctors being able to treat patients effectively hinges on hospitals not being overcapacity. That's where you can help make a difference and lower health care demand.

Until a vaccine for COVID-19 is widely available to the American public, the only way to keep people out of hospitals is to continue with social distancing, mask-wearing and hand-washing. As temperatures drop in some parts of the country, it's important to also follow local and state regulations for indoor and outdoor public settings and gatherings.

That said, if you are sick or require medical attention, do not delay or forgo seeing your doctor. Do not put off your physical and mental health. It's important to schedule a virtual visit or go to urgent care to avoid worsening conditions during the pandemic.



Lower Your Risk for the Top Killer in America—Heart Disease

One person dies every 36 seconds in the United States from cardiovascular disease. Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death in the United States. In fact, 1 in every 4 deaths is caused by heart disease.

Get Informed

Heart disease refers to several different types of heart conditions. Coronary artery disease—caused by plaque buildup in the walls of the heart’s arteries—is the most common. Other forms of heart disease include heart attack, heart failure, arrhythmia and congenital heart defects.

The symptoms of heart disease can vary, and some people may not even know they have a heart condition until they have a heart attack. Red flags include shortness of breath, chest discomfort, difficulty with speech, heart palpitations and sudden loss of responsiveness.

Lower Your Risk

There are certain uncontrollable factors that increase your risk of heart disease, including age, sex and family history. Generally speaking, those with a family history of heart disease and older people have a higher risk of developing a heart condition. However, other factors that increase your risk for heart disease—such as stress, inactivity, obesity, diabetes, smoking and a poor diet—are controllable.

To lower your risk of heart disease, consider the following strategies:

- Eat foods that are low in saturated fat, trans fat and sodium.
- Get at least 2.5 hours of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week.
- Keep an eye on your cholesterol, which should be checked at least every five years.
- Reduce your stress levels.
- Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol consumption.

To find out your risk for heart disease, or for more information, contact your doctor.





NHO

Learn more about national health observances (NHOs) from the past three months in this section.



October—Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Breast cancer is the second most common type of cancer and the second-leading cause of cancer deaths for women in the United States. Top risk factors include age, race and family history of breast cancer, which are things you cannot change.

Regardless of your personal risk factors, you can use these prevention strategies to reduce your risk of breast cancer:

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Exercise regularly.
- Avoid exposure to carcinogens and radiation.
- Abstain from drinking alcohol or limit intake to one drink per day.

In general, living a healthy lifestyle can help lower your risk of developing cancer and increase your chances of surviving cancer. If you are concerned about your personal risk of developing breast cancer, call or visit your doctor. For more information on risk factors, prevention tips and breast cancer screening, visit www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/.



November—American Diabetes Month

American Diabetes Month is designed to raise awareness about diabetes and communicate the urgency of the growing public health crisis. More than 30 million people in the United States have diabetes. Of these 30

million people, 95% have Type 2 diabetes, while the remaining 5% have Type 1 diabetes. Both types of diabetes center around the inability to control one's blood sugar.

While you can't prevent Type 1 diabetes, you can prevent Type 2 diabetes. Making the following six lifestyle changes can greatly increase your chances of preventing the disease.

1. Manage your weight.
2. Increase your activity level.
3. Talk with your doctor about your risks.
4. Monitor your carbohydrate intake.
5. Maintain a healthy diet.
6. Choose whole grains.



December—Safe Toys and Celebrations Month

You should always consider the age of whomever you are giving a present. For instance, you should avoid toys with small parts when buying for a toddler, and ensure the subject matter of the gift is age-appropriate. However, some toys may still be harmful despite being marketed as appropriate for the recipient's age.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology stresses that projectile toys, especially, have the potential for scraping eyes and even causing cataracts, despite typically being sold as gifts for children ages 15 and younger. The organization acknowledges other dangers inherent with seasonal gift giving and recommends the following precautions:

- Avoid toys with sharp or protruding parts.
- Keep toys for older children away from younger siblings.
- Check toy labels for age and play recommendations.
- Make sure children are supervised when playing.

Looking Ahead...

January

National Radon Awareness Month

February

American Heart Month

March

National Nutrition Month



Health and Wellness

Remain on top of the latest trends in health and wellness with the three articles in this section.

Staying Fit at Home This Winter

With COVID-19 cases still on the rise, your local gym or fitness studio may be closed. Even if it is open, you may not be comfortable with exercising around others. The good news is that you can still get a great workout without leaving your house.

Consistency is key with any fitness routine. By working out at home, you're more likely to adopt fitness as a healthy lifestyle. Ready to commit to fitness? Try these at-home workout tips:

- **Designate a workout spot.** Find a room or corner in your home to be your workout space. You don't need that much space for an efficient workout, just enough to move around a bit or lay down an exercise mat.
- **Keep it simple.** If you already have hand weights, a yoga mat or exercise bands at home—great! If not, don't worry. Get creative with body-weight

exercises and use soup cans, water bottles or laundry detergent containers to add resistance to your routine.

- **Set goals.** Small or big, any goal will work. You may be trying to lose weight or training for a race. Making a simple commitment to moving every day also works. If you need help staying motivated, give yourself rewards along the way, such as new fitness equipment or clothing.
- **Schedule your workouts.** Each week, write down the times you plan to exercise—or add appointments to your virtual calendar—and stick to that schedule. If something comes up and you have to change an appointment, reschedule it right away.
- **Find an exercise partner.** A workout buddy doesn't necessarily have to live in the same household. Consider taking livestreaming or virtual classes, joining an online fitness community or regularly checking in with a friend to increase accountability.





Boost Your Immunity With Food

This winter, cases of the common cold, the flu and COVID-19 are prevalent. This means that it's important now more than ever to take care of your body so it can fight off infectious diseases. It seems that people are willing to make healthier food choices and actually doing it. In fact, a recent [survey](#) revealed that 85% of Americans have made some sort of change to the food they eat or how they prepare it, due to the pandemic.

Continue to focus on putting healthy foods into your body. The human body absorbs nutrients from whole

fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains and proteins more efficiently than processed foods or supplements. It's important to limit inflammatory foods such as those with refined carbohydrates, trans fats, high-fructose corn syrup, refined oils and high sodium content. Simply think of it as limiting or avoiding processed foods and fast food when possible.

Instead, choose fruits, vegetables (especially leafy greens), nuts, fatty fish and olive oil. Focus on fueling your body with healthy foods that include dietary fiber, nutrients or probiotics. Last but not least, remember to stay hydrated and drink enough water for your body to operate at its best.



Beat the Winter Blues

As the winter days get shorter, your mood may become as dark as the late afternoon. The winter blues is a term for a reason. The COVID-19 pandemic is already causing stress, anxiety and growing mental health disorders—and it could worsen as the pandemic continues and the seasons change once again.

Try one of the following strategies to help you relax, unwind and make the long winter months seem more manageable:

- **Change your mindset.** Refocus your thoughts on wintertime pleasures by making a list of things that you enjoy about winter. Some ideas include getting cozy with a book, making traditional recipes, enjoying the smell of fresh snow and listening to wood crackle in a fireplace.
- **Get outside.** Make it a point to get outside every day for fresh air or a quick 15-minute walk, especially before the sun sets on the day. Ensure you have the right clothing, boots and cold-weather accessories on so you stay warm.
- **Declutter or organize.** It can be draining to clear clutter, so commit to doing a little bit at a time. The rule of thumb is that, if it takes less than a minute to do, you should do it right away. It could be as simple as putting your dirty coffee cup in the sink or dishwasher instead of leaving it out in another room. Organizing and getting rid of clutter can be energizing.
- **Stay socially connected.** As the pandemic continues, stay connected by keeping up with regular video chats with family and friends, joining a virtual book club, writing a postcard or sending a care package.



Recipes

Try out these two healthy recipes, which are from the USDA's MyPlate Kitchen website.



Potato Skins With Buffalo Chicken

Makes 4 servings



Ingredients

- 12 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 1 cup water
- 4 medium russet potatoes
- 3 Tbsp. hot pepper sauce
- ¼ cup nonfat milk
- ¼ cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 2 Tbsp. margarine
- ¼ cup crumbled blue cheese
- 2 green onions
- 2 medium tomatoes
- 4 celery stalks

Nutritional information for 1 serving

Calories	360
Total fat	12 g
Saturated fat	4 g
Cholesterol	45 mg
Sodium	550 mg
Total carbohydrate	44 g
Dietary fiber	5 g
Total sugars	5 g
Added sugars included	0 g
Protein	20 g

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 F.
2. Place chicken in a saute pan, add water and cover. Simmer for 20 minutes and remove chicken from pan to cool slightly. When chicken is cool enough to handle, shred it.
3. While the chicken is simmering, wash and scrub potatoes, and slit each one lengthwise about one-inch deep.
4. Place potatoes in a microwave-safe dish and microwave on high, uncovered, for about 10 minutes. Let potatoes cool slightly.
5. Slice each potato in half lengthwise, and scoop out potato, leaving a ¼-inch shell. Mash the potato together with hot pepper sauce, sour cream, margarine and milk. Fold in blue cheese and shredded chicken.
6. Spoon mixture into potato skins, slightly denting the center to hold fresh toppings after baking.
7. Place filled potato skins on a 9-by-13-inch baking sheet and bake about 15-20 minutes until tops are golden brown.
8. Dice tomatoes and green onions. Cut celery stalks into 4-inch sticks.
9. To serve, top potatoes with onions and tomatoes. Serve celery sticks on the side for scooping potato contents.



Avocado Breakfast Bruschetta

Makes 4 servings



Ingredients

- 1 ripe avocado
- 2 medium tomatoes
- 1 green onion
- ½ cup chopped fresh basil (plus 2 Tbsp. for garnish)
- 4 hard-boiled eggs
- 12 slices of whole-wheat baguette bread
- ¼ cup reduced-fat ricotta cheese
- black pepper to taste

Directions

1. Dice avocado, tomatoes and green onions.
2. Peel and chop hard-boiled eggs.
3. Gently toss the first five ingredients in a small bowl, reserving 2 Tbsp. of basil for garnish. Add black pepper to taste.
4. Toast baguette slices, and smear with ricotta cheese.
5. Top slices with the avocado mix and garnish with remaining chopped basil.

Nutritional information for 1 serving

Calories	340
Total fat	17 g
Saturated fat	4 g
Cholesterol	190 mg
Sodium	434 mg
Total carbohydrate	32 g
Dietary fiber	9 g
Total sugars	6 g
Added sugars included	1 g
Protein	17 g