



5 tips to help older adults be healthier in 2020

STATEPOINT - For many, the new year is about establishing goals for the year ahead. But where should you start? As we age, an increasing number of us link our emotional and physical well-being to our overall health. After all, you can't do the things you'd like if you aren't healthy.

With that in mind, Cigna and its Medicare Advantage (MA) fitness partner, the Silver&Fit Healthy Aging and Exercise Program, share these five tips to help older adults get fitter and stronger and be less stressed and happier in 2020:

1. Hit the gym. Exercise is a proven way to help you get fitter and stronger, improve balance, lose weight, reduce blood pressure, improve cardiovascular health, manage pain and even be more social. Many gyms offer such options as free weights, machines, pools, classes, private instructors and other amenities that can inspire you to try new things. Prefer working out with others? Group classes can help you discover a new exercise, stick to a schedule and find exercise buddies. If you're new to exercise, remember that slow and steady is the way to build good habits, avoid injury and achieve health goals. It's always a good idea to



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Can't afford a gym membership? You may be surprised to learn that many MA plans offer exercise programs at top fitness centers and YMCAs for no extra cost.

consult your doctor before starting any new exercise program.

Can't afford a gym membership? You may be surprised to learn that many MA plans offer exercise programs at top fitness centers and YMCAs for no extra cost. Check your plan for details.

2. Nourish your body. For optimal health, nourish your body with healthy, energizing foods, including fruits, vegetables, grains, fish and healthy oils, such as olive oil and sesame oil. Limit pre-packaged, processed foods. Set an achievable goal. Try cutting out one unhealthy food each month, such as sugary soft

drinks or chips. Your body will love you for it! Also, stay hydrated, especially when exercising.

At the same time, eliminate unhealthy habits, such as smoking or drinking alcohol in excess. With an MA plan, you may be able to get help with smoking cessation products or alcohol counseling at no extra cost.

3. Stress less. Stress can be toxic and debilitating. Develop a "PLAN" to deal with it. According to Cigna's Dr. Stuart L. Lustig, this includes identifying a Period of time to unwind, a Location to de-stress, an Activity to enjoy and the Name of someone with whom you can talk. Yoga, tai chi and

meditation may help you cope with stress, as well as going for walks, listening to music, comedy or audio books -- or even coloring. If you're experiencing extreme stress, talk to your doctor. Remember, the mind and body are connected, and stress takes its toll on physical health.

4. Get social. According to a 2018 Cigna survey, loneliness in America has reached epidemic levels. Nearly half of Americans report sometimes or always feeling alone (46 percent) or left out (47 percent). Loneliness has been shown to negatively impact physical and mental health. Alleviate loneliness by taking one proactive step each week. For example, call or get coffee with friends or family, join a club or volunteer. You can also connect with other active adults on social media. Check out the inspirational health and fitness posts on the @SilverandFit Facebook page and join in the conversations.

5. Practice gratitude. Happiness comes with thankfulness. Think about people and things you feel grateful for, and start a gratitude journal.

By doing your best to incorporate these five tips into your life, you'll kick-start your journey toward a healthier 2020.

4 easy tips to boost your energy

BPT - Even if you try to keep to a healthy diet and work out regularly, chances are there are times of day when your energy fades, or entire days when you just don't feel like you're on the right track. Between the constant demands on your time from work and family, it can be tough to stay energized all day long.



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Protein-up your breakfast with egg whites,

For expert advice on balanced nutrition to boost your energy levels, check out Kevin Curry's website, FitMenCook.com. Curry demonstrates that it's possible to create meals and snacks to help you achieve your health and wellness goals without breaking the bank or even being a trained chef. He recommends swapping out parts of dishes to boost their nutrition - like egg whites instead of whole eggs, or brown rice or quinoa in place of white rice. He strives to make veggies and proteins the star of the dish, while using ingredients that are both easy to find and simple to prepare. Here are some easy tips for ways to boost your energy and add more pep to your step, throughout your day.

1. Protein-up your breakfast

You probably know you shouldn't skip breakfast, and many of us have to eat it on the go, but there's more you can do - your energy level will thank you later if you add more protein to the first meal of the day. For quick and easy ways to amp up your protein, use Bob Evans Egg Whites, which are made from a single, clean ingredient: 100% liquid egg whites. They offer a high-quality, protein-filled breakfast solution with five grams of protein in every serving. Taking a few extra minutes in the morning to boost your protein intake can keep your whole day on track.

* Fix a quick omelet or scrambled eggs

* Add 1-2 servings of Bob Evans Egg Whites to your smoothie or protein shake

* Try this recipe for Strawberry Protein Pancakes, which your whole family can enjoy:

Strawberry Protein Pancakes
10 minutes prep time, serves 2

Ingredients

1 scoop vanilla protein powder

1/2 cup old fashioned oats

1/3 cup unsweetened applesauce

1/3 cup Bob Evans Egg Whites

2 tablespoons Greek yogurt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 cup fresh or frozen strawberries, chopped

Instructions:

Blend everything except

the strawberries together, until there are no remaining chunks. Set chopped strawberries aside.

Heat a nonstick pan to medium high (a large or pancake pan works best). Pour batter onto the pan in small circular shapes, then sprinkle chopped strawberries on each pancake.

When the pancakes start to bubble, flip and cook the other side.

Top with more strawberries, low-sugar maple syrup, Greek yogurt or whatever calorie-conscious topping you like!

Source: BobEvansGrocery.com

2. Plan ahead

Pack protein-rich snacks to bring with you on the go, so you have healthy options handy to give you a quick pick-me-up throughout your day, especially when you feel your energy is fading. Small snacks throughout the day won't make you feel sleepy the way a large meal can.

* Nuts with little or no added salt or oil

* Low-fat cheese

* Meat sticks

* Greek yogurt without added sugar

3. Stay hydrated

Often energy levels can drop when you're dehydrated. Be proactive to keep yourself ready for anything.

* Bring along a reusable water bottle to sip throughout the day.

* Pack a protein smoothie or shake - don't forget the Bob Evans Egg Whites - for lunch to prevent the dreaded afternoon slump.

4. Keep active

Even when you've worked out in the morning, but especially on those days you miss the gym, find ways to add more activity throughout the day.

* When you're at a desk all day, take breaks to walk outside or around your office.

* Find somewhere to do a little stretching, squats and lunges to activate your muscles.

* At home, find projects around the house that keep you moving.

* Get down on the floor or out in the yard to play with the kids or pets.

Following these tips will help you be at your best, all day long. For more recipes to power your day, visit BobEvansEggWhites.com.

Living with chronic liver disease? Be aware of hepatic encephalopathy

STATEPOINT - Approximately 30 million people in the U.S. have some form of liver disease, which occurs in people for many different reasons. Some common types and causes of liver disease include hepatitis, caused by viruses A, B, and C, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), which is caused by too much fat in the liver cells, and alcohol-related liver disease, caused by consuming too much alcohol. Having liver disease over a long period of time can result in cirrhosis, an advanced chronic liver disease, which then puts a patient at risk for hepatic encephalopathy (HE) - a serious complication of advanced liver disease.

"Up to 80 percent of patients with cirrhosis can develop HE. This condition can have very debilitating effects on patients and takes a toll on caregivers, especially as the condition progresses," says



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Having liver disease over a long period of time can result in cirrhosis, an advanced chronic liver disease, which then puts a patient at risk for hepatic encephalopathy (HE) - a serious complication of advanced liver disease.

Dr. Howard Franklin, vice president of Medical Affairs and Strategy at Salix Pharmaceuticals. "However, many patients with liver disease, especially

younger patients, are not even aware they are at risk for developing HE, so early recognition of signs and symptoms is critical."

A Closer Look at HE

In patients with advanced chronic liver disease, the liver is damaged so it cannot filter toxins out of the blood the way a healthy liver would. These toxins can then build up and travel through the body until they reach the brain. The buildup of these toxins in the brain can then lead to the symptoms of HE. Onset of HE can start slowly, and at first, people with the condition may not even be aware they have it. Family or friends may often be the first to notice someone with HE is acting differently. Symptoms of HE, which can encompass both mental and physical symptoms, may vary for each person and include:

- Mental symptoms - For

getfulness, confusion, poor judgement, not knowing where you are or where you are going or personality changes

- Physical symptoms - Changes in sleep pattern, tremors or shaking of hands or arms, slowed or sluggish movement, slurred speech and changes in breath odor

In the most severe form of HE, people can become unconscious and enter a coma.

These symptoms can have a significant impact on daily life, such as not being able to drive a car, not being able to work and not being able to care for oneself and having to rely on a caregiver. Proper and early treatment and management of HE can help slow its progression before it gets worse.

Treatment Options

Talk to your doctor to

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Tips for relieving joint pain

STATEPOINT - The health benefits of regular exercise are undeniable, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends 30 minutes of exercise at least five times per week. However, high-impact exercises like running and weight training can lead to joint pain, especially if you have a joint condition. The good news is that smart exercises with low impact can alleviate joint pain and deliver the same health benefits.

Here are a few tips to consider:

Keep Moving

Trying to protect your joints by not moving actually does more harm than good. Regular exercise can actually help joint pain and ease symptoms of chronic joint conditions, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Just be sure to talk to your doctor about your exercise plan before you get started.

Go Low Impact

You don't need to put tremendous weight on your joints or jump up and down in order to break a sweat or elevate your heart rate. When you're already in pain, this type of exercise can actually make things worse. Instead, opt for high-quality, low-impact workouts.

There are now exercise machines available for home use that provide the same quality low-impact workout you'd get in physical therapy. Consider the Teeter FreeStep Recumbent Cross Trainer, a seated exercise machine that takes the weight off the joints while torching calories.

Unlike other recumbent machines which can be bad for the knees, the FreeStep mimics a natural stepping motion that prevents knees from traveling over the toes, as well as stabilizes the back and hips. And you don't have to sacrifice workout quality - in fact, research shows that FreeStep users burn 17.4



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There are now exercise machines available for home use that provide the same quality low-impact workout you'd get in physical therapy

percent more calories than when using a recumbent bike at the same level of effort. Beyond calorie burn, it also offers full-body resistance training, which is especially important, as weak muscles can be a root cause of pain.

Hydrate

It may seem obvious, but ensuring that you drink the recommended daily intake of water is vital to reducing pain in your joints.

Proper hydration helps your body eliminate wastes and toxins that can lead to painful joint conditions. Plus, it helps to keep the joints lubricated and flexible, reducing friction and inflammation and helping to maintain healthy tissue.

Stretch Daily

Stretching increases flexibility and range of motion, improves movement and function, reduces pain and stiffness and prevents further injury. Just remember to move slowly and keep it gentle.

At the very least, spend a good five to 10 minutes in the morning stretching your hamstrings, quadriceps, calf muscles and hip flexors.

For a free photo guide to "5 Daily Stretches to Relieve Knee & Joint Pain," visit teeter.com/freestep-guide.

With the right exercises and maintenance program, you can improve your health and get a stronger body, without pain.

How to update home lighting to be easy on the eyes

STATEPOINT - If you ever experience eyestrain, tired itchy eyes, blurry vision or headaches, it may be time to give your home a lighting makeover. Problems caused by bad lighting can be intensified by using it for longer, something most households should keep in mind, as 74 percent of Americans in a recent survey, commissioned by lighting manufacturer, Signify, say they spend eight hours or more a day under artificial light.

The World Health Organization predicts that 50 percent of people will be short sighted by 2050. Unfortunately, there's a disconnect between people's concerns about eye health and the steps they are taking to support eye comfort at home. While 80 percent of U.S. consumers in the same Signify survey say they believe good lighting is beneficial for eye health, a 2017 Signify study found only 21 percent take that into account when purchasing light bulbs, and only 29 percent consider



Signify

Improving the comfort of your eyes could be as simple as changing a light bulb.

light quality.

For many consumers, the disconnect may stem from overwhelming choice when it comes to home lighting and from not having enough information to make an informed decision. Luckily, manufacturers are taking steps to improve lighting quality and help guide consumers in their search for comfortable light that's easy on the eyes. For example, Signify has defined specific lighting quality parameters, which take into account fac-

tors such as flicker, strobe, glare and dimming effects that can affect one's eye comfort. Consumers can look for an EyeComfort label on product packaging to identify the Philips LED light bulbs that meet the standards for quality lighting that's easy on the eyes.

To further protect your eyes and avoid discomfort, try the following:

- If you are in front of screens (computers, smart phones, televisions) for extended periods of time, close

your eyes for 20 seconds or more, every 20 minutes, to allow them to relax.

- If outdoors, wear sunglasses with 100 percent UV protection to help protect your eyes from the sun. It's helpful to keep a pair in your bag or car, so they are always nearby. Also consider spending a bit more time in natural light and less in artificial light.

- Exercise and strengthen your eyes by incorporating simple, yet effective eye yoga exercises into your daily routine for a few minutes daily.

- Schedule regular check-ups with an eye specialist, who will be able to detect the first signs of any eye condition or disease.

While certain eye conditions are beyond one's control, why not do what's in your power to protect your family from eyestrain and related discomfort? The simple DIY project of upgrading your home lighting can mean happier, healthier eyes and better quality of life.

Are you getting all your vitamins? How to revamp your diet

STATEPOINT - Getting all the vitamins and nutrients you need each day is one of the most important things you can do to feel your best.

The good news is that you don't need to devote hours each week to meal prep to ensure you're healthfully getting essential vitamins. As you revamp your diet, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Don't follow fads: When it comes to your wellness, it's best to rely on basic science, not the latest fad diets or sports drinks and supplements that rely on added sugars, fillers, preservatives, artificial flavors, sweeteners, dyes, and nega-

tives. Look for products that transparently list all their ingredients.

- Drink your vitamins: Did you know that liquids are the most bioavailable form for your body to absorb nutrients? For complete health on-the-go, consider drinking your vitamins. One effective solution is Drink Nutrient, which offers single-serve stick packs that make it easy to get the nutrients and essential vitamins you need. Among its offerings is Vitamin Coffee, a natural health enhancer and energy booster made from 100 percent Colombian Arabica coffee that offers 50 percent of your daily essential vitamins in each serving. Served hot or cold, it's a good choice for anyone who needs a caffeine boost without the crash. Or, to get 100 percent of your daily

essential vitamins and 610 mg of electrolytes in one go, consider Vitamin Booster+, which contains real fruit juice and is only 15 calories per serving.

- De-stress: Too much stress can compromise your body's ability to absorb nutrients. So, take steps to relax and unwind. Whether it's through meditation, journaling, cooking or jogging -- discover what hobbies and wellness activities help you reduce your stress levels and be sure to make time for them.

- Refuel wisely: If you hit the gym frequently, you likely have tried one or two sports drinks and know how important it is to refuel quickly and wisely after a workout. For optimal high performance, consider upgrading your drink of choice. For muscle repair, mental focus, 13

essential vitamins as well as double the electrolytes of leading sports drinks, Liquid Nutrient has a potassium-to-sodium ratio intended for high-quality hydration.

- Maximize meals: To maximize meals, make sure the bulk of the calories you consume are not "empty." Empty calories, such as added sugars and solid fats, contain little to no nutritional value. Fill up on dark leafy vegetables, berries, nuts, seeds and good-for-you fats like avocado and salmon, while avoiding chips, cakes and other junk foods.

Don't let your busy lifestyle get in the way of ensuring you're getting all the nutrients you need to feel your best. With new tools, it is easier than ever to revamp your diet for optimal nutrition.

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learn more about HE and how to manage this condition. Lifestyle changes, such as changes in diet or

eliminating certain medications, may also help. "Once diagnosed and put on treatment, proper adherence to medication is critical," says Dr. Franklin.

If you or someone you know has chronic liver

disease and begins to experience any symptoms of HE, it's important to talk to your doctor right away. This is the first step toward helping find an appropriate treatment plan to manage the condition.



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The wrong stuff: How being to nice can kill you

Eighty-two year-old Linda is a very nice person. She gets along with everyone, and doesn't like to make waves. Unfortunately, being nice almost killed her.

Linda has taken the 5mg tablets of the blood thinner warfarin for several years. When I saw her last month at our clinic, I increased her weekly warfarin maintenance dose just a little bit. Her old dose was 5mg 3 times weekly and I changed to 5mg 4 times weekly.

Her new dose was 5mg 4 times weekly and 2.5mg (one-half tablet) 3 times weekly, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Writing down her new dose on a card, I explained the plan, updated her prescription directions, then faxed the prescription with her new dose directly to her pharmacy.

When Linda went to the pharmacy to pick up her pills the following week, she opened the bottle to check on the pills she was getting, but something wasn't right. She pointed out to the pharmacist that her pills were a different color than she usually got, and he told her that they were supposed to be a different color because her prescription had changed.

When she explained to him that her new dose matched the directions on the prescription label, but that was supposed to be the only change, he disagreed with her, insisting that the doctor's office had also changed the tablet size, from 5mg tablets to 10mg tablets.

She tried again, telling him that she had always gotten the 5mg tablets and her doctor would have told her if she was going to change the size of the tablets. She insisted to him that her doctor had only changed the directions at her last appointment, not her pill size.

The pharmacist told her no, that wasn't right. He pulled out her faxed prescription and showed it to her, emphasizing that, see, your doctor did change it to the 10mg tablets, and that is what she should be taking. At that point she then gave up and went home, and started taking the 10mg tablets according to the directions on the label.

When I checked Linda's



blood 2 weeks later, her blood thinner level had skyrocketed to a dangerous level. She was very, very lucky she only took it for 2 weeks, because she could have bled to death.

How could this have happened?

Four weeks ago on a Friday morning, a car driving by our clinic hit a patch of black ice and careened into the big power pole just down the street from us. The collision sheared off the top of the pole, dumping its transformer into the middle of our busy street. Luckily, nobody was seriously injured in the crash.

What wasn't so lucky was what happened to us, the nearest business to the power pole. Somehow, the transformer crash created a weird power surge that fried all of our computer systems. All of the servers giving us access to all of our electronic medical records were totally DESTROYED.

Luckily, our medical records are all stored off-site in the cloud, and they were fine. It was everything else in our clinic that was completely GONE. The hardest hit of all was our in-house pharmacy, who lost their entire database. All of their patient information, including insurance information, billing, allergies, and all of their prescription records were completely wiped out. Gone. Forever. They had to purchase a new system and start completely over from their paper records. As a pharmacist, I still shudder when I think about it. It was truly "Pharmageddon".

The Monday after Pharmageddon, the computer people had managed to get one server up and running, so the clinic had some access to our medical records. We all used it and prayed it would hold up until the strain. That was also the day Linda came in for her blood thinner check, and her dose of warfarin was adjusted. That was the day I faxed the prescription that had 10mg warfarin tablets on it instead of her previous 5mg warfarin ones, and I

still don't know how it happened, as I didn't change that part of her records.

Linda tries hard to keep herself safe when taking her medicine, and in this situation, she did a lot of things exactly right. She checked her pills before leaving the pharmacy with her new prescription. When she discovered a discrepancy, she pointed it out to the pharmacist and asked for clarification. When she was challenged, she stood her ground, insisting that her doctor would have told her if there had been a change in the tablet size.

But she gave up too soon. If the pharmacist wasn't going to call her doctor to make sure the change wasn't a mistake, she should have gone ahead and called us.

Linda almost died because she was too trusting. And too nice.

That pharmacist was NOT in the right. That prescription SHOULD have never been filled in the first place without clarifying the directions because the dose specified in the prescription included 2.5mg (0.5 tablet), which would only make sense if the prescription was for 5mg, not 10mg tablets. That discrepancy, plus the fact that all of her previous warfarin prescriptions were for 5mg tablets, should have triggered a call by the pharmacy to the doctor's office to resolve the mismatch.

When Linda picked up her prescription and pointed out to the pharmacist that her tablet size was different, he should have double-checked the directions on the original copy of the prescription. Once finding the 2.5mg (0.5 tablet) inconsistency in the directions, he should have called the doctor's office to clarify the strength.

Unfortunately, when Linda insisted to the pharmacist that her doctor would have told her if she changed the tablet size, he STILL didn't call the office to verify the strength of the prescription.

But at that point, Linda let the issue drop. And she could easily have bled to death over a preventable mistake.

Don't let this happen

to you or to a loved one. Whether you use a local pharmacy like Linda, or a mail-order pharmacy, be aware that mistakes can happen. Don't let your or a loved one pay the price!

Here are 4 Ways to Help Keep Yourself Safe from Getting the Wrong Pills:

1. Check out every new prescription.

If you use a local pharmacy, always open up your new bottles of pills BEFORE you leave the pharmacy. Once you leave, they can't take the pills back, and you will have more problems fixing any discrepancies. If you use mail order, always compare the pills in your new bottle with what you are supposed to be taking before putting them away.

2. SPEAK UP!

Don't assume that your prescriptions are always right. As Linda found out, doctor's offices can generate prescriptions that don't make sense, and pharmacists can make mistakes. Speak up, so a mistake can be identified before it harms you or a loved one.

3. Don't Give Up.

If something doesn't seem right, don't back off until you are satisfied with the answer. If Linda had stuck to her guns, she could have avoided getting the very dangerous blood thinner level she developed, by either insisting the pharmacy manger call the doctor's office or by calling the doctor's office herself to clarify her medicine's dose and tablet size.

4. Identify any "mystery" pills.

You don't have to contact the pharmacy to identify what's in a particular prescription bottle or pill you find on the floor. Entering any pill's description including color, shape, and imprinted markings into a Google search will give you photos of the exact pill, helping you identify it.

Dr. Louise Achey, Doctor of Pharmacy is a 40-year veteran of pharmacology and author of Why Dogs Can't Eat Chocolate: How Medicines Work and How YOU Can Take Them Safely. Check out her NEW website TheMedicationInsider.com for daily tips on how to take your medicine safely.

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Indigestion from travel is common, as being away from home often means eating unfamiliar foods and keeping odd hours.

A doctor's common-sense approach to heartburn relief

STATEPOINT - Indigestion is on the rise worldwide and is especially prevalent in the U.S. According to the American College of Gastroenterology, 60 million Americans suffer from heartburn at least once a month. While it's a common issue for older people due to aging, it's now a growing problem for younger adults as well, who report increasing bouts of indigestion, upset stomach, and anxious stomach, which may be linked to stress and hectic lifestyles.

"When the acid in your stomach rises into your esophagus, that's when you know you have heartburn," says Dr. Ken Redcross, a board-certified physician in internal medicine and author of "Bond: The 4 Cornerstones of a Lasting and Caring Relationship with Your Doctor." He explains that heartburn is more than just a minor discomfort, and it can impact daily life. "Heartburn can cause chest pain, difficulty swallowing, and even interfere with sleep. While there are many contributing factors, whatever the cause, it's uncomfortable and important to manage."

Suffering from indigestion and heartburn? Dr. Redcross recommends a few simple measures that may help you find relief.

- When embarking on a new diet to improve health and wellness, the last thing you may expect to suffer from are digestive issues. But a sudden change to one's diet is frequently the source of heartburn. Keto diets in particular can trigger heartburn as the diet requires upping the intake of fat, which takes longer to leave the stomach. If you are starting a new diet, it can be helpful to change your diet more gradually.

- Indigestion from travel is common, as being away from home often means eating unfamiliar foods and

keeping odd hours. When on the go, (or all the time) stick mostly with tried-and-true foods you know that sit well, attempt to keep a regular eating schedule, and wear loose, comfortable clothing.

- Eating too fast or too much can also contribute to indigestion. Slow down and savor your food. Also, consider consuming smaller portions at a time.

- Try to incorporate some movement into your daily routine, particularly after meals, as lying down directly after eating can be a source of indigestion. Exercise can also help you maintain a healthy weight, which is another important factor in managing indigestion.

- Know your triggers. For some, certain foods like citrus, spices, fatty food, and alcoholic or caffeinated beverages can trigger symptoms. Knowing your specific triggers can help you avoid them.

- Be prepared to address symptoms when they strike. Indigestion sufferers with a bloated or upset stomach can find plant-based relief with travel-friendly Boiron Acidil tablets that melt in your mouth without water. Easy to take before or after a meal, they work with the body to target occasional heartburn, acid indigestion, bloating, or upset stomach. This homeopathic medicine can help get your body back into balance naturally. Claims for Acidil are based on traditional homeopathic practice, not accepted medical evidence. They are not FDA evaluated. More information about Acidil and other homeopathic medicines for gastrointestinal relief can be found by visiting BoironUSA.com/digestives.

- For a happy, healthy belly, learn your indigestion triggers and be prepared to manage symptoms.

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