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Quitting tobacco?

Stamp out e-cigarettes, too.

If you've recently quit smoking, we applaud you! But you need to know the bad news about electronic cigarettes, or "vape pens," too. Many smokers have swapped traditional cigarettes for e-cigarettes because they believe they're a less destructive option. The problem is that certain chemical products found in e-cigarettes have also been linked to severe respiratory disease. Unlike traditional cigarettes, e-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that heat liquid from a refillable cartridge, releasing a chemical-filled aerosol. A main component in the liquid is nicotine extracted from tobacco mixed with a base—usually propylene glycol (also found in antifreeze!)—plus flavorings, colorants and other chemicals. The exact ingredients are nearly impossible to determine, since e-cigarettes are unregulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. However, lab testing of popular brands found toxic, cancer-causing chemicals. Definitely not anything you want in your body!

By: Cleveland Clinic Wellness Editors





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U.S. colon cancer rates dropped 30% in the past decade, thanks to an increase in lifesaving screenings, but we can do even better!

While it remains the third most common cancer overall, colon cancer rates are dropping rapidly—by more than 3 percent each year between 2000 and 2010. Experts point to increased awareness of screening tests, including colonoscopies, as a key factor in this trend. In fact, the percentage of Americans ages 50 to 75 who have had at least one colonoscopy jumped from 19% in 2000 to 55% in 2010.

If more Americans were to get screened, the rate could drop even more. Screenings are essential for colon cancer prevention because they detect the polyps, or tissue growths, where colon cancer starts, and allow doctors to remove them before they can do any long-term damage. Colon cancer screenings generally begin at age 50, but because the disease has a genetic component, those with a family history may need to be screened earlier. If colon cancer runs in your family, guidelines recommend a first colonoscopy 10 years prior to the age at which your youngest relative with colon cancer received their diagnosis.

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THANKSGIVING PREP: GET YOUR GRATITUDE ON FOR HAPPIER HOLIDAYS AND BETTER HEALTH



You wouldn't run a 10K without training for it, right? And anyway, the benefits of all that effort come from consistent exercise, not a one-off. The same holds true for gratitude. Start practicing it now and you can reap benefits that go far beyond the Thanksgiving table—including a healthy heart, strong relationships, and happiness.

Make it new —again. Habituation—getting used to things to the point that you hardly notice them—is the enemy of gratitude. Time to wake up and smell the coffee, literally (think about your spouse fixing your morning brew just the way you like it) and otherwise (notice and appreciate once again the view outside your kitchen window over which you swooned when you first moved in).

Strap on your gratitude goggles. Seeing with gratitude means noticing when your mind latches onto the negative (another cold, rainy weekend!) versus intentionally doing a 180 and turning your attitude to the flip side (an opportunity for a cozy dinner with friends).

Put it in words. Keep a daily gratitude journal, and thank the people in your life for things large and small. Zero in on details. Rather than being grateful for “a healthy family,” note the cousin who’s been cancer-free for five years; instead of thanking your spouse for “being so great,” thank him for the foot rub, the amazing blueberry pancakes, or taking out the trash.

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Healthy Recipe

SPICE ROASTED ACORN SQUASH STUFFED WITH SPINACH AND CHICKPEAS

If you think acorn squash is just for Thanksgiving, think again! This winter squash with its characteristic ridges and sweet, yellow-orange flesh deserves your attention all season long. Acorn squash is extremely nutrient dense (small size, big health benefits!): It boosts the immune system, reduces the risk of certain cancers, improves vision, protects skin, strengthens bones, reduces blood pressure, regulates blood sugar and cholesterol, improves digestion, and maintains proper circulation. With the spinach and chickpeas added here, you're looking at an amazingly nutritious recipe that works well as an entrée or side dish.

Yield: 4 Servings

Ingredients:

- 2 acorn squash
- 1 teaspoon plus 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- 1 yellow onion, sliced
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, quartered
- 15-ounce can low sodium chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 bunches fresh spinach, stems removed
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- a pinch of freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Instructions:

Heat the oven to 400°F.

Trim the ends (tops and bottoms) of the squash and then cut the squash in half. Scoop out the seeds. Place the squash halves, flesh sides up, on a sheet pan, and drizzle each side with ½ teaspoon of olive oil. Rub to coat and then sprinkle with chili powder. Flip over the squash and roast 40 minutes, until tender and easily pierced with a paring knife.



Meanwhile, in a large saucepan, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons oil over medium-high heat. Stir in the onion, cover with a tight fitting lid, and cook 6–7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until tender. Remove the lid and cook 3–4 minutes more, stirring often, until the onion is light golden brown. Add the tomatoes and chickpeas, and cook 1 minute, stirring occasionally. Turn off the heat, add the spinach and cover for 2 minutes until spinach begins to wilt. Remove the lid, add salt, pepper, and lemon juice, and toss well.

Flip the cooked squash and fill with the chickpea-spinach mixture, dividing evenly.

Nutrition Info Per Serving:

(4 servings) 303 calories, 9.6 g total fat, 1.4 g saturated fat, 13 g protein, 48 g carbohydrate, 11.6 g dietary fiber, 4.3 g sugar, 0.0 mg cholesterol, 489 mg sodium.

Developed by Sara Quessenberry for Cleveland Clinic Wellness