

HEALTH



It's best practice to replace your batteries and ensure your smoke detector is working properly, and a good time to remember to do it is around the start and end of Daylight Saving Time. GETTY IMAGES/ONURDONGEL

National Safety Month reminds us all to think about safety first



Dr. Betty Cheney
Guest Columnist

Each year, the National Safety Council designates June as National Safety Month.

This year, due to COVID-19, safety in and out of the workplace has been front-of-mind for most of the world.

As we navigate how to live and work safely during this unanticipated year-long pandemic, we should take time to review, both indoors and outdoors, steps to take to reduce unintentional injuries.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States alone, unintentional injuries are the third leading cause of death across ages.

Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for people ages 1- 44, as of the latest data published in 2019.

Check fire, carbon monoxide detectors

Starting indoors, we often think about checking smoke detector batteries twice a year, specifically at daylight savings time.

This is also a great opportunity to check on carbon monoxide detectors, which is especially important for homes with attached garages, where running cars can lead to carbon monoxide entering the home.

In emergencies, gas generators should never be used inside the home or near an open window because of the risk of car-

bon monoxide escaping into the home.

Know your fire plan

A fire extinguisher is an important and helpful tool in the kitchen for any cooking fires.

Be aware of the type of fire extinguisher, as not all types can be used on a grease fire.

Check for the expiration date or servicing date listed on the fire extinguisher. Better to always have the extinguisher in working order, especially before it is needed.

Another fire precaution is to practice a fire drill and escape plan with the family.

For young children, review crawling low to avoid smoke and heading for the nearest door. Agree on a meeting point outdoors for the family to regroup.

Check the function of each window in case they are needed for an escape.

Windows are a safety asset in case of fire.

Conversely, open windows can be a fall hazard if pushing or leaning on the window screen.

Cords, ducts and kitchen issues

Cords on window treatments tangle easily and become a strangulation risk for young children.

Position cribs and beds away from window treatments and always opt for cordless window coverings when possible.

In the laundry room, be sure to clean the dryer vent after each use. If lint builds up over time, it can lead to a fire.

Take a moment to vacuum the duct at the rear of the dryer as well and be sure the vent outside the home is clear from obstruction.

On occasion, wildlife will take up residence in the warm dryer duct, which can also lead to a blockage.

Always be mindful of kitchen appliances plugged into electrical outlets below the countertop.

Dangling cords and wires look like curious toys for adolescent hands.

As a safety precaution, if front facing knobs exist on the range or cooktop, simply remove the knobs when not in use to avoid any accidental turns.

All pots or pan handles should also be turned to the side or rear to avoid young children reaching for them while cooking.

Watch your step ... and your child

Accidental trips and falls can be hazardous at any age.

Be sure rugs or carpets are secured with an underlay or non-slip pad.

When reaching on high shelves or changing light bulbs, be sure to use an appropriate ladder or step stool.

Avoid using a chair or other furniture, which can be unsteady while reaching.

For homes with infants or visiting children, all furniture and televisions should be anchored securely to the wall to avoid tip-over accidents.

Even for low dressers and cabinets, opening drawers can look like perfect stairs for little climbers.

Unfortunately, they can come toppling down on top on little ones if not secured properly.

Secure medication, cleaners, firearms

Medications and cleaning supplies should always be secured in high cabinets or shelves to avoid accidental ingestion by young children.

Colorful labels and liquids can look appealing to young eyes.

Keep the National Poison Center Hotline saved in your phone, 1-800-222-1222 in case of accidental ingestion or exposure.

Any firearms in the home should be stored, unloaded, and locked securely with ammunition stored separately.

Drowning happens fast

For outdoor safety purposes, swimming pools or hot tubs should be surrounded by a fence or enclosure.

Patio and backdoor alarms should also be considered as an additional layer of protection.

While children are in or around water, whether at the pool or the beach, adult supervision is essential.

Floatation devices and swimming lessons are helpful, but an adult should be within arm's reach when young children are in the water.

If multiple children are swimming, designate a "water watcher" to allow adults to take turns carefully observing the pool.

Drowning is often a quiet event which is best prevented by a close eye at every moment.

Stay cool in the Florida heat

During the Florida summer heat, it is important to take steps to remain cool and avoid overheating, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Peak sun exposure occurs between 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., so keep outdoor activities brief during this time. Plan frequent breaks for water and cooling.

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What you need to know about collagen supplements



Nutrition for Today
Susie Bond
Guest columnist

Collagen is rapidly becoming one of the most popular supplements on the market today.

This is due to the many benefits associated with it, such as improvement in skin, hair, nails, joints and bones.

There are claims that it may help build muscle mass, facilitate wound healing, strengthen the immune system, support the heart and improve gut health.

That seems like a lot of hype for just one supplement. But there's a reason

why this may be true.

Collagen is the most abundant protein in the human body. It provides structure to cartilage, tendons, skin, bone and muscle.

Our body produces its own collagen, but around the age of 30 that begins to decrease.

Supplementation can help boost the collagen in our body and improve many age-related symptoms such as joint pain, muscle weakness, thinning hair and aging skin.

Numerous studies have examined these claims. Some look very promising, while others are ahead of the science.

Skin, hair and nails

As we age our skin begins to lose

elasticity, fine lines develop and we start to develop signs of aging.

Studies are promising for the use of oral collagen supplements in improving skin elasticity, hydration and wound healing. Additionally, it has been shown to increase nail and hair strength, resulting in better growth.

Bones and joints

Collagen is integral to the structure of cartilage and bones.

As we age and the collagen in our cartilage decreases, we are at risk of developing osteoarthritis.

Some studies have shown that collagen supplements can significantly reduce joint pain and symptoms of osteoarthritis.

Collagen also has been found to increase bone mineral density in studies comparing collagen to a placebo.

Muscle mass

Studies have shown that collagen can promote the synthesis of muscle proteins in those with age-related loss of muscle.

Greater muscle mass and strength were seen in elderly men who took collagen supplements compared to placebo.

Other claims

Collagen supplements are touted for

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Knowing when to file for Social Security depends on many factors



One Senior Place
Brenda Lyle
Guest columnist

Q. When is the best time for me to file for Social Security?

A. The question about when to take Social Security always sparks a lively discussion, with no “right” answer.

The timing truly depends on factors that are unique to each individual situation.

Social Security calculates your payment on the 35 years you earned the most money. While you can take your social security benefit as early as age 62, your benefit grows the longer you work and wait to take the benefit.

Your “full retirement” age is based on the year of your birth and taking your payment at age 62 will permanently lower your monthly benefit.

Your best first step is to go online to SSA.gov and create your account. There, you can see your lifetime earnings record as well as payment estimators to help you understand your benefit when taken at different ages.

Financial and physical health

There are two main factors to consider when debating the timing of your Social Security benefit.

Remember that the sign-up/eligibility age for Medicare is still 65.

In most instances, you cannot enroll early.

So if you opt for Social Security at age 62, you’ll need to provide your own health insurance for the intervening three years.

Are you OK with that – and the lower benefit?

Consider too, your health and life expectancy.

SSA.gov has a “life expectancy” calcu-

lator based (solely) on your year of birth.

Life expectancy matters. While your benefit grows every month you wait to take it, you also are giving up payments that you could choose to take.

The website provides the “break even” age you need to reach to make up for any lost payments.

Two chances to get it right

If you take your Social Security early and change your mind, take heart: You may withdraw your request within 12 months of applying and pay Social Security back the payments taken.

You may then restart your benefits at a later date for a potentially higher payment. But you can only do this once.

Who can I talk to?

For the internet savvy, start with SSA.gov, which is the official website of the Social Security Administration.

Create a personal account, get an estimate of your benefits and use their life expectancy calculator.

Questions? One Senior Place has financial planners well versed in the various options and Medicare advisors to walk you through the different scenarios.

Easy to reach Social Security advisers from the non-profit Association of Mature American Citizens Foundation are also available to help you by phone at 888-750-2622.

One Senior Place is a marketplace for resources and provider of information, advice, care and on-site services for seniors and their families. Questions for this column are answered by professionals in nursing, social work, care management and in-home care. Send questions to AskOSP@OneSeniorPlace.com, call 321-751-6771 or visit One Senior Place, The Experts in Aging.

Brenda Lyle is a Certified Care Manager with One Senior Place, Greater Orlando.

HEALTH CALENDAR

Upcoming

Free Memory Testing. Merritt Island Medical Research will be offering free memory screenings the second Tuesday of each month at One Senior Place, 8085 Spyglass Hill Road, Viera. The next session will be Tuesday, **June 8**, from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Call 321-305-5015 to schedule an appointment.

Osteoarthritis discussion. Thursday, **June 17**, from noon to 1 p.m. at One Senior Place, 8085 Spyglass Hill Road, Viera. Presented by Aquatic Health & Rehab. Osteoarthritis, knee/hip and all areas of pain. Identifying various types of pain. Causes and Treatment plans discussed. For more information and to RSVP, call 321-253-6324.

Planning for incapacity in order to avoid guardianship proceedings. Presented by the Estate Planning & Elder Law Centers of Brevard on Tuesday, **June 22**, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at One Senior Place, 8085 Spyglass Hill Road, Viera. This seminar will discuss what documents help avoid a guardianship and what the process is if a guardianship is necessary. Limited seating, RSVP to 321-751-6771.

Medicaid Planning Seminar. Elder Law Attorney William A. Johnson, P.A. will present on Thursday, **June 24**, at 10 a.m. at One Senior Place, 8085 Spyglass Hill Road, Viera. Limited seating, must RSVP to 321-751-6771.

Support Groups

Parkinson’s Support Group of Viera. In-person only, Monday, **June 7**, at 10 a.m. Please join us as we come back in person to talk about Parkinson’s disease and share how life has changed since COVID. RSVP to 321-751-6771. Hosted by One Senior Place, 8085 Spyglass Hill Road, Viera.

Alzheimer’s & Dementia Support Group. Wednesday, **June 16**, from 2 to 3 p.m. The group encourages caregivers to maintain their own personal, physical and emotional health as well as optimal care for the person with dementia. Sponsored by Market Street Memory Care, to RSVP call 321-751-6771. Hosted by One Senior Place, 8085 Spyglass Hill Road, Viera.

Ongoing

Zumba Gold. Perfect for active adults looking for a modified Zumba class that recreates the original moves you love at a lower intensity. Come ready to dance every Monday and Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. at Freedom 7 Senior Community Center, inside the Cocoa Beach Country Club, 5000 Tom Warriner Blvd, Cocoa Beach, FL 32931. Everyone is welcome. Visit www.freedom7seniors.org or 321-783-9505 for more information. Drop in, no preregistration required.

Chair Yoga, Breathe, Stretch, Repeat. Gentle moves with a purpose while seated. Feel refreshed, flexible, and ready to take on the day. One-hour class every Tuesday at 11 a.m. at Freedom 7 Senior Community Center located inside the Cocoa Beach Country Club inside the auditorium. \$2 per class, Drop In! More information, visit our website www.freedom7seniors.org or call 321-783-9505.

Questions About Your Hearing? Personal Hearing Solutions, every Monday from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at One Senior Place, 8085 Spyglass Hill Road, Viera. Sandra Wagner will be on hand to share information and answer your

questions about hearing loss and solutions to it for a safe and healthy lifestyle. For more information, stop by or call 321-253-6310.

Overeaters Anonymous (OA) Meetings in Brevard County. Do you worry about the way you eat? Overeaters Anonymous may have the answer for you. For more information on the Space Coast chapter, including more meetings and contact info, visit <https://oaspacecoast.org/>

Cocoa Beach: 11 a.m. on Monday at the Cocoa Beach Public Library, 550 N. Brevard Avenue, Cocoa Beach

Merritt Island: 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday at Hobbs Pharmacy, 133 N. Banana River Drive, Merritt Island – person to person meeting or call into meeting 515-604-9755 Enter 558911#

Indian Harbor Beach: 11 a.m. on Friday at Circle Club, 230 E. Eau Gallie Blvd., Indian Harbor Beach

Indialantic: 9:30 a.m. on Saturday at Eastminster Church, Melvin Hall, 106 N. Riverside Drive, Indialantic, FL

TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) TOPS Chapter FL 0066 meets at 6:15 p.m. Thursdays at the Catherine Schweinsberg Rood Central Library, 308 Forrest Ave, Cocoa, FL 32922. Weigh-in begins at 5:45 p.m. Cost is \$4 monthly chapter dues and \$32 yearly membership dues. More info, call 321-271-9427 or visit <http://www.tops.org>.

TOPS Chapter FL 0164 meets at 9:30 a.m. Thursdays at the rear entrance, Knights of Columbus Hall, 2150 Dairy Road, Melbourne 32904. Weigh-in begins at 8:45 a.m. Cost is \$7 monthly chapter dues and \$32 yearly membership dues. More info, call 321-499-7395 or visit <http://www.tops.org>.

TOPS Chapter FL 0456 meets at 9:30 a.m. Fridays, Building C, Room 1, 625 Barefoot Bay Blvd, Barefoot Bay, FL 32976. Weigh-in begins at 9 a.m. Cost is \$3 monthly chapter dues and \$32 yearly membership dues. More info, call 321-271-9427 or visit <http://www.tops.org>.

TOPS Chapter FL 0473 meets at 6:15 p.m. Thursdays, Roseland Fire Hall, 8025 129th Court, Roseland, FL 32957. Weigh-in begins at 5:45 p.m. Cost is \$5 monthly chapter dues and \$32 yearly membership dues. More info, call 321-271-9427 or visit <http://www.tops.org>.

TOPS Chapter FL 0506 meets at 10 a.m. Thursdays at the right side entrance, First Baptist Church, 341 Emerson Drive NW, Palm Bay, FL 32907. Weigh-in begins at 9:15 a.m. Cost is \$6.00 monthly chapter dues and \$32.00 yearly membership dues. More info, call 321-271-9427 or visit <http://www.tops.org>.

TOPS Chapter FL 0544 meets at 10:30 a.m. Thursdays in the Fellowship Hall, Ascension Lutheran Church, 1053 Pinetree Drive, Indian Harbour Beach, FL 32937. Weigh-in begins at 9:45 a.m. Cost is \$5 monthly chapter dues and \$32 yearly membership dues. More info, call 321-271-9427 or visit <http://www.tops.org>.

TOPS Chapter FL 0876 meets at 10 a.m. Wednesdays, Building 2, Martin Anderson Senior Center, 1025 Florida Avenue South, Rockledge, FL 32955. Weigh-in begins at 9:30 a.m. Cost is \$4 monthly chapter dues and \$32 yearly membership dues. More info, call 321-271-9427 or visit <http://www.tops.org>.

If you have items you’d like placed in this calendar, email Tim Walters at twalters@floridatoday.com.

Alcohol in hand sanitizers is not absorbed through the skin



The People’s Pharmacy
Joe Graedon and Teresa Graedon

Q: I wonder about the safety of using so much hand sanitizer. How much of the alcohol is absorbed through the skin, and what effect does it have on our systems?

A: Thank you for this interesting question. A study published in the journal Alcohol and Alcoholism (June 25, 2020) reports that this is not a problem.

The authors performed a small experiment in which subjects applied generous quantities of alcohol-based sanitizer to their hands. The researchers conclude: “Despite the small number of subjects and measurements, this anecdotal study strongly indicates that contrary to repeated claims, significant cutaneous absorption of ethanol from even frequent use of hand sanitizers or other ethanol-containing liquids does not occur.”

Q: I had COVID in December. I got over the pneumonia but have been left with brain fog. I am also very weak and get tired easily. My right hand shakes. I had none of these problems prior to catching COVID.

Is it dangerous to get the vaccination after you have already had COVID? My doctor says it is safe once three months have gone by, but I am still nervous. Any information you have would be appreciated.

A: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: “Yes, you should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19 ... If you were treated for COVID-19 with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine.”

We have heard from some experts that the vaccine might even help overcome some of the symptoms of post-COVID syndrome (PCS). According to Yale Medicine (April 12, 2021): “As more

people get vaccinated, a surprise discovery has been that the vaccines seem to provide relief for some patients with what’s being called ‘long COVID’ (when symptoms linger for weeks or even months) ... As many as 30 to 40 percent of those who get the vaccine have reported improvements to their symptoms.”

To learn more about PCS and ways to treat this mysterious condition, you may want to listen to our podcast, Show 1254: “Combating the Long-Term Effects of Post-COVID Syndrome.” It is under the podcast tab at www.PeoplesPharmacy.com.

Q: Can you give me at least three good remedies for gas? My marriage is in jeopardy. I’ve tried GAS-X during each meal and two or three tablets between meals, and no effect.

A: First, you might want to keep a “fart chart.” By creating a diary of what you have eaten and how many times you pass gas, you may be able to determine which foods are causing your distress. Then you can try eliminating them to see if that helps.

Next, consider an over-the-counter product such as Beano. It contains the enzyme alpha-galactosidase which helps break down oligosaccharides in foods such as beans and broccoli.

Third, you may wish to consult a gastroenterologist to find out if you could have lactose intolerance or celiac disease. If you are unable to digest milk sugar or gluten, you will have to modify your diet. Pills that contain the enzyme lactase may help with gas-induced lactose intolerance.

To learn more about what causes flatulence and lots of other strategies to get rid of gas you may want to consult our eGuide to Overcoming Digestive Disorders. This electronic resource can be found in the Health eGuides section of www.PeoplesPharmacy.com.

In their column, Joe and Teresa Graedon answer letters from readers. Write to them in care of King Features, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803, or email them via their website: PeoplesPharmacy.com. Their newest book is “Top Screwups Doctors Make and How to Avoid Them.”

Safety

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Coaches, parents and athletes should review signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke before starting summertime practices and games.

More outdoor concerns

When adults are using lawn equipment or power tools it is best for young children to stay inside to avoid flying debris.

As adolescents start to help with outdoor chores and learn to use the equipment, review safety measures and expectations.

Any fertilizer, pesticides, or other lawn treatments should be kept out of the reach of young children.

Summer fun normally includes sparklers, but they can reach high temperatures very quickly.

Consider glow sticks or confetti poppers as alternatives for summer evening celebrations.

Do not forget a properly fitting hel-

met when you or your family are riding bikes, scooters, skateboards, and other wheeled activities.

All this danger, and hurricanes?

June also marks the start of hurricane season.

There are many helpful checklists and resources available to prepare your home and family for a hurricane.

When thinking about infants and young children, have a plan for safe water for formula preparation as well as age-appropriate food. This is a great time to restock the diaper bag with essentials in case of emergency.

Taking a few moments to prepare around the home and outdoors can prevent injury and potentially save a life.

National Safety Month is an opportunity to improve and update existing safety plans for you and your family.

Dr. Betty Cheney Kelly attended medical school at Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine, Dayton, Ohio. She moved to Orlando to complete her pediatric residency at Arnold Palmer pediatric center and joined Pediatrics in Brevard in 2019.