



BETTERSAFE

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY

How to Keep You & Your Family Safer on the Road

With the COVID-19 global pandemic, we all seem to be driving a little less these days, but when we do get into a car it still remains one of the riskiest things we do. According to recent data, more than 36,000 people die in car accidents every year in the U.S. Millions more are injured each year.

Many things can make driving risky. Speeding, not paying full attention to the road, and driving while tired all increase your chances of a crash. Drinking or using drugs can be especially dangerous. Fortunately, there are things you can do to keep yourself and others safe while in the car.

ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS

With cell phones and screens everywhere, distracted driving has become a major problem. Texting can take your eyes off the road for seconds at a time. In just five seconds, you travel the entire length of a football field at 55 miles per hour.

Distraction isn't limited to phones. It's anything that takes attention away from driving the car. Eating, playing with the radio, and adjusting your navigation system all distract from safe driving.

Reaching for objects is also a big problem. You may take your eyes off the road when you reach for your sunglasses or something in the seat next to you.



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

People of any age can give in to distractions while driving. Many adults admit to texting, answering calls, and other dangerous behaviors. That's a problem because teens are modeling their parents' actions as they learn to drive.

BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL FOR YOUNGER DRIVERS

Studies show that teen drivers are at greatest risk for crashes. Crashes are higher among 16- to 19-year-olds than any other age group. That's because some driving skills get better with experience. Teens are also prone to distraction, especially with friends in the car.

To help keep new drivers safe, all states now use a graduated licensing system. The system has three stages. Teens first get their learner's permit, where they are supervised by an adult driver. After passing their driving test, they receive a license that comes with restrictions,

like limits on nighttime driving and passengers. After maintaining a safe driving record for a set period, they can get a standard driver's license.

Parents need to be good role models, because teens are still watching and learning from how parents behave. Additionally, parents can strengthen their child's motivation to drive more safely by having honest conversations about safe driving. It's usually best to keep it to small topics each time, but bring the topics up multiple times. Timing is also important. Both parents and teens need to be calm for conversations to be effective. Parents can undoubtedly help teens establish safe driving habits that they carry into adulthood.

SAFER DRIVING

Whether you're a new driver or have been driving for decades, it's important to think about safe driving.



SAFE DRIVING TIPS

- » Always keep your eyes on the road and your hands on the wheel.
- » Don't multi-task, like talking or texting, eating and drinking, or fiddling with the stereo, entertainment, or navigation system.
- » Wear your safety belt.
- » Drive at the speed limit. It's unsafe to drive too fast or too slowly.
- » Obey all traffic signs.
- » Keep enough distance between you and the car in front of you to avoid a crash.
- » Don't drink and drive.
- » When you take a new medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist about side effects. Some can affect your driving.
- » If you have glasses or contact lenses, make sure you have a current prescription and wear them while driving.
- » Don't wear sunglasses or tinted lenses at night.



DAY IN DAY OUT
WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

When You Can't Communicate

A LOOK AT APHASIA & ITS IMPACT

If you didn't have the ability to talk or communicate, you'd likely be devastated. Indeed, losing the ability to communicate is life altering. But that's what happens in a condition called aphasia. Aphasia occurs when a part of the brain that helps process language is damaged.

COMMON CAUSES

The most common cause of aphasia is stroke. But a head injury, infection, brain tumor, and other brain disorders can also cause the condition. Almost 180,000 people in the U.S. develop aphasia every year.

Different types of aphasia affect language in different ways. For example, people with Wernicke's aphasia can still speak. But they produce long sentences that don't make sense and often aren't aware of their mistakes. People with Broca's aphasia understand most language and know what they want to say, but struggle to produce even a few words.

Other types of aphasia affect reading, writing, and other aspects of expressing and understanding language. The type depends on which area of the brain is damaged.

TREATMENTS

Language is not located in just one place in the brain—it's distributed. That's helpful for recovery because the



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brain can often be trained to use different parts to process language in new ways. You can think of language as an electrical circuit. If you break one part of the circuit, you can create pathways to reconnect it.

Health care professionals called speech-language pathologists can help people with speech, language, and related problems to retrain their brains. Therapy may start very soon after the loss of language.

Some types of therapy for aphasia focus on re-learning one word at a time. Other researchers have been testing a different type of speech therapy called script training. This technique involves repeating sentences or even whole conversations over and over.

Experts are also testing the use of brain stimulation in addition to speech-language therapy. They use magnets or electrodes placed on the head to temporarily alter brain activity.

Even with treatment, some people with aphasia won't be able to gain back their language skills. But they may benefit from learning other communication strategies, such as using gestures or drawing.

Technology can also help. There's so much just on a smartphone that can help facilitate communication. For example, you can take a picture on your phone. That can help people understand the topic that you want to communicate. Moreover, though aphasia affects language, it doesn't impact intelligence. Even though your loved one might have difficulty communicating, they can still be part of the conversation.



HELPING THOSE WITH APHASIA BE HEARD

To help someone with aphasia feel more comfortable communicating:

- » Ask for and value the opinion of the person with aphasia.
- » Minimize distractions, such as a loud radio or TV.
- » Use short, uncomplicated sentences when speaking.
- » Write down key words to clarify meaning as needed.
- » Avoid correcting their speech.
- » Allow them plenty of time to talk.
- » Encourage any kind of communication, including speaking, gesturing, pointing, or drawing.



TAKECHARGE

WELCOA'S SELF-CARE BULLETIN

Stay Connected, Stay Healthy

The COVID-19 crisis has forced nearly every American to stay at home, or at least stay at home much more than usual. Although this has been necessary, it's important to make sure we're still making an effort to be social and connect with friends and family. After all, feeling lonely or being isolated are bad for your health. Loneliness and social isolation have been associated with higher rates of depression, a weakened immune system, heart disease, dementia, and even early death.

ARE YOU AT RISK?

While anyone can feel lonely, certain factors increase your risk. Major life changes or losses can increase feelings of loneliness. Older adults are at greater risk because they're more likely to live alone. Mobility issues can make it harder to leave the house. And sensory issues like vision and hearing loss can contribute to feeling isolated.

Experts suggest that you should make every effort to try to stay active and better connected if you:

- » live alone or are unable to leave your home
- » feel alone or disconnected from others
- » recently experienced a major loss or change
- » are a caregiver
- » lack a sense of purpose



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

IDEAS FOR STAYING CONNECTED

Find an activity that you enjoy or learn something new. You might have fun and meet people who like to do the same thing. Here are some other effective and straightforward strategies:

GET MOVING! Exercise decreases stress, boosts your mood, and increases your energy. Whether it's sweating to a workout video or taking a walk around your neighborhood, exercise can help.

VOLUNTEER. You'll feel better by helping others. Providing social support or helping others in need can give meaning to our lives and help combat feelings of isolation or disconnection.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND NEIGHBORS IN PERSON, ONLINE, OR BY PHONE. Many people are using technology to connect with friends and family virtually. Take time to reach out to others by phone or online. A call or video chat can remind you that you're not alone.

CONSIDER ADOPTING A PET. Animals can be a source of comfort and companionship. They may also lower stress and blood pressure.

Positive relationships with friends and family help us thrive. Without social connections, it's easy to feel lonely or isolated. No matter what your age, it's important for your health to stay socially connected. Loneliness can take a toll. Remember, it's linked to higher rates of depression and heart disease, and can weaken your immune system.





TO YOUR HEALTH

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

A Closer Look at Yoga

AND ITS IMPACT ON HEALTH & WELL-BEING

It seems like more and more people are giving yoga a try. In fact, according to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, one in seven adults in the U.S. has practiced yoga in the past year. Yoga may help bring several health and wellness benefits. Here's a closer look.

WHAT IS YOGA?

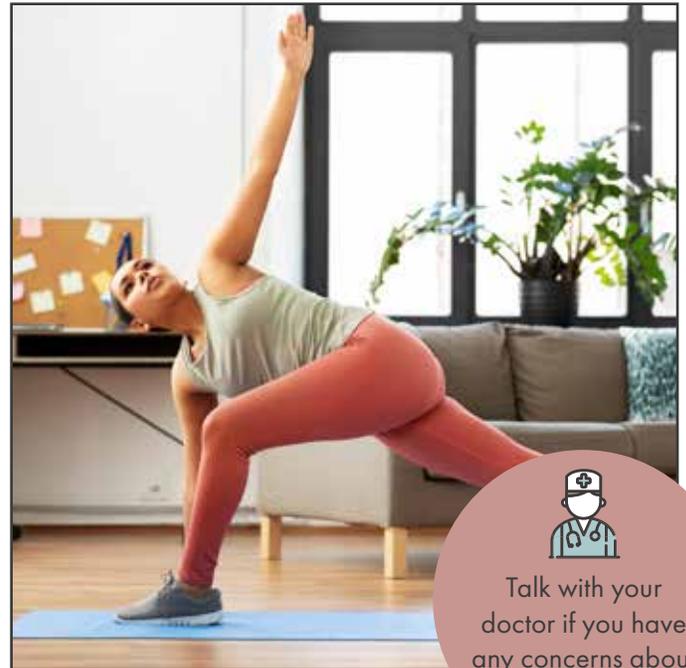
Based in Indian philosophy, yoga involves both the body and mind. It began as a spiritual practice. Modern yoga focuses more on physical poses, breathing techniques, and meditation. Meditation involves exercises that help you clear and calm your thoughts.

There are many types of yoga. Some are slower and focus on holding poses. Others involve flowing movements that connect to your breathing.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH BENEFITS?

Research suggests that yoga may help improve general wellness. In studies, yoga has helped some people manage stress, improve mental health, lose weight, or quit smoking.

There's also evidence that yoga may be helpful for some medical conditions. Yoga may help lessen pain and menopause symptoms. It improved sleep in studies of older adults and people with cancer.



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

Several studies have shown that yoga can help those with chronic low back pain. Some experts now recommend it as a first-line treatment for low back pain, among other non-drug treatments. Experts do caution that more high-quality research is needed to confirm yoga's health benefits, and yoga shouldn't replace treatment from your health care provider.

Research into yoga is ongoing. Studies are now looking at whether yoga is helpful for specific groups of people. For example, whether it can reduce chronic pain for military veterans or improve quality of life for people who have had breast cancer. New studies are also looking into whether yoga may help mental health conditions like anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

What should you know if you're thinking about starting yoga? Experts say to start slowly and carefully in

order to avoid any sort of injury. If you have a medical condition, talk with your health care provider before getting started.

Everyone's body is different. Yoga postures should be modified based on your abilities. Choose an instructor who is experienced and attentive to your needs.

You may also want to seek out a yoga therapist. Yoga therapists have more extensive training than that required of a regular yoga teacher. They're trained to work with different conditions and mostly work one-on-one or in small groups.

GETTING STARTED WITH YOGA

- » Start with an appropriate yoga class. Look for ones called beginner level, "gentle" yoga, or senior classes.
- » Ask about the training and experience of the yoga instructor you're considering.
- » Talk with your health care provider before trying yoga if you're pregnant, older, or have a health condition.
- » Let your yoga instructor know about your individual needs and any medical issues.
- » Go slowly to prevent injury. Avoid extreme positions and forceful breathing. Listen to your body.

