



There's an unmistakable joy that comes from dancing, whether you're technically trained or lacking in rhythm. It's the experience that can boost your mental and physical health.

Here's what you can gain from moving to the groove:

>>**Balance** Studies show dances including jazz, ballroom and tango can improve balance and motor skills, even among the elderly. This is promising for those with motor-system disorders such as Parkinson's, which is marked by stiff limbs, tremors and impaired coordination. Parkinson's patients who engaged in dance for rhythmic stimulation saw progress in gait and upper extremity function, according to research.

>>**Mind and mood:** Dance can reduce stress and release feel-good chemicals in the body. When compared to 11 other physical activities, only dance was linked to reduced dementia risk, based on a study in *New England Journal of Medicine*. Furthermore, dance may also benefit depression and anxiety.

>>**Heart:** Burn calories and get your heart pumping with an upbeat dance. An interval waltz has shown to potentially improve heart and blood vessel function in those with stable chronic heart failure. Weight control can further help your heart: A person weighing 150 pounds can burn 240 calories per hour dancing, on average.

**Dance offers something for everyone.
Find one you like and have a ball.**

Making the Best Medical Care Choices

As patients, we should be involved in our medical care as much as possible. It can sometimes be a complicated process. In fact, patients and their health care providers may make choices that lead to duplicated and unnecessary care, wasting time and health care resources.

An example: MRI scans for back pain. An American College of Physicians study found that patients who had MRIs in the "first month of seeking treatment were 8 times more likely to have surgery with a 5-fold increase in medical expenses ... but did not recover faster than people who didn't have MRI tests. Even if a test or treatment is shown to benefit some patients, it may not be appropriate for everyone.

The Choosing Wisely campaign supports teaching health care providers and their patients to recognize that health does not always improve with more care. This program has identified tests and procedures that have low value to patients.

Services we should question: annual EKGs, bone density screening, MRI scans, Pap smears for women who have undergone a hysterectomy, and antibiotics for sinusitis. You can learn more at ChoosingWisely.org.

How well do you work with your provider?

T I ask questions about my diagnoses until I understand the problem.

T I ask questions about prescribed tests and treatments until I understand them.

T I follow my treatment plan (e.g., taking medications and recording symptoms)

T I recognize that I'm the one in charge of my health care.



Quality health care is the right care at the right time for the best results.



Go on a Pasta ADVENTURE

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Once upon a time, noodles were made only from wheat flour. Now, there are more choices to suit a variety of nutritional needs. Try these:

>>Grain pasta: Try options made from quinoa, buckwheat, corn and other gluten-free grains. Note: Sometimes noodles are made with a mixture of grains and may contain wheat. If you can't eat wheat, read ingredient lists carefully.

>>Legume noodles: These gluten-free and nutritionally dense noodles ... made from lentils, chickpeas, black beans or a combination ... have 1 more protein than white and whole-grain pasta. They have more fiber than white pasta, but about the same amount of fiber as whole-grain pasta. They have a pleasant bean-like flavor and marry well with any rich sauce.

>>Rice noodles: From vermicelli to fusilli, noodles made from white or brown rice are easy to find. These high-carb noodles have less fiber than wheat noodles, but are easier to digest (rice is lower on the allergen scale vs. wheat). Their mild flavor suits soups and Asian noodle dishes.

>>Vegetables, too! Oh, yes. Put about any long vegetable (think zucchini, sweet potato, carrot and cucumber) through a kitchen tool called a spiralizer. They make a lovely base for salads and hold pasta sauce quite well.

Alcohol and Heart Disease: Pros and Cons

The link between moderate alcohol use and heart protection is complicated. Alcohol is a drug that affects the body in several ways, and each body may react differently to it.

The concept that moderate drinking (no more than 2 drinks a day for men or 1 drink a day for women) helps lower heart disease risk presents 2 arguments: