

Health

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pal around

If you're happy and you know it, thank your buddies. Joyfulness is contagious, according to a recent dual-university study. So whenever you feel a little down, pop over to a cheerful co-worker's cubicle or a good friend's house for a quick pick-me up.

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Handy News

Typing is painful for the 8 million Americans with carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS). The number of sufferers has doubled in the last 20 years, according to a study from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Researchers say obesity and diabetes may be to blame, since each raises the risk for CTS and both are on the rise. The problem occurs when swelling in the wrist puts pressure on a major nerve, causing pain, tingling and weakness in the hand. Women are twice as likely as men to get CTS, possibly because their wrists are smaller, so even minor swelling can compress the nerve. Call your doctor at the first sign of symptoms. Early intervention with a brace, a corticosteroid injection or physical therapy may provide relief. In severe cases surgery may be necessary.

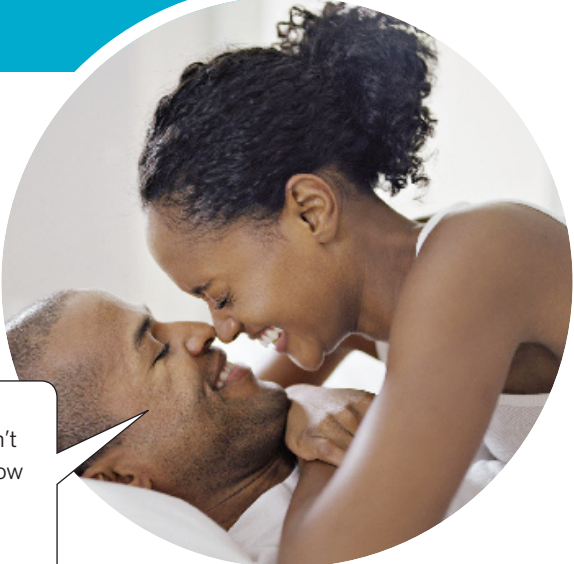
typing tip
 Keep your wrists elevated. Buy a gel or foam wrist rest (from \$15, staples.com).



DIET DO Two spoonfuls of flaxseed a day may keep the doctor away. The omega-3-rich superfood known to fight heart disease also helps prevent colon cancer. Chemicals in ground flaxseed seem to reduce the inflammation that causes intestinal tumors. Find the nutty-tasting product in the baking aisle of your supermarket. Sprinkle it on cereal or yogurt in the morning, and mix it with mustard or low-fat mayo on your lunchtime sandwich. *Source: Nutrition and Cancer journal*

LISTEN UP

Lending an ear is the key to building emotional intimacy with your husband, says Michael P. Nichols, Ph.D., a psychology professor at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, and author of *The Lost Art of Listening* (Guilford).



Ask yourself this...
 When your husband says, "I can't decide what to wear tonight," how would you reply?

- a) Wear your gray suit.
- b) Don't worry, nobody is going to notice anyway.
- c) What were you thinking of wearing?
- d) I can't decide what to wear, either.

How you should respond: Go with C to open up the conversation. Your attention shows that you care about what he's thinking and invites him to express himself more fully.

Q There are so many kinds of mouthwash. Which one is best?

A For those who want to freshen their breath, any kind will do. "But if you're at risk for cavities (calling all sugar addicts, snackers and non-flossers) choose one with fluoride, such as Act, which helps prevent tooth decay," says Jerry Gordon, D.M.D., a dentist in Bensalem, Pennsylvania. "And people with gum disease should try a mouthwash like Listerine that contains thymol, eucalyptol, methyl salicylate and menthol. These ingredients have been proven to reduce gingivitis." Gargle once a day for 30 seconds after both brushing and flossing your teeth.

Photos: Lisa Kyle Young/Getty Images (flax); Simon Watson/Jupiter Images (couple). Illustration: Gary Neill.