An ounce of prevention
Your health is what counts above all

Whether with baby steps, sturdy strides or fearless leaps, make your way to health and wellness.

At Standard Life, we want to help you find your way and we believe every action, no matter how small, can make a difference.

This brochure is just an example of the information and tools available to you in our Health & Wellness Centre.

Discover more

standardlife.ca/wellness
An ounce of prevention

The best way to stay healthy is to avoid getting sick or injured in the first place.

Learning about the risks beforehand is key to preventing illness or injury. This holds true for everything from work-related injuries to allergic reactions, from catching colds or the flu to making an existing illness worse.
Having a more ergonomic workspace can improve your quality of life.
Ergonomics at work

The goal of ergonomics is to adapt the workspace to the individual, whether it’s in an office, a factory or a hospital. Ergonomics sets out workspace layout rules and calls for tools and software that allow workers to perform their tasks safely and efficiently.

Ergonomics as a prevention tool

An ergonomic analysis of your workspace can help prevent eye problems and musculoskeletal injuries, particularly back and neck pain, headaches and tendinitis. These injuries may result from repetitive movements, inadequate work techniques, or working in an awkward position, which strains joints or muscles.

Other physical problems may be caused by the workplace environment, such as bad lighting, inappropriate equipment, poor air quality or extreme temperatures.

What measures to adopt?

Avoid getting injured by adopting simple preventive measures. Make sure your workspace and equipment are adjusted to suit you physically. Also, be sure to stretch and change positions at work several times a day to avoid muscle tension.

When technology hurts

The excessive use of smartphones and laptops can also be the source of chronic pain. Here are a few tips for choosing the right device and using it appropriately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laptop</th>
<th>Smartphone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use an external keyboard with your laptop.</td>
<td>Note that smartphones can weigh between 100 and 160 g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise the laptop so that the screen is at the same height as your eyes.</td>
<td>Select a model with a screen that displays at least 65,000 colours and has a resolution of 240 x 320 pixels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Take a break after every hour you work in the same position.
Preventing allergic reactions

An allergy is an abnormal and exaggerated response of the immune system to an allergen (substance from outside the body). Allergens include: air-borne allergens (pollen, mites, dust, dander, dead skin, pet saliva, mould, etc.), food allergens (peanuts, milk, eggs, wheat, fish, shellfish, etc.) and other allergens (medication, latex, bee or wasp stings, etc.).

Why are allergies growing more common?
Some experts say the sanitized environment we live in increases the risk of developing allergies. It seems that being exposed to viruses and bacteria at a very early age strengthens the immune system. This is important, since our ability to resist allergens depends on having an immune system capable of fighting infections.

Other factors that play a role in the development of allergies include smoking and air pollution.

What can I do if I have allergies?
The best way to avoid having an allergic reaction is to avoid exposure to any allergens that would trigger it. Tell the people in your life (family, friends, co-workers, etc.) about your allergies and what they must do to help you prevent coming into contact with these allergens. Allergies can come and go, or stay with you for life. If it is impossible to avoid an allergen or if your symptoms are too severe, there is medication you can take to reduce your allergic reactions. Desensitization treatment is available for certain types of allergies. Ask your physician which is the best course of action for you to take.

How do I know if I have allergies?
A physician can do a skin test to learn what you are allergic to. This test consists of placing a drop containing an allergen on your arm and watching for signs of redness or swelling. A skin test can check your sensitivity to many allergens at the same time, but it cannot test for all possible allergens.
Did you say allergy?
People suffering from an allergy generally have one or more of the symptoms described in the table below. These symptoms can vary from one person to the next or even from one day to the next.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allergic reaction</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atopic eczema</td>
<td>➤ Red blotches with dry crust and scaling at specific areas on the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Itchiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hives (urticaria)</td>
<td>➤ Raised pinkish or whitish papules or blotches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Itchiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Burning sensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal allergy (allergic rhinitis)</td>
<td>➤ Itchy and runny nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Itchy and red eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Watery eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Sinus pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma (These symptoms show up periodically)</td>
<td>➤ Whistling noise made when breathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Difficulty breathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Feeling of tightness in the chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Dry cough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaphylactic reaction</td>
<td>➤ Tightening of the throat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Difficulty breathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Increased heart rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Pallor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Nausea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Stomach pain, vomiting or diarrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaphylactic shock</td>
<td>➤ Same symptoms as for an anaphylactic reaction (these symptoms may be associated with either or both conditions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Drop in blood pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Possible loss of consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food allergy (The symptoms usually appear within 30 minutes of the food allergen being eaten)</td>
<td>➤ Red and white splotches on the skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Itchiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Swelling around the eyes or swelling of the tongue and face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Anaphylactic reaction (serious allergy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insect sting allergy (bee, wasp, etc.)</td>
<td>➤ Rash and redness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Pain and swelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Anaphylactic reaction (serious allergy)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Can chronic diseases be prevented?

Chronic diseases are health problems that evolve slowly and last a long time, often even a lifetime. The most common chronic diseases are cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, respiratory disease, musculoskeletal problems and mental illness. They are the world’s leading cause of death.

Controllable risk factors
In addition to heredity, the major risk factors for developing a chronic disease are:
- Smoking
- Drinking alcohol
- High blood pressure
- Lack of exercise
- High cholesterol
- Being overweight
- Bad eating habits

How to prevent those risks
Here is how you can take action to eliminate these factors:
- Stop smoking or exposing yourself to second-hand smoke
- Drink no more than one glass of alcohol a day if you are a woman, or two glasses a day if you are a man
- Get thirty minutes of exercise a day
- Eat a variety of foods, especially many fruit and vegetables
- Cut down on your salt intake (e.g. processed foods, salting your food, etc.)
- Listen to your body, which tells you when you are hungry or full

By adopting good lifestyle habits, you increase your chances of having a long and healthy life.
Medication serves to treat or control health problems and, in some cases, can even save your life. It is important to use medication properly to enjoy its benefits and avoid any of its undesirable side effects.

A few precautions
Be sure you know your medication well. Respect the dose and length of treatment. Make a note of possible side effects and interactions with certain foods, natural health products or other medication. Be aware that over-the-counter medication is not always without danger and that, therefore, the same recommendations apply.

**Tips for proper medication use**
- Check the expiry dates on your medication and bring any expired medication to the pharmacy so that it may be disposed of safely
- Pick up all of your prescriptions at the same pharmacy so that the pharmacist can check if there are any risks associated with combining all of the medication you are taking
- Listen to your physician or pharmacist’s instructions for taking your medication, like taking it on an empty stomach or with food
- Talk to your physician if you would like to change or stop your treatment
- Ask your pharmacist any questions you have about your medication. This healthcare professional is the one who can recommend the best course of action.
Cold and flu: myths and facts about food

A cold and the flu are both infections of the upper respiratory tract (nose, throat) caused by a virus. There are many claims being made that some types of food or nutrients can cure or prevent you from catching these viruses. Are these claims too good to be true?

Mom’s chicken soup: the ultimate comfort food
Did your mother ever bring you a bowl of chicken soup when you were in bed with a bad cold? However comforting it might have been, the health benefits associated with this gesture of motherly love are not based on any scientific evidence. Drinking hot liquids like chicken soup can help relieve a stuffy nose, but chicken soup in itself has no medicinal properties. Your mother’s chicken soup was probably soothing for your cold because it was a hot liquid served with extra Tender Loving Care.

Is vitamin C good for a cold?
As soon as the temperature drops, many people rush out to the pharmacy to buy vitamin C supplements, believing that by taking these they can avoid coming down with a cold or the flu.

Scientific studies show that, in some people, taking a very high dose (1000 mg per day) of vitamin C over a long period of time can reduce the duration of cold or flu symptoms by one day. This benefit seems rather weak if you consider the risks. You only need 75 to 90 mg of vitamin C per day. It is not recommended to take so much vitamin C over such a long period, given the possible side effects (kidney stones, for one).

Should you stop drinking milk if you have a cold?
Some people say you should not drink milk if you have a cold because it increases mucus production. If you have a cold, you may have the impression your mouth feels slightly slimy after drinking milk. This is caused by the fat in the milk coating the inside of your mouth and not the result of excess mucus being produced. Simply drink a bit of water and the sensation will disappear.

What about probiotics?
For many years, scientists have been studying the effects of probiotics, which are bacteria that encourage the growth of good intestinal flora and boost the immune system. Despite all of the research conducted, it has not been scientifically proven that probiotics can help prevent you from catching a cold or the flu. Probiotic supplements are therefore not a recommended means of avoiding coming down with one of those two infections.

Secret of prevention: basic hygiene
Good lifestyle habits, such as a balanced diet, can keep your immune system strong. However, there is no particular food you can eat to prevent catching a cold or the flu. Since a cold and the flu are caused by viruses, the best way to prevent catching them is to thoroughly wash your hands often and avoid coming into contact with infected people. The most effective way to avoid coming down with the flu is to get a flu shot.

Getting better quickly
Drink a lot of water, get plenty of rest and maintain a balanced diet.
A few simple steps

Everyday prevention can reduce your chances of becoming sick or disabled, slow the progression of an existing illness, and help you avoid injuries or accidents.

After all, every reason for being careful is a good one where your health is concerned.
The information included in this brochure does not constitute medical advice and although it is based on widely recognized data, differing opinions may exist. We strongly recommend you consult a health professional in order to obtain appropriate advice based on your own medical condition.

Find out more

www.standardlife.ca