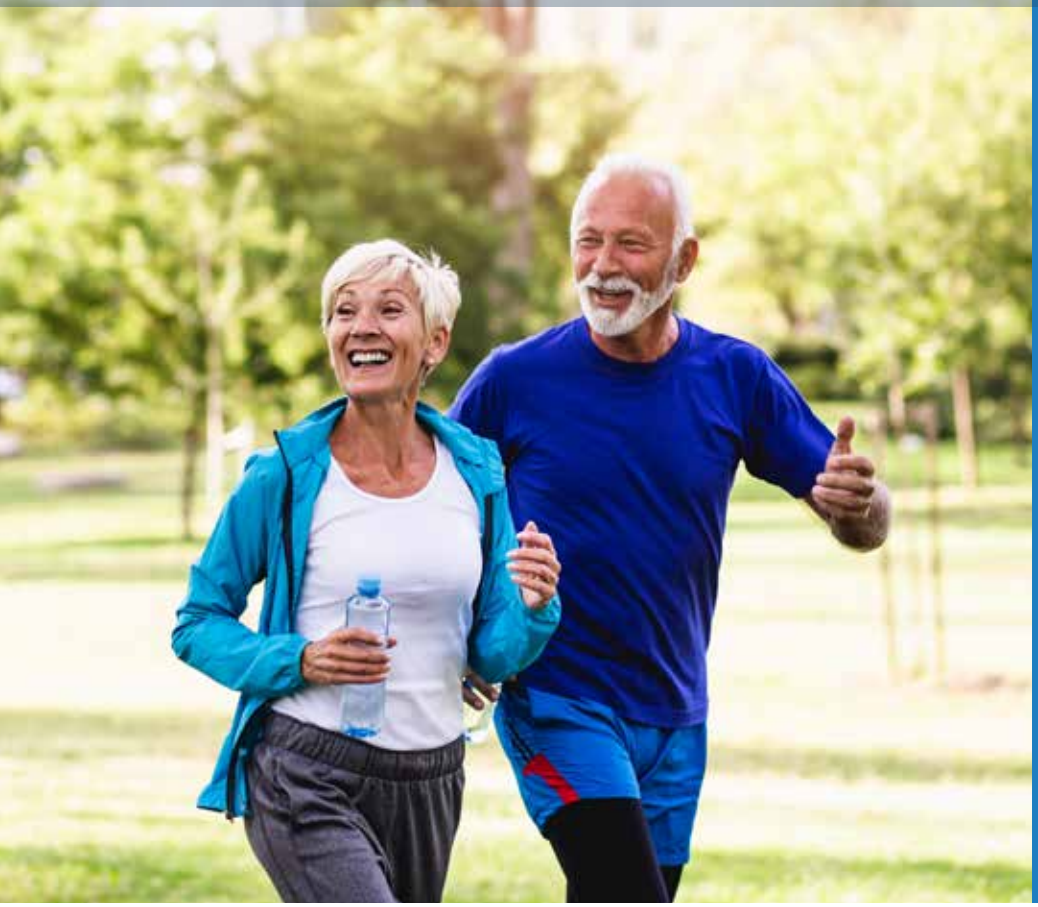
BottomLine

For members of Bloom Benefits Association 2018



Also included in this issue:

Weight Loss Helps Knee Arthritis

Recent research shows that people who are overweight can reduce their symptoms of knee arthritis by losing at least 20% of their weight.

Millions of older adults have stiff, painful knees caused by arthritis. Arthritis causes a breakdown of the cushion of tissue inside the knee joint. Without this cushion, bone can rub against bone. That may cause pain and swelling. Being overweight could make the symptoms worse.

Experts generally advise adults who are overweight or obese to lose at least 10% of their weight to reduce symptoms of knee arthritis. Recently, an NIH-funded research team wondered whether 20% weight loss would help reduce symptoms even more.

The study included 240 overweight and obese adults over 55 with painful knee arthritis. The research team helped them to exercise and diet to lose weight.

The researchers compared the people who lost 20% or more body weight with those who lost 5%. The people who lost 20% or more reported less pain. They could walk farther in a 6-minute test. In addition, blood tests revealed a much lower level of a substance related to pain and swelling.

"The importance of our study is that a weight loss of 20% or greater—double the previous standard—results in better clinical outcomes and is achievable without surgical or pharmacologic intervention," says lead researcher Stephen P. Messier at Wake Forest University.

The researchers are planning to enroll three times as many people for their next study of pain reduction from diet and exercise.

Article reprinted from NIH-News In Health

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of Bloom Benefits Association will be held at 16476 Wild Horse Creek Road, Chesterfield, MO 63017, on Friday, June 1, 2018 at 11:00 a.m. (CST) for election of Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting and any adjournment thereof.

The above notice is given pursuant to the By-Laws of the Association.

PROXY
Bloom Benefits Association
June 1, 2018 Annual Meeting of Members
THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF BLOOM BENEFITS ASSOCIATION

The undersigned member of Bloom Benefits Association does hereby constitute and appoint the President of Bloom Benefits Association, the true and lawful attorney(s) of the undersigned with full power of substitution, to appear and act as the proxy or proxies of the undersigned at the Annual Meeting of the Members of Bloom Benefits Association and at any and all adjournments thereof, and to vote for and in the name, place and stead of the undersigned, as fully as the undersigned might or could do if personally present, as set forth below:

1. FOR [ ], or to [ ] WITHHOLD AUTHORITY to vote for, the following nominees for Board of Directors: David Wilson, Lisa Collier, and Audrey Bridges
2. In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

This proxy, when properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned member. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the election of directors and officers.

DATED: _____ , 2018

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Please date and sign and return promptly to 16476 Wild Horse Creek Road, Chesterfield, MO 63017 whether or not you expect to attend this meeting. The Proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event that you attend the meeting.

Chesterfield, Missouri
May 1, 2018
Date

Breathe Easier

Dealing with Bad Air Quality

Even though you can't see it, the air you breathe can affect your health. Polluted air can cause difficulty breathing, flare-ups of allergy or asthma, and other lung problems. Long-term exposure to air pollution can raise the risk of other diseases, including heart disease and cancer.

Some people think of air pollution as something that's found mainly outside. They may picture cars idling or power plants with smoke stacks. But air pollution can also occur inside—in homes, offices, or even schools.

Whether outdoors or indoors, the effects of air pollution are most obvious for those who already have difficulty breathing. "All people are likely susceptible to the adverse effects of air pollution. But people who have chronic lung diseases such as asthma are more susceptible," explains Dr. Nadia Hansel, who studies lung problems at Johns Hopkins University.

NIH researchers are working to understand and reduce the impact that air pollution—both outdoors and indoors—has on health.

What's Outside

Several different types of pollutants can affect your health. When the weather is warm, an invisible gas called ozone can make it harder for some people to breathe. This gas is created when sunlight triggers a chemical reaction between oxygen and certain pollutants from cars, factories, and other sources.

Ozone can irritate the lining of your airways and lungs. People with asthma and other lung conditions are more likely to feel its effects.

"When people with poorly controlled asthma are exposed to low levels of ozone, the amount of inflammation in the lungs goes way up," explains Dr. Daryl Zeldin, a lung and environmental health science expert at NIH. "As a result, air passages narrow, which makes it much harder to breathe."

Another type of outdoor pollutant that affects health is particulates. These are fine and coarse particles that are released when fuel is burned. They can come from things like cars, power plants, and wildfires. Research has linked particulates to short- and long-term lung problems.

To track these and other harmful pollutants, air quality monitors have been set up at over 1,000 locations across the country. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency uses these monitors to produce the Air Quality Index (AQI). The index can be found online at www.airnow.gov(link is external).

People who are sensitive to outdoor pollution may want to use the AQI to track when levels are high. This information can help you make choices about when to do outdoor activities.

Improving Air Indoors

Indoor air pollution can be harmful, too. It can come from many sources. Secondhand tobacco smoke contains tiny particles that can hurt your lungs. Gas stoves and appliances can create harmful gases.

Pets and pests (such as mice and cockroaches) can shed substances, called allergens, that cause allergies. Mold and dust mites also produce allergens. Even furniture and cleaning products can release harmful compounds into the air.

In recent years, researchers have learned a lot about how exposure to indoor pollutants contribute to disease. "Studies are now asking: What do we do about it? What sorts of things can help reduce some of these exposures?" Zeldin says.

Several NIH-funded researchers are looking at ways to reduce harm from indoor air pollution. Hansel studies the use of air cleaners (also called air purifiers) to improve the air quality for older adults with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). This condition makes it hard to breathe and puts people at increased risk of dangerous lung infections, such as pneumonia.

"Studies have shown that high pollutant levels inside the home can make breathing harder for people with COPD," Hansel says.

Hansel's team is now testing whether using air cleaners with special filters in the home can decrease COPD symptoms. The filters they're testing remove both particulates and nitrogen dioxide, a gas pollutant produced by cooking.

The researchers will compare COPD symptoms in people who use the filters with those who don't. They hope the use of the filters will also reduce hospital visits.

Research has shown that improving indoor air quality in the home can improve the health of kids with lung conditions, explains Dr. Wanda Phipatanakul, a children's health expert at Boston Children's Hospital.

But while air quality in the home matters, children can spend more than eight hours a day indoors at school. Improving air quality in schools has the potential to improve the health of many children at once, Phipatanakul adds.

"Home-based interventions help individual families, but targeting schools could help all the kids that are there, and has much more potential for impact," she says.

Phipatanakul is running an NIH-funded study in about 40 schools. The intervention includes air cleaners in classrooms to remove particles and special pest control strategies to reduce allergens. The researchers are tracking children with asthma at the schools over the school year to see if the intervention improves their symptoms.

Research has shown that, in addition to improving health, improving indoor air quality can also boost how well kids do in school. "Kids who come to school and aren't as sick are going to do better. So that's kind of the overall goal," Phipatanakul says.

Inside Out

One good thing about indoor air pollution is that many causes can be removed or changed. "It's difficult to change the outdoor environment," Phipatanakul says, "but indoors is more contained."

A simple tool for many homes is making sure inside air has a chance to escape. "Ventilating your house, such as opening windows, can actually lower the air pollution levels inside, and it really doesn't cost anything," Hansel explains.

This strategy may not work on days when outdoor pollution is very high, she says. Paying attention to the AQI or other measures of outdoor air quality can help you decide when to let inside air out.

Article reprinted from NIH-News In Health

Tips to Breathe Easier

To reduce the effects of poor quality air on your health:

- **Avoid outdoor activities in the afternoons on warm days,** when the risk of air pollution is highest.
- **Avoid strenuous outdoor activities if the air is polluted.** Check your region's air quality index(link is external) (EPA). Orange and red mean it's a bad air day, so people with lung problems should avoid the outdoors. Purple and maroon mean air pollution is extreme, and everyone should try to stay in an indoor environment with clean air.
- **Reduce pollutants in your home.** Don't let anyone smoke in your home. Avoid burning candles, incense, or wood fires. Run fans or open a window when cooking. Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter instead of sweeping to avoid stirring up dust and allergens.

Healthy Habits Can Lengthen Life

Have you heard the advice to exercise, choose a healthy diet, keep a lean weight, never smoke, and limit alcohol?

Researchers wanted to find out whether people who follow this advice live longer than those who don't. So, they compared lifespan and other data from thousands of adults with all five of these healthy habits to those without.

People in the healthy habits group got at least 30 minutes of exercise each day. They ate the recommended amounts of fruits, vegetables, nuts, whole grains, and healthy fats. And they limited salt, sugary drinks, trans fat, and red and processed meats. They also limited alcohol. Women had no more than one drink each day and men no more than two drinks. They also maintained a normal weight and didn't smoke.

The people in the other group didn't exercise, have a healthy diet, or limit drinking. They smoked and were overweight.

Based on the results, the researchers estimated that a 50-year-old woman who had all five habits would live, on average, to age 93. In contrast, if she didn't have any of these habits, she would live on average to age 79.

For a 50-year-old man, the average lifespan was about 88 years old with healthy behaviors and only 76 years without.

"This study underscores the importance of following healthy lifestyle habits for improving longevity in the U.S. population," says Dr. Frank B. Hu of Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, senior author of the study.

Article reprinted from NIH-News In Health

BottomLine is published by:
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and association services, call or write:

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1-800-992-8044 or (636) 530-7200

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For more information, or to upgrade your membership, please call 1-800-387-9027.

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