



HEALTH NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM BETH ISRAEL MEDICAL CENTER

The Internet can be a friend to the busy caregiver. Visit these sites for more helpful hints:

- > [www.NetofCare.org](http://www.NetofCare.org)
- > [www.CaringInfo.org](http://www.CaringInfo.org)
- > [www.Cancer.gov/CancerTopics/Coping/FamilyFriends](http://www.Cancer.gov/CancerTopics/Coping/FamilyFriends)
- > [www.NextStepInCare.org](http://www.NextStepInCare.org)

## Care for the Caregiver

**S**ome caregivers are adult children tending to an aging parent. Some are parents of a child with special needs or chronic illness. Most common, according to **MYRA GLAJCHEN, DSW**, Director of the Institute for Education and Training in Pain and Palliative Care, is a spouse taking care of a spouse.

Because caregiving can be stressful, Dr. Glajchen reminds caregivers, “Take care of yourself. Caregivers today can become patients of tomorrow if they neglect their own health while taking care of someone else.” Easier said than done, right? But you can better take care of yourself if you turn to others for support. Here are some suggestions from Dr. Glajchen:

**FAMILY.** Make caregiving a family responsibility. Perhaps a relative who works flexible hours can accompany the sick person to medical appointments, while another relative visits on weekends. Someone who is organized can help with paperwork and filing; relatives who live far away can make helpful phone calls.

**FRIENDS.** Many friends will offer to help. Don’t turn down those offers. When someone asks to pitch in, have specific tasks at the ready: Do a load of laundry, cook a casserole, take your kids on a Saturday outing, come visit for two hours. Make it clear that you may take the

opportunity during your friend’s visit to keep your own doctor’s appointment or take a walk or even a nap.

**DOCTORS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL.** Appoint one family spokesperson to deal with the doctors. It is extremely helpful if this spokesperson can also go on doctors’ visits since it is overwhelming for a patient to take in all the information. Go with a list of prepared questions and find out the best way to follow up with the physician. Be sure to ask the physician for advice on paid home health aides and whether your relative might be eligible for some covered hours.

**SUPPORT GROUPS.** Meeting regularly with a group of other caregivers can be an invaluable stress reliever and a source of excellent information. Ask your doctor if the hospital provides any groups that would be a good fit for your circumstances. Churches, temples and senior citizen centers also sponsor groups, so spread your net wide.

**YOURSELF.** Your attitude toward caregiving can affect your level of stress. “Caregiving is not all bad. I want to emphasize that caregiving, while challenging, also draws people closer together,” says Dr. Glajchen. “Caregivers have an opportunity to find meaning and personal growth. With the right amount of support, caregiving can be a very fulfilling experience.” ●



## Message from the President

Spring is a wonderful time to pause, take stock and make sure we are doing all we can do to keep our families and ourselves as healthy as possible. In addition to the latest advanced medical and surgical treatments, Beth Israel Medical Center provides ample resources for preventive and well care.

In this issue of *Healthy Neighbors*, we offer practical advice to caregivers so that they can take better care of themselves. Continuum Cancer Centers of New York provides some important recommendations for reducing your risk for cancer. We've also included ways to prevent on-the-job or around-the-home injuries.

I am also delighted to inform you of an exciting partnership Beth Israel and the other Continuum Hospitals of New York have undertaken to provide valuable health information to the New York metropolitan community. The initiative, named Live Well New York, is a high-profile, multimedia project through which our affiliated physicians and practitioners share important health and wellness information on a wide variety of topics with the local community and beyond. This information is promoted through stories in *The New York Daily News* and in health segments on *NBC-New York* (Channel 4).

Whether through initiatives such as Live Well New York or issues of *Healthy Neighbors*, Beth Israel seeks to provide you, your loved ones and neighbors with expert advice to help make informed decisions about improving health and wellness.

Remember, we are here to help!

**Harris M. Nagler, MD, FACS**  
President, Beth Israel Medical Center



# Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinet!

“Once a year, everyone should clean out their medicine cabinets,” advises **Elizabeth Palillo, PharmD**, Clinical Pharmacy Manager, Beth Israel Medical Center. Faced with a mess of half-used prescriptions, old lotions and syrups, where does a spring cleaner begin? Dr. Palillo offers some advice:

**FIRST, THROW OUT EXPIRED PRODUCTS.** “While in general, older medications won’t harm you, they do lose their efficacy, meaning they won’t work as well as you expect,” advises Dr. Palillo.

**DISCARD PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS THAT YOU DON’T NEED ANYMORE.** If you have leftover antibiotics or a prescribed cream for a rash that cleared up, toss them.

**IF THE SEASON HAS PASSED, OUT IT GOES.** “Some people drink straight from the cough syrup bottle; so if the cold season is over, those possibly contaminated bottles should be thrown out,” says Dr. Palillo. Eye drops are other items that are probably contaminated. If yours are more than three months old, get a fresh bottle. Sunscreens are another seasonal item. “Sunscreens degrade after being exposed to heat. Definitely start the summer fresh with a new tube,” adds Dr. Palillo.

**THROW OUT SAFELY.** Dump pills and liquids into a sealable tin can (coffee cans work great) and mix with something non-edible like kitty litter or powder detergent. Duct tape the lid to the can and dispose in the garbage. Be environmentally friendly and don’t flush your meds down the toilet. Exceptions to the no-flush rule: narcotics and painkillers. “We advise you to flush those because of the potential for them to be found in the trash and abused,” says Dr. Palillo.

**RESTOCK ON FIRST AID.** While you’re making a clean sweep and purchasing fresh supplies, make sure you have these on hand: bandages of varying sizes, first aid ointment, a pain reliever/fever reducer, an antihistamine for possible allergic reactions and the number of your local Poison Control Center placed near your medications.

**CONSIDER WHERE THAT CABINET IS LOCATED.** “It’s counterintuitive, but the bathroom medicine cabinet is the worst place to store many medications—too much heat and steam,” explains Dr. Palillo. Choose instead a shelf in a kitchen cabinet or a nightstand or desk drawer. ●



# Workplace Wellness for the Deskbound

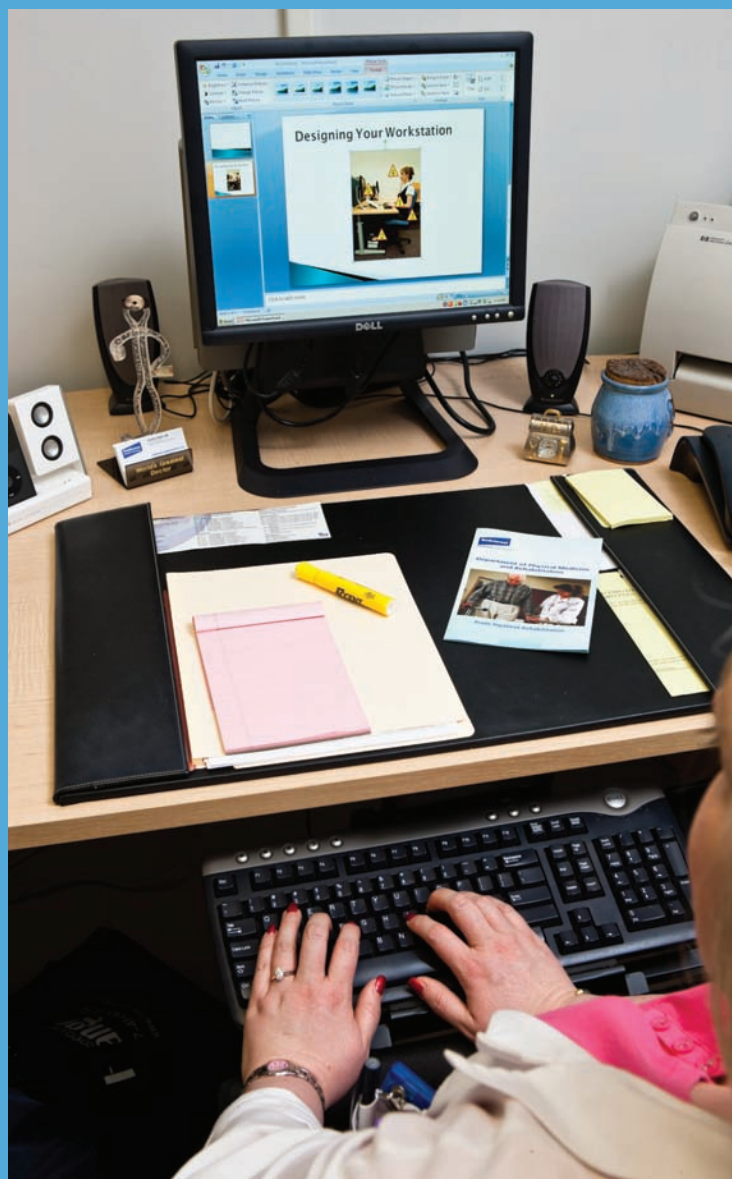
**S**tuck at a desk for most of your day? Review how your workstation can prevent pain and injury in your hands, neck and back.

**CHRISTINE HINKE, MD**, Associate Director of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Medicine at Beth Israel, says, “You want to remain in as neutral a position as possible while working. You don’t want the keyboard too high or too low so that your arms and wrists are overly bent or stretched. You don’t want your feet to be dangling or your neck constantly turned to see your screen.” Here, she offers a few easy fixes (and provides a real-life example in the picture to the right):

- Try an under-desk shelf that lowers the keyboard.
- Use a wrist rest to elevate your wrists.
- Situate your screen directly in front of you, not to the side.
- Get a riser to lift your screen to eye level (try a phonebook!).
- Adjust your chair to find a good height that feels comfortably neutral in relation to your desk and your keyboard.
- Consider a footstool.
- If you are on the phone throughout the day and tend to cradle the phone between your ear and neck, use a hands-free headset or the phone’s speaker. At the very least, put a shoulder rest on the receiver.

Dr. Hinke also advises frequent breaks. “Stop periodically throughout your day. Get up, stretch and take a little walk around the office,” she says. “It’s a strain on your musculoskeletal system, as well as your cardiovascular system, to sit at a desk for hours on end without moving and stretching.”

If your work-related discomfort is not responding to your adjustments, get an evaluation at the **Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation faculty practice, 212.844.1294.**



## Live Well New York

Beth Israel Medical Center, along with other members of Continuum Hospitals of New York, has teamed up with *The New York Daily News* and *NBC-New York* to provide valuable health information to the New York metropolitan community via a high-profile, multimedia platform. Tips, news and guidelines will be offered through:

- *The New York Daily News*: Look for weekly health stories from Continuum’s physicians and practitioners.



- *NBC-New York*: Look for daily health segments on Channel 4 on a wide range of wellness topics.
- *www.LiveWellNY.com*, where visitors can find the most relevant health info, as well as wellness tips and advice, for a healthier lifestyle in New York City. ●

# 5 Foods That May Shield You From Cancer

**T**here's no magic wand you can wave that guarantees you will not get cancer. But the Continuum Cancer Centers of New York does say that these five food groups have been shown to provide some protection. Since these are good for you anyway, there is no harm in adding to your meals a little extra:

- 1. LEGUMES.** Not only do delicious lentils, black beans, peas and soybeans offer you plenty of healthy fiber (which in and of itself has been shown to prevent some cancers like colorectal cancer), but they also deliver saponins, protease inhibitors and phytic acid, which remove toxins and protect cells.
- 2. BERRIES.** These delicious snacks are terrific sources of Vitamin C and anti-cancer agents called phytochemicals. Strawberries and raspberries also contain ellagic acid, an antioxidant that helps the body destroy cancer agents and slows reproduction of cancer cells.
- 3. CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES.** Broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, chard and kale may help regulate a complex system of body enzymes that defends against cancer.
- 4. RED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES.** Tomatoes, pink grapefruit and watermelon—they all have lycopene to thank for their rosy glow. And lycopene protects cells from free radicals.
- 5. WHOLE GRAINS.** Whole grains deliver antioxidants and a natural prevention against blood sugar spikes.



- A few other hints to get the most nutritional advantages of these foods:
- Fill two-thirds of your dinner plate with plant foods.
  - Eat plants in their natural state, not in supplements.
  - Eat them as unprocessed as possible—boiled brown rice is better than brown rice chips.
  - Buy them frozen (unsweetened, unsalted) when the fruit or vegetable is out of season.

Visit the Continuum Cancer Centers' new website, [www.CancerTeam.com/cancer-prevention](http://www.CancerTeam.com/cancer-prevention), for more of the latest thinking on cancer prevention.

**Inside:** Strategies for on-the-job and around-the-home health and wellness.

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