

HEALTH Matters

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Lifestyle



To be or not to be...

tagged in someone's Facebook pic? To add or not to add your boss as a 'friend' on FB or in your G+ circle? To 'like' or not to 'like' those holiday pictures posted by your arch rival?

This throws up an interesting perspective, which is – how much online communication is enough to be 'social' and yet retain your privacy? Should you really inform a diverse group of acquaintances and friends, all about your weekend; or what you ate for lunch at the office table; or that you're feeling low and need some TLC? To what levels are these social media conversations harmless today?

If you're on a social media site today, it might be a good time to do a sanity check on your presence, and refrain from:

- Giving away too much through photos. A study has found that people form judgements without even reading your words. So be careful about what stories your pictures tell.
- Adding applications that can access all your data and friends.
- Putting yourself at an employment risk by 'friending' bosses, seniors at work, who can track your interactions anytime.
- Posting defaming words that could do damage through dissemination (Remember, Lalit Modi had to cough



up £90,000 in the defamation suit against him by Chris Cairns.)

- Making it more about quantity than quality. Meaningless posts status messages/tweets push an audience more than they pull them in.

The biggest applause, that social media vehicles take away today, is in the area of connecting old school friends, relatives, alumni, and so on; and helping people stay in touch despite distances and busy schedules. Others use various forums to support one another through bereavements and receive help and therapy from their forums.

Boon or bane, your social media presence is very simply described by the maxim – what goes in is what comes out! Treat it with respect, care, and responsibility and you'll reap the rewards in those terms too. Happy connecting!

Editorial

Welcome to our seventh issue of Health Matters. The Indian summer is approaching and there is a surge of fevers of all kinds due to a change in season. Our health feature advises on how to manage different fevers.

Core strength is very important due to the upright posture and we discuss the many exercises which help maintain it after a surgery in our feature on 'Fitness to the Core'. Social networking sites have opened up new platforms for people to express themselves; we analyse the good, bad, and ugly aspects of information sharing on these networks.

With jobs demanding frequent change of place, it is common to go through a change in culture with a new location. However, this can be smooth if handled with the right attitude, which is what we tell you in our article on culture stress.

Happy reading to all our patrons of Health Matters! Please write in with your feedback and views to editorial@ttkhealthcareservices.com.

Inside

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Fitness



Fitness to the core

For those who are wondering what exactly is core strength and why should you worry about it, read on...

One reason is this: all of our movements are powered by the torso — the abs and back work together to support the spine when we sit, stand, bend over, pick things up, exercise and more. The torso is the body's centre of power, so the stronger you are in that area, the easier your life will be.

The core can be compromised or weakened after an abdominal or back injury or surgery, ask anyone with a back pain or after an abdominal surgery — the abdomen or back muscles start becoming lax and depositing fat.

Here we will discuss rehabilitation periods and exercises recommended during the recovery phases of common surgeries of the torso.



Type of Surgery	Rehab Period	Look out for	Exercise recommended
Thoracic - Lung and Coronary Bypass Surgery (Open Heart)	6 weeks	It is important to gently build up your activity levels to strengthen your lung function. No lifting or heavy weights or resistance exercises during rehab.	Deep breathing exercises, coughing exercises. Best exercises are walking and Range-of-Motion exercises in 3-5 minute short sessions.
Upper Abdominal - Laparoscopic	2 weeks	You will experience pain and discomfort around the scars, especially for the first few days. You may also have pain in your shoulder for a couple of days.	Pelvic tilts, trunk curls, leg lifts, sit ups, water exercise, Using exercise ball.
Lower abdominal and pelvic surgeries including Caesarean Section	4-6 weeks	Moving in and out of bed may be sore. Avoid heavy lifting for 6 weeks post op.	Pelvic tilts, trunk curls, leg lifts, sit ups, water exercise, using exercise ball. Kegel's exercises will help to strengthen pelvic floor muscles.
Prostate surgery	6 weeks	Blood may appear in the urine during the first few weeks after transurethral surgery for a short period. Avoid heavy lifting for 6 weeks post op.	Pelvic tilts, trunk curls, leg lifts, sit ups, water exercise, using exercise ball. Kegel's exercises will help to strengthen pelvic floor muscles.
Upper back	10-12 weeks	Pain deep inside (especially when moving) and some discomfort around the wound.	Prone arm and leg raises, cat curls, trunk curls. Start stretching from week 1 followed by static stabilisation exercises, later after 6 weeks add dynamic stabilisation exercises.
Lower back	10-12 weeks	You may experience numbness in the leg, twinges of leg pain, pain around the incision and/or, at times, spasm of the back muscles. This should improve within 1-2 weeks after surgery.	An early exercise programme of stretching, strengthening, and conditioning and return to normal daily activity may help improve the secondary soft tissue component of the pain after lower back surgery.

With the upright posture, the core muscle group is very important for bipeds. Take your pick of an activity you like and do not hesitate to go for it after a surgery or back injury. (Make sure you have your treating doctor's approval).

For further information on Kegels and McKenzie exercises – please use these links.

References - <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/kegel-exercises/wo00119>
<http://www.spine-health.com/wellness/exercise/pain-relief-mckenzie-treatment>

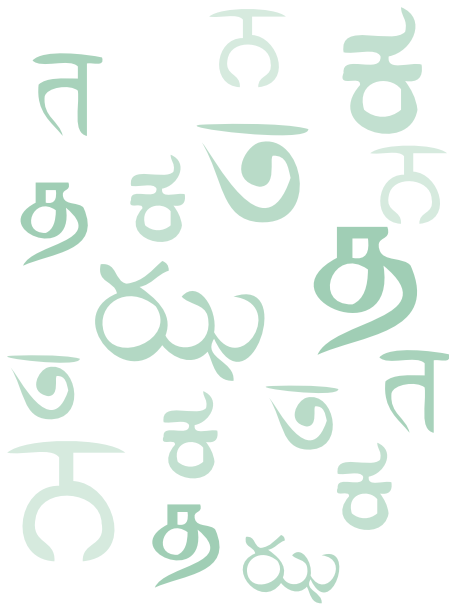


Stress



Culture stress

Sometimes due to a job change or in pursuit of education, you may find yourself living in a totally different culture than what you are comfortable with.



Take the example of someone from Delhi who had to move to Suratkal to pursue engineering. After four years, not only had he come out with flying colours at BE but also learnt Kannada, taken a fancy to lemon rice, and had a part Gujarati and part Tamilian girlfriend.

People who face cultural differences react and adapt to them in different ways. Here are a few tips to help be part of the new milieu:

- ✔ Realise and understand that people are the same wherever you go and will always respond to a smile or a friendly gesture. So look them in the eyes and smile!
- ✔ Remember to use common sense in a new city. Learn key phrases to help you navigate a new language and environment. Things like – how to ask for directions, how to negotiate with rickshaw drivers, how to ask for prices, is it ok to bargain? Check on whether it's normal to travel alone at night (if you are a woman).
- ✔ Make new friends at your workplace and share your culture and experiences with them. Try out the local cuisine – you will always find a few things that you like – and it's also a great ice breaker and conversation starter.
- ✔ Learn to laugh at yourself if you make a mistake using the new language or a faux pas of any kind. People connect better when there is humour involved.
- ✔ Keep in touch with your roots. Go home regularly (even if for weekends). Getting back into that “zone of comfort” will help you face the “zone of discomfort” of the new city.

It takes all kinds of people to make the world complete. As an old adage goes — “When in Rome, do as the Romans do...”

Health



Fever dos and don'ts



‘Fever is a good thing’. Yes you heard that right! Occurrence of fever means that the body's defence mechanisms are working well.

But that does not mean you should never worry about a fever. Fevers are a clue that may tell us that the person has a dangerous infection. The fever itself is not harmful, but the infection that causes it may be.

How does one manage fever at home? Are all fevers serious needing medical attention?

Five important guidelines:

- 1 Know how to take temperature:** Use digital oral or axillary thermometers. Keep it in place for at least one minute before reading.
- 2 Keep your calm:** Do not panic and rush to the hospital for a slight fever, but trust your instinct. If things are not following the usual pattern, seek help.
- 3 Know how to treat fever:** Try to manage it by keeping the environment of the room cool, continuous sponging, fever reducing medicines like paracetamol, and preventing dehydration by drinking plenty of water.
- 4 Know what not to do:**
 - ✔ **Do not** to wrap the person with a fever in blankets or warm clothes. Dress the person in one layer of comfortable clothes, provided the environmental temperature is comfortable.
 - ✔ **Do not** self medicate with antibiotics without consulting a doctor as you may cause more harm than good.
- 5 Know when to seek medical attention:**
 - ✔ Fever of more than 103 degrees F with severe headache, neck stiffness, confusion or agitation
 - ✔ Fever with blood in urine or stool or cough
 - ✔ Fever with a weak immune system and extremes of age.
 - ✔ If there is a suspicion of swine flu — a sudden fever — 100 degrees F or above, sudden cough, headaches, tiredness, chills, runny nose, sneezing, weakness and fatigue. (Suspect it for a worsening condition or in a person with a weakened immunity and or extremes of age).

And remember, fever is a body's natural response to fighting infection and not a disease. Monitor it, manage it, and if it does not respond – seek help.



Diet



Brain foods

Metabolism is a chain of chemical reactions that help the body live and grow.

The brain is a greedy organ. It wants the best food to function. It is a picky eater though – it accounts for 2 percent of our body weight, but uses up roughly 20 percent of our daily calories.

The brain requires a balanced diet of protein, fat, carbohydrates, micronutrients and, mood enhancers.

- ✦ **Fats** - The brain is 60% fat and needs fats rich in Omega 3 fatty acids. They are valuable in treating depression and other psychiatric disorders as well as benefit brain development in children. They are present in **fish, olive oil, milk, meat, eggs, avocado**, etc.
- ✦ **Proteins** - are required for effective function of neurotransmitters. This is present in **eggs, nuts, seeds, legumes**, etc.
- ✦ **Carbohydrates** - The brain demands a constant supply of glucose. Carbs of a low glycemic index will serve the purpose. This can be achieved from **whole grains, corns, carrots, squashes, steamed or boiled potatoes, and other root vegetables**.
- ✦ Micronutrients and antioxidants in appropriate quantities can be consumed through **leafy vegetables like spinach, citrus fruits, berries**, etc. Antioxidants



have an important role to play in preventing brain aging.

- ✦ Mood enhancers like **chocolates, bananas kiwi, pineapple, plantains, plums, and tomatoes** are a treat not just for the taste buds but also for the brain as they contain high levels of serotonin which is a mood stabiliser.

Here is a quick mantra for good brain nutrition:

Toddlers and older children require high levels of protein and higher fat levels than adults because fats help the brain develop more efficiently.

A general rule of thumb to follow to meet a healthy adult's nutritional needs is to fill one quarter of a plate with nuts and grains, one quarter with lean meat or protein, and the remaining half with vegetables and fruits.

The elderly require greater amounts of fruits and vegetables to provide optimum immune function and also neutralise free radicals, thereby preventing memory loss in brain cells (hippocampus).

So there you have it. The phrase **“Eat healthy, think better”** is not just an empty advertising tag line!



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