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BottomLine Health

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>> BRINGING YOU THE WORLD'S TOP WELLNESS EXPERTS

Don't engage in exercise that involves your hands when the joints are inflamed. *Also helpful...*

- **Lift items with both hands** even if you're strong enough to use one.
- **Avoid carrying items with your fingers.** *Example:* Loop handles of shopping bags over your forearm instead of carrying them with your fingers.

• **Opt for "joint-friendly" tools—**

a brush for washing dishes (it's easier on hands than a dishcloth)...large nail clippers (easier to grip than small ones)...and spring-loaded scissors.

- **Rest your hands** periodically when typing, working in the yard, etc. Also, avoid repetitive motions and switch tasks often.

Anjum Lone, OTR/L, CHT, PM&R manager, occupational therapy, Phelps Memorial Hospital Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York.

Healthier burgers ✨

Are turkey burgers really healthier than beef or veggie burgers?

Turkey burgers can be leaner and healthier than beef, but only if they're made from lean ground turkey breast. Otherwise, dark turkey meat and skin are almost certain to be ground in with the white meat, raising the fat content.

Because lean turkey burgers can be dry, there's a tendency to top them with mayo, dressings or ketchup—which up their fat or sugar content. Instead, pile on onions, tomatoes, mushrooms and lettuce. Or add a dollop of guacamole.

In general, veggie burgers are lower in fat and have fiber and vitamins that meat burgers don't have, yet they can be high in sodium and lower in protein. *Best:* Make your own using black beans, onions and spices. There are easy recipes online.

Lisa R. Young, PhD, RD, adjunct professor of nutrition at New York University, New York City, and author of *The Portion Teller Plan*. PortionTeller.com

At risk for Bell's palsy?

My sister has Bell's palsy. As a sibling, am I at increased risk?

Clusters of Bell's palsy appear in families, but we can't say that siblings definitely have a higher risk.

Bell's palsy is sudden, usually temporary paralysis or weakness stemming from inflamed or compressed facial nerves. Viral infections such as *viral meningitis* or *herpes simplex* (the cold sore virus) are likely causes. The nerve damage generally affects half the face, causing the eyelid and mouth on that side to droop...drooling...pain around the jaw...and an inability to blink, smile or frown.

People diagnosed with Bell's palsy are typically treated with high-dose steroids and antiviral medications, and approximately 85% recover fully after several weeks to six months. If not, a facial paralysis expert may suggest *botulinum toxin* (Botox) injections to relax facial

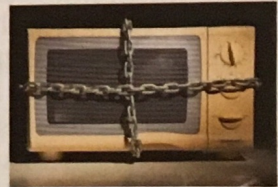
muscles or surgery to improve facial symmetry.

Babak Azizzadeh, MD, FACS, director, The Facial Paralysis Institute, Beverly Hills, California. FacialParalysisInstitute.com

Microwave safety

I have an old microwave oven. It works, but is it as safe as a new one?

Make sure the door isn't warped and the hinges are not bent...the mesh window screen is not damaged...and the seal around the door is not loose. If you are able to turn on your oven while the door is open, the FDA recommends that you immediately stop using it. Any of these issues could signal that the oven is leaking radiation in excess of safe limits. It's safer to replace your oven than to fix it.



HELPFUL: Limit exposure to *all* forms of radiation by putting distance between you and products that emit radiation. Opt for wired products, such as corded headphones, over wireless. Use the speaker mode on your cell phone...don't carry your cell phone in your pocket unless it's on airplane mode...and don't stand next to your microwave while it's on—even new ovens emit some radiation.

Devra Davis, PhD, president of the Environmental Health Trust, Teton Village, Wyoming.

Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering, "It will be happier."

—Alfred, Lord Tennyson, American poet (1809–1892)