

Spring 2019

INSIDE

**Honoring Military
Children**

**Small Steps to
Healthier Habits**

Get Your Shakshuka On

**A Clear View of
Cataracts**



Beatrice Jones and Joseph Jones, P01, USN (Ret.)
of Hyde Park, MA

U spring calendar

MARCH

10

Daylight Saving Time begins
(set clocks ahead)



National Sleep Awareness Week
(March 10–16). Learn more at
sleepfoundation.org

17

St. Patrick's Day

20

Spring begins

APRIL



April is the Month of the Military Child

14

Palm Sunday

15

Patriots' Day (Massachusetts)

19

Good Friday
Passover begins at sundown

21

Easter

MAY

5

Ramadan begins (est.)

12

Mother's Day

18

Armed Forces Day

27

Memorial Day

JUNE

14

Happy Birthday, U.S. Army!
Flag Day

16

Father's Day

21

Summer begins

FITNESS



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WELLNESS



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COMMUNITY



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Newport **PAGE 5** Meet member
Paul Prefontaine

US Family Health Plan members choose
from a network of over 2,000 civilian primary
care providers and thousands of specialists,
plus a large network of civilian hospitals.

Who We Are

US Family Health Plan of Southern New England is a Department of Defense TRICARE Prime option, and one of six regional US Family Health Plan programs across the nation. Our large network of civilian doctors, hospitals, and other health providers serves Plan members who live in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and parts of southern New Hampshire and northern Connecticut.

We pride ourselves on friendly, personal service. If you have questions, call us at **1.800.818.8589**. If you're nearby, come visit our headquarters in the historic Brighton Marine building in Brighton, Massachusetts. You can also get to know us better at usfamilyhealth.org or at facebook.com/USFHP.SouthernNewEngland.



A Salute to the Kids

It has been an exciting time in my family of late. We are experiencing two weddings within ten months of each other. My youngest child, my daughter, marries in June of this year. My oldest, my son, was married last August. It has been an incredibly wonderful experience as a parent to see these two children grow into adults, create a world all their own, meet someone they love, and commit to joining together to forge a new generation.

My children are in their thirties, so they have been on their own for more than a decade. Yet I am reminded regularly how arriving at this point has not always been easy. The challenges of raising a child are many. The worries are great. The sacrifices and costs are significant. I am thankful for the support I have had along the way. And I couldn't imagine life without them.

During the month of April, the country celebrates the Military Child. The contribution of military families, and specifically the children, is surely something to honor.

Our children are our future. I don't mean that they are our legacy, but rather that they are our contribution to the future. The children we raise will be the leaders who move us forward in the decades to come. Our capacity for growth as a country and our resilience in the face of the challenges of future decades are in their hands.

During the month of April, the country celebrates the Military Child. The contribution of military families, and specifically the children, is surely something to honor. Military children face myriad unique challenges — from the absence of a deployed parent, to frequent moves, to changing schools and leaving friends — that military family life entails. These children are part of the selfless contribution of military families. We extend to them our deepest gratitude. ■



Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program

Many members have asked about the new Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), offered by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Since US Family Health Plan already provides eye care and discounts on eyewear, most members won't need additional vision coverage because it may duplicate coverage with US Family Health Plan.

Because US Family Health Plan doesn't provide dental coverage, members may want to look into the FEDVIP dental plans during the next open enrollment season (for benefits starting January 1, 2020, the open enrollment season will be November 11 through December 9, 2019).

Visit [tricare.benefeds.com](https://www.tricare.benefeds.com) for more information. ■

Thanks for Your Help With the 2019 CAHPS Survey

US Family Health Plan will conduct our annual Member Satisfaction survey starting in March. If you're one of the 1,100 members who receive the survey in the mail, please be sure to answer the questions and return the survey in the postage-paid envelope provided. If you'd rather complete the survey online, the package will contain information about how to do that.

This important tool lets us know what we do well and where we can do better. The survey responses are confidential. We see only the aggregate data; we do not see personal information about the members who complete the survey. Thank you in advance for helping us. ■



Providence Bruins Military Appreciation Night

On January 25, US Family Health Plan was a proud sponsor of **Military Appreciation Night** with the Providence Bruins. Our field representative, Jim Souza, awarded a special Bruins jersey to Sergeant Donald Romano, who has served for 12 years in the Rhode Island Army National Guard.

Sergeant Romano has deployed three times as a MEDEVAC Crew Chief on UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters — to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kuwait. He lives in Warwick, RI, with his wife and two daughters.

Thank you, Sergeant Romano, for your unstinting commitment and service to the Rhode Island Army National Guard and to your country. ■

Donald Romano, SGT, ARNG, received his Bruins jersey from Jim Souza, SFC, USA (Ret.), field representative for US Family Health Plan.



Joshua Mathis, Operations Specialist/CPO, USN, with Jessica Mathis and kids Jakson, Jenesis, and Jilyann.

Naval Station Newport

The fun never let up at MWR Naval Station Newport's January 27 **Family Bowling Event**, supported by US Family Health Plan. The "Lego Batman" theme kept kids and adults busy making Lego Batman night-lights and paper-bag puppets, and coloring Batman pictures, too. And, of course, there was plenty of bowling!

US Family Health Plan was also pleased to support MWR Naval Station Newport's December 1 **Breakfast with Santa**, always a favorite event for everybody involved. ■

Paul F. Prefontaine, SFC, USA (Ret.)

Department Service Officer, the American Legion, Department of Massachusetts
US Family Health Plan member

In 1972, when 18-year-old Paul Prefontaine was called up by the draft, he was no stranger to military service. His late father, Jean Prefontaine, had landed with the 29th Infantry Division at Omaha Beach on D-Day in 1944, receiving two Purple Hearts for his wartime service. Later on, Jean Prefontaine joined the US Army Corps of Engineers and became a dedicated member of the American Legion Post in Dorchester, MA.

The younger Prefontaine found the same kind of satisfaction in military service. The Vietnam War wound down not long after he joined the Army. He played trumpet in an Army band, and when the band no longer needed so many trumpets, was told that he could fulfill his commitment by serving for six years in the National Guard.

"That six years turned into twenty-four," he says. "I couldn't stay away. My family was always involved, always serving. That's the way we were brought up."

Prefontaine lived in and around Dorchester, raising a family, working as a manager at Purity Supreme supermarkets and later working at Verizon, where he was a service representative with the responsibility of coordinating work with other phone companies.

He is quick to credit his military service with providing him skills for success in the civilian workforce. "I learned about leadership," he says, "about understanding people and treating them properly. I learned about diversity and how to understand rules and regulations, which was especially helpful at the phone company."

In 2015, Prefontaine retired from Verizon. "At first," he says, "I thought: this is great! It was summer and I could work in the garden!" (He grows flowers and vegetables on his lot in Dorchester, canning and freezing produce for the cold months.) "But then," Prefontaine says, "winter came. Winter and sitting around. It wasn't for me!"



"My family was always involved, always serving. That's the way we were brought up."

Prefontaine is an active member of the American Legion, finding service opportunities and collegiality at the Robert I. Nickerson Post 382 in Squantum, a neighborhood and barrier island in North Quincy.

He applied for a position as a Department Service Officer for the American Legion, got the job, trained, and began keeping office hours at the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea, the VA in Jamaica Plain, and at Brighton Marine Health Center in Brighton (Tuesdays from 1 to 4 pm in Building 2).

Working for the American Legion has brought a satisfying balance to Prefontaine's life. He has time for his garden, Post 382, and his grandchildren, as well as for what the Prefontaines have always done well: serving others. ■

HARNESSING HABITS FOR



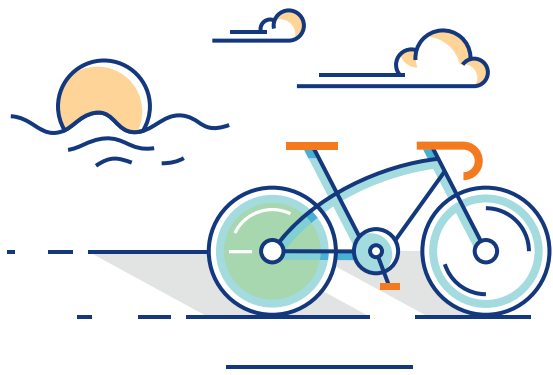
Each of us is a collection of habits — habits determine whether we go for a daily walk or spend the evening watching television, or whether we grab a soft drink to go with our lunch or choose water instead.

Most of us have some less-than-healthy habits that we'd like to transform into healthy ones. Fortunately, there are some tried-and-true ways to help make that happen.

What doesn't work

Most of us have started to make a change for the better, then lapsed. We may have tried the following strategies, which tend not to work:

- *Relying on willpower alone* when willpower is often weak.
- *Taking on too much all at once*, which can quickly become overwhelming.
- *Taking on changes in ways that we experience as hardship*, with the only reward a distant vision of a healthier self. With a goal far away and hard to achieve, it's easy to lose motivation.



Taking small steps

Experts who study how habits are formed suggest taking these steps when you're trying to change habits for the better:

- **Decide to make one change.** Choose just one thing. It might be “Get more exercise,” “Lose 10 pounds,” or “Change my eating habits to lower my blood pressure.” Write the change down. If you’re comfortable talking with someone else about your habits, tell that person and ask for their support.
- **Take small steps toward that change.** Start with one small, manageable step. It might be to go for a five-minute walk today or to skip dessert at dinner tonight. The key is to take a step — to take action, not just plan to act — so you see what it feels like. Then repeat that step tomorrow, and the next day, and the next, until it becomes a new habit.
- **When you’re ready, build on the step and extend it.** Move from a five-minute walk to a 10-minute or 20-minute walk, or from avoiding dessert to changing another element of your diet.

Sustaining a new habit

To help nurture your new healthy habit, be sure to:

- **Make it easy.** Put your walking shoes in plain sight by the front door. Keep your gym bag packed and out where you'll see it. Keep a water bottle on your desk to remind you to drink. Chop vegetables ahead of time so they're ready to use for dinner when you get home from work.
- **Eliminate what triggers the old habit.** Wherever possible, avoid situations that force you to rely on willpower alone to short-circuit a bad habit. If there isn't any ice cream in the freezer, you won't be tempted to eat it. If you're trying to cut down on alcohol, it's best to avoid going out with drinking buddies.

Don't be too hard on yourself

If you backslide — that is, if you eat a piece of cheesecake, or you miss a walk or bike ride — don't be too hard on yourself. No one has a perfect record. The important thing is to get back at it as soon as you can and move on toward your goal of a healthier self. ■



Charles Rollinger, MD, is our Vice President of Medical Management and Quality

UNDERSTANDING CATARACTS

It's spring in New England and that means the sun may shine. I've written about the effects of the sun on skin and the need for protection against its damaging rays, but one organ that people forget to protect from the sun's ultraviolet rays is the eye. This lack of protection can damage the proteins in the lens of the eye and lead to cataracts.

What is a cataract?

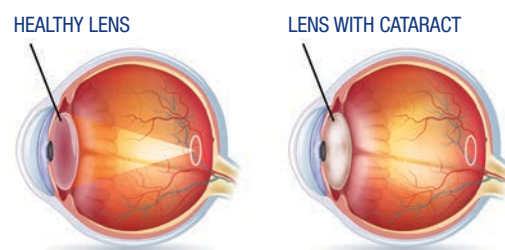
A cataract is the clouding of the lens of the eye. Cataracts usually develop slowly and it may take years before a person notices a change in their vision. One of the first changes that people with cataracts notice is difficulty seeing clearly while driving at night. Cataracts can also make images appear foggy and make it difficult to read. The cataract can start to develop as a small area of thickening, but eventually enlarges to include the entire lens.

Other risk factors for cataracts

There are other risk factors besides sun exposure that can increase a person's chances of developing cataracts. These risks include genetic conditions, eye injuries, long-term use of steroid drugs, and diabetes. Smokers, people who are overweight, and people who consume large quantities of alcohol are also at increased risk.

If you develop a cataract

Early on, changing the strength of an eyeglass prescription may be enough to help improve the vision of someone with cataracts. As time passes, though, the cataract may grow and cause a more profound visual change, and many people eventually need cataract surgery.



The lens of the eye acts like a camera lens, focusing the image on the retina, which functions like camera film. As people age, the lens may start to thicken and become less clear. Vision becomes less sharp. A cataract may form and cloud the lens.

The most likely treatment for cataracts is replacement of the lens with an artificial one. The surgery is usually performed as an outpatient procedure under local anesthesia. If the cataracts are in both eyes the procedure is performed in two separate surgeries.

The vast majority of patients will enjoy vision of 20/40 or better following surgery. As with all surgeries, there is a small likelihood of complications such as infection, pain, or visual disturbance.

If you're considering cataract surgery, it's important to have a full discussion with your doctor and consider the risks of the procedure. Only you know how much the change in your vision is affecting your life.

Preventing cataracts

If you have clear vision now, consider how you might reduce your risk of developing cataracts. Wearing sunglasses with ultraviolet-ray protection can help reduce the risk. Avoiding smoking, limiting alcohol consumption, and eating a diet high in natural vitamins and minerals (think lots of fruits and vegetables) can also help reduce the risk. ■

De-stressing a PCS

In the 2018 Blue Star Families Military Family Lifestyle Survey, relocation stress came in third on a list of "top stressors" for active-duty military and their spouses, just after financial issues and deployments.

Parents often worry about the effects of a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) on their children. How easy — or hard — will it be to make new friends? To say goodbye to old ones? To adjust to a new school? These tips can help:

- **Let your kids know about the move ASAP.** Like you, they need time to prepare emotionally.
- **Keep them involved in the move.** Even young children will like to have their own labeled box of special things to pack.
- **Try to continue important family routines as you get ready to move.** If you watch a movie together every Friday night, try to keep that ritual going, even if you're sitting on boxes.
- **Make address books for younger children.** Put in names, photos, contact information, even birthdays, for friends in their old community. They may not be old enough for email yet, but they'll be reassured to know that they still have ways to get in touch.
- **Find out if your new installation offers a Youth Sponsorship program.** This can give your child a way to make a new friend ahead of time. Go to MilitaryINSTALLATIONS at <https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/> to learn more.

A PCS is tough whether it's your first or your fifteenth. Above all, be patient with your children and with yourself and ask for help when you need it. Soon you'll be enjoying the adventure of new faces and new places to have fun as a family. ■



The Month of the Military Child

In April, we take time to honor the children who are such an important part of military families. They serve and sacrifice for our country, just as their parents do. If you see a military child today, please say thank you from US Family Health Plan. We're proud of them and grateful for all that they do.

Cutting Down on Added Sugars?

Try a Sugar-Skinny Breakfast

Experts say that adults should limit added sugars to 50 grams (about 12 teaspoons) a day. It's important to cut that amount in half for children ages 2 to 18, capping the sugars at 25 grams (about six teaspoons).

How to do it? One way is by rethinking breakfast, which in the U.S. has become a sugar-fest. Donuts? A glazed jelly stick at a national donut chain will run you 39 grams of added sugar. A nice big muffin from the same shop weighs in at 43 grams of added sugar.

Many healthy-seeming (lots of fiber, right?) cereals pack the same sugar wallop, and a six-ounce container of many brands of yogurt will use up half your daily sugar allowance (and all of your child's).

Not all cultures start the day on such a sweet note. In Egypt, many families wake up with a dish of "Ful Medames" — stewed and spiced fava beans. In parts of Japan, you might eat a breakfast of rice, fish, miso soup, and nori seaweed. A dish called "Gallo Pinto" — rice and beans, often served alongside eggs and plantains — is traditional in Costa Rica.

Here are some ways to shed the sugar but still have a quick and tasty start to the day.

Shakshuka Eggs

Shakshuka is popular for breakfast throughout the Middle East, but especially in Israel. It's similar to Italy's "Eggs Diablo" and to "Huevos Rancheros" from Mexico.

2 servings

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cumin
- 1 14-ounce can of diced tomatoes
- 3 large eggs
- A handful of fresh parsley leaves (chopped or not)
- Salt and black pepper

Heat the oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, and cook until soft and golden (about four minutes), stirring occasionally. Add paprika and cumin, and cook, still stirring, for two more minutes. Lower the heat to a simmer, then add the tomatoes and cook for 15 more minutes, until slightly thickened.

With a spoon, make three dents in the sauce, then crack the eggs into them. Cover the skillet with a lid and cook for five to six minutes or until the egg whites have set and the yolks are the consistency of soft-boiled egg yolks. Sprinkle with parsley and with salt and pepper. (If you're limiting salt, stir a little vinegar into the sauce instead.)

Power Mixes

A power mix is a great way to turn last night's leftovers into a healthy, sugar-skinny breakfast. A combination of three or four of any of these items is quick and tasty. Try adding a little olive oil, cinnamon, basil, or chili-pepper flakes for extra punch.

- Chopped vegetables (cooked or not)
- Chopped fruit
- Nuts
- A hard-boiled egg, piece of chicken, or piece of fish
- A cooked whole grain (unsweetened oatmeal, farro, or quinoa)
- Unsweetened yogurt

Lettuce, Banana, and Nut Butter Wrap

This is quick and easy, especially if you wash and dry the lettuce the night before. (You can layer the leaves between paper towels in the fridge and they'll stay fresh.)

2 servings

- 2 bananas, sliced lengthwise
- 4 lettuce leaves, washed and patted dry (try red-leaf or iceberg)
- 8 teaspoons of unsweetened nut butter (try almond, peanut, or cashew)

Spread some nut butter on each banana slice, roll it up in a lettuce leaf, and enjoy. ■





New Physical-Activity Guidelines for Americans

Keep all of us on the move

The United States has new physical-activity guidelines for the first time in a decade. Many of the guidelines remain the same as the 2008 versions, but there are some differences.

- **Children ages 3 to 5.** *At least three hours a day of active play.* The earlier guidelines provided no specific recommendations for young children.
- **Children and teens ages 6 to 17.** *At least one hour a day of moderate-to-vigorous activity.* Make this a mix of aerobic (swimming, running, volleyball) and strength exercise (jumping rope, wall climbing, playground play). This is the same as the 2008 guidance.
- **Adults.** *At least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity* (swimming, brisk walking, biking) *or at least 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity* (running, tennis).

Adults should also do *muscle-strengthening activities at least twice a week* (lifting weights or doing body-weight exercises like push-ups, lunges, and squats).

These amounts and kinds of activity for adults remain the same as the 2008 guidelines. However,

the new guidelines specifically suggest that the 150 minutes of aerobic activity be spread throughout the week instead of over one or two days. The old guidelines counted activity toward the 150-minute minimum only if it lasted at least 10 minutes. The new guidelines count any activity, no matter how brief, toward the goal.

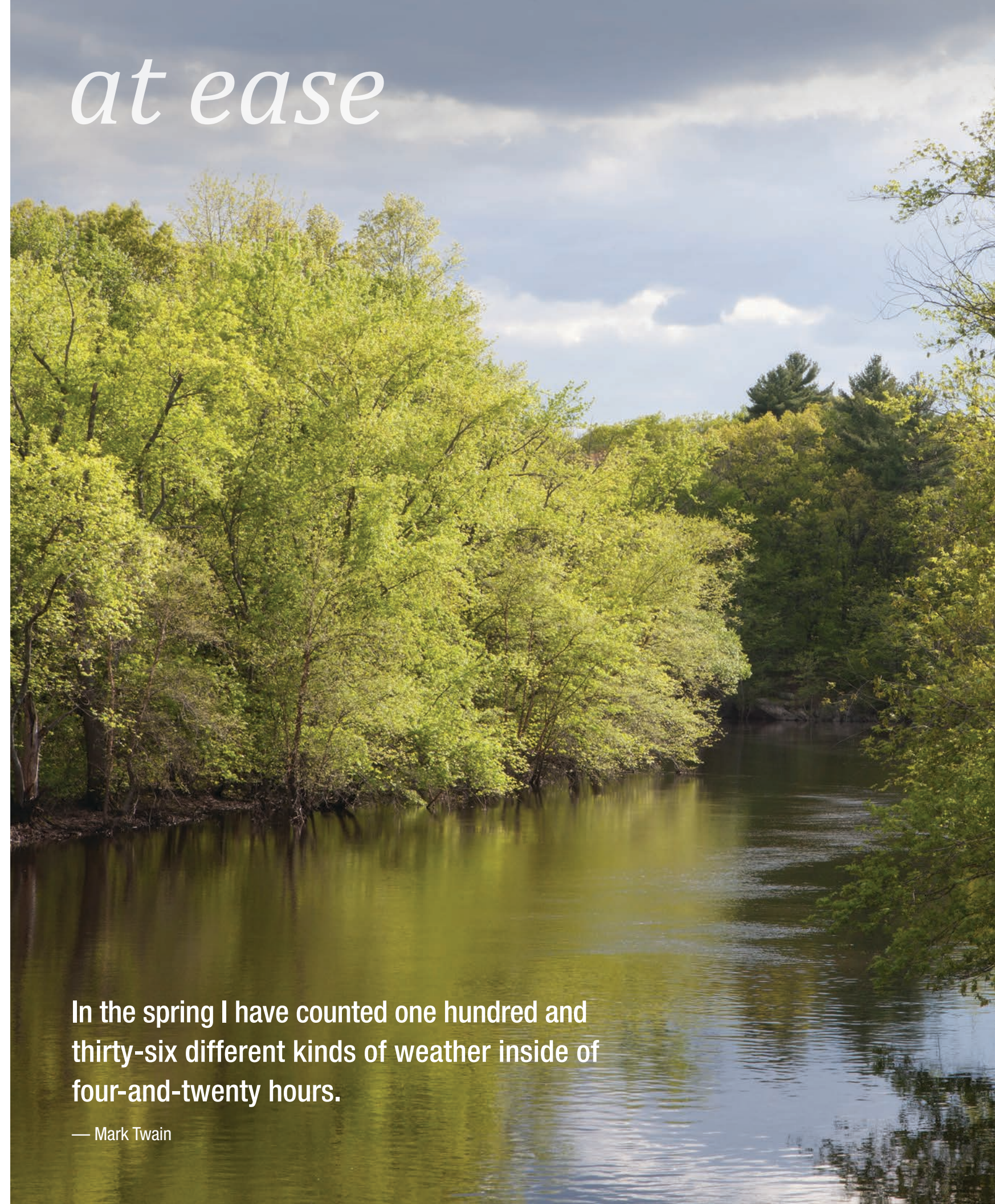
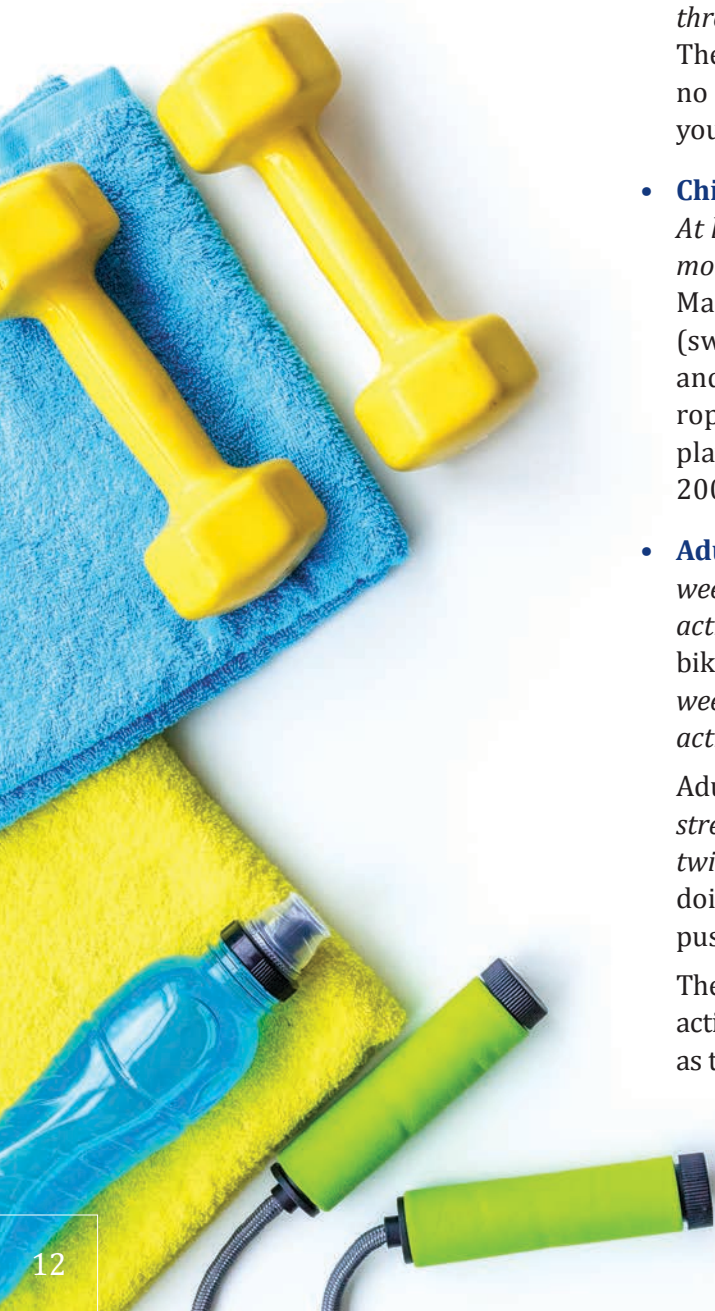
- **Older adults.** *The same guidance as for younger adults, but with the addition of balance training such as tai chi or yoga.* ■

For information about how to work more physical activity into your life, go to the Move Your Way website from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at health.gov/moveyourway.

at ease

In the spring I have counted one hundred and thirty-six different kinds of weather inside of four-and-twenty hours.

— Mark Twain





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Listening to U

Interviewing members for the “In the Long Run” feature of U magazine is one of my favorite tasks. It reminds me that everyone has a story, and that everyone has something important to say. The key is to take time to listen. And when we listen we learn.

My spring resolution is to listen more to other people's stories, especially the stories of people whose experiences are different from my own: older people, younger people (especially little kids), people from other cultures, and people with different values and beliefs. As the noted Chicago educator Vivian Paley once wrote, “It's hard to learn from people who are just like you.”

Warmest wishes for a spring full of stories, listening, and learning.

What would you like to read about in future issues of U magazine?
Please let me know at Kerry.Tucker@usfamilyhealth.org.

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