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## How often should you weigh yourself?

Want to know how often you should weigh yourself? Turn to one of the best experts on your health and wellness: yourself.

Consider this: You're following a healthy diet and getting regular physical activity. You step on the scale and see that your weight is a little bit higher than it was the day before. How do you react?

**1** I keep in mind that this is just a variation in my weight, not a reflection of how well I'm managing my weight. I remind myself that I'm on the right track. I give myself credit for everything I'm doing well and remind myself to stay focused on following a healthy diet and getting regular physical activity.

**2** If I gain even a tenth of a pound, I panic. I vow to starve myself or plan a punishing workout so I can get my weight back under control.

Weighing yourself regularly is critical to reaching and staying at a healthy weight. It allows you to catch weight gains before they get out of hand and make changes that help you return to a healthy weight and avoid more weight gain.

**If your answer is 1,** you probably understand that your weight can vary short term for many reasons. Calories and fluid, physical activity, and medication and hormone changes can all play a role.

**If your answer is 2,** weighing yourself more often may do more harm than good. This can lead to behaviors that will set you up for failure.

 No matter how often you weigh yourself, it's your weight over time that matters most. Weigh yourself daily if it motivates you to stay on track. If weighing yourself daily doesn't help you, weigh yourself weekly instead.



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## EmbodyHealth: Credible information for Carpenters

If you read Consumer Reports, you're probably familiar with the Consumers Union.

American's leading consumer advocate, Consumers Union was founded in 1936 when advertising first flooded the mass media. At the time, consumers lacked a reliable source of information they could depend on to help them distinguish hype from fact and good products from bad ones.

Today, there's a similar need for trustworthy information about healthcare quality. In

response to rising health care costs and alarming safety concerns, patients need to do their homework so the decisions they make about providers, tests and treatments yield the best outcomes.

The volume of information available to consumers has never been greater, thanks to the World Wide Web. In a matter of seconds, a search engine such as Google, Yahoo, or Bing can scan the contents of more than 630 million active websites and create a shortlist of

relevant sites. The downside is that it's never been harder to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources.

The Internet is not regulated, so there is no one checking each website to see if the information is true. Some websites serve up reliable, accurate health information that is backed by solid medical research. Other sites contain health information that is questionable or just plain wrong.

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## EXPERT INSIGHT

# Tips for using online social networks

**By Farris K. Timimi, M.D., Cardiovascular Diseases, Mayo Clinic**

Dr. Timimi is medical director of the Mayo Clinic Center for Social Media, at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.

How people use the Internet has been changing. In addition to simply seeking out information, people use the Internet as a place to connect with others. Many online conversations take place on platforms known as social media. Online forums, blogs and social networks such as Facebook are all types of social media.

Social media tools can help you find the information and support you need – but you may find them overwhelming and not know how to use them.



## ALCOHOLISM RECOVERY: HOW TO PROVIDE SUPPORT

**Get educated.** Learn as much as you can about [alcoholism](#) (SEE PAGE 8) and the ongoing recovery process.

**Be positive.** Your loved one needs your support now more than ever. Instead of criticizing, focus on what your loved one is doing right.

**Rethink activities.** Don't offer your loved one alcohol or drink in your loved one's company. Support your loved one's healthy habits, such as getting regular exercise and

engaging in interests or hobbies that aren't centered around alcohol.

**Don't overload.** Your loved one needs to focus on recovery. It may be best not to ask him or her to take on new demands right now.

**Support spiritual practice.** Research shows that people who engage in some type of regular spiritual practice may find it easier to maintain recovery from alcoholism or other addictions.

If you have a friend or family member who's rebuilding a life without alcohol, you can help. Here's how.

**Seek your own support.** Taking part in a support group can help you cope with your loved one's disease. For example, Al-Anon can provide support and help you connect with others affected by someone else's alcoholism. In many communities, Alateen groups also are available for teenage children of people who have alcoholism.

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Want access to the health experts at Mayo Clinic?

This newsletter provides it. Mayo Clinic's 3,700 physicians, scientists and researchers help develop and review articles in this publication. Our editorial board also reviews each article to ensure that we're offering accurate, action-oriented information.



# How can you increase your social support?

Strong social support is one of the keys to happiness and good health. But sometimes it can be hard to develop and maintain positive social connections. Here are some ways to increase your social support.

**Make an effort to improve relationships with people already in your life. For example, ask a co-worker to take a 10-minute walk with you over your lunch break.**

**Getting involved in your community is a great way to make new friends. Become a regular at your local dog park, or join a church or other group for people who share your interests.**

**Offer your time or talents at a nursing home, soup kitchen or other charitable organization. You can form strong connections when you work with people who have mutual interests.**

**If your attempts are rejected or don't go as planned, try not to take it personally. It takes effort to develop and maintain positive social connections. It won't happen overnight, so stick with it for the long haul!**

**Recognize that friendships involve give-and-take: Sometimes you're the one giving support; sometimes you're receiving it. In addition, friendships take different forms. Intimacy and support may be important in some of your friendships, while other valuable friendships may simply offer companionship.**

## MyStory

### Ara Celi DiCostanzo: ‘I turned to the people I knew’

While pursuing a dream, Ara Celi DiCostanzo learned an important lesson: Friends are an important part of life.

At age 21, Ara Celi left home for the first time to pursue her dream to be a doctor.

Going to medical school was a lifelong calling for Ara Celi. Her father taught animal science, and her brother had a chromosome disorder. Becoming a doctor meant a lot to Ara Celi.

It meant so much, in fact, that Ara Celi’s life became all about her schoolwork.

“I cut myself off from everyone. I needed to prove myself,” Ara Celi says.

There was just one problem with this approach: Ara Celi thrived on being around people and having a rich network of friends.

At the same time, Ara Celi ran too much and didn’t vary her physical activity. She injured herself often, partly because she didn’t vary her activity. Eventually, a painful injury sidelined her from running for two to three months.

On top of everything, Ara Celi was struggling in school. She placed unreasonable expectations on herself and got upset when things didn’t go well.

Ara Celi’s mentor at school saw the challenges she was facing and had a heart-to-heart with her.

“You need to step back, or you’re going to crash and burn,” Ara Celi remembers her mentor saying. She needed to reach out to other people – something Ara Celi had forgotten.

Away from the friends and family she knew, Ara Celi wasn’t sure what to do. But then she realized she had people she could turn to – people she’d met at the gym where she worked out.

Since that day, two things have happened: Ara Celi’s network of friends has grown, and she varies her physical activity. In short, she’s finding balance in her life – with a little help from her friends.

“It’s a lot more about laughing and racing,” Ara Celi says of her indoor cycling workouts with her friends. “I can’t injure myself because I won’t be able to hang out with the same people.”

Learning how to find balance in her life has given Ara Celi new self-confidence, too.

“I feel like I’m starting to learn how to listen to myself. I feel more in tune to what I need,” Ara Celi says. “It’s a little bit of everything coming together, like pieces of a puzzle.”



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 **Have a personal health success story to share?**

Email *EmbodyHealthnewsletter* @mayo.edu or write to Mayo Clinic *EmbodyHealth* newsletter, 200 First St. SW, Rochester, MN 55905. All correspondence becomes the property of Mayo Clinic, which reserves the right to edit material.

WHAT'S THE  
DIFFERENCE?

## In-network vs. out-of-network providers

Do you know if your health plan coverage includes a provider network? If so, do you know the difference between in-network and out-of-network providers?

A network includes facilities, providers and suppliers your health plan contracts with to provide health care services.

Your health plan agrees to pay for covered services from certain providers commonly called **in-network** providers. You may have to pay part of your bill, but it's usually less than what you'd pay to see an out-of-network provider.

Services from what are commonly called **out-of-network** providers are paid at a lower rate or may not be paid at all by your health plan. If you get care from an out-of-network provider, the portion you pay depends on your health plan.

Sometimes you may choose to see an out-of-network provider. Treatment for a serious illness that isn't available through an in-network provider is one example. In an emergency, such as a heart attack, some health plans cover part of your care no matter where you receive it. Or you may choose to keep your provider even if you have to pay more out of pocket.

Because health plans differ widely, it's up to you to know if your provider is in network or out of network and what services are covered by your health plan. Look at your health plan materials, call your health plan's customer service number or visit its website if you aren't sure.

A LEARNING SERIES DEDICATED  
TO HELPING YOU KNOW, LIVE AND  
ENJOY A HEALTHIER LIFE



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## LIFE LESSONS FROM THE BLUE ZONES® SARDINIA, ITALY

People in certain areas of the world tend to live longer, healthier lives and experience very few of the diseases that affect others. In these areas, identified by **Dan Buettner**, author of **The Blue Zones**, people are three times more likely than most Americans to live to be 100 years old – and still enjoy life.

Here's what people in Sardinia, Italy, do to live longer, healthier, happier lives, according to research conducted by Buettner, his colleagues at **National Geographic** and other researchers that specialize in aging.

Eat a lean, plant-based diet. Eat meat mostly on Sundays and special occasions only.

Put family first.



Celebrate elders.

Take walks.

Laugh with friends.

Drink goat's milk.

Drink a glass or two of wine each day.

One note: Although Sardinians drink wine moderately, experts caution not to start drinking simply for the health benefits it may provide if you don't already consume alcohol.

 People in all of the Blue Zones share key habits. They eat a healthy diet, get regular physical activity, have a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives, and enjoy a strong sense of community and social support.

ADAPTED FROM BUETTNER D. *THE BLUE ZONES*. 2ND ED. WASHINGTON, D.C.: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC; © 2012. USED WITH PERMISSION.

## QUICK QUIZ: TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 YOUR HEALTH PLAN AGREES TO PAY FOR **IN-NETWORK** PROVIDERS.
- 2 IF YOU SEE AN OUT-OF-NETWORK PROVIDER, YOU MAY HAVE TO PAY YOUR ENTIRE BILL.  
 True  False
- 3 IT NEVER MAKES SENSE TO SEE AN OUT-OF-NETWORK PROVIDER.  
 True  False
- 4 IF YOU GO TO AN OUT-OF-NETWORK PROVIDER FOR AN **EMERGENCY**, YOU MAY NOT HAVE TO PAY FOR YOUR ENTIRE BILL.



## TAKE THE QUIZ, ENTER TO WIN!

ENTER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN ONE OF MAYO CLINIC'S AWARD-WINNING BOOKS!

Contact information will be used for the purposes of this contest only.

Name:

Phone number:

Email (optional):

**MAIL** Clip out your quiz and mail it to Stephanie Vaughan, Mayo Clinic *EmbodyHealth* newsletter, 200 First St. SW, Rochester, MN 55905.

**OR EMAIL** your answers and contact information to [EmbodyHealthnewsletter@mayo.edu](mailto:EmbodyHealthnewsletter@mayo.edu). Include "Healthy You drawing" in the subject line.

**WINNERS** Contest entries must be received by May 15, 2013. One winner will be chosen to receive a Mayo Clinic book of the winner's choice. Winners will be notified by phone, or if no phone number is given, by email.

# 4 popular workout myths

FIND OUT IF WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT WORKING OUT IS FACT OR FICTION.

1  
MYTH

"No pain, no gain" is a good way to tell if your workout is effective.

**REALITY** Pain is your body's way of saying something's not right. If you feel pain or significant discomfort during or after exercise, you may need to rest or adjust your [workout](#) (SEE PAGE 8). Remember: You can benefit from exercise without becoming extremely sore or injuring yourself.

2  
MYTH

If you work out for less than an hour, it doesn't count.

**REALITY** Any physical activity counts. Getting just 10 minutes of physical activity at a time is good for your health. For the most health benefits, work toward getting at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week, 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity or a combination of the two.

3  
MYTH

Aerobic exercise is the only exercise you need.

**REALITY** Aerobic exercise makes your heart beat faster. That makes it important for your health. Walking fast and riding a bike are two examples. But strong muscles are important, too. Pushups, situps and training with weights are a few ways you can strengthen your muscles. Do exercises that strengthen your legs, hips, back, chest, stomach, shoulders and arms at least two days a week.

4  
MYTH

You're not getting a good workout unless you're sweating.

**REALITY** Sweating isn't always the best way to tell how hard you're working. Try keeping track of your heart rate when you work out, too. Here's another tip: If you can talk during physical activity but can't sing, you're getting moderate exercise. If you're exercising at a vigorous level, you won't be able to say more than a few words without pausing to take a breath.



## Exercise during cancer treatment: How it can help

If you're being treated for cancer, physical activity can help.

Taking regular walks and doing gentle resistance training at home made a difference for people receiving cancer treatment, a recent **Mayo Clinic** study shows. They were able to move more easily, felt less tired and slept better than those who didn't exercise. Even brief periods of physical activity helped.

Other recent studies confirm these findings. Physical activity can help improve:

Body weight

Balance

Overall fitness

Muscle strength

Flexibility

Quality of life

Cancer-related pain, nausea, depression and anxiety

Fatigue, both during and after cancer treatment

The **American Cancer Society** offers these tips for physical activity during cancer treatment.

- If your red blood cell count is very low, hold off on exercise until it improves.
- If your immune system is weak, don't go to public gyms and other public areas.
- If you're getting radiation treatments, avoid swimming pools. Chlorine may irritate the treatment area.

✓ Above all, get your doctor's OK before you start to exercise. If your doctor says it's OK, start slowly. Increase your activity level little by little. Stop and call your doctor if you have any concerning symptoms during exercise. Shortness of breath or an increase in pain are examples.

## LEAD POISONING: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Most people think of old houses and paint when they think of lead poisoning. But other products can be dangerous, too. Traditional home remedies; candies from Mexico; some containers, cookware and tableware; and some toys and even toy jewelry have lead in them. Visit the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** at [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/Recalls/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/Recalls/default.htm). You'll find a list here of products that have been recalled because they have lead in them.

If you're worried about lead exposure in your home, talk to your state or local health department about testing your home for lead. In the meantime, keep children away from any chipping or peeling paint. Regularly wet-mop floors. Wet-wipe windowsills and window wells, which can have high levels of leaded dust.



If you're remodeling your home, do it safely. Get remodeling tips and resources from the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** at [www.epa.gov/lead/parents.html#before](http://www.epa.gov/lead/parents.html#before). For more in-depth remodeling advice from the EPA, visit [www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/rrpamph.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/rrpamph.pdf).

OR SCAN THIS WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE.

## Men'sHealth

# Multivitamins and cancer prevention

A new study sheds light on the role vitamins may play in cancer prevention.



In a recent study in the **Journal of the American Medical Association**, researchers followed nearly 15,000 men older than age 50 for 14 years. Half the men took a daily multivitamin; the other half took a placebo. After 14 years, the men who took a daily multivitamin had reduced their overall cancer risk by 8 percent. While overall cancer risk was lower, the men didn't have a lower risk of prostate, colorectal or other site-specific cancers.

This study is one of the first to show a link between multivitamin use and cancer prevention. It also seems to challenge earlier, larger trials. A 2011 study of more than 180,000 men and women found no link between multivitamins and cancer. A 2009 study of more than 160,000 women found that multivitamins didn't lower the risk of cancer.

 When study findings conflict as they do here, the decision to use or not use a therapy is usually a personal one. In situations like this, work with your doctor to make the best choice for your health.

## Women'sHealth

# How to lose weight and keep it off



### What you eat matters

**Who was studied:**  
481 overweight and obese postmenopausal women

#### What researchers learned:

Eating habits linked to weight loss change over time. At six months into the women's weight-loss effort, eating fewer desserts, dining out less often, drinking fewer sugar-sweetened beverages, eating fewer fried foods and eating more fish were tied to weight loss. At four years into their effort, eating fewer desserts and drinking fewer sugar-sweetened beverages were still linked to weight loss. But women also were eating less meat and cheese and more fruits and vegetables.



### Keep track of what you eat

**Who was studied:**  
123 overweight and obese postmenopausal women

#### What researchers learned:

Similar to previous research findings, this yearlong study showed that women who kept a food journal lost more weight. Women who had regular meals and ate out for lunch less than once a week also lost more weight.



### Pair diet with exercise

**Who was studied:**  
225 overweight and obese middle-aged women

#### What researchers learned:

Two years of study showed that women who reduced their emotional eating, adopted a flexible diet, and felt that they were willing to exercise and could achieve their exercise goals were more likely to lose weight and keep it off.



Use these findings to help you develop your own weight-loss plan.



# integrative insights

## How can I find quality herbs and supplements?

Quality is a serious matter when it comes to herbs and [supplements](#). [SEE PAGE 8](#) Companies that produce them are expected to follow certain manufacturing processes from the **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**. The **Federal Trade Commission** also helps ensure that a product's information is true. But these safeguards can't fully guarantee quality.

**To find quality herbs and supplements, take these steps.**

**Check with organizations that test for quality.** Some companies test to make sure that products have the ingredients listed on their labels. They also test to ensure that products don't have harmful levels of contaminants. You may see an approval seal on a product's packaging. This seal shows that a product has been tested. Examples include:

- ConsumerLab.com – [www.consumerlab.com/seal.asp](http://www.consumerlab.com/seal.asp)
- U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention – [www.usp.org/USPVerified/dietarySupplements](http://www.usp.org/USPVerified/dietarySupplements)

**Do your homework.** Get good information about a product by:

- Talking to your doctor.
- Looking for research. Start with these sources.

The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, <http://nccam.nih.gov>

The Office of Dietary Supplements, <http://ods.od.nih.gov>

PubMed, [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed)

Food and Drug Administration, [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

- Contacting the manufacturer directly and asking about its quality-control practices.

## INGREDIENT SUBSTITUTIONS: Tips and tricks

It's easy to make your favorite recipes a little bit healthier.

INSTEAD OF	TRY
1 cup whipping cream	1 cup reduced-fat or fat-free frozen whipped topping
1 lb. ground beef	1 lb. ground turkey breast meat
2 slices cooked bacon	1 slice Canadian bacon
1 cup nuts	1/2 cup toasted nuts
1 egg	2 egg whites or 1/4 cup egg substitute
1 oz. unsweetened baking chocolate	3 T unsweetened cocoa powder and 1 T vegetable oil
1 cup shortening, butter, margarine or oil in baked goods	1/2 cup applesauce or fruit puree and 1/2 cup oil
1 cup sour cream	1 cup reduced-fat or fat-free sour cream or plain yogurt
1 oz. hard cheese	1 oz. reduced-fat or fat-free cheese

One last trick: Use parchment paper or cooking spray instead of oil or butter to keep baked goods from sticking to the pan.

## Very veggie egg bake

Serves 6 | Ready in 65 minutes

1 cup frozen chopped spinach, thawed

1. Preheat oven to 375° F. Coat a 7-by-11-inch glass baking dish or a 2-quart casserole with cooking spray.

4 large eggs

2. Place the spinach in a strainer and press with the back of a spatula to remove excess liquid. Set aside.

4 large egg whites

3. In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, egg whites and milk. Add dry mustard, rosemary, spice blend and pepper; whisk to combine.

1 cup skim milk

4. Toss spinach, bread, onion and red pepper in a large bowl. Add egg mixture and toss to coat.

1 1/2 tsp. dry mustard

5. Transfer to prepared baking dish and push down to compact. Cover with foil.

1 tsp. dried rosemary or 1 T minced fresh rosemary

6. Bake for 30 minutes or until the eggs have set. Uncover and top with cheese. Continue baking for an additional 15 minutes or until the top is lightly browned. Transfer to a wire rack and cool for 10 minutes before serving.

1/2 tsp. salt-free herb-and-spice blend

**Nutrition analysis per serving:** 180 calories, 5 g total fat (2 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 2 g monounsaturated fat), 130 mg cholesterol, 310 mg sodium, 16 g total carbohydrate (3 g dietary fiber, 5 g sugars), 18 g protein

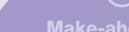
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper

6 slices whole-grain bread, crusts removed and cut into 1-inch cubes

1/4 cup chopped onion

1/2 cup diced red pepper

4 oz. thinly sliced reduced-fat Swiss cheese



### Make-ahead tip:

Prepare casserole through step 5. Refrigerate overnight. Let stand at room temperature while oven preheats and then bake as directed.



Try these simple ingredient substitutions.

**WANT MORE INFORMATION?**  
Visit [www.CarpentersHealth.org](http://www.CarpentersHealth.org)

For more on:	Search on:
Alcoholism	<a href="#">alcoholism</a>
Workouts	<a href="#">workout</a>
Weight-loss ideas	<a href="#">lose weight</a>
Supplements	<a href="#">supplements</a>

## HealthQuestions

### When should I see a doctor for a headache?

Headaches are the most common form of pain people experience.

Get emergency medical care for a headache that:

- Comes on suddenly
- Becomes severe within a few seconds or minutes
- Can be described as the worst headache of your life

Other danger signs need immediate medical attention, too. Get medical attention if your headache:

- Is sudden and severe and occurs with a fever, stiff neck or vomiting
- Occurs with a seizure, personality change, confusion or loss of consciousness
- Begins quickly after strenuous exercise or a minor injury
- Is new and occurs with weakness, numbness or difficulty seeing

A headache that wakes you in the middle of the night or early in the morning doesn't necessarily mean you need emergency medical attention. But it's another reason to talk to your doctor.

For headaches that have become frequent or persistent or that make it hard to do normal activities, make an appointment to see your doctor.

### ? HAVE A STORY IDEA OR HEALTH TOPIC YOU'D LIKE TO READ ABOUT?

Email it to us at [EmbodyHealthnewsletter@mayo.edu](mailto:EmbodyHealthnewsletter@mayo.edu) or write to us at Mayo Clinic EmbodyHealth newsletter, 200 First St. SW, Rochester, MN 55905.

All correspondence becomes the property of Mayo Clinic, which reserves the right to edit material. Readers who send in questions will not be identified. We regret that we can't respond to each question.

## EmbodyHealth: Credible information for Carpenters

**continued from page 1**

dependent on the Carpenters Health and Security Plan, a website such as **EmbodyHealth** ([www.CarpentersHealth.org](http://www.CarpentersHealth.org)) makes it simple to locate reliable health information. All content is researched and written by Mayo Clinic medical professionals.

In terms of credibility, Mayo Clinic ranks among the best. Last year, in fact, a *New York Times* article had this to say about Mayo Clinic's content and integrity on the web.

"No hysteria. No drug peddling. Good medicine. Good ideas," said the *Times* columnist. "This is very, very rare in the medical Web."

EmbodyHealth is not available to the general public. The site was created expressly for the Carpenters Health and Security Plan. Participants, spouses and dependents are strongly encouraged to make it their primary source of health information.

Logging on gives you unlimited access to easy-to-understand articles and advice about...

- Illnesses and symptoms
- Tests and procedures
- Drugs and supplements

EmbodyHealth also offers programs, trackers, calculators, and incentives designed to help you improve your health.

Registration is required to use the site, but it's free, and only takes a minute to complete. Contact Participant Services at 800-552-0635 to get a special Rewards Number needed to create your EmbodyHealth account.

### Other sources of reliable information

**Hospital Compare** ([www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov)) is a website produced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help you make decisions about where you get your health care. This website compares quality of care at over 4,000 hospitals across the country.

**Community Checkup** ([www.wacommunitycheckup.org](http://www.wacommunitycheckup.org)) compares the quality of care at hospitals, clinics, and other health care providers in the Puget Sound region. It's one of many resources offered by the **Puget Sound Health Alliance**, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving health care quality and affordability in King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish and Thurston counties.

**Own Your Health** ([www.wacommunitycheckup.org/ownyourhealth](http://www.wacommunitycheckup.org/ownyourhealth)) is part of a Puget Sound Health Alliance campaign designed to help consumers become active participants in their own health care. The website provides trustworthy information, helpful tips and handy tools to help consumers make informed decisions about their health care.