Visit Medical Korea
Korean Travel Destinations on the Guinness World Records

The Guinness World Records collect the best and the greatest of everything. Did you know that there are many travel destinations in Korea included in these records? The longest fountain bridge, the train station closest to the sea, and the longest embankment can all be found in Korea.

Banpo Bridge Rainbow Fountain

The world’s longest bridge fountain is found right in the heart of Seoul, at Banpo Hangang Park. The Banpo Bridge Rainbow Fountain, with a total length of 1,140 m, was added to the Guinness World Records in 2008. The fountain draws water from...
the Han River and puts on a beautiful show with water sprayed from 380 nozzles. The fountain processes some 190 tons of water every minute. It boasts of fantastical beauty at night, with over 200 LED bulbs, installed alongside the Banpo Bridge, emitting lights of different colors to project a rainbow onto the night sky. The sprays of water begin to dance to the tune of the music being played, while the rainbow-colored LED bulbs continue to dye the running water underneath in different colors. The best spot for viewing the fountain show is the outdoor stage in front of Sebitseom Island. The fountain shows are played, for 20 minutes on end each, for four to five times every night, from April to October.
- **Address**: 40 Sinbanpo-ro 11-gil, Seocho-gu, Seoul
- **Tel**: 02-3780-0578
- **Show hours (September and October):** Weekdays: 12:00 nn, 8:00 p.m., 8:30 p.m., 9:00 p.m. / Weekends: 12:00 nn, 7:30 p.m., 8:00 p.m., 8:30 p.m., 9:00 p.m.
Jeongdongjin Station

Jeongdongjin is the name of a beachside village in Gangneung, Gangwon-do. It was named that way since the Joseon period because the village stood straight to the east when seen from Gwanghwamun Gate in Hanyang. Jeongdongjin is known as one of the best spots to witness sunrise on New Year’s Day in Korea. All TV networks dispatch their reporters to Jeongdongjin every New Year’s Eve so that they could interview excited spectators who wait for the sun to rise.

Jeongdongjin is also famous for its train station, which is on the Guinness World Records for its proximity to the sea. The station is located only 50 m away from the waves of the sea. As soon as you step on its platform, you begin to hear the sound of waves coming from the azure East Sea.
Saemangeum Embankment

The Saemangeum Embankment, which extends to 33.9 km in total between Gunsan and Buan, two townships in Jeollabuk-do, was added to the Guinness World Records in 2010 for being the longest seawater dam in the world. At the top of the embankment is a four-lane road. When you drive along this road while looking at the vast Yellow Sea from the windshield, you will understand why this embankment was nicknamed “the Great Wall of the Sea.”

You should stop by the Saemangeum Public Relations Center in Buan or other drivers’ rest spots along the road to take
in a panoramic view of the embankment and its surroundings. The observatory on the third floor of the Saemangeum Center provides a breathtaking view of the embankment outside the window glass. The Dolphin Rest Spot features a sculpture that is shaped like the tail of a dolphin plunging headlong into the sea. Step onto the spiral observatory at the Conch Shell Rest Spot to have a view of the Gogunsan Archipelago.
● Address: Biando-ri, Okdo-myeon, Gunsan, Jeollabuk-do
● Tel: 063-584-6822
Have You Ever Experienced Diving into the Sea of Jeju Island like a Haenyeo?

What is so special about the ocean surrounding Jeju Island? The answer would be haenyeo. Haenyeo are female free divers who make their living by diving into the deep sea and harvesting seaweed and shellfish. They dare jump the rough sea with only their diving suits and goggles. Something beautiful is hidden in the deep blue sea, which cannot be seen from the surface of the water. How about setting out on a special journey to Jeju Island by becoming a haenyeo?

A Village Where About 250 Haenyeo Live

Hado Fishing Village is located in the easternmost part of Jeju
City. What is so special about this place, compared with the many other villages on Jeju Island, would be its haenyeo, mainly because it is where the largest number of haenyeo live. As haenyeo is the symbol of the ocean surrounding Jeju Island, in Hado Fishing Village you will see the ocean that can undoubtedly represent the characteristics of Jeju Island. About 250 haenyeo dive into the sea to harvest seafood, such as octopus, sea urchin, and abalone, which are then delivered to every corner of South Korea or exported to Japan. It is also possible to visit the Haenyeo Museum that depicts and records the life and culture of haenyeo in this village.

Hado Fishing Village offers various leisure sports including snorkeling, sea kayaking, and paddle board surfing. The most popular activity among them would be the haenyeo experience that allows you to dive into the sea and catch seafood along with professional haenyeo. This program is available from March to December. Participants are responsible for bringing their extra clothes, shower items, and towels.
Diving into the Sea of Jeju Island

Now, it is time to turn into a haenyeo. Once you get a diving suit in front of the Hado Fishing Village Experience Center, you can head to the shower room. It is not even easy to put on the rubber diving suit that looks like a black leotard. Pouring water into the suit is a simple way to fit yourself perfectly in it. As water creates space between your suit and body, you can easily slip into the suit. Once you finish wearing the swimming goggles and putting lead weights – which will help you sink faster – around your waist with the suit on, you will look like a real haenyeo. When you are almost ready to dive, a professional haenyeo will give you a few instructions including: “Do not step on seaweed as it is slippery” or “Do not hold on to taewak all the time just because you feel scared.” Taewak is a flotation device haenyeo usually carry with
them when they are working in the sea. Its upper half looks just like a pumpkin, which helps you take a break after you emerge on the surface; meanwhile, its lower half works as a net where you can put your harvested seafood.

Shall we now jump into the sea? If you stretch out your arms and grab a taewak just like when you use a kickboard in a swimming pool, you will see your body floating in the sea. It does not matter whether you can swim or not. You can swim faster by fluttering kicks just a little with your flippers on. The swimming goggles keep your vision clear underwater as they protect the area from your forehead to just below your nose. Unlike the professional haenyeo who will harvest seafood right after diving into the sea, you may find it difficult to dive upside down into the sea. Make sure you stoop down and dive your head first to execute the perfect dive! Once you succeed in diving, it is time to drink in the beautiful underwater scenery of the deep blue sea in Jeju. A shoal of colorful fish and a bunch of dark green seaweed dance to the beat of the waves. It is perfectly fine to be lost in admiration while checking out rocks up until you spot horned turbans or sea urchins. Once you harvest seafood, you can keep it in the net of the taewak.
Taste of the Sea Delivered to the Table by No One Else But Me

After spending about an hour swimming in the sea, you can take a rest out at the beach. A professional haenyeo will clean and prepare the seafood you have gathered so that you can enjoy them right away. It is prohibited to catch fish and seafood in the sea of Jeju Island unless you are a haenyeo or a resident of the village. However, if you sign up for this hands-on haenyeo experience, you will be allowed to bring home or taste the seafood you have collected. You do not have to take off your diving suit right after the tour as you can also enjoy snorkeling in the crystal-clear water in every corner of the village. You will feel like a child while treading the water. Even if you swallow some water, you can laugh it away. Come and enjoy your beautiful summer days on Jeju Island!
● **Address:** 1897-27, Haemajihae-ro, Gujwa-eup, Jeju, Jeju Special Self-Governing Province

● **For any inquiry, call:** 82-64-783-1996

● **Website:** http://hado.seantour.com
Revitalize Your Body and Mind with Traditional Korean Medicine

As temperatures rise and the summer rolls near, we become more prone to fatigue. Is there a secret to boosting our energy level quickly? Yes, there is, and you will find it at Seoul K-Medi Center. Located in the Yangnyeongsi District of Seoul, Seoul K-Medi Center provides a broad array of programs and facilities with which you can explore the rich tradition of Korean medicine. Take your time to explore the center, including its Herbal Medicine Museum, beauty shop, and other units. As you follow the trail of subtle herbal fragrances around the center, you will feel reinvigorated.

New landmark of Seoul Yangnyeongsi

Located near Jegi-dong Station on Metro Line 1 in Seoul, Seoul
K-Medi Center provides a wide range of programs and facilities through which visitors can explore the history and modern varieties of Korean herbal medicine. Interesting features on site include the Herbal Medicine Museum, Bojewon, K-Medi Beauty Shop, and K-Medi Café. Yangnyeongs, the special district in which the center is situated, used to be a market where all rare and invaluable ingredients of traditional herbal medicine flocked during the Joseon period. The Yangnyeongs Market today still trades over 70% of all ingredients for herbal medicine consumed in Korea. The district features over 800 herbal medicine clinics, pharmacies, and herb traders. Seoul K-Medi Center is a new landmark that symbolizes the continued history and importance of Yangnyeongs.
Experience Korean herbal medicine

Seoul K-Medi Center offers a wide range of programs with which visitors can explore the tradition of Korean herbal medicine. Visit the Costume Room on the first floor to rent and wear the traditional garments that doctors and nurses used to wear in the Joseon period, and take memorable photos. The foot bath on the second floor is one of the most popular spots throughout the center. Soaking your feet in the herb-infused warm water will make you feel much relaxed and reenergized in just half an hour. The staff prepares bath water with different herbs every day in light of the weather outside and the season. Bojewon, the Korean medicine clinic on site, is found on the third floor. The name “Bojewon” boasts of a long history, as it used to be the name of
public medical institutions that catered to the poor and the ill during the Joseon period. Today, Bojewon at K-Medi Center provides acupuncture and moxibustion therapy free of charge for international visitors (reservation needed). On the third floor, visitors can also experience intensive Korean medical care for 30 to 40 minutes on end, complete with heated herb packs, heated massage mats, stress tests, and the like. Use the heated herb packs to restore radiance to your skin, and relax on the heated massage mats.
Explore Korean herbal medicine

The Herbal Medicine Museum on the second floor of the center displays more than 420 relics of traditional medicine, including ancient textbooks and other artifacts that show the past and the present of Yangnyeongsì, as well as 300 ingredients of herbal medicine. The museum staff not only curates the history of traditional herbal medicine but also recommends diets and
exercises tailored to different body types. The dried ingredients for herbal medicine may all look like dried barks of trees, but they are at the base of incredibly complex recipes that treat a host of illnesses and conditions. Learn about herbs that cure lower backaches, strengthen the gastrointestinal system, and treat bronchitis, and discover which herbs your body needs.

Make food
Adding medicinal herbs to food might strike you as strange at first, as you probably expect it to make the taste of food bitter. Visit the Food Center on the third floor to break out of that bias. Here you can taste and get a recommendation on a wide range of delicious dishes that cater to the health needs of your body type. You can also participate in cooking programs and make food that is both healthy and tasty. Visitors to recent cooking classes had a chance to make sweet hobak-sikhye (fermented rice drinks with sweet pumpkins added), daechucha (date tea), and gyeongwaryu-gangjeong (granola bars with nuts). K-Medi Café in the annex offers a broad array of herbal teas and desserts for different body types.
Discover medicinal herbs for beauty

Korea is known for its skin care and cosmetic products made with ingredients of traditional herbal medicine, but it is difficult for first-time visitors to identify the right kinds of products for them. K-Medi Beauty Shop on the first floor helps international shoppers to make more informed choices when purchasing cosmetics made with herbal ingredients. The shop offers
products containing herbal and eco-friendly ingredients, with a staff that will readily help curious customers. The K-Medi Promotion Center also provides a wide range of teas, tablet-type medicines, health supplements, and other products that could serve as great souvenirs.
● **Address**: 26 Yangnyeongjungang-ro, Dongdaemun-gu, Seoul

● **Tel**: 02-969-9241

● Open from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (March to October), and from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (November to February)

● **Website**: http://kmedi.ddm.go.kr
Finding New Strength at Godowon Healing Center

The opposite of the hectic world is found deep in the mountains. When we enter the depths of the mountains, we are finally liberated from the constant noises of cars, construction sites, and people on the streets. Instead of these, there exist small springs and serenity on the mountains. Godowon Healing Center, which is hidden away amid high mountains in Chungju, a rural town that boasts of clean air and beautiful landscapes, is the place to go for relaxation and freedom. The center offers a wide range of meditation programs against the backdrop of a lush green forest, enabling guests to recharge themselves with new strength.

It all started with an e-mail.
Godowon Healing Center is situated in the Munseong Natural Recreational Forest but is run independently of the forest park. Known as “The Spring Deep in the Mountains,” Godowon Healing Center was named after the title of a special e-mail. Dowon Go, a journalist who was working for one of the major dailies in Korea in 2001, began to e-mail his friends regularly to share impressive passages that he found in books, along with his own remarks. These e-mails soon became known around the nation as Dowon Go’s Morning Letters. Today, 3.7 million subscribers start their mornings with these letters. Before he opened Godowon Healing Center, Mr. Go traveled to numerous world-renowned meditation centers to learn about techniques for mindfulness. At Thich Nhat Hanh’s Plum Village in France, Go learned meditation through walking. At an OSHO center in India, he learned meditation through dance.
The world changes when you pause for a moment.

Godowon Healing Center provides a broad array of mindfulness programs including walk and meditate, meditation for the day, meditation for readers, and meditation with fasting. The center also features meditation programs tailored to specific groups including married couples, young adults, best friends, and lovers. All programs start by asking participants to pause for a moment. When the gong rings, all participants must immediately stop whatever they have been doing. If you have been walking through the woods, for example, you stop and enjoy the air and natural sounds around you when you hear the gong. If the gong rings while you are eating, you put down your utensils and focus only on the texture and taste of the food in your mouth. At Godowon
Healing Center, mindfulness starts by pausing whatever activity one has been doing, removing disorganized thoughts, and focusing solely on one’s senses.
Spring Stay Programs for truly therapeutic experiences

The Spring Stay Programs allow participants to stay overnight in eco-friendly lodging arrangements that form a part of Godowon Healing Center. Guests can choose from one of the six stay programs including No-Thinking Stay, Food and Stay, Meditate-in-Nature Stay, Spa and Fasting Stay, Yoga Stay, and Book Stay. If you have been having hectic schedules and would want to give your brain a little break, the No-Thinking Stay program is for you. Participants are given the Badges of Silence. No one at the center, including staff and other mindfulness participants, are allowed to talk to you while you are wearing this badge. If you would like to surround yourself with natural sceneries and enjoy the tranquility of meditation, then the Meditate-in-Nature
program is for you. The Food Stay Program offers delicious and healthy meals made with all-natural ingredients only, without any chemical additive or flavoring. The Spa and Fasting Stay Program enables participants to detoxify and lighten up themselves. This last program provides lessons on breathing techniques, and repeated cold and hot baths to facilitate the detoxification process.
Spring Green Spa for natural cleansing
The Spring Green Spa is a collection of hot and cold springs designed specifically for meditators. It features the Cold and Hot Baths, an outdoor pool that offers scenic views of the surrounding forest that changes colors from season to season and a jjimjilbang (heated sauna) that relaxes tense muscles.

- **Address:** 201-61, Useong 1-gil, Noeun-myeon, Chungju, Chungcheongbuk-do
- **Tel.:** 1644-8421
- **Website:** http://www.godowoncenter.com
The Therapeutic Power of Green: Green Tea Fields in Korea

You may not be a green tea lover, but can you really resist the vital energy of the lush, green tea fields? There are a number of tea fields in Korea that attract tourists not just with their teas, but also with their beautiful landscapes. Light green waves cover these vast fields in Boseong, Hadong, and Jeju to hail the arrival of early summer in May. Dip yourself in this wave after wave of green energy and forget your worries.

Daehan Dawon in Boseong: Why Boseong is the Capital of Green Tea

Boseong, a small town in Jeollanam-do in southwest Korea, produces 40% of all the green tea traded in the country. The county is filled with vast tea fields here and there. If you want to see the picturesque landscape of tea fields often featured on media, Daehan Dawon is the destination to visit. This tea-themed tourism farm has been in existence for over six decades. Named as one of the 50 must-see tourist destinations in Korea by CNN in 2012, the tea farm attracts over a million guests every year.

The farm offers a wide range of tour programs, with hiking trips that last from 20 minutes to an hour. Every hiking trip features a walk through the Asian cedars and famous spots featured on commercials. Some trips also offer visits to the Tea Field Observatory and the Sea Observatory. The cedar forest near
the entrance of the farm is an attraction in itself. The soaring heights of the Asian cedars boast the beauty of straight lines stretching upward against a backdrop of curvy waves of tea trees. The green tea ice cream on offer at the Dawon Lounge is a delicacy that you should not miss out on. The powerful scent of green tea will make your exploration through the tea farm all the more reinvigorating.
Address: 763-67 Nokcha-ro, Boseong-eup, Boseong, Jeollanam-do
Tel. 061-852-4540
Website: http://dhdawon.com
Hadongdawon: Source of Tea Enjoyed in the Royal Court

Green tea grown in Hadong, a small town in Gyeongsangnam-do in southeast Korea, is nicknamed “the royal tea” because it used to be one of the tributes that local communities paid to the king. Hwagae-myeon, the tranquil community hidden away amidst the Jirisan Mountain, provides a perfect climate complete with warm air, ample humidity, and significant precipitation—all of which are crucial to the cultivation of the finest tea. There are eight major tea fields in Hadong, and “the First Tea Farm” is all the more special as it is where the first-ever tea tree was planted and grown in Korea.

According to Samguk Sagi (“Chronicles of the Three Kingdom”), a Silla king’s envoy who had been to Tang China brought seeds of tea with him on his return and planted them on the spot of land now known as the First Tea Farm. This area soon became the source of tea devoted to kings. The terraces of the tea trees on the steep sides of Jirisan Mountain are bright with energetic green around this time of the year. The Hadong Wild Tea Museum in the vicinity is another point of interest to stop at. This is where you can brew tea in a traditional way and perform tea ceremony. There are also numerous tea salons along the riverside road that extends from the Ssanggyesa Temple (Buddhist temple) to Hwagae Market. Enjoy a cup of green tea at one of these salons and take in the panoramic green landscape all around you.
Seogwang Tea Garden: Offering an Idyllic Landscape and Bittersweet Green Tea Desserts

Seogwang Tea Garden is by far the most famous of all tea fields on Jeju Island. It is popular because it offers not only a scenic tea field, but also numerous oreum (hills) of varying heights, the single-standing tree featured in countless photos and media, and O’Sulloc Tea Museum. Its sheer scale of 920,000 square meters also overwhelms tourists. The area has not always been favorable to tea cultivation. Amore-Pacific, the Korea-based multinational corporation renowned for its beauty and cosmetic products, purchased this barren and stony land and set out to transform it into one of the most fertile fields for tea cultivation in Korea in 1973. The company planted a million tea trees here in 1985,
marking the birth of the tea field now known as Seogwang Tea Garden. Whereas tea fields in Boseong and Hadong feature terraces, tea farms in Jeju consist of level lands that offer views of Hallasan Mountain and oreum at a distance.

The idyllic landscape of Seogwang Tea Garden has frequently been featured in K-drama and movies. The single-standing tree in the middle of the tea field is a popular spot for guests taking photographs. The O’Sulloc Tea Museum across the tea field features a café offering various green tea-related desserts, a room full of teacups and utensils from around the world, and an observatory on the second floor from which you can enjoy a perfect view of the tea field underneath.
● Address: 1235-3 Seogwang-ri, Andeok-myeon, Seogwipo, Jeju
● Tel. 064-794-5312
Catch the Signs: Symptoms of Colorectal Cancer

If you think you have nothing to do with colorectal cancer, think again. The incidence rate of colorectal cancer has been rising among people in their 40s and even in younger age groups. The main culprit is a diet that is heavy on meat or processed meat. Genetics also play an important role in colorectal cancer, so care is needed if you have a family member diagnosed with colorectal cancer. As we cannot see our own large intestine, we have to pay close attention to the signs our body sends our way. Oncologists stress the importance of early discovery because 90% of patients with stage 1 colorectal cancer make a full recovery after surgery.
1. Rectal bleeding

Rectal bleeding after emptying your bowel may be a symptom of colorectal cancer. In particular, watch out for the color: if it is dark or bright red, it may be a cause for concern. Moreover, if you feel a lump in your abdomen, it may be time for a colorectal cancer examination.

2. Blood in stools

The most common symptom of colorectal cancer is blood in stools. Black or black-and-red stools are a warning signal: colorectal cancer may cause bleeding in the lower digestive tract, which, in turn, causes bloody feces. Then, how can you tell if bloody stools are caused by hemorrhoid or cancer? Bloody feces caused by hemorrhoid is bright red because bleeding caused by the disease is likely to be from the rectum.

3. Acute diarrhea and frequent trips to the toilet

Acute diarrhea is not a good sign, especially if you did not overeat or had food that has gone bad. Other possible symptoms include feeling as if your bowel is not properly emptied, frequent trips to the toilet, and frequent defecation.

4. Stringy stools

Stool thickness is also relevant. A healthy stool looks like a
banana with even thickness. If your stools begin to come out thinner than usual, then it is time to monitor your stools closely.

5. Gassy stomach

If you experience abdominal discomforts—such as gas, a bloated feeling, or cramps—it may be a symptom of colorectal cancer.

6. Constant pain in the lower abdomen

Abdominal pain may be caused by gastroenteritis. However, it is starkly different from colorectal cancer. While the symptoms of gastroenteritis can be reduced by taking antibiotics, antibiotics have no effect against the pain caused by colorectal cancer. If unexplained abdominal pain continues, consult your doctor as soon as possible.
Other signs of colorectal cancer include sudden loss of appetite, weight loss, and frequent fatigue. If three or more symptoms manifest at the same time, make sure to see an oncologist for a colonoscopy. If you are 50 years or older—younger if you have a family member diagnosed with the disease—you should have yourself checked on a regular basis even without any perceived symptom.
Straighten Your Back to Change the Way You Look

Stress is one of the aspects that define the lives of people today. Many of our contemporaries complain of various symptoms including stiff shoulders, back pain, and stomach troubles. These symptoms are often caused by the aging of the spine. Of course, the main culprit is “gravity.” We do not usually notice the load that gravity puts on our spines. As we age, the muscles surrounding our spine grow weaker, leaving us feeling sluggish and making it difficult for us to raise our bodies.

The Spine: The Last Line of Defense

Humans evolved in a way in which the head is located on top to protect the brain, whereas the spine evolved to have an S-shaped
curve. The particular shape protects our brain from impact as we move our bodies. It also protects the spinal cord that connects the body to the brain and serves as a conduit that connects our nerves with our muscles and skin. Thanks to the spine, we can tell if we are feeling hot or cold. The spine allows us to move our bodies at will. It also controls the muscles so that we can move the way we do. In addition, the nerves in the spine are connected to the intestines. We do not feel it, but the nerves help the organs digest and absorb food.

A Simple Spine Checkup

**Step 1.** Feel each of your spinal discs. If you feel pain even with a light touch, you may have a spinal problem.

**Step 2.** Stand up with your back touching the wall. If your shoulders do not touch the wall, it means you have a stooped posture. On the contrary, you are in good condition if the back of your head and your shoulders touch the wall, and your waist is not far off from the wall.

**Step 3.** Roll back and forth on the floor. Lie down on, and hug your knees to your chest. Then, roll back and forth, making sure that each disc touches the floor. If you cannot even roll on the floor because doing so causes you severe pain, your spine may have already aged considerably.

The Hallmarks of a Healthy Spine
A healthy spine is stable and flexible. In this context, stability means that your spine can support your body as its main pillar. You lose stability when you suffer from pain in your spine or its surrounding muscles or if you have scoliosis. The spine also needs to be flexible. Each of the 20 discs comprising the spine should be able to move smoothly without difficulty. When some of them lose their flexibility, load is added on the other healthier discs, which may lead to spinal issues.

**A Sound Posture, a Sound Body and Mind**
The first step toward a healthy spine is having the right posture. A good posture reduces the burden on the muscles and joints surrounding the spine. It also helps with stiffness in the neck and shoulders, as well as back pain. A person with a healthy spine radiates a vibrant energy and has healthy intestinal functions. Healthy intestines lead to good appetite, thereby preventing stomach troubles such as constipation or indigestion. Postures also affect our mental status. A bad posture causes the nerves in the spine to negatively affect the intestines, causing pain and anxiety. We often fail to realize these issues until symptoms manifest. Therefore, the best approach is to always keep a good posture and exercise regularly to give our spines the stability and flexibility they need.
Relieve Stress and Prevent Hypertension

May 17 is World Hypertension Day. The day has been designated to raise public awareness of hypertension and the importance of preventing associated diseases. Almost one billion people worldwide are suffering from hypertension, with experts forecasting the number to reach 1.5 billion by 2025.

Hypertension is a medical condition characterized by a blood pressure of 140 mmHg or a higher systolic and 90 mmHg or a higher diastolic. Common symptoms include headache, lightheadedness, and tinnitus, but many patients do not experience any symptom at all. The lack of severe symptoms often leads hypertension patients to maintain their unhealthy habits, which later lead to much more serious complications that
involve the damage of blood vessels. The failure of damaged blood vessels to deliver nutrients and oxygen to the key organs of the body thus causes heart, brain, kidney, and eye problems. Strokes caused by cerebral hemorrhage and cardiac infarction are indeed serious complications of hypertension, with risks of fatality.

According to a research by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the United States, the leading cause of hypertension is obesity. Doctors, however, agree that there are a host of other factors that could also lead to hypertension including genetic history, dietary habits, the lack of exercises, drinking, smoking, aging, and stress.

It is better to prevent than treat hypertension. Preventing it
involves maintaining the standard BMI, avoiding excess sodium intake, and exercising regularly. Most importantly, it requires avoiding or relieving stress.

Find your best regimen for relieving stress.

There is no fixed cure for stress. We all get stressed out to different extents under different circumstances. The following tips may help you toward finding and developing your own cures for stress.

1. Identify the types of stress to which you are prone.

Identify the sources of stress that bother you. Then, decide whether you have control over them. Concentrate your effort, time, and resources on controlling those that you can control. As for the sources of stress that are out of your control, admit that
you lack control, and lighten the load on your mind.

2. Know what you like.

We can naturally de-stress by immersing ourselves in things that we like. However, effective stress-relievers must not be work-related. Neither should they be about showing ourselves off. Trying to enjoy things as part of work or to show off to others could lead to further stress.

3. Appreciate the small things in life.

Trying to go out of one’s ways to find cures to stress could be distressing. Ordinary activities, such as organizing one’s room, shopping for essentials, and taking dogs out for a walk, could have a better effect on cooling us down and reducing stress.
Age-Specific Medical Checkups Can Increase Healthy Life Expectancy

Welcoming the aging society, we tend to put more emphasis on “healthy life expectancy” than on average life expectancy. Living healthy is far more important than living longer. The key to increasing our health span is to get regular medical checkups. Shall we now take a closer look at what to keep in mind when getting medical checkups depending on our age?

Cancer in Younger Age Group Can Be More Dangerous

The average health span in South Korea is 65 years, which is 10 years less than the 74.5 years in its neighboring country, Japan. Out of the 191 countries across the world ranked according to healthy life expectancy, South Korea ranked 51st. To increase our health span, early detection and treatment of diseases are as important as good eating habits and consistent exercise.

It is not just those in their middle ages after their 40s who have health concerns. As the number of patients with gastric cancer in their 20s to 30s and of single women with cervical cancer is increasing, we can say that we—regardless of age—must pay attention to our health. For example, when diagnosed with stage 0 cervical cancer, about 90% of patients can go into complete remission. Given that, it is never too late to emphasize the importance of medical checkups that are beneficial for early
Some people hold on to the wishful thinking that they will stay healthy forever because they exercise regularly. However, even famous young athletes like Jameson Taillon (a baseball pitcher for the Pittsburgh Pirates of Major League Baseball), Chad Bettis (a baseball pitcher for the Colorado Rockies), Francesco Acerbi (an Italian soccer player), and Yeray Álvarez (a Spanish soccer player) have been diagnosed with testicular cancer. Our body can be entirely devoured by a disease when we least expect it. All we can do to prevent it is to get regular medical checkups.

Physical characteristics or diseases can vary depending on age. That is why we must get age-specific medical checkups while paying attention to our own or our family medical history. Nevertheless, it is still necessary for us to get regular, annual medical checkups (or every half a year for those with a family medical history) regardless of age.

**Aged 20–30: Back to Basics Medical Checkups!**

People in their 20s to 30s tend to neglect their health. However, due to unhealthy dietary patterns and excessive stress, they are facing a growing risk of getting gastric and colorectal cancers. This is the reason why they also need regular medical checkups. Cancer among those in the younger age group can be more
dangerous as it can spread faster, even at an earlier stage. As you can see from this, early detection is very important. In general, those in their 20s to 30s are asked to take a hepatitis B blood test, check their blood pressure for the diagnosis of elevated blood pressure, measure their height and weight to see whether they are obese and get a chest X-ray for the diagnosis of tuberculosis.

It is highly recommended for women in their 30s who plan to get pregnant to check whether they have a rubella virus infection when taking a blood test. If a pregnant woman becomes exposed to rubella virus, she would be prone to miscarriages and increase the chances for her baby to be diagnosed with congenital rubella syndrome, which may result in severe birth defects such as cataract, hearing loss, congenital heart disease, and intellectual disability.
Aged 40-50: Learn about Your Body by Getting a Thorough Medical Checkup When Cancer Is the Leading Cause of Death!

The biggest cause of death among those in their middle ages is cancer. Apart from cancer, major causes of death include liver and heart diseases, cerebrovascular disorders, and diabetes. Thus, those in their middle ages must get thorough health checkups along with cancer screening tests for the diagnosis of gastric, colorectal, cervical, and liver cancers.

In particular, it is advisable for those with hepatitis B or C or with liver cirrhosis to take a liver cancer screening test every half a year. As for rectal or colorectal cancer, it is difficult to detect the polyps that carry a risk of developing into cancer only through a fecal occult blood test. You will benefit better from an
endoscopic examination of the colon and rectum every two to three years if you have polyps, and every five years if you do not have any.

After your 40s, it is required to get a computed tomography (CT) scans for a more thorough medical examination. CT scans can detect bronchial disorders, aortic diseases, lung cancer, and other diseases that a basic ultrasound scan is unable to do so. In particular, those with family history and other risk factors must take CT scans.

**List of Major Health Screening Tests that Vary Depending on the Patient’s Age**

Middle-aged men and women have different screening and diagnostic tests that they must pay attention. For example, men in their 40s are at the risk of heart disease 3 to 4 times higher than women of the same age as they are. That is why they must get regular health checkups to counteract high blood pressure. Middle-aged men suffering from high blood pressure or obesity, in particular, must undergo an endoscopic examination of the colon. If they are smokers or patients with chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, dyslipidemia, and diabetes, it is advisable for them to get a carotid ultrasound scan as carotid artery stenosis might increase their chances of getting cerebral apoplexy.
Middle-aged women are concerned about conditions that present most frequently in women such as cervical and breast cancers. The government provides women beyond their 40s with an opportunity to obtain a free mammography screening test. However, this test can only detect tumors that are more than two centimeters. In case you have a family medical history, you better take an ultrasound scan along with a human papillomavirus test and a pelvic ultrasound scan.

After menopause, women must get a bone density test every two to three years. Nevertheless, osteoporosis is no longer a concern exclusive among women. Recently, there have been many cases of osteoporosis among men due to drinking, smoking, and low testosterone levels. After the 50s, people—regardless of gender—must regularly take bone density tests and follow a lifestyle that can prevent osteoporosis.
Aged 60 and Over: Fight Degenerative Conditions or Cerebrovascular Diseases!

If you are aged 60 and over and currently entering the golden age of your life, all your focus must lie on the “postponement of degenerative diseases when getting medical health checkups.” As you will gradually experience physical degeneration, you will have higher chances of getting diseases compared to those in their middle ages. What is at stake here is to slow down the progression of the diseases as well as to maintain the current health condition for a longer term.

Those aged 60 and over must pay attention to cancer, cerebrovascular disorders, and heart diseases the most. They must take medical tests whenever they feel something is wrong
with their sight, hearing, and teeth. For the prevention of cerebro-neurological disorders, including cerebral apoplexy, Alzheimer’s disease, and Parkinson’s disease, and senile disorders like cardiovascular diseases, it is highly recommended that they regularly take MRI, MRA, and CT scans of their head. If you are concerned about dementia or if you have a family medical history and you are exposed to risk factors for cerebral apoplexy such as smoking, diabetes, and high blood pressure, a CT scan is a must.

The elderly must also pay attention to prostate diseases. In South Korea, 43.8% of the patients with prostate cancer are in their 70s. When you enter your 60s, you will benefit from an early prostate ultrasound scan as it can prevent not only prostate cancer but also prostate enlargement.
Prolonged Cold May Be a Symptom of Thyroid Diseases

People, in general, do not seem to think much of thyroid diseases. Many of us describe thyroid cancer as cancer “of the good kind.” Some even pass remarks such as “you look so thin and pretty now” to patients who lost weight because of hyperthyroidism. When a patient complains of hypothyroidism symptoms, some people dismiss them as common menopausal symptoms. Are thyroid diseases as benign as some people make them sound?

Midlife Diseases with Symptoms Similar to Menopause

When you reach the age of 40, your body feels different from day to day. You remember visiting two or three places a day and being fine with it just a few months ago. Now, you need to take a nap after every excursion. You feel chilly even when you are wearing a thick sweater and have raised the room temperature. You know your metabolic functions are supposed to wane when you get old, but it does not seem fair that you did not shed even a pound after surviving for two days on a porridge-only diet. You feel slight swelling in your throat and take some cold medicine, but your body refuses to get better. You think that, perhaps, you should switch to another medicine.
The above paragraph sums up a day in the life of most women going through menopause, particularly in winter. However, in some cases, this experience may not be as ordinary as it seems. Many people do not even realize that they have thyroid diseases because they exhibit symptoms similar to those of a cold. The symptoms are sometimes caused by the temporary deterioration of thyroid functions. However, we should be aware of the possibility that it may not always be the case.

As we age, our youthful interest in our looks transitions into a keen interest in the state of our circulatory and endocrine organs. For this reason, the word “thyroid” sounds more familiar to the members of the middle-aged population.
The thyroid is an endocrine organ that secretes hormones. It converts iodine from food into thyroid hormones and circulates them throughout the body to facilitate each organ’s functions. While the endocrine hormones created by the pancreas, adrenal gland, and sexual gland target specific parts of the body, thyroid hormones affect almost all organs.

Thyroid hormones maintain the body temperature and control metabolism and calorie consumption. In newborns and children, they play a crucial role in their growth and brain/bone development. When the thyroid does not function properly, it destroys the balance of our metabolism, making it difficult for us to lead a normal life. You can think of it as living in a house with a broken heating system: you will suffer.

The organ responsible for controlling the thyroid hormone production is the pituitary gland, which is, in turn, controlled by the hypothalamus. When one or more of these organs malfunction, the body produces more or fewer hormones than usual. When more hormones are secreted, the condition is called hyperthyroidism. When the body produces insufficient thyroid hormones, the condition is called hypothyroidism. A thyroid nodule is also one of the thyroid diseases. Hashimoto’s Disease is another thyroid disease suffered by many middle-aged women. Some patients with the disease display hypothyroidism.
Feeling More Irritable than Usual? Thyroid Diseases May Be the Cause

The onset rate of hyperthyroidism in women is four to eight times higher than in men. Women in their 30s–50s are particularly susceptible to the disease. The main symptoms include perspiration, weight loss, weak pulse, shaky hands, and chest pain. If you feel overly sensitive and easily irritated over small matters, or your limbs are shaky, and you lose weight for no reason, you might have hyperthyroidism. In 80% of the cases, the symptoms are caused by Graves’ Disease. In serious cases, patients experience paralysis caused by loss of muscular strength, bulging eyes, or double vision. Although weight and energy losses are often mistaken for cancer symptoms, you should not worry because hyperthyroidism and cancer are two entirely different diseases.

Hypothyroidism occurs when the thyroid hormone production drops below the normal level. Patients with hypothyroidism are prone to feeling cold because of the decrease in their basal metabolic rate, leading many of them to mistake the symptoms for a cold. If you feel puffy, are easily tired, and experience constipation, weight gain, anemia, and deteriorated memory, it may be wise to see a doctor for a checkup. More than 95% of hypothyroidism cases are caused by conditions in the thyroid,
most of which are symptoms of Hashimoto’s Disease, an autoimmune disease that causes thyroid inflammation.

A thyroid nodule is one of the most common thyroid diseases: it affects around half of the population across the world aged over 40 years. Most of the cases are benign, with only around 5% being malignant. Thyroid papillary carcinoma, which accounts for 90%–95% of all cases of thyroid cancer, has a 10-year survival rate of more than 90%. It is crucial to find the treatment that works for you.

Does Seaweed Soup Cause Thyroid Diseases?

The exact cause of thyroid diseases is yet to be discovered. Some mistakenly believe that hyper/hypothyroidism are genetic
diseases because they are more commonly found in people of certain physical constitutions. However, the diseases are not genetically inherited. Some thyroid cancers are genetically inherited medullary cancers. However, they take up only 1%-3%. Thyroid papillary cancer is known to be unrelated to genetics.

In Korea, many pregnant women worry that they may contract thyroid diseases from the seaweed soup (miyeokguk) that they eat. However, it is a worry based on a misconception. Indeed, an average Korean takes five to six times more than the daily amount of iodine recommended by the World Health Organization (152 μg). However, experts say that high iodine intake does not cause diseases. On the contrary, people living in countries that do not favor seaweed on the dining table often suffer from iodine deficiency. The iodine pills in the market contain 100 times the recommended amount, so caution is advised when taking them.

Some cases of thyroid diseases require patients to take certain medications for the rest of their lives. However, in most cases, patients get considerably better after taking medicine for not longer than two to three months. Some patients think that taking thyroid medicine for a long time can cause osteoporosis. However, when patients stop taking medicine, they are exposed to the risks of osteoporosis caused by the excessive secretion of
thyroid hormones.

It is a well-known fact that the thyroid is vulnerable to radiation. In particular, children aged five and under should not be exposed to radiation. Adults are relatively safer from the effects of radiation, but it would be wise to refrain from taking too many computed tomography (CT) scans.

In terms of treatment, thyroid diseases are not that different from other chronic diseases. They can be prevented with appropriate stress relief routine, regular exercise, and a healthy diet with balanced nutrients. It is a common knowledge that obesity, drinking, and smoking are the causes of thyroid diseases or any disease for that matter. Regular exercise is highly recommended. However, a hyperthyroidism patient may experience difficulty in breathing and faster heartbeat during exercises. Therefore, it would be wise to stay away from the gym until you get normal hormone levels through treatment.

**Thyroid Disease Prevention and Helpful Tips**

Thyroid inflammation cannot be prevented. The best we can do is alleviate the symptoms with dietary therapy and exercise when the symptoms manifest.

- In case of hyperthyroidism, it is best to eat food, such
as broccoli, cabbage, kale, spinach, and bean, to lower your thyroid activities.

- Stay away from sugar, dairy products, caffeine, or alcohol.

- Essential fatty acids and fish oils are effective anti-inflammatory agents.

- Regular exercises improve thyroid functions.

* Source: Samsung Medical Center