

Fall into Fitness and Good Health

Written by **Sabrina Palmieri, RD, LDN & Dan McCoy ACE-CPT.**

As summer winds down and the air gets cooler, you may find yourself enjoying the outdoors more with an evening roll, run, or walk. Physical activity is essential for weight management, disease prevention, and overall well-being. Finding fun ways to incorporate activity into your day will help you stick to your fitness routine. Many people are worried about starting a fitness routine for fear of not knowing where to start. In this issue we will show you that fall is a great time to start or improve your fitness and health.



How Much Activity?

In general, all adults should avoid inactivity, but when it comes to knowing how much activity we really need, it can be confusing. We recommend that adults participate in moderate-intensity aerobic activity for 150 minutes per week or high-intensity aerobic activity for 75 minutes per week. Moderate-intensity activities include things like brisk walking, wheeling, or tennis. High-intensity activities include jogging, running, and swimming. Even greater health outcomes

are seen with an increase in activity to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 150 minutes of high-intensity activity. According to the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion within the Department of Health and Human Services, the benefits include lower risk of premature death, coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and depression.

Getting Started

Physical activity requires no special equipment, just comfortable clothes and shoes. Sometimes the best place to start is with walking or rolling. Walking, swimming, rolling, and riding a handcycle are great ways to achieve your weekly goal of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity. This is the perfect time of year to get outside as the weather starts to cool. There are many places to walk in Pittsburgh with routes, trails, and parks.

Fun Fall Activities

Pittsburgh has many different forms of exercise available to individuals of all abilities. Here is a list of some of the different forms of exercise Pittsburgh has to offer:

- Pittsburgh Steelwheelers (Wheelchair Basketball, Handcycling, Wheelchair Rugby)
- Pittsburgh Mighty Penguins (Sled Hockey)
- Dynamic Paddlers (Adaptive Kayaking)
- Three Rivers Rowing (Adaptive Rowing)
- Hope Network (Basketball, Handcycling)
- Three Rivers Adaptive Sports (Waterskiing, Canoeing, Handcycling, Bowling)

Fueling for Fitness

Regardless of the type of physical activity you plan to participate in, staying hydrated and fueling properly is essential. In early fall, the weather can still be hot and humid. Be sure to bring water with you while you're exercising if the temperatures are high.



Eating balanced meals before and after your activities ensures you will be adequately fueled. Balanced meals include an appropriate portion of carbohydrates, protein, and fat. If you plan to be out for an all-day trip, be sure to pack plenty of snacks. Here's a recipe for some healthy, portable energy snacks:

Pumpkin Cranberry Energy Bites

Recipe by Alex Caspero

Ingredients:

- 2 cups instant or rolled oats
- 1/3 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup pepitas (shelled pumpkin seeds)
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger

- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup peanut butter
- 1/3 cup honey
- 2 tablespoons pumpkin puree
- 1/3 cup chocolate chips

Instructions:

1. Place oats, cranberries, pepitas, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and salt in a large bowl.
2. Whisk together the peanut butter, honey and pumpkin puree. If the mixture is thick and not pourable, then microwave the mixture for 20-30 seconds. A softer mixture will make it easier to mix together.
3. Pour the honey mixture into the oats and stir until combined. Gently fold in the chocolate chips.
4. Scoop the mixture into small bowls (I used this 1 tablespoon scoop) and place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
5. Continue with the rest of the mixture, then place the baking sheet in the fridge or freezer until hardened.

For more about this recipe, please visit:

DelishKnowledge.com/Pumpkin-Cranberry-Energy-Bites

Fall Cooking at its Best

Written by Sara Izzo

One of the pleasantries I often look back on are the many days I spent in the kitchen watching my grandfather cook meals for the family. I usually found my use sitting on the high chair watching him using sharp knives and flame throwing gas stoves and doing magical motions with his hands, mixing all kinds of colorful spices.

Recently I noticed myself using similar methods, but with fewer guests at the table, I discovered new ways to use my slow cooker. Slow cooker recipes often suggest typical meals like beef or chicken stews, which I enjoy.

Cornish hens are often overlooked. Found in your local freezer section and reasonably priced, Cornish hens are a great source of protein. They are a wonderful substitute for a holiday bird like a turkey or a whole chicken but they're also perfect for a chilly Saturday evening at home. Crispy skin isn't usually experienced with a slow cooker but you'd be surprised to find that you can get the same crispy texture you'd have with an oven or rotisserie. The key is to dry the skin and the inside of the bird as much as you can with paper towels and using an aluminum foil rack you can make yourself. This method allows the fat from the bird to render and keeps the bird nice and juicy while the skin gets thin and crispy. No extra oils or fat is needed, which keeps this extremely healthy and delicious.

Foil Rack Directions:

- Use heavy duty foil, as this works best.
- Cut 1 arm length sheet of aluminum foil for each hen.
- Roll or twist foil longways and loosely. Curve the foil into a round circular tube molding the ends together. It should look like a large donut that is small enough for the hen to sit on top without touching the bottom of the slow cooker.

Crispy Slow Cooker Cornish Hens (1-2 servings)

- 1 Cornish hen
 - ¼ tsp each herbs of your choice (rosemary, thyme, oregano)
 - ½ tsp sea salt
 - ¼ black pepper
 - ¼ tsp each onion powder and garlic powder
1. Combine all seasonings in a small bowl and set aside. Place the foil rack in the slow cooker that is turned off and not plugged in.
 2. Using clean hands, dry the hen thoroughly with paper towels. Remember to dry the inside as well. Repeat the process until no wet spots are left on your paper towel.
 3. Once dried, begin to sprinkle the reserved seasonings under the skin of the breast and inside of the bird, then season the bottom and the top.
 4. Place the hen on the foil rack that is inside the slow cooker. Cover with the lid and set on low for 5 hours. If using 2 hens, leave in for 8 hours.
 5. Pair this delicious meal with your favorite fall vegetables, like squash or my favorite spicy honey carrots. This recipe is found in our Spring newsletter.

This recipe is great for whole chicken or an entire turkey breast. Just adjust the amount of seasonings and the foil.

**Be sure the lid can fit securely when using any elevating rack in the slow cooker.*

“Preventing Falls in Fall”

Written by **Monica Still, RN, BSN**

It's autumn. The weather turns colder, the nights get longer, and our thoughts turn towards the coming Winter months. And then there's me. I don't just think of Fall; I think about *falls*. I worry that this might be the year that I take a tumble that ends up putting me in the hospital and rehab. The good news is that there are precautions that all of us can take to prevent falls. Here are some helpful things you can do:

- Make sure your indoor pathways aren't cluttered and that all rugs are securely in place on the floor. It's very easy to slide on a throw rug placed on a hardwood floor or trip over one on a carpet.
- Make sure your sidewalks are clear of ice, snow and even wet leaves. Having enough light illuminating your path is another great way to help prevent falling.
- Use the handrails on stairways (indoors and out), or a grab rail near a single step.
- Use a cane or walker if your doctor has recommended it.
- If you take medicines that make you sleepy or dizzy, try timing your medicine for a time when you don't have to be up and moving around. Don't wait until the last second to use the bathroom.
- Handheld showers, showerchairs, tub transfer benches, non-skid bath mats, and handrails are all great ways to keep yourself safe while taking care of your needs.

Fall prevention is not just for people who walk. Wheelchair users are also at risks for falls. If you are a wheelchair user, you should not assume that the person helping you with your transfer has locked your wheelchair brakes. Some other ways to prevent falls from your wheelchair include to avoid leaning forward and tipping yourself out of the wheelchair, moving footrests out of the way to avoid tripping on them during transfers, not overreaching for an object, and avoiding being too far forward on the seat. If you use a power wheelchair, make sure that it is turned off before transferring. Be sure to keep the cord out of your way when charging it.

Unfortunately, even with taking every precaution, it is possible to still fall. Having a medical alert device is a good way to get help if the worst happens. There are many different types of devices and some state programs or insurance may pay for the cost. If you don't have a medical alert device, try to keep your cell phone with you. If you fall, try to keep calm and seek medical help if needed. I hope these tips help you have a safe Fall without any falls.

ICE – In Case of Emergency

Written by **Rachel Young, CRNP**

Do you have a way to communicate to first responders about your medical history? If you have a smart phone, the ICE or “in case of emergency” tool is available to let emergency responders access your medical information through your phone, even if there is a locked phone screen. Take a moment to check out [this](#)

[article on HuffPost.com](#) that explains how to set up this feature on Android and Apple iOS devices.



In addition to the website, [Wheelmap.org](#), you can also find this map on the app available for iOS, Android, and Windows Phones.



Upcoming Events at Spina Bifida Association of Western Pennsylvania

Some of the upcoming SBAWP events include:

- [Adult Retreat - September 27-29, 2019](#)
- [Youth/Teen Retreat - October 4-6, 2019](#)
- [6th Annual Girlfriends for Good Purse Bash - Nov 9, 2019](#)

For more information, please visit www.sbawp.org.

Tools for Techies and Gadget Lovers

Written by **Darcie Ilg, PA-C**

Whether you are planning a trip to another country, or just a day out around your local town, predicting the accessibility of your destination can be challenging. **WHEELMAP** is a worldwide map created for finding wheelchair accessible places. It uses a 3-color system to rate the accessibility of streets and buildings. It is an evolving and growing resource and you can even update it yourself. Currently, almost 600,000 worldwide public places are on the map and about 300 new places are added daily.

Guidelines for the Care of People with Spina Bifida: What You Need to Know

Written by **Brad Dicianno, MD**

In previous newsletters, we mentioned the new “Healthcare Guidelines” which were published in October, 2018. In this and upcoming newsletters, we will highlight one of the sections in the guidelines and tell you what you need to know. In this issue, we are highlighting “Care Coordination.” Care coordination means that your spina bifida clinic and your primary care provider help you with organization of the health care services you are receiving. You can play an important role in this process by doing the following:

1. **Understand your insurance.** Know the company who provides your insurance and the name of your insurance plan. Know how to contact them and carry information, like a wallet card, with you at all times.

- 2. Understand supplemental security insurance (SSI).** SSI pays benefits to disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources. SSI benefits also are payable to people 65 and older without disabilities who meet the financial limits. People who have worked long enough may also be able to receive Social Security disability or retirement benefits as well as SSI. For more information, please visit [SSA.gov/Benefits/SSI](https://www.ssa.gov/Benefits/SSI)
- 3. Understand vocational rehabilitation.** A number of services and programs are offered in each state to help you with employment and education goals. For information about programs in PA, please [click here](#). Similar programs are offered in other states.
- 4. Make a plan for your long term care.** If you rely on other people for part of your care, come up with a plan for what would happen if those caregivers became ill and could not care for you. Make a list of what you need help with, and who would provide that help. Talk to those people about the plan. Some individuals may need to apply for attendant care services to have professional caregiver help at home.

Please contact our office if you have concerns or questions about these important parts of your care.

MyUPMC Patient Portal

In order to serve you better and improve communication, we are asking that you join MyUPMC. MyUPMC is a free, secure online portal that allows you to communicate with our office, view test results, refill prescriptions, and manage your overall health. To sign up, go to [MyUPMC.com](https://www.upmc.com/myupmc) and create an account. If you have any questions, please ask our front desk or give us a call at **412-232-8901**.

UPMC Financial Assistance Program

If you qualify for the UPMC Financial Assistance program, you may receive help with medical expenses such as reduced copays. The general financial aid program is available regardless of where you live. If you live in Pennsylvania, you may also qualify for additional refunds for medical expenses through our Adult Spina Bifida Clinic grant. Apply by going to [UPMC.com/FinancialAssistance](https://www.upmc.com/FinancialAssistance) or ask someone in our office for an application. If you apply, please let us know so we can track your application and let you know if you are approved. We also ask that you save a copy of your medical receipts and expenses.

Contact Us

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[UPMC.com/SpinaBifida](https://www.upmc.com/SpinaBifida)