Health Newsletter

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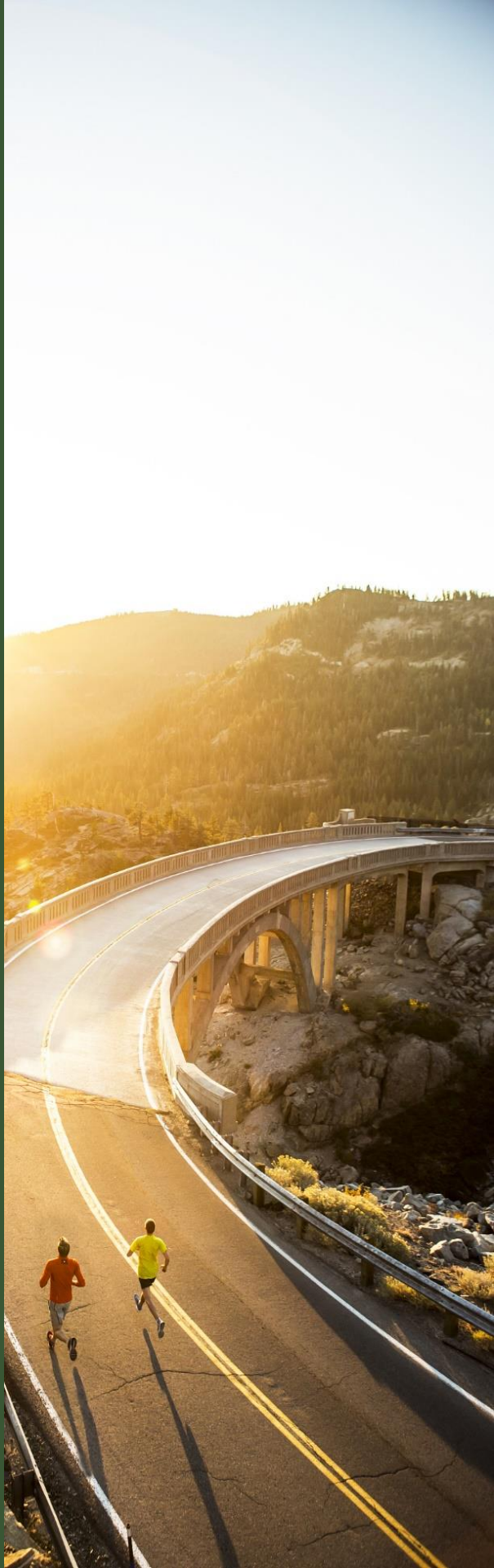
April 2024

Historical Newsletters

Contents



My health, my right

April 7 is World Health Day, the theme for World Health Day 2024 is 'My health, my right'. This year's theme was chosen to champion the right of everyone, everywhere to have access to quality health services, education, and information.

Do you want to live a healthier lifestyle but find yourself feeling like wellness is out of reach? The truth is wellness is accessible to all. You don't need a lot of time or money to achieve a healthy lifestyle; it's simply about making the small daily choices that add up to big long-term change.

Stand Up More Often

Try to stand more throughout the day. Standing is not just good for your physical health, but your mental health as well. Get up and move around, stretch out your muscles, fill up your water bottle, or even take your work call outside for a walk around the block. Standing is a simple and easy way to improve your health.

Take Your Workout Outside

There are tons of benefits to working out, but more and more research suggests it's important to spend time doing outdoor activities as well. Why not combine the two for a peaceful nature walk? Or head to the park and give these fun outdoor workouts a try!

Prepare More Home Cooked Meals

Eating at home is healthier, and not to mention way more delicious. While not all of us can find the time to make home cooked meals every night, try to make a home cooked meal at least once a week. When you cook at home, you have more control over the ingredients you put into your meals, and nothing fuels your body better than a healthy home cooked meal!

Decrease Added Sugars in Your Diet

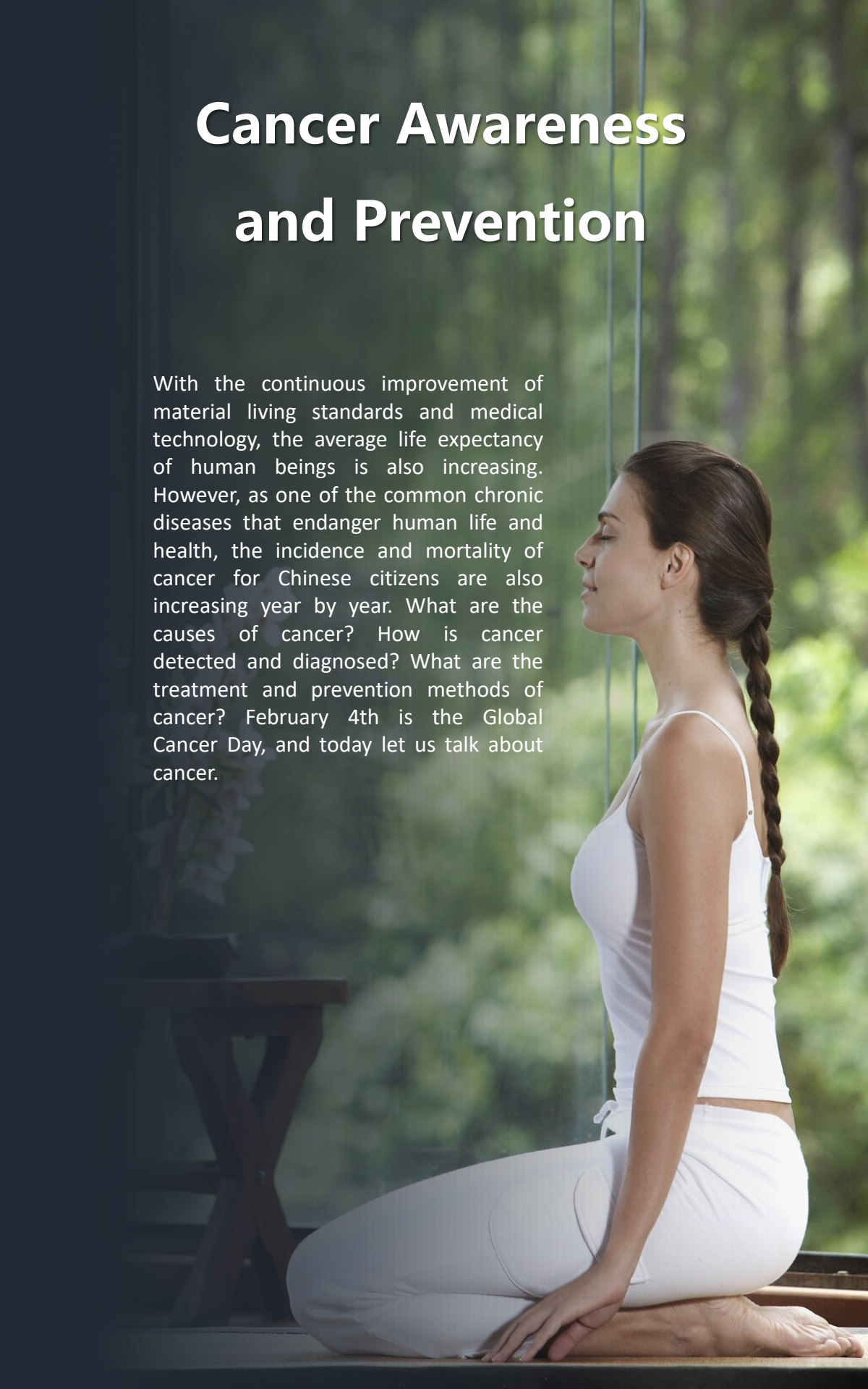
Refined sugars only add empty calories to your daily sugar intake and can increase your risk of diabetes and obesity. Do a fridge clean out! Check the labels of common store-bought goods in your cupboards like tomato sauce, granola bars, or salad dressings and replace these items for smarter low-sugar options.

Be Positive

We all get into negative spirals, sometimes thinking we can't achieve our dreams or be who we want to be. However, negative self-talk won't get you there; in fact, it's likely holding you back. When you change your mindset, you give yourself the power to change your life. Rather than talking yourself down, talk yourself up and see the amazing changes in your everyday life!

Cancer Awareness and Prevention

With the continuous improvement of material living standards and medical technology, the average life expectancy of human beings is also increasing. However, as one of the common chronic diseases that endanger human life and health, the incidence and mortality of cancer for Chinese citizens are also increasing year by year. What are the causes of cancer? How is cancer detected and diagnosed? What are the treatment and prevention methods of cancer? February 4th is the Global Cancer Day, and today let us talk about cancer.



Overview

Cancer is a generic term for a large group of diseases that can affect any part of the body. Other terms used are malignant tumors and neoplasms. One defining feature of cancer is the rapid creation of abnormal cells that grow beyond their usual boundaries, and which can then invade adjoining parts of the body and spread to other organs; the latter process is referred to as metastasis. Widespread metastases are the primary cause of death from cancer.

Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for nearly 10 million deaths in 2020 .

The most common in 2020 (in terms of new cases of cancer) were:

breast (2.26 million cases);
lung (2.21 million cases);
colon and rectum (1.93 million cases);
prostate (1.41 million cases);
skin (non-melanoma) (1.20 million cases); **and stomach** (1.09 million cases).

The most common causes of cancer death in 2020 were:

lung (1.80 million deaths);
colon and rectum (916 000 deaths);
liver (830 000 deaths);
stomach (769 000 deaths); and
breast (685 000 deaths).

What symptoms might be associated with cancer?

Signs and symptoms caused by cancer can vary depending on the organs and location of the cancer, **and the symptoms associated with cancer may include:**

Fatigue, Lumps or thickening areas that can be felt under the skin, Weight gain or loss, Skin changes, such as yellowing, blackening or redness of the skin, ulcers that do not heal, or changes in existing moles, Changes in bowel habits, Persistent cough or difficulty breathing, Difficulty swallowing, Hoarse voice, Indigestion after persistent eating, Persistent, unexplained muscle or joint pain, Persistent, unexplained fever or night sweats, Unexplained bleeding or skin bruising.

What are the risk factors of cancer?

Age: Cancer may take decades to develop, which is why most people diagnosed with cancer are 65 or older. While cancer is more common in elderly people, cancer isn't the adult only disease. Actually cancer can be diagnosed at any age.

Behavior and lifestyles : Certain unhealthy lifestyles can increase the risks of cancer. Smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, excessive exposure to sunlight, obesity, and unsafe sexual behaviors can increase cancer risks. You are advised the improved these lifestyles and behaviors to reduce your risks of cancer.

Family history: Some cancers can be caused by genetic diseases, and if you have a history of cancer in your family, your doctor may conduct the genetic testing to determine if you have inherited mutation genes that increase your risks of developing cancer.

Disease factor: Some chronic conditions, such as ulcerative colitis, can also increase the risks of certain cancers.

Environmental factor: The peripheral environment of human body can also increase the risks of cancer if it contains carcinogenic substances. Long-term exposure to second-hand smoke or specific chemicals such as asbestos and benzene in the workplace can also increase cancer risks.

How to diagnose cancer?

Doctors typically use one or more methods to diagnose cancer, including:

Physical examination: Whether there are lumps in the body parts, which may indicate the cancer. During a physical exam, the doctor may find abnormalities that may indicate the presence of cancer, such as changes in skin color or enlarged organs.

Laboratory tests: Laboratory tests (such as urine and blood tests) may help your doctor identify abnormalities that may be caused by cancer.

Imaging tests: Imaging tests allow your doctor to examine your bones and internal organs with a non-invasive method. Imaging tests used to diagnose cancer may include **computed tomography (CT) scans, bone scans, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), positron emission tomography (PET) scans, ultrasound, and X-rays etc.**

Biopsy: Doctor may collect the sample of tissue cells during biopsy to test in the laboratory. In most cases, biopsy is the only way to definitively diagnose cancer.

What are the treatment methods for cancer?

Surgery: The purpose of surgery is to remove cancerous or abnormal tissue.

Chemotherapy: The usage of chemotherapy drugs is to kill cancer cells.

Radiation therapy: Radiation therapy uses high-power energy beams, such as X-rays and protons to kill cancer cells. Radiation therapy can come from a machine outside the body, or it can be placed inside the body.

Bone marrow transplantation: Bone marrow transplantations are also known as stem cell transplantation. Bone marrow is the substance in bones that makes blood cells. Bone marrow transplantation can be completed to use your own cells or cells from a donor.

Immunotherapy: Also known as biotherapy, it uses your body's immune system to fight cancer.

Hormone therapy: Some types of cancer are triggered by high levels of hormone in the body, such as breast and prostate cancer. Removing these hormones from the body or blocking their biological function will help stop the growth of cancer cells.

Targeted drug therapy: Targeted drug treatment focuses on specific abnormalities within cancer cells that allow them to survive.

How to prevent cancer?

You can reduce your cancer risks by adopting the following lifestyles:

Quit smoking: If you smoke, stop smoking immediately. It's never too late to quit smoking.

Avoid excessive UV exposure: UV exposure from sunlight increases the risks of skin cancer. You can reduce your skin cancer risks from UV exposure by staying under the shade, wearing protective clothing, and applying sunscreen.

Healthy diet: Consume more fruits and vegetables; Choose whole grains and protein foods such as lean meats, eggs and milk. Limit the intake of processed meat.

Regular physical activities: Getting at least 30 minutes of physical activity in most days of one week or more than 150 minutes of aerobic exercise per week can help reduce the risks of certain cancers.

Weight management: Overweight or obesity can also increase the risks of cancer. Try to achieve and maintain your healthy weight by taking the lifestyles of healthy eating and regular exercise.

Limit alcohol consumption: For adults, this means up to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men. Abstaining alcohol consumption will be beneficial for reducing cancer risks.

Cancer screening: Discuss with your doctor to choose proper cancer screening items based on your personal risk factors.

specific cancer screening programs

Immunizations: Certain viruses can increase the risks of cancer and immunization will help protect against these viruses, including hepatitis B virus and human papillomavirus (HPV).

Report Interpretation

Abdominal Ultrasound

Abdominal ultrasound exam is an imaging examination. It uses high-frequency ultrasound wave to display and create images of abdominal organs and large blood vessels. Ultrasound machines emit high-frequency sound waves that bounce off tissue structures such as organs, blood vessels and other soft tissues. The computer receives these signals and uses them to create pictures. Ultrasound is a safe and accurate imaging test. Unlike X-ray imaging, ultrasound does not use radiation (high dose radiation can cause health problems). Ultrasound has no known health side effects.

When should you conduct an abdominal ultrasound exam?

There are many reasonable reasons with which your doctor may recommend an abdominal ultrasound exam for your involved during routine physical examinations and during pregnancy. An abdominal ultrasound may help make the diagnosis if:

- Unexplained abdominal pain, jaundice (yellowing of the skin and sclera), and suspected liver, gallbladder, pancreas, kidney and other organ diseases (such as inflammation, tumors, stones, etc.).
- Hematemesis, black stool, and unexplained weight loss.
- Screening for intraperitoneal abnormalities, such as fluid accumulation.

What diseases can abdominal ultrasound detect?

Ultrasound is an important examination for diseases of digestive system and peritoneum and may also help diagnose the unexplained abdominal pain. Diseases that can be examined or diagnosed by ultrasound include:

- Abdominal aortic aneurysm.
- Kidney stones.
- Kidney tumors.
- Bladder stones.
- Gallstones.
- Liver cirrhosis.
- Kidney disease.
- Pancreatitis.
- Enlarged spleen.
- Abdominal cysts or tumors.
- Fatty liver.
- Certain types of cancer (such as pancreatic cancer).

Description and interpretation of common diseases detected in the abdominal ultrasound examination?

Liver, bile, pancreas and spleen:

Liver cyst: Described as a round or oval echoless area in the liver, with high echo of the cyst wall, clear boundary, and enhanced posterior echo.

Hepatic hemangioma: Described as intrahepatic nodules, clumps with high echo, clear boundary, small sieve shaped weak echo, and no obvious blood flow signal on color Doppler images.

Primary liver cancer: Described as single or multiple nodules or masses with hyperechoic, hypoechoic, or mixed echo, high speed and low resistance blood flow signals on Doppler imaging exam, and cancer embolus in the portal vein. It is commonly seen in patients with cirrhosis.

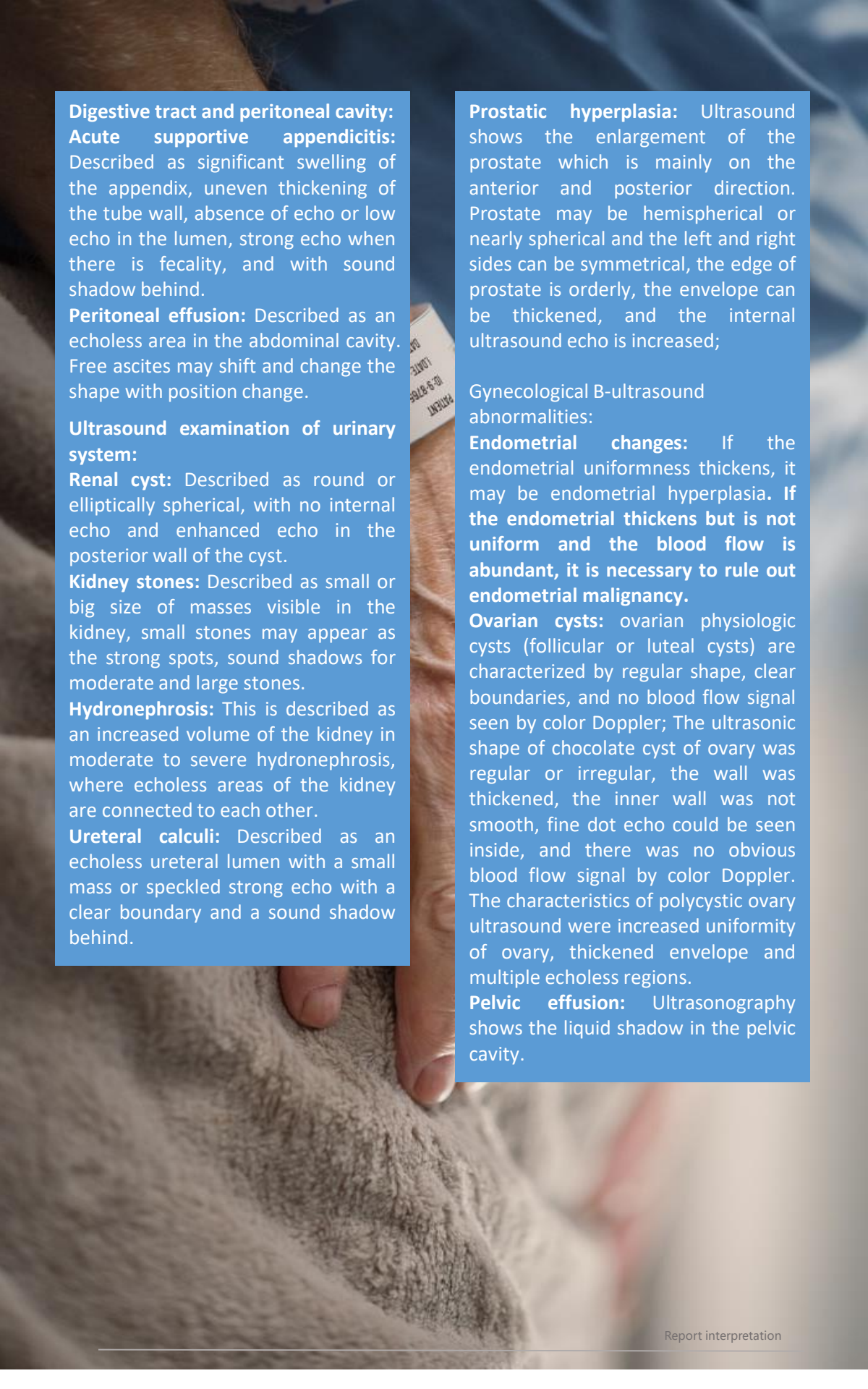
Cirrhosis: Described as a shrunken liver with an uneven or jagged surface.

Gallstone: Described as a stable form of mass in the gallbladder cavity with high echo, followed by sound shadow;

Gallbladder polyp: attached to the wall of the gallbladder, protruding or rising into the lumen, shape of polyps may be papillary, nodular, or spherical, no movement with the change of body position, and no sound shadow behind.

Acute cholecystitis : Described as the gallbladder is enlarged and full, the gallbladder wall thickens and presents as "bilateral shadow" change;

Acute pancreatitis: Described as diffuse enlargement of the pancreas, mainly at the diameter from anterior and posterior direction, with unclear boundaries.



Digestive tract and peritoneal cavity:
Acute supportive appendicitis: Described as significant swelling of the appendix, uneven thickening of the tube wall, absence of echo or low echo in the lumen, strong echo when there is fecality, and with sound shadow behind.
Peritoneal effusion: Described as an echoless area in the abdominal cavity. Free ascites may shift and change the shape with position change.

Ultrasound examination of urinary system:
Renal cyst: Described as round or elliptically spherical, with no internal echo and enhanced echo in the posterior wall of the cyst.
Kidney stones: Described as small or big size of masses visible in the kidney, small stones may appear as the strong spots, sound shadows for moderate and large stones.
Hydronephrosis: This is described as an increased volume of the kidney in moderate to severe hydronephrosis, where echoless areas of the kidney are connected to each other.
Ureteral calculi: Described as an echoless ureteral lumen with a small mass or speckled strong echo with a clear boundary and a sound shadow behind.

Prostatic hyperplasia: Ultrasound shows the enlargement of the prostate which is mainly on the anterior and posterior direction. Prostate may be hemispherical or nearly spherical and the left and right sides can be symmetrical, the edge of prostate is orderly, the envelope can be thickened, and the internal ultrasound echo is increased;

Gynecological B-ultrasound abnormalities:
Endometrial changes: If the endometrial uniformness thickens, it may be endometrial hyperplasia**. If the endometrial thickens but is not uniform and the blood flow is abundant, it is necessary to rule out endometrial malignancy.**
Ovarian cysts: ovarian physiologic cysts (follicular or luteal cysts) are characterized by regular shape, clear boundaries, and no blood flow signal seen by color Doppler; The ultrasonic shape of chocolate cyst of ovary was regular or irregular, the wall was thickened, the inner wall was not smooth, fine dot echo could be seen inside, and there was no obvious blood flow signal by color Doppler. The characteristics of polycystic ovary ultrasound were increased uniformity of ovary, thickened envelope and multiple echoless regions.
Pelvic effusion: Ultrasonography shows the liquid shadow in the pelvic cavity.

Health advice for common diseases diagnosed by abdominal ultrasound?

Fatty liver: It is recommended that patients keep the healthy lifestyle, strengthen the exercise, healthy diet, and weight management. If hyperlipidemia is positive, you can follow the medical advice from doctor and apply the medication for treatment.

Liver cirrhosis: It is suggested to find out the causes of cirrhosis, the common causes including hepatitis virus infection, alcohol and drugs consumption, immunological liver injury and so on. The treatment for the causes are advised. In general, patients with hepatitis can choose antiviral or liver function improvement treatments, such as avoiding liver-damaging drugs, removing or reducing the disease cause, maintaining the enteral nutrition, and protecting liver cells.

Hepatic cyst: Hepatic cyst is a common benign lesion of the liver, mostly caused by the abnormal development of small bile ducts in the liver. Liver cysts grow slowly and may be asymptomatic for a long time or lifetime, and your doctor may recommend the regular follow-up for you. If there is discomfort with hepatic cyst, the surgery may be considered.

Gallstones: There is no complications for most gallstone cases, you can choose to observe and regularly follow your condition if there is no obvious symptoms or discomfort with gallstone. For patients with recurrent acute cholecystitis accompanied with gallstones, surgical treatment may be considered.

Gallbladder polyps: They areoften found during the health checkup when most of them are benign. **For gallbladder polyps less than 5mm, you can recheck the ultrasound exam regularly. Surgery is recommended for gallbladder polyps larger than 10mm.**

Acute pancreatitis: The inflammation should be actively controlled, and the cause should be sought and treated (the common cause of pancreatitis is biliary pancreatitis).

Kidney and urinary stones: There are many factors that cause urinary stones, including environmental factors (hot and dry climate), genetic factors, dietary habits, disease factors (hyperparathyroidism, vitamin B6 deficiency, polycystic kidney, etc.), drug factors (long-term use of corticosteroids, sulfonamides). **Patients should drink more water daily with at least 2,500ml water a day to increase the urine volume and reduce the concentration of salt in the urine.** Meanwhile, you should increase the physical activities is possible, and adjust your diet with the advice from your doctor. If there is accompanied with obvious pain or major discomfort, you should seek medical attention immediately.

Run with the wind: Running Precautions

The half-marathon race has just been completed on Apr 15 in Beijing successfully and there were more than twenty thousand participants to attend this game. There are lots of participants to attend running race every time. Mastering the preparation before the race, injuries and emergency treatment during and after the race is important for every participant, and here we would like to share the precautions to be taken when participating in the running race.

Development of training program before running race.

Physical examination

Before running, you should first undergo a comprehensive physical examination by a qualified medical institution, especially for items such as heart and blood pressure, and it is necessary to have a "heart check-up**". If you have congenital heart disease or a history of heart disease, high blood pressure or abnormalities in blood lipids, blood sugar, liver, kidney indicators, etc.,** you **should follow the doctor's advice.**

In order to do well in the exercise, a training program the week before the race is crucial.

D1: Recovery Running: You may choose to jog on flat ground, keeping a comfortable pace and not overexerting yourself.

D2: Interval Training: You can warm up at a slower pace, then speed up for 1 minute, then recover at a slower pace for 1 minute, repeat this process 5-8 times and finish with a jog.

D3: Long distance running: Choose an appropriate distance and slowly increase the mileage of your run according to your actual situation, keep a moderate speed, do not overexert yourself, and pay attention to maintaining correct posture and breathing.

D4: Rest and stretching: You can perform some easy stretches to relax your muscles and prevent injury. Make sure you are stretching correctly and hold each movement for 15-30 seconds.

D5: Speed training: You can warm up at a slower pace, then quickly accelerate for 200 meters, followed by 200 meters of recovery at a slower pace. Repeat this process 5-8 times, ending with a jog.

D6: Easy running and short sprints: You can start with a period of jogging, then accelerate for 200 meters and recover with jogging. Repeat this process 5 to 8 times and finish with jogging.

D7: Rest and relaxation: You can engage in some easy stretching and relaxation activities such as yoga or meditation to soothe tension and anxiety.

Precautions to be taken in race

Don't set limits for yourself: Don't be intimidated by the number 42km、21km or 10km. Take energy gels and salt pills 15 minutes before the start, take an energy gel every 7 kilometers, and make up for more salt pills if you are sweating a lot. Take a sip of drink or water at each water station.

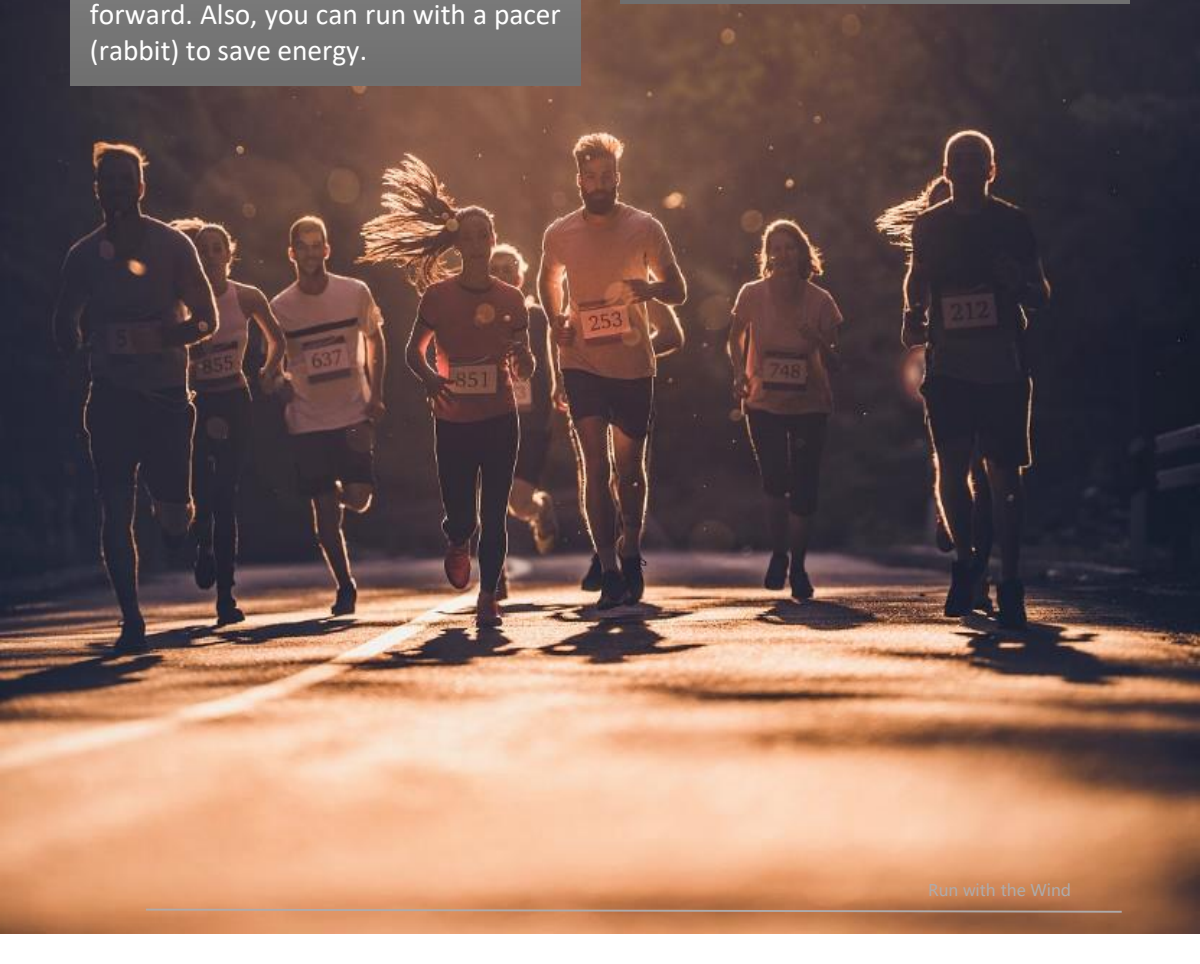
Keep a good rhythm, not too fast or too slow: When you start to run don't run too fast, don't run too far to weave if it's very congested among participants, and choosing to skid will reduce collisions a bit. If you are changing lanes to reach a water station, always make signal ahead of time. **You can listen to music with a high step rate of 180/bpm and keep your feet on the beat to keep the rhythm.** Exuberant music when you feel tired and aching can really take your minds off of it and invigorate you to move forward. Also, you can run with a pacer (rabbit) to save energy.

Emphasis on replenishment :

When you get to the supply station during the race, make sure you don't just drink water, but also drink some electrolyte-containing beverages such as Gatorade, in small sips by times, but don't drink milk.

Stretching and relaxation after running and nutritional supplementation:

Do not stop immediately after running to stretch, you can first walk slowly, to timely replenish carbohydrates, proteins, electrolytes, BCAAs and other various nutrients. After high-intensity exercise, the body's immune system will decline, especially in raining days and cold climate. **Once the running is over, you should change into dry clothes, wear a jacket to avoid catching a cold.**



Emergency treatment of common injuries in running.

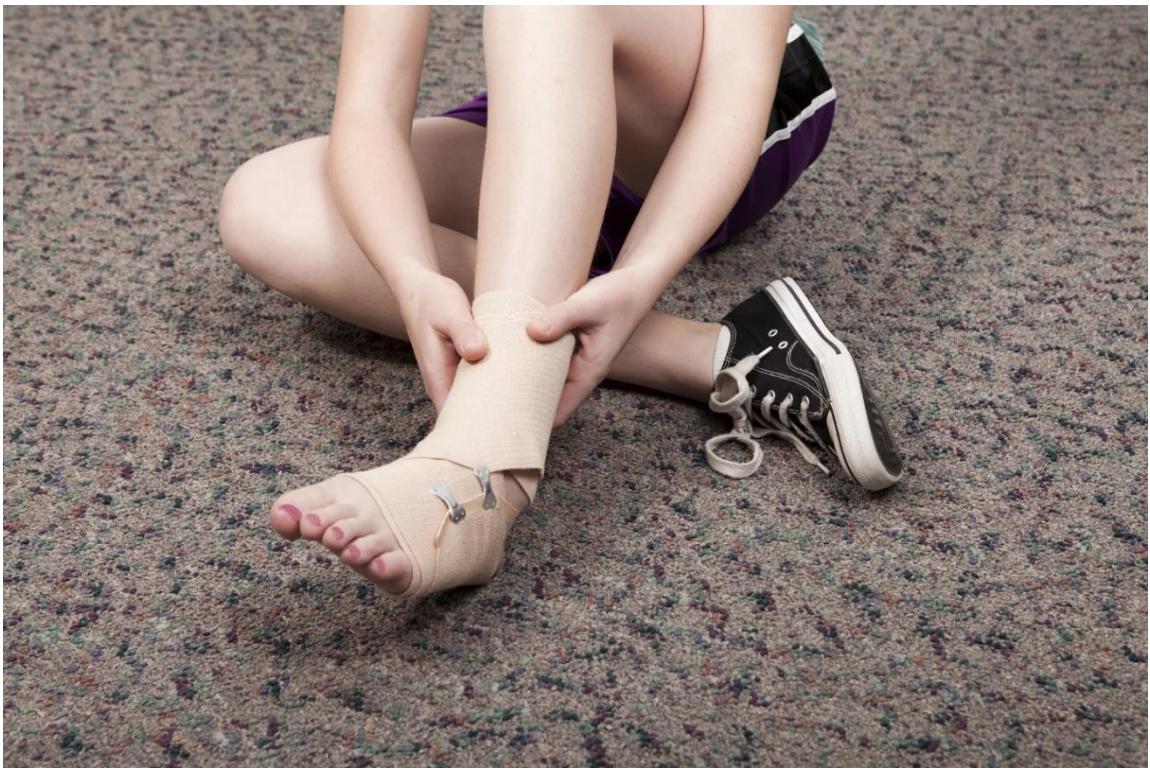
Ankle sprain

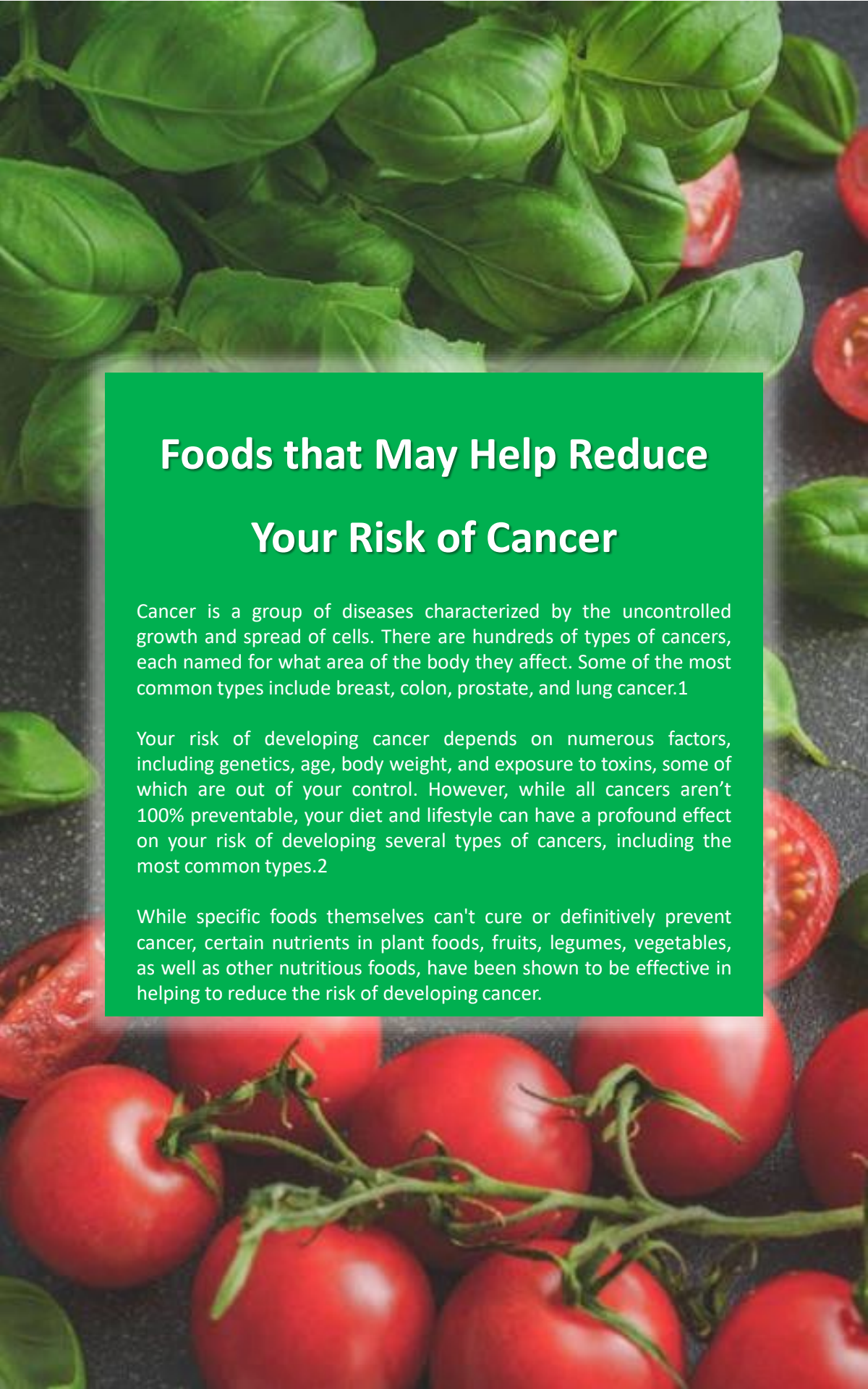
There are a number of accidental injuries that can occur during running race, and one is the ankle sprain. After ankle sprain, there will be swelling and pain in the ankle joint, the surrounding skin is bruised, and probably you can't walk. If this happens, you should stop running immediately, elevate the affected limb, **apply an ice pack on the injured part and fix the ice pack and injured body part with inelastic bandage, and wait for the help of volunteers and medical personnel.**

At this time, you can also gently massage and stretch the cramped muscle, If it is the calf muscle cramp, you can try to stretch the foot towards the shin direction; if it is the anterior thigh muscle cramp, you can bend the knee behind yourself, and pull the foot toward the buttocks with your hand and keep thigh muscle stretching until the cramp disappears.

If you are experiencing a significantly increased heart rate, dizziness, blurred vision or difficulty breathing during the race, you should stop immediately or regulate the running rhythm, and seek the help of the medical emergency volunteers or ambulance.

A final word: The end of the running is always a safe journey home, from where your loving family is waiting for you





Foods that May Help Reduce Your Risk of Cancer

Cancer is a group of diseases characterized by the uncontrolled growth and spread of cells. There are hundreds of types of cancers, each named for what area of the body they affect. Some of the most common types include breast, colon, prostate, and lung cancer.1

Your risk of developing cancer depends on numerous factors, including genetics, age, body weight, and exposure to toxins, some of which are out of your control. However, while all cancers aren't 100% preventable, your diet and lifestyle can have a profound effect on your risk of developing several types of cancers, including the most common types.2

While specific foods themselves can't cure or definitively prevent cancer, certain nutrients in plant foods, fruits, legumes, vegetables, as well as other nutritious foods, have been shown to be effective in helping to reduce the risk of developing cancer.

Berries

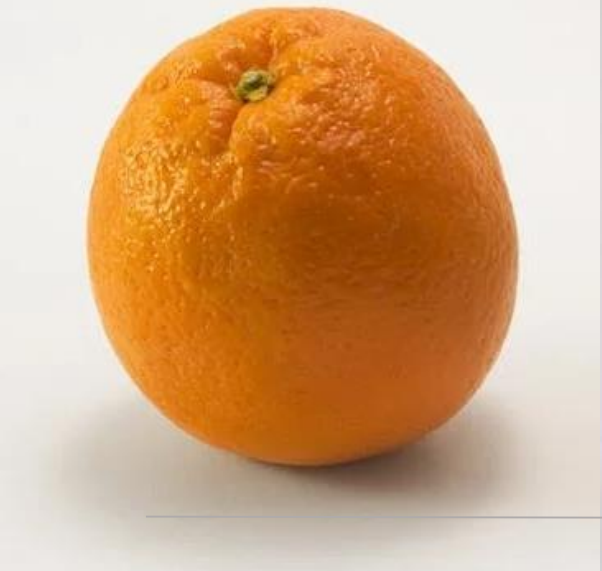
Regularly consuming berries may help reduce your risk of cancer. Berries, such as blueberries, strawberries, and blackberries, are high in antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds like flavonoids and anthocyanin that help protect against cellular damage and inhibit the production of compounds that cause inflammation, which may help lower cancer risk.

Studies show that diets high in fruits, like berries, are associated with a lower risk of several types of cancers, including breast cancer and stomach cancer. What's more, eating berries may help protect against breast cancer-related death in people who already have breast cancer. A 2020 study that included data on nearly 9,000 women with stage I–III breast cancer found that two servings per week of blueberries was associated with a 25% lower risk of breast cancer-specific mortality.

Citrus Fruits

Citrus fruits like oranges, grapefruits, and lemons contain nutrients such as fiber, carotenoids, folate, vitamin C, and flavonoids. **These nutrients can provide antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects in the body, which can lower your cancer risk.**

A 2023 review of 24 studies found that, compared to low intake, a higher intake of citrus fruits reduced the risk of colorectal cancer by 9%.



Apples and Pears

Including apples and pears in your diet may offer protection against some cancers, including colorectal cancer, breast cancer, and lung cancer. These fruits are high in nutrients and plant compounds known to have anticancer properties, such as vitamin C and flavonoid antioxidants.

Multiple studies have found that people who regularly consume apples and pears have a lower risk of several cancers, including breast, lung, and colorectal cancer.

The 2023 review of 24 studies mentioned above found that diets high in apples may lower the risk of colorectal cancer by as much as 25%.

Green Leafy Vegetables

Like fruits, vegetables are high in cancer-fighting nutrients and phytochemicals. A diet high in vegetables, including leafy greens, onions, and cauliflower, may help reduce cancer risk.

Green leafy vegetables, such as arugula, kale, spinach, and Swiss chard are packed with nutrients known to have anticancer effects in the body. Green leafy vegetables are especially rich in carotenoid antioxidants, such as beta-carotene, lutein, and zeaxanthin, which have powerful cellular-protective and anti-inflammatory properties.

Cruciferous Vegetables

Cruciferous vegetables include broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and leafy greens such as kale, arugula, and Swiss chard. These vegetables have been shown to provide impressive protective effects against several health conditions, including cancer. They're concentrated in sulfur-containing phytochemicals called glucosinolates. The body converts glucosinolates into molecules called isothiocyanates, which have strong anticancer properties.

Research strongly suggests that increasing your intake of cruciferous vegetables is an effective way to lower your risk of several cancers, including breast, stomach, lung, and pancreatic cancer.

A 2020 study that included 292 people with stomach cancer and 1,168 healthy people found that, compared with the lower intake, participants with the highest intake of total cruciferous vegetables had a 41% reduced risk of developing stomach cancer.

Allium Vegetables

Allium vegetables, including garlic, onions, and leeks contain plant compounds that may help protect against certain cancers. For example, garlic and onions are high in anticancer substances such as flavonoid antioxidants, organosulfur compounds, and vitamin C, which may inhibit cancer cell proliferation and protect cells from oxidative damage.

Study findings suggest that diets high in allium vegetables are associated with a lower risk of breast cancer, colorectal cancer, stomach cancer, and several other common cancers.

A 2022 meta-analysis of 17 studies found that women with the highest intake of allium vegetables had a 30% lower risk of breast cancer compared to women with the lowest intake.

Seafood

Seafood, especially fatty fish, like salmon, trout, mackerel, and sardines, is a rich source of the omega-3 fats eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). EPA and DHA have potent anti-inflammatory effects and also help prevent cellular damage. In addition to EPA and DHA, fatty fish provide antioxidant nutrients such as vitamin E and selenium, as well as carotenoid antioxidants, which may offer cancer-protective effects.

Regularly consuming fish may lower your risk of several common health conditions, including heart disease and certain cancers. Seafood-rich diets have been shown to offer protection against some types of cancers, including colorectal cancer.

In a 2022 review of 25 studies, it was found that people who consumed the most fish had a significantly reduced risk of colorectal cancer. Study results showed that each 50-gram (g) daily increment of fish consumption was associated with a significant 4% reduction in colorectal cancer risk.

Consumption of oily fish, like sardines and trout, has also been associated with a reduced risk of breast cancer and liver cancer.

Legumes

Legumes, including beans and lentils, are high in nutrients that have cancer-protective properties, such as fiber and minerals. Legumes also contain bioactive substances such as phenolic compounds, which can help reduce inflammation and protect against cellular damage, which adds to their cancer-protective effects.

Because they're so high in fiber, adding beans and lentils to your diet may have a significant effect on your risk of developing colorectal cancer, which is associated with low-fiber diets. A 2022 review that included 29 studies on legumes found that each 100-gram (g) per day increment of legume consumption was associated with a 21% lower risk of colorectal cancer.

Fiber-rich foods help protect against colorectal cancer by diluting fecal carcinogens or cancer-causing compounds, increasing stool bulk, protecting against constipation, and increasing the production of short-chain fatty acids, which are compounds that have cancer-protective effects in the digestive system.

Regularly eating legumes may also help lower your risk of other cancers, including prostate cancer and breast cancer.

Emotional Awareness: The First Step to Happiness

There is a line in the movie The Continent that resonates with many people: I've listened to a lot of big talks about life but I still can't live a good life. Nowadays we have quick and easy access to all sorts of information, yet we don't quite understand what happiness is. Perhaps the knowledge and information has little to do with happiness.

Some may disagree and argue that emotions are useless and talking about emotions is a sign of weakness. They desire successes and resources and they believe that's what can make them stronger.

When we try to deny or separate from emotions, we are actually reinforcing emotions. Instead, learning to recognize and accept emotions will open the door to happiness.

Many people choose to run away from emotions. Perhaps they once have felt stuck in emotions and felt hopeless and helpless. This is a very challenging and difficult state of mind. In fact, there are many causes one may feel stuck in emotions. When we have a better understanding of emotions and their causes, we might be able to feel them and learn to be with them.

The accumulation of negative emotions

When we try to suppress or get rid of emotions, we are doing the opposite. Emotions won't go away like that but will stay within the body and mind and build up over time. The longer they stay in, the harder we feel to get out of that state of mind.

The lack of emotional management

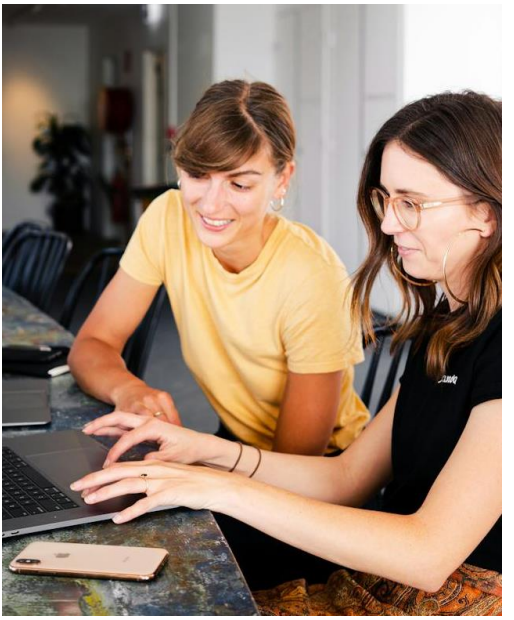
We learn to acquire emotional management as we grow and through our significant relationships. If our caregivers lack emotional management skills, this will also hinder us from developing an awareness of emotions and effective and positive strategies to regulate our own emotions, which will become a challenge later in life.

Over-thinking

Overthinking or over-analyzing will keep us in the state of emotions. This is also preventing us from moving on.

Lack supporting networks

Humans are social beings. We can express our emotions and let them out through social interaction with others and feel supported and heard. When we don't have a strong network of support, it is a lot harder for us to deal with emotions on our own.



Develop awareness of emotions

Through body: emotions can cause symptoms and reactions in the physical body, for example, fast heart beat rate, tensed muscle, shortness of breath etc. Noticing these changes in our body will help us notice our emotions.

Vocabulary: learn and use the terms to describe and express our emotions, such as feeling frustrated, anxious, angry, or happy, excited, relaxed, at ease etc. These vocabs will help us understand and be aware of what emotion we are going through in the moment.

Keep a diary of emotions: write down your emotions and events. This will help us understand our triggers and patterns.

Alone time: spend some time with yourself and reflect, and ask yourself: what is my emotion in this minute and what am I feeling? This self-reflection will help grow our ability and sensitivity to be aware of our emotions.

Feedback from others: people around us may see our emotions and behaviours the way that we are unable to see. Their feedback may help us develop a bigger picture of our emotions.

Practice expressing emotions and letting them flow

Use the right word: use the words as accurate as possible to express your emotions. For example, I'm feeling frustrated, I'm angry, I'm anxious etc. This will help others understand what you are going through and respond to you appropriately.

Describe the event: when express your emotions, try to describe the event and provide the context so others will better support you.

Use 'I' sentences: start your sentence with 'I' rather than 'you'. For example, use I feel hurt, instead of you always hurt me. The former will convey how you feel more clearly and effectively.

Express the intensity: apart from expressing your emotions, you may express the intensity too. For example, I'm a little worried, or I'm very frustrated. This will help others understand your emotional level.

Listen to others' feedback: after expressing your emotions, you may want to listen to what others have got to say. Having a two-way communication will go a long way and maintain a positive relationship with others and resolve potential conflicts or underlying issues.

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