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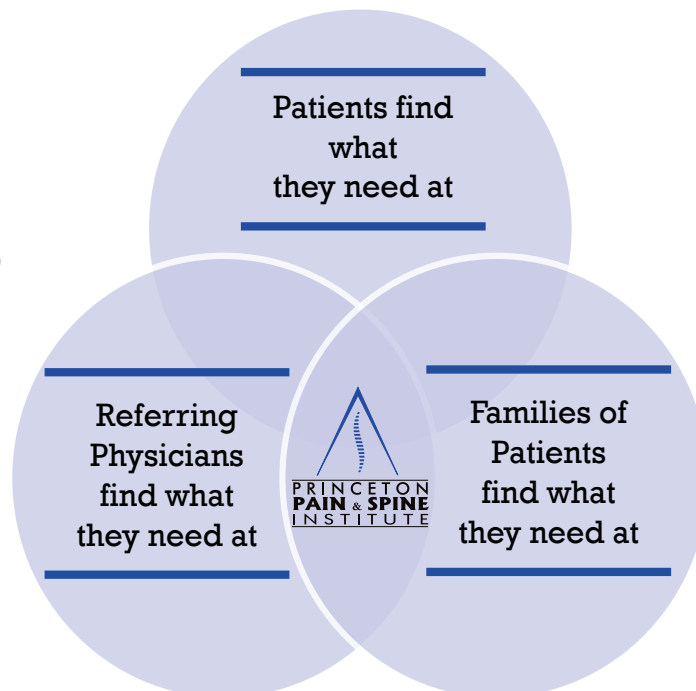
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Everything You Need to Know about Vitamin D Deficiencies

By Brianna Siciliano

There are so many vitamins in the world, and sometimes we have absolutely no clue which vitamins are vital for daily health. Because of this, we become deficient of certain vitamins, weakening our body in one way or another (for example, weakening our immune system, organs, bones, blood flow, etc). It is time we take control of our health and make sure that our bodies are fed with the vitamins and minerals that can improve our lives today, tomorrow, and everyday for the rest of our lives!

Vitamin D is essential for supporting muscle strength, supporting a healthy immune system, regulating mineral concentrations of phosphorus and calcium in the body, and enhancing calcium absorption. Deficiencies of vitamin D are (unfortunately) very common in the U.S. These deficiencies can be caused by being overweight or obese, living in a region with a long winter season, having little to no sun exposure (it is recommended to have at least—or more than—10-30 minutes of sun exposure at least twice a week), failing to consume the recommended levels of vitamin D over time, having darker skin (because people with darker skin may need as much as 10 times more sun exposure than paler people so that the production of vitamin D can be the same), or being older (because as we age, our skin does not make as much vitamin D in response to our body's sun exposure).

Symptoms of vitamin D deficiencies include muscle weakness,

bone pain, increased blood pressure, and depression. In addition, vitamin D deficiencies can be linked to serious health concerns, including severe asthma in children, increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease, cancer, and cognitive impairment in older adults.

Can you be vitamin D deficient and not know it? Yes, it is possible! To find out if you are vitamin D deficient, it might be worth your while to take a blood test (specifically the 25-hydroxy vitamin D blood test) and look at your results (have your doctor do so as well!). If your levels come back somewhere in the range of 20 nanograms/milliliter to 50ng/mL, you do not have a vitamin D deficiency. However, if your levels are less than 12 ng/mL, you are vitamin D deficient.

Eating foods like cooked salmon, fortified milk, fortified cereal, and eggs—all food sources containing different amounts of vitamin D—is not going to expose your body to its daily vitamin D needs. To give your body more vitamin D, you can either A) expose your bare skin to the sun more often or B) take vitamin D supplements. Hey, it doesn't hurt to do both!



Management and Treatment of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome in Children and Adolescents

Managing chronic fatigue syndrome can be as complex as the illness itself. Options for treating and managing CFS may include treating the most disruptive symptoms such as fatigue due to sleep problems, pain, and lightheadedness. CFS symptoms can vary over time and may require periodic re-evaluation. Primary care providers can develop effective treatment plans based on their experience in treating other complex illnesses. Management may require input from a variety of healthcare professionals (e.g. medical doctors, rehabilitation specialists, mental health professionals, and physical or exercise therapists) when available.

A management program should address:

- Varying and unpredictable symptoms

- A decrease in stamina that interferes with activities of daily life

- Memory and concentration problems that adversely affect school performance

- Changes in relationships with family members and friends

Doctors, family members, and patients need to communicate with one another about which symptoms are most disruptive or disabling so they can tailor the management plan accordingly. Treatment can be directed toward the most problematic symptoms as agreed upon by the patient, family members and doctors.

When family members and children communicate with doctors about the child's lifestyle and behaviors, they can make important distinctions. For instance, whether the child's lack of usual energy is because of fatigue or the result of normal changes in sleep cycles that may begin at puberty. Such distinctions are important because they affect the management plan for the child.

Fatigue Due to Sleep Problems

Many CFS patients, including children and adolescents, experience sleep problems. Common sleep complaints include difficulty falling or staying asleep, daytime sleepiness, frequent awakening, and intense and vivid dreaming. Adult patients report that they feel less refreshed and restored after sleep than they felt before they became ill.

In young children, this problem is detected by a lack of their usual energy. Sleep problems in adolescents with CFS may be challenging to detect, as sleep cycles may begin to change with the onset of puberty, such as staying up later and sleeping in. The demands of school classes, homework, after-school jobs, and social activities also affect sleep patterns.

Doctors can help people with CFS adopt good sleep habits. Patients should be advised to practice standard sleep hygiene techniques:

- Establish a regular bedtime routine

- Avoid long naps during the day

- Control noise and light (limit or remove music or screen exposure-TV, other and all electronic devices) prior to bed for the night as part of an extended wind-down period

- Get natural light exposure in the morning, preferably before school

- Use the bed only for sleep

- Try light exercise and stretching earlier in the day, at least four hours before bedtime

Pain

Children and adolescents with CFS do not commonly experience muscle and joint pain, as do adult CFS patients. Yet headaches and abdominal pain may be more common in children and adolescents with CFS, and pain and sleep difficulty often go hand-in-hand. Children may not be able to express pain, or they may describe it poorly. Therefore, observations of lifestyle and behavior are critical to good management of symptoms. Doctors should attempt to identify the origin of the pain and then discuss with patients and family members the use of pain-relieving medications. Doctors should be cautious in prescribing pain-relieving medication because some may cause side effects.

Depression and Anxiety

Adjusting to a chronic illness can sometimes lead to symptoms of depression and anxiety. Anxiety in children and adolescents with

CFS is not caused by the illness itself, but can develop because of the adjustments the child must make in order to manage the condition. Counseling may be helpful in reducing stress and symptoms of depression and anxiety, for example, sleep problems and headaches.

Some children might also benefit from antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications. However, doctors must review recommendations and consider the usual concerns about prescribing these medications for children and adolescents. Antidepressant drugs of various classes have other effects that might worsen CFS symptoms and cause side effects. When doctors are concerned about patients' psychological conditions, they may make a referral to a mental health professional.

Although treating depression and anxiety can reduce psychological distress and impairment in some patients, it is not a cure for CFS.



Orthostatic Intolerance

Orthostatic intolerance (OI) is the development of a set of characteristic symptoms while standing or sitting upright. Compared with adult CFS patients, OI is more common in adolescents with CFS. Adolescents may exhibit symptoms of OI, such as frequent lightheadedness. The symptoms may be triggered or made worse by prolonged sitting or standing upright.

Initially, conservative treatment of OI can involve several things. Doctors may suggest that patients increase daily fluid and salt intake and make postural adjustments (like getting up more slowly and using muscle contractions in the legs to help better tolerate upright posture). When possible, patients can also use compression garments such as support hose, girdles or abdominal binders. If symptoms continue to be severe and are not relieved by these conservative measures, consultation with a cardiologist or neurologist may be beneficial for adolescents.

Activity

CFS patients frequently report experiencing post-exertional malaise or post-exertional relapse, which is the exacerbation of symptoms following physical or mental exertion. This relapse typically lasts 12-48 hours after activity and could even last days, weeks, or months. For patients with CFS, managing activity levels is a key part of managing the illness. It is important to find a balance between inactivity and excessive activity, which can aggravate CFS symptoms. This often requires a new way of thinking about daily activities. For example, daily chores and school activities may need to be broken down into shorter time frames. A symptom diary can be very helpful for managing CFS. Keeping daily track of how patients feel and what patients do, may help to find patterns or identify triggers when symptoms start to affect daily activities.

Parents may work with teachers and administrators to redefine expectations of activity and performance for children with CFS. It is true that exercise can benefit children with certain chronic illnesses. While the overall goal is to help CFS patients tolerate exercise again, children with CFS should avoid activity that results in aggravated CFS symptoms. Activity programs aimed at vigorously increasing aerobic capacity are not recommended.

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How Can I Help My Child Develop Healthy Self-Esteem?

By Brianna Siciliano

As children grow older, they become more and more observant. They listen to what other people around them—especially their peers—have to say. Kids pick up on all sorts of actions, beliefs, knowledge, and images, and unfortunately, sometimes these are not positive. How children feel about themselves can depend on many factors, including standards that have been set for themselves, the environment their time is spent in, and experiences that they have grown up through. Although some of these factors are out of your control as your child's parent, others can be influenced by you!

If and when you hear your child make a negative comment about herself, call your child out. Let your son or daughter know that he/she is a beautiful and special blessing, and how great he/she is in different areas. Point out things that your child should be proud of, for example their hard work in a certain activity or sport, their good grades, or their great relationships with others. Different people excel in different categories! Make sure your child knows how great he or she is!

To boost your his or her self-esteem, it is important to help your child recognize and modify the negative thoughts about him or herself. Being reminded of their importance, and having their incredible abilities pointed out, is a major confidence boost to children. Saying something as simple as, "You have been doing a great job in school lately! All of your hard work is paying off. I'm very proud of you!" will let your child know that they are noticed and valued.

As a parent, it is extremely important to be careful of what you say because kids are very sensitive to parents' words. Remember to praise your child for their effort and their successes. When a child doesn't achieve something, like for example making the soccer team, he or she is in a vulnerable place. Instead of saying something like, "You'll make the team next time, you just need to work harder," say something along the lines of, "You didn't make the team, but you put in some great effort and I'm proud of you!" This will have a much better end result for your child's self-esteem.

Parents can also help by being positive role models, giving positive and accurate feedback, and being affectionate and spontaneous. Children look up to their parents and learn a lot from their home environment; if a child sees their mother loving her body, then the child will want to love their own body, too!

Kids should grow up feeling special and great, not normal or average. With your help, your child can feel like a million bucks. Make sure your children know how loved, special, and beautiful they are!



QUESTION:

What is a midwife and what does a midwife do?

ANSWER:

A midwife is a person trained to assist women in childbirth. The term midwife also reflects a philosophy of care that is directed toward women and offers a variety of health services such as gynecological examinations, contraceptive counseling, prescriptions, and labor and delivery care. Providing expert care during labor and delivery, and after birth is a specialty that makes midwives unique. One of the main reasons women decide to use a midwife is to experience childbirth as naturally as possible.

According to the American College of Nurse Midwives, benefits of receiving midwifery care include:

- Decreased risk of needing a cesarean
- Reduced rates of labor induction and augmentation
- Reduced use of regional anesthesia
- Decreased infant mortality rates
- Decreased risk of preterm birth
- Decreased third and fourth degree perineal tears
- Increased satisfaction with quality of care
- Increased chances of having a positive start to breastfeeding



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February Is American Heart Month

By Susan Heckler

One of the highlights each February is the anticipation of Valentine's Day. This is the occasion where you can touch someone's heart and bring them happiness. February is also American Heart Month, which promotes understanding of your risks for heart disease, stroke, and to stay "heart healthy" for yourself and the ones you love.

Cardiovascular disease is the # 1 killer of women and men in the United States. One in four deaths is caused by heart disease annually. It is a leading cause of disability, preventing Americans from working and enjoying family activities as well as costing the United States over \$300 billion each year. This includes the cost of health care services, medications, and lost productivity caused by heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure.

Do you know your risk factors?

- Diet—Make healthy choices, reduce sodium and portion control.
- Physical Activity—The Surgeon General recommends that adults should engage in moderate-intensity activity for at least 150 minutes per week.
- Tobacco Use—STOP SMOKING!
- Obesity—Being overweight increases your risk.
- High Blood Pressure—High blood pressure often has no symptoms, so be sure to have it checked on a regular basis. Avoid drinking too much alcohol, which can increase your blood pressure.
- High Blood Cholesterol—Test your cholesterol levels at least once every 5 years, although annually is best.
- Diabetes—Monitor your blood sugar levels closely
- Stress—Take steps to manage and reduce it!

So when you see stores decorated with hearts, remember to have your own heart checked and remind the ones you love too.



Eggshells - a Great Source of Calcium

By Susan Heckler

Calcium benefits have been known for many years, it aids in maintaining bone health and dental health, as well as the prevention of colon cancer and the reduction of obesity. Once touted as a must for youth, it is now understood that we need calcium from cradle to grave. As we get older, our bodies absorb less calcium from the food that we eat, so it's important that we continue to consume calcium-rich foods and use supplements.

Dairy products are beneficial sources of calcium, but there are other unexpected ones too. See the chart below for comparison.

<http://33q47o1cmnk34cvwth15pbvt120l.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/calciumchartpreview.jpg>

Not on the lists and charts available are eggshells! Eggshells are about 90-95% calcium carbonate, and are easily absorbable by our bodies. This is great for those who don't digest dairy well or have allergies.

Using eggshells as a source of dietary calcium may lead to food poisoning due to salmonella or other bacterial contamination so take caution. Use the eggs as you normally would, and instead of discarding the egg shells, run them under clean, cool water. Make sure to get all the egg white out of the egg shell. To kill all bacteria, pasteurize the eggshells by bringing the eggshells to at least 140 degrees Fahrenheit as measured with a food thermometer for at least 3 1/2 minutes. A rolling boil, at 212 degrees Fahrenheit, falls well above the 160 degrees recommended by the USDA Food Inspection and Safety Service for safe egg consumption.

Then, using a blender or coffee grinder, pulverize the egg shell into a powder. Calcium content may vary from eggshell to eggshell and from batch to batch, depending on the method used to extract it. 1/2 tsp. of dry, powered egg shell contains around 400 mg of calcium. The average person should consume around 1000 mg of calcium, which is easily done if you are eating a proper diet.

Use 1/2 tsp. in drinks, smoothies, cereals, recipes, etc. Excessive intake of calcium can lead to muscle cramps, so be sure to eat a banana or a magnesium source food to negate these effects.

FOOD	SERVING	CALCIUM (MG)
Sesame Seeds	0.25 cup	351
Sardines (with bones)	3.75 oz can	351
Yogurt	1 cup	296
Collard Greens	1 cup	268
Spinach	1 cup	245
Cheese	1 oz	204
Turnip Greens	1 cup	187
Canned sockeye salmon (with bones)	3 oz	188
Molasses, blackstrap	1 Tbsp	180
Mustard Greens	1 cup	166
Beet Greens	1 cup	164
Bok Choy	1 cup	158
Almonds, dry roast	2 oz	150
Cow's milk	4 oz	138
Swiss Chard	1 cup	102
Kale	1 cup	94
Cabbage	1 cup	63
Broccoli	1 cup	62
Brussels Sprouts	1 cup	56
Green Beans	1 cup	55
Oranges	1 medium	52
Cinnamon	2 tsp	52
Summer Squash	1 cup	49
Fennel	1 cup	43
Parsley	1/2 cup	42
Asparagus	1 cup	41
Celery	1 cup	40
Cumin	2 tsp	39
Basil	1/2 cup	38
Garlic	6 cloves	33
Oregano	2 tsp	32
Leeks	1 cup	31
Romaine Lettuce	2 cups	31
Cloves	2 tsp	27
Black Pepper	2 tsp	26

QUESTION: What are the effects of missing one or more teeth?

Each tooth in our mouth has a specific purpose and function. Front teeth are designed to cut or tear our food and back teeth are designed to crush the food. Adults usually have 28-32 teeth. This can vary based upon the presence of wisdom teeth and/or teeth removed for orthodontic reasons.

When teeth are missing, most people compensate by altering their chewing patterns.

Other results of missing teeth include:

- Drifting of teeth which creates a mal-occlusion (incorrect alignment of teeth)
- Formation of periodontal issues and cavities
- Ill effects on the TMJ (tempromandibular joint) which can cause muscle and head aches.
- Inconsistent wearing of teeth
- Reduced chewing ability of certain foods
- Speaking concerns
- Cosmetic concerns

It is usually recommended to replace missing teeth after their loss within a reasonable amount of time to prevent the issues noted above. Many options are available and should be discussed. The specific recommendations for each individual should be discussed with their dentist. In general, the three most common ways of replacing missing teeth include Implants, fixed or non-removable bridges, and removable prosthesis (dentures). There are advantages and disadvantages for each option. Before making any final decision, make sure all of your questions are answered and you understand what the results will be.

If you have any questions or wish to have a second opinion, call to schedule a complimentary consultation.



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FINDING THE RIGHT SCHOOL!

It is that time of year again. The search for a quality preschool program and summer camp is on. As early as January parents start searching for the best possible program available before time is up. Enrollment for high quality programs begin very early in the year because the number of available spots in these programs are limited. Starting your search to late will most probably get you on the waiting list. While parents are thinking about finding the right school for their child, there are many aspects to consider. Remember start early, take your time, research the curriculum and visit the program and its environments.

In selecting a school each family needs to consider how well it fits, not only between the child and the school, but also between the parents and the school. As tempting as it may be to enroll without a classroom observation, it is imperative that this visit be at the top of your to-do list. Therefore a school visit and orientation about the educational program the school follows is a must. It will allow each parent to get an idea of how well the school matches with their sense of values and goals, for their child's well being and education. The best way in determining which school is right for you and your child is through close personal observation. Do not rely on hearsay from other parents. The school that one family may rave about may be totally wrong for your own. Rely on your own experience, trust your eyes, ears and gut instincts. You should find yourself in harmony with the school's ambiance and practice.

The program that you choose should believe that each and every child is unique, and will follow his/her own natural pathway of development. It is during these pathways were preschool can enrich the social, cognitive, emotional, and physical aspects of the child's growth. As your child embarks on these very important years of development, he/she will need to be challenged. Children are born to be curious, creative and motivated to

observe and learn. It is this curiosity that when properly channeled will open up a world of knowledge and opportunity for the child.

The classroom environment should be thoughtfully prepared, conceptualized solely for the child. The activities should be developmentally appropriate and manageable for the child. The age appropriate activities lure the child's innate desire to learn and ensure success. This drive with which the child holds within him, should be the basis for all principles and methods to the educational program chosen. With this innate desire to explore and discover by themselves, the child becomes an independent learner. It is critically important to allow the child to develop a high degree of independence, self-reliance and autonomy. Following their sensitive periods of development children are capable of making their own choices, which guide their own learning. The program should understand and believe that there is a direct link between children's sense of self-worth, empowerment, self-mastery, and their ability to learn and retain new skills and information.


The idea of ongoing professional development should be stenciled throughout the school. It can be seen on the continual development of vibrant programs geared towards enticing each child. These programs will reflect: an introduction of new technology and innovation to facilitate early learning; continuity of learning belief, which encompasses the parents and extends education well beyond the classroom and into the home and family. The right school should strive to present a school that will find each parent to be in harmony with its ambiance and style. This can only be made possible through the inclusion of parents, teachers and staff working together in the active pursuit of empowering our children for a better tomorrow. The school should follow a proven educational approach, which has been shown to guide the child toward independence, a love of learning and future success.

If you have any questions please contact Ms. Tola Karnavas at The Montessori School of Hamilton (609) 585-1314 or toula@hamiltonmontessorischool.com

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Coping With Homesickness At Sleep-Away-Camp

This summer, millions of children will get their first taste of independence at a summer resident camp. For many, it will also be their first experience with homesickness. But parents don't have to feel helpless when homesickness strikes. The prescription for camper homesickness is a simple solution of preparation and patience.

Phillips Exeter Academy psychologist Dr. Christopher Thurber studied homesickness in 329 boys between the ages of 8 and 16 at resident camp. According to his results, homesickness is the norm rather than the exception. A whopping 83 percent of the campers studied reported homesickness on at least one day of camp.

Thurber and the American Camp Association (ACA) suggest the following tips for parents to help their child deal with homesickness at camp:

- Encourage your child's independence throughout the year. Practice separations, such as sleepovers at a friend's house, can simulate the camp environment.
- Involve your child in the process of choosing a camp. The more that the child owns the decision, the more comfortable the child will feel being at camp.
- Discuss what camp will be like before your child leaves. Consider role-playing anticipated situations, such as using a flashlight to find the bathroom.
- Reach an agreement ahead of time on calling each other. If your child's camp has a no-phone-calls policy, honor it.
- Send a note or care package ahead of time to arrive the first day of camp. Acknowledge, in a positive way, that you will miss your child. For example, you can say "I am going to miss you, but I know that you will have a good time at camp."
- Don't bribe. Linking a successful stay at camp to a material object sends the wrong message. The reward should be your child's new found confidence and independence.
- Pack a personal item from home, such as a stuffed animal.
- When a "rescue call" comes from the child, offer calm reassurance and put the time frame into perspective. Avoid the temptation to take the child home early.
- Talk candidly with the camp director to obtain his/her perspective on your child's adjustment.
- Don't feel guilty about encouraging your child to stay at camp. For many children, camp is a first step toward independence and plays an important role in their growth and development.
- Trust your instincts. While most incidents of homesickness will pass in a day or two, Thurber's research shows that approximately seven percent of the cases are severe. If your child is not eating or sleeping because of anxiety or depression, it is time to go home. However, don't make your child feel like a failure if their stay at camp is cut short. Focus on the positive and encourage your child to try camp again next year.

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These body changes and symptoms are commonly associated with decreased estrogen. However, decreased estrogen is not the only cause of vaginal dryness. It is important to stop using soap and powder on the vulva, stop using fabric softeners and antilicking products on your underwear, and avoid wearing panty liners and pads. Vaginal moisturizers and lubricants may help. Persistent vaginal dryness and painful intercourse should be evaluated by your healthcare provider. If it is determined to be a symptom of menopause, vaginal dryness can be treated with low-dose vaginal estrogen, or the oral selective estrogen-receptor modulator ospemifene can be used. The MonaLisa Touch is a new therapy for the treatment of vaginal dryness that is non hormonal, non medication and non surgical using a gentle laser. Regular sexual activity can help preserve vaginal function by

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Just Because I Love You Sweetheart Parfait

These parfaits are a healthy snack or dessert that is perfect for Valentine's Day. Say I love you and serve these Valentine' inspired healthy treats! These parfaits can be made up to 2 days in advance, the recipe serves 4 and is only a 140 calories per serving.



INGREDIENTS

½ teaspoon cocoa powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 teaspoons honey
1 ½ cups low-fat or fat free Greek yogurt
2 cups fresh or frozen raspberries
¼ cup shaved dark chocolate or chocolate chips

DIRECTIONS

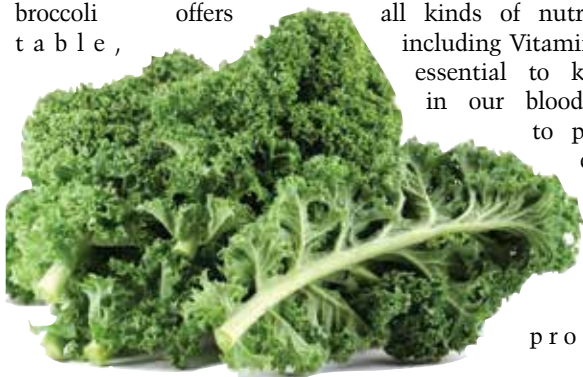
In medium bowl, whisk together cocoa powder and vanilla. Add honey and yogurt, and stir until they're well combined with cocoa mixture. It will turn light brown. Spoon 2 tablespoons of yogurt mixture into the bottom of four clear glasses. Top with some raspberries and repeat until all of the yogurt and raspberries are used up. Sprinkle each parfait with chocolate shavings. Serve or refrigerate until ready to serve.

Maximizing the Benefits of Winter Vegetables

By Brianna Siciliano

The winter temperature seems to be continuously dropping and our bodies are looking for any source of warmth. After a long day of stress, we are all yearning to relax and enjoy a healthy, delicious, warm, home-cooked meal. Sometimes we look for the easy fix for our cravings; if we're looking for a hot meal, we'll batch up a quick, unhealthy option for a snack or for dinner. This is a bad habit that needs to be stopped! A new year has begun, and as the new year is emerging, so are you! This is going to be the best year of your life: you are going to set and achieve new goals, become a happier person, and make healthy decisions. To kick off this fabulous year, stock up on your winter vegetables. Your body will thank you in the long run!

Broccoli is a vegetable that you cannot deprive yourself from this winter! High in nutrients and low in calories, broccoli is one of the best vegetables to enjoy this season. A cup of cooked broccoli offers all kinds of nutrients to the table, including Vitamin K (which is essential to keep proteins in our blood functioning to prevent blood clotting), Vitamin A (helps with vision and red blood cell production),



Vitamin C (forms body tissue and bones, and helps wounds and cuts heal), potassium (needed for nerve function and heart contraction), folate (needed for maintenance and production of new cells in the body), and fiber (which can help lower cholesterol). Adding and keeping broccoli to your diet is something you will never regret.

Kale is an incredibly healthy and hardy veggie that can be enjoyed raw or cooked. The colder the kale leaves are stored, the sweeter the flavor. Packed with vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, fiber, and cancer-fighting phytonutrients, kale is the best green antioxidant filled veggie. Lucky for us, winter is kale's peak season. When shopping for kale, choose stalks that have firm, deep-green leaves. If you have never tried kale yet, beware! This vegetable might change your outlook on greens forever (for the better!).

Winter would not be the same without winter squash. Squash was introduced to my family two years ago when we were first introduced to the tasty flavors of butternut squash and spaghetti squash. Butternut squash—which is filled with calcium, magnesium, phosphorous, zinc, iron, and vitamins A, C, E, K—is often recommended by dietitians for people who are looking to reduce their weight and/or control their cholesterol. Spaghetti squash, on the other hand, is loaded with riboflavin, folate, thiamin, and vitamins A, B-6, C, K. When cooking and eating your squash, make sure you enjoy the nutrient-filled seeds!

Adding these delicious vegetables to your menu will spark motivation to help you begin—or continue—your journey to better health.

Healthy Slow-Cooked Recipes

By Brianna Siciliano



Daily schedules can be hectic and stressful. After a long day of putting all your energy into different tasks (like work, school, chores, errands, etc), there are days where cooking dinner seems like too much of a hassle. You've already used up most of your energy, and cooking will only suck up some more. Isn't there a way to have a hot dinner ready for dinner time, without involving so much energy in the late afternoon/early evening? Yes, there is: slow cooking with a crock pot! By preparing your dinner in the morning and following the directions for different crock pot meals, your dinners could be cooked over the span of a few hours, and when dinner time comes around, your meal will be hot and tasty

SLOW-COOKED BRAISED PORK WITH SALSA

Serves 8 with a generous $\frac{3}{4}$ cup per serving

INGREDIENTS

3 pounds boneless pork shoulder, or butt
 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups prepared tomatillo salsa (or any salsa you prefer)
 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
 1 teaspoon cumin seeds, or ground cumin
 3 plum tomatoes, thinly sliced
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped fresh cilantro, divided
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup reduced-fat sour cream

DIRECTIONS

Trim and discard pork surface fat. Then cut the meat apart by following layers of fat around the muscles, and trim and discard the fat. Cut the meat into 2-inch chunks and rinse these chunks with cold water. Finish this step off by placing the meat in a 5 or 6-quart slow cooker. Turn the heat to high. Next, combine the salsa, broth, onion, and cumin seeds into a saucepan and boil these ingredients over high heat. Once boiled, pour this mixture over the meat. Once the mixture is added, top everything off with the tomatoes, and gently mix all the ingredients together. Put the lid on the slow cooker (crock pot) and cook until the meat is pull-apart tender, which should be 6 to 7 hours.

With a slotted spoon, transfer the pork from the slow cooker (crock pot) into a large bowl, and cover the bowl to keep your food warm. Pour the sauce and vegetables in a large skillet so you can skim the fat. Boil the sauce and veggies for about 20 minutes on high, and while the sauce and veggies are boiling, skim the broth from time to time to intensify flavors and slightly thicken the mixture. Add the pork and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cilantro to the vegetables and sauce, and heat everything up.

Finish the recipe off by placing servings into bowls and topping each serving off with a dollop of sour cream and sprinkling of the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cilantro.



SLOW-COOKED TURKEY STRONGANOFF

Serves 6, with each serving getting
 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups of stew and 1 cup of noodles each

INGREDIENTS

8 cups sliced mixed mushrooms
 3 medium carrots, sliced
 1 small onion, finely chopped
 1 3 to 4-pound split turkey breast, skin removed, trimmed
 1 cup reduced-fat sour cream
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dry sherry
 1 cup frozen peas, thawed
 1 teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
 8 ounces whole-wheat egg noodles (6 cups dry), cooked
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

DIRECTIONS

Combine mushrooms, carrots, and onion in a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker. Add the turkey, meat side down, to the slow cooker. Cover and cook on High for 4 hours, or on Low for 8 hours.

Transfer the turkey to a cutting board once it's finished cooking.

Whisk sour cream, flour, and sherry in a bowl. Stir into the slow cooker with the peas, salt, and pepper. Cover and cook everything (besides the meat) on high until thickened, which should take approximately 15 minutes. Remove the turkey from the bone and cut into bite-size pieces. Cover the turkey to keep the meat warm. When the sauce is finished, gently stir the turkey with the sauce. Serve everything over cooked noodles, sprinkled with parsley.



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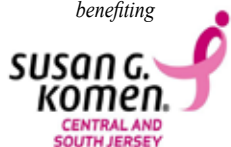
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Coach's Corner

By Jill Garaffa

How to Out-Smart Your Brain to Achieve Health

Dear Jill,

I know what I need to do intellectually, but I can't seem to get myself to do it. For example, I know that ordering pizza is an unhealthy choice; yet, I order it anyway in lieu of cooking a healthy meal. I know it's good to exercise; yet, I lay on the couch and can't seem to move or I over schedule myself so I don't have the time or energy to exercise. Am I crazy?

Signed, Good Intentions

Dear Good Intentions,

You're definitely not crazy. In fact, you are far from it: your brain is in top working order if this is your experience. Let me explain...

First, a quick brain anatomy lesson: Inside your brain, you actually have three separate brains, not just one: your cerebellum & brain stem are in charge of keeping you alive: breathing, heartbeat and anything out of your conscious control. Your neocortex is your logical, or conscious brain---you do all your thinking, reasoning and creative thought here. Your conscious brain is what makes New Year's resolutions and promises to make healthy choices. It has great intentions. The limbic system, which is your emotional, or unconscious brain, is where the good intentions get stuck. The unconscious brain runs purely on survival instincts. Very simply: it moves us toward pleasure and away from pain. It moves us toward safety and away from danger. If your limbic system senses danger or discomfort, it will propel you in the opposite direction.

If you are making sudden, drastic changes to your diet or exercise regime (which is what most people do around January 1st), you might only get a few days into your routine before your limbic system detects a serious threat to your survival. Suddenly, your string of positive, healthy choices comes to a screeching halt and you find yourself back on the couch or sitting with a bag of potato chips asking yourself, "how did I do this again?"

The way to over-ride the emotional brain from taking over is to make very small changes. Like, really, really small changes---so small that your unconscious brain does not detect a threat. How do you know if your changes are small enough? You have consistency. If you become inconsistent, then, chances are you are taking on too big of a change and you need to bring it down a notch or two.

Some questions for exploration & discovery: Ask yourself: What is the smallest change I can make to my eating that I am willing to make right now? What is the smallest action I can take right now to get my body to move more? What is one thing I can do to take care of myself today? What is something I can do today that will be fun & enjoyable to me?

Change is not easy. A life coach can support you with moving from where you are now to where you want to be. As a life coach, I am trained to support you through the internal emotional & psychological change that must come first before you can make lasting physical change.

Wishing you peace, clarity and power, Jill

Jill Garaffa, OTR/L, PCC, ELI-MP is a Licensed Occupational Therapist and Professional Certified Life Coach providing Health & Wellness Coaching for individuals and organizations. For more information, please visit www.seedsofchangeoaching.com or call 732-859-6962.

If you have a life situation where you feel stuck or stalled, and would like coaching, please email jill@seedsofchangeoaching.com or visit www.seedsofchangeoaching.com and click "contact us" to be featured in a future column.



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pictured left to right:
Lisa Bidwell, Melannie Chelton,
Ivor Hugh, Nicole Danley
(not pictured)



Spa Treatments That Will Warm You Up

By Brianna Siciliano

The cold weather does not seem to be leaving anytime soon, and it seems like we are doing anything we can to keep warm: taking long, hot showers, drinking hot tea, coffee, and hot chocolate, and cuddling up with our children, spouses, pets, and blankets. Wouldn't it be great to warm yourself up while getting pampered all at the same time? Well, it is possible! Ask your local spa if any (or all) of these wonderful spa treatments are available for you!

If you are looking to loosen your tight, knotted muscles, ease your tension, and relieve stress, a Hot Stone Massage is perfect for you! The heat that the hot stones provide are extremely relaxing. The stones also warm up your tight muscles, helping your massage therapist work deeper and quicker to unknotting your tight muscles.

Another fabulous spa treatment that will warm you up is a Seaweed Skin Treatment. For this body treatment, fresh seaweed is warmed up to body temperature and smoothed over your body to help get rid of toxins, while softening, your skin. Seaweed is a great source of healing! When applied to your skin, seaweed can combat acne, reduce toxins in your skin, fight cellulite, and supply your skin with moisture. Once the seaweed treatment is finished, you end the process by taking a warm shower and applying seaweed cream onto your skin. How could you pass up the opportunity of receiving this beneficial treatment?

If you are looking for a massage that will focus on helping chronic muscle aches and pains, leg muscle tightness, sore shoulders, or on realigning deep layers of muscles, then a Deep Tissue Massage is what you have been searching for! Deep tissue massages physically break down the causes of your tension and pain to relieve suffering and restore normal movement. Therapists usually use massage oil, hot towels, and firm pressure to relax your muscle tissues. By the end of this massage, you will have less pain and more mobility.

Get rid of all of your worrying, stress, tension, and pains by making an appointment to pamper and warm yourself up! You deserve it!

Beauty Boot Camps

By Susan Heckler

Not happy with your appearance? Join the crowd. If you ask 100 people if they are happy with their looks, my bet is all will say they find fault or could use improvement.

Thus, the new trend of Beautiful Boot Camps popping up all over. They range from interactive websites, to blogs, to brick and mortar stores and retreats. One website describes themselves as a crash course in being beautiful. There are boot camps for makeup, hair and body with some focusing specifically on your age.

*If it will help you build strength,
confidence and happiness, go for it!*

The Social Institute Research Centre claims that studies show:

- Attractive children are more popular, both with classmates and teachers.
- Teachers give higher evaluations to the work of attractive children and have higher expectations of them (which has been shown to improve performance).
- Attractive applicants have a better chance of getting jobs, and of receiving higher salaries.
- One U.S. study found that taller men earned around \$600 per inch more than shorter executives.
- In court, attractive people are found guilty less often. When found guilty, they receive less severe sentences.

- Many people believe in the "what is beautiful is good" stereotype—
an irrational but deep-seated belief that physically attractive people possess other desirable characteristics such as intelligence, competence, social skills, confidence—even moral virtue.

Let's be honest, everyone wants to look their best and feel good about themselves. If you don't, be proactive and do something about it. If it will help you build strength, confidence and happiness, go for it! You don't have to wait for a New Year's resolution to get started.



Tap to Eliminate Your Problems and Worries

By Brianna Siciliano

Do you want your life to thrive and flourish so that you can finally be the best you possible? Are you finally ready to live the life that was meant for you, a life full of fulfillment, joy, and excitement? It's about time to make a change and start living a successful, thriving life, which can be achieved by tapping.



The basic technique for tapping requires you to focus on the negative emotion that is deeply bothering you, whether it is a bad memory, a fear or anxiety, an unresolved problem, or anything that is bothering you. Once you identify the problem you would like to focus on, compose a set up statement that acknowledges the problem you want to deal with and overcome. It can be as simple as, "Even though I panic when I think about _____, I deeply and completely accept myself."

While mentally focusing on this issue, use two fingertips to lightly tap 5-7 times on each of the 9 body peak points. Tapping and concentrating on these points will access your body's energy and restore it to a balanced state.

The energy peak points should be tapped in this order:

1. The top of the head (it is recommended that all four fingers on both hands are used)
2. The eyebrow (use two fingers on the inner edges of the eyebrows)
3. Side of the eyes (on the bone bordering the outside corner of your eye)
4. Under the eyes (the hard area under the eye; use two fingers and tap about an inch below your pupil)
5. Under your nose (tap on the small area between the bottom of your nose and top of your upper lip)
6. Chin (tap midway between the point of your chin and the bottom of your lower lip)
7. Collar Bone (tap just below the hard ridge of your collarbone with four fingers on each hand)
8. Underarm (tap about four inches beneath the armpit; use four fingers)
9. Head (Right back to where you started)

While tapping, repeat simple reminder phrases, such as "my anxiety" or "my interview." Keep tapping until your anxiety is gone, and once that happens, install some positive feelings into your body. You can say, for example, "I love the person that I am," or "I have faith in my ability to change."

Try to repeat the tapping technique about ten times per day. Soon, all of your negative energy will be released and you will finally be the positive, healthy person you have always dreamt of being!

Exercise Your Right to Have Fun

When the weather outside is frightful, jogging in the park or a long bike ride can prove problematic. A high ropes course provides a great all-around workout that is fun and exhilarating. iPlay America's new Sky Trail® High Ropes Course features several courses and obstacles designed to test your skills and provide a great workout.

There are rope bridges, zig-zag beams, cargo nets, walk-across beams, vertical rope ladders, and other outstanding elements that allow you to get a beneficial and healthy workout all while staying out of the elements! That's because iPlay America's Sky Trail® High Ropes Course is the largest INDOOR ropes course in New Jersey and it's paired with the Sky Tykes Kidz Ropes Course which is specifically designed for younger children. Exercise your right to have a great time and come to iPlay America, where the healthy, family fun happens all year round. To learn more and see what it's all about, visit iPlayAmerica.com.



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"I Used to Worry About Mom When I Could Not Be With Her"



Hibernian Home Care has made it possible for Mom to stay home safely, and enjoy the companionship of a professional caregiver.

With a job of my own, and three teenagers at home, it was difficult to always be there for Mom. I always felt that no matter how much time I spent with my Mom, it was never enough. It upset me to think that she spent many hours alone in between my visits.

One of my friends told me about how they used services from Hibernian Home Care for their parents after one of them had surgery and suggested that I give them a call.

Immediately upon calling Hibernian Home Care, I felt a sense of relief. The staff person was so caring on the phone and was really interested in finding out about our specific needs and how Hibernian Home Care could help.

The Registered Nurse who came to meet me and Mom at her home was so helpful. She had many ideas to share to make things a little easier for both of us.

The Caregivers have all been wonderful, and my Mom looks forward to their scheduled visits. They help her keep the house tidy, prepare meals, assist with her personal care, and take her on errands and appointments.

Now I feel a tremendous weight has been lifted. I am comforted knowing Mom is enjoying life more and is so happy to be in the home that holds so many dear memories for her.

**Finally, Mom and I have more time to visit together.
Thank you, Hibernian Home Care
for making this possible.**

For more information, contact us:

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Winter Activities for Retirees

By Brianna Siciliano

Keeping your mind busy after retiring is very important. Sometimes it can be a challenge to find entertaining activities to keep yourself preoccupied day by day, but luckily, creativity can keep your calendar packed with loads of fun things to do! There are many indoor activities to give a try, and who knows? Maybe you'll fall in love with a certain activity and want to pursue it for the rest of your life! Try something new this winter—make it your new year resolution to discover a new passion—and see what comes out of it!



A great way to keep busy is by taking a class, whether the class be a cooking class, an art class, an exercise class, or even a few college classes! Nothing is unreachable or unrealistic, so dream big and follow your dreams! You have all the time in the world to dedicate to people and activities, so why not spend your time doing things you're interested in? Why not pursue your dancing passion with new friends in a local zumba class, or pursue your baking passion with new friends you'll meet at a cooking class? There are so many available class options in our area, so find a class that's perfect for you!

An idea that many of us find corny is participating in a book club, but in reality, being a part of a book club might be a fun idea! As a member of a book club, you have the opportunity to read books, spark conversations, and create and embrace friendships. Book clubs are wonderful for people who have a passion for reading, especially for people who are willing to read new genres of books. You might walk into the book club as romance lover and grow to love mystery, fantasy, and science fiction books. Who knows? Giving book clubs a chance might be a great way to pass time!

If you are looking for ways to volunteer your time to help others, ask around and see what you can do to help people, animals, and businesses in your community. Are you an animal lover? Actively volunteering at a nearby animal shelter will not only benefit you, but animals, too! Being a volunteer is something that everyone should do at least once in their life!

As a retiree, you have the opportunity to do anything that you'd like to pursue! Fill up your calendar and give things like learning a new sport, taking a class, joining a book club, volunteering your time, spending time with your children, grandchildren, friends, family, or participating in weekly events like breakfast with the men (or women) a chance. You won't regret it, I promise!

Keeping Safe from Winter Hazards

By Brianna Siciliano

Colder nights, snow and ice, and dark skies are all a package deal when winter sets in. The winter can be a very dangerous time for seniors because of the higher risk of injuries and health problems, including frostbite, hypothermia, and falls in snow and ice. We have all heard the saying, 'It's better to be safe than sorry,' and in the winter time, this phrase is very important to live by. It is much better for your health to take precautions throughout the winter than to rush yourself no matter what you are doing, whether you are getting the mail from your mailbox or walking up a few outdoor (or even indoor) stairs.

Frostbite is something to take seriously; if you notice that your skin feels numb, hard, or waxy, or if you notice that your skin is becoming white, gray-ish, or ashy, get out of the cold weather right away and place your frostbitten body parts in warm (warm, not hot!) water. Extremely cold temperatures that our skin is exposed to can cause damage to the skin, and sometimes that damage can hurt our bones! Frostbite usually affects your cheeks, nose, ears, chin, fingers, and toes, and in severe cases, frostbite can take a toll on your limbs. To prevent frostbite, cover up every part of your body when you know you will be exposing your fragile skin to frigid temperatures!

Hypothermia, which can be caused by frostbite, is not uncommon for older adults. Older adults tend to produce less body heat than younger people, resulting in confusion of knowing when their body temperature is too low. If you notice that you (or someone you are with) is shivering, feeling tired, confused, weak, and/or sleepy, has problems walking, is breathing slower, or has a lower heart rate, call 911. It is important to not rule out the diagnosis of hypothermia

if an older person is not shivering, because sometimes older people tend to shiver less (or not at all) when their body temperature drops. To prevent hypothermia, keep indoor temperatures at 65 degrees or higher, stay indoors (if possible) when it's very windy and/or cold outside, wear layers of loose clothing when exposing yourself to the freezing temperatures outside, and avoid wearing wet clothing. (Wet clothes chills your body quicker, so stay dry!)

Falling in the winter is very dangerous, especially in snowy and icy conditions. The importance of carefully walking in the winter time cannot be stressed enough! Having someone shovel your steps, walkways, and driveway is a great winter investment (I wouldn't suggest shoveling yourself because of the injuries that can happen to your body). Sure, it might cost you \$20, but wouldn't you rather spend \$20 and be safe than fall and hurt yourself? Another tip for preventing falls is to wear boots with non-skid soles because wearing these shoes lowers your risk of slipping while walking. Overall, if you are looking for the most important tip for staying away from falls, walk very, very slowly and cautiously outdoors. Winter precipitation is very sneaky!

Being cautious is something you will never forget, so keep away from hazards like frostbite, hypothermia, and falls. Enjoy your safe, happy, and healthy winter.



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Local health centers serve people with limited access to healthcare. Your annual income and family size determines your ability to pay, according to the most recent federal poverty guidelines. Visit: <http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov>.

Medicare's Prescription Drug Program can provide extra help with the cost of prescription drugs if you're a Medicare beneficiary. Visit: <https://www.ssa.gov/medicare/prescriptionhelp/>

Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging connecting you to services for older adults and their families. You can also reach them at 1-800-677-1116 or <http://www.eldercare.gov/Eldercare.NET/Public/Index.aspx>



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The LIFE Center is an important part of this program. It is located at 7500 Kevin Johnson Boulevard in Bordentown. Here, seniors receive health care, nutritious meals, and participate in activities with others so they may remain active, socialize and make new friends. The LIFE Center provides one location where doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals can provide treatment and monitor changes in an individual's health. Transportation to the Center is included.

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Live Your Perfect Life with 'The Good Life Inventory'

By Brianna Siciliano

Everyone wants to live the best life possible: we all want to live in the right place, have relationships with the right people, and do all the right work. We want to achieve all of our dreams—whether they are in or out of reach in the moment—and we want to live everyday to the fullest, making all of our goals and dreams reality. But how can we achieve the perfect life if we do not know what we truly want?

There is a week long well-being program that can be found online to help you discover what you truly want in life, and how you can live your life with a clear purpose. Each day of the week, you will receive an email with one to two tasks to help you move forward in achieving the best life you can live. The program consists of taking a quick and simple quiz to take inventory on every part of your life, growing and reflecting on every relationship in your life, finding out if the work you are pursuing is working for you, and in the end you will great your 'Good Life' purpose statement.

By the end of the 'Good Life' program, the program says that you will have a full understanding of what your perfect life should look like, and you will have already started your journey to making your perfect life a reality.

How can you make this perfect life possible? By logging onto <http://lifereimagined.aarp.org/challenge/19881-good-life-inventory/> and clicking on the blue 'Let's Get Started' button. From there, you can either sign yourself up on the website, or sign in through your Facebook account, making the process quicker and easier. After signing up, find out what your 'Good Life' score is by answering the quick, simple activity that is designed to help you take the appropriate steps towards your perfect life. The program promises that if you follow it everyday for seven days, before you know it, you will be living a life full of happiness and excitement!



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Evening Rituals Can Improve Your Life



By Brianna Siciliano

Waking up happy is the perfect way to start our days! It would be incredible to wake up in a great mood everyday, right? By following evening rituals and cleansing your spirit, freeing your mind, and organizing your life (and business), you can surely have a great tomorrow.

Rituals have strong influences on our feelings, behaviors, and thoughts, and without even realizing it, we follow our own personal rituals everyday. In the morning, what's the first thing you do? Do you have a specific routine you follow, for example shutting off your alarm, using a bathroom, and brushing your teeth in that exact order? If so, you have set your morning ritual without even realizing it! Although plenty of people follow their morning rituals, not many people follow evening rituals. It is time to change that.

Evening rituals guarantee a pleasing, refreshing rest period through the night. When you lay in bed before falling asleep, you tend to think of the things you have, and have not yet, accomplished. Like morning rituals, evening rituals are not the same for everyone. Rituals are meant to be personalized, after all, so design your evening rituals around what works for you. Evening rituals depend on your needs, but to get started on designing and following a smooth path to a great night's sleep and an even greater tomorrow, try out a few of these rituals:

Write down what you're proud of!

Everyday we successfully achieve many small victories (sometimes we achieve major victories!) and by the end of the night, we fail to

acknowledge the progress that we make. We stress over the failures instead of successes in the middle of the night. Well, it is time to change that. By writing down three (or more) things that you are proud of, and focusing on the things that you did right throughout your day, you will wake up more motivated to continue making progress. No matter what kind of day you are having, you are bound to have at least two positive moments.

Make time for family!

At the end of the day, a great evening ritual could be spending time with your spouse and/or children. Reading books to little ones, talking about your child's day, and/or complimenting your spouse on something you have recently noticed and appreciated will result in a perfect way to end your day.

Turn off electronics!

The brightness of electronic screens keeps you up longer by tricking you into believing that it is the time to send emails, text messages, and calls instead of winding down for bed time. Put your phone, tablet, and/or laptop away and spend some time reading a book, preparing an outfit for tomorrow, or drinking a late night treat (a warm cup of milk, hot chocolate, or water; avoid sodas and caffeine!)

When's the last time you slept like a baby? A few months—possibly a few years—ago? Let's change that! You deserve nothing but the best; let's make sure all your days and nights are the best they can be! ■

By following evening rituals, you are bound to have better sleep at night and a better day once you wake up. Do yourself a favor and design nighttime rituals that will benefit you the most!

Staying Healthy in the Winter

By Brianna Siciliano

Winter weather can tire us out; waking up in the morning to frigid temperatures and the dark sky is not exactly the ideal setting to wake up in. Putting mornings aside, winter brings many undesirable factors into play, including colds and the flu, extra weight on our bodies, and unimaginable exhaustion. Thankfully we can do our best to keep healthy this winter season by taking all the right steps to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

To start, it is very important to get as much sleep as possible throughout the winter months. In the winter, it is perfectly natural for our bodies to catch up on hours for sleeping. Nights are longer for these short winter months, therefore we must take advantage of this blessing!

Another important factor to staying healthy in the winter is exercise. As the holidays come to an end, we are afraid to step on our scales and see how much weight we have gained over the past few weeks. But weight control is not the only reason to exercise in the winter! Working out gives our body energy and endorphins while getting our heartbeat up, and working out makes our bodies warm. There is no better way to stay warm in the winter than by taking



Animals hibernate in the winter, so why can't we? Sleeping is vital to keeping healthy during the winter months!

advantage of all the benefits that exercising provides us!

Feeding your body supplements in the winter is a great way to prevent colds. Including Vitamin C, Vitamin A, Iron, and Vitamin D in your diet is a great way to strengthen your immune system, boost energy levels, maintain great eyesight, and reduce the time frame and severity of cold symptoms. What many people do not realize the importance taking vitamins. While Vitamin C is an antioxidant that protects our bodies from diseases, such as heart disease and cancer. Vitamin A is vital for strengthening the immune system, maintaining eyesight, and repairing tissues in our body to help growth and development.

While Iron is needed for energy and the formation of red blood cells in our body (which carry oxygen); vitamin D is needed to control the amount of calcium in our bodies to keep our bones strong.

All in all, staying healthy this winter season is possible! Getting more sleep, exercising, and taking vitamins and minerals can help your health remain in tip-top shape during the cold and flu season.

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Mold and Your Home's Health

Exposure to damp and moldy environments may cause a variety of health effects, or none at all. Some people are sensitive to molds. For these people, molds can cause nasal stuffiness, throat irritation, coughing or wheezing, eye irritation, or, in some cases, skin irritation. People with mold allergies may have more severe reactions. Immune-compromised people and people with chronic lung illnesses, such as obstructive lung disease, may get serious infections in their lungs when they are exposed to mold. These people should stay away from areas that are likely to have mold, such as compost piles, cut grass, and wooded areas.

In 2004 the Institute of Medicine (IOM) found there was sufficient evidence to link indoor exposure to mold with upper respiratory tract symptoms, cough, and wheeze in otherwise healthy people; with asthma symptoms in people with asthma; and with hypersensitivity pneumonitis in individuals susceptible to that immune-mediated condition. The IOM also found limited or suggestive evidence linking indoor mold exposure and respiratory illness in otherwise healthy children.

In addition, in 2004 the IOM found sufficient evidence to link exposure to damp indoor environments in general to upper respiratory tract symptoms, cough, and wheeze in otherwise healthy people and with asthma symptoms in people with asthma. The IOM also found limited or suggestive evidence linking exposure to damp indoor environments in general to shortness of breath, to respiratory illness in otherwise healthy children and to potential development of asthma in susceptible individuals. Other recent studies have suggested a potential link of early mold exposure to development of asthma in some children, particularly among children who may be genetically susceptible to asthma development, and that selected interventions that improve housing conditions can reduce morbidity from asthma and respiratory allergies, but more research is needed in this regard.

A link between other adverse health effects, such as acute idiopathic pulmonary hemorrhage among infants, memory loss, or lethargy, and molds, including the mold *Stachybotrys chartarum* (*Stachybotrys atra*), has not been proven. Further studies are needed to find out what causes acute idiopathic hemorrhage and other adverse health effects.

Mold is found both indoors and outdoors. Mold can enter your home through open doorways, windows, vents, and heating and air conditioning systems. Mold in the air outside can also attach itself to clothing, shoes, bags, and pets can and be carried indoors.

Mold will grow in places with a lot of moisture, such as around leaks in roofs, windows, or pipes, or where there has been flooding. Mold grows well on paper products, cardboard, ceiling tiles, and wood products. Mold can also grow in dust, paints, wallpaper, insulation, drywall, carpet, fabric, and upholstery.



Continued on Page 26



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Continued from Page 25

Inside your home you can control mold growth by:

- Controlling humidity levels;
- Promptly fixing leaky roofs, windows, and pipes;
- Thoroughly cleaning and drying after flooding;
- Ventilating shower, laundry, and cooking areas.

If mold is growing in your home, you need to clean up the mold and fix the moisture problem. Mold growth can be removed from hard surfaces with commercial products, soap and water, or a bleach solution of no more than 1 cup of household laundry bleach in 1 gallon of water.

Mold growth, which often looks like spots, can be many different colors, and can smell musty. If you can see or smell mold, a health risk may be present. You do not need to know the type of mold growing in your home, and CDC does not recommend or perform routine sampling for molds. No matter what type of mold is present, you should remove it. Since the effect of mold on people can vary greatly, either because of the amount or type of mold, you can not rely on sampling and culturing to know your health risk. Also, good sampling for mold can be expensive, and standards for judging what is and what is not an acceptable quantity of mold have not been set. The best practice is to remove the mold and work to prevent future growth.

If you choose to use bleach to clean up mold:

- Never mix bleach with ammonia or other household cleaners. Mixing bleach with ammonia or other cleaning products will produce dangerous, toxic fumes.

- Open windows and doors to provide fresh air.
- Wear non-porous gloves and protective eye wear.

- If the area to be cleaned is more than 10 square feet, consult the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guide titled Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings. Although focused on schools and commercial buildings, this document also applies to other building types. You can get it by going to the EPA web site at http://www.epa.gov/mold/mold_remediation.html.

- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using bleach or any other cleaning product.

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January Is National Eye Care Month

By Brianna Siciliano

Start the new year off the right way by visiting your optometrist or ophthalmologist and making sure your eyes are getting the best care that they need. Our eyes are very valuable, and sometimes we take our eye sight for granted. Imagine participating in all of your activities without seeing a thing; imagine a day where you couldn't see what you were cooking, what your children looked like, what activities your children were participating in, or what clothes you were picking out for the day. Life would be completely different, wouldn't it? Making sure that your eyesight and your children's eyesight is the best it can be is very, very important.

Children should have their eyes checked from the day that they're born by their pediatrician or family doctor. As a parent, it is important to look out for signs that might mean your child may have vision problems. These signs include:

- Constant eye rubbing
- Extreme light sensitivity
- Poor focusing
- Trouble following an object with their eyes
- Chronic redness of the eyes
- Chronic tearing of the eyes
- A white pupil instead of black
- Abnormal alignment or movement of the eyes (after 6 months of age)
- Unable to see objects from a distance
- Having trouble reading the blackboard/whiteboard
- Squinting
- Difficulty reading
- Sitting too close to the television



If you notice any eye problems in your child (or in yourself!), have your child examined right away so that the problem does not become permanent. When caught earlier, eye conditions can often be corrected.

It doesn't hurt to get your eyes—or your children's eyes—checked periodically. Eye care is not something to put off; make sure your eyes, and your family members' eyes, are getting the best possible care that they deserve.

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Men Need Anti-Aging Skin Care Products Too

Men are slowly but surely becoming some of the top buyers of anti-aging products. More and more men are realizing that having younger and healthier looking skin is just as important as women but also can be inexpensive and without invasive cosmetic procedures.

The saying goes that men age better than women. This is true because men have thicker, oilier skin than their counterpart. Men don't get as many wrinkles as women do. Women start seeing wrinkles in their late 20s, while men don't start seeing them until their almost 40. Once men hit 40, they begin to start noticing deeper wrinkles, and loss of elasticity, in turn making their skin appear to sag. A sagging face is one of the most tell-tale signs of aging. Wrinkles can come at any age, especially if you're someone who squints and smiles a lot. Sagging skin is a product of getting older. The older you get, the less oil your skin produces. That means your skin becomes drier and loose. There are cosmetic procedures that can tighten your skin, but for the most part, they're all invasive and require weeks of recovery time.

Men have the advantage of having thick and porous skin that can absorb products to ensure they work effectively. When looking for an anti-aging products to tighten skin, make sure to look for an ANTI-AGING TREATMENT. It is extremely important it is to look for treatments as opposed to products labeled as creams and serums.

The key to finding the perfect anti-aging treatment lies within reading product reviews and actually trying out the product for yourself. Everyone's skin is different and reacts differently to different products.

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Best Exercise Tips for Busy Moms and Dads

By Stefanie Maglio

Busy moms and dads are constantly on the go, whether it be for their kids, work, or errands. They often don't have time to focus on themselves. This includes exercise. However, there are ways to get in some daily exercise without having to carve an hour out of your day to go to the gym. Follow these tips to get in shape while going about your regular daily routine. Purchase some five-pound Dumbbells. When you wake up in the morning, do a set or two of lateral raises. This will strengthen your triceps and biceps. Then at the end of the day before bed, do alternating lunges while holding the Dumbbells at your sides to exercise your quadriceps and calve muscles. During the day, find every chance you can to be moving. If your child's school is a few blocks a way, take a walk or light jog to pick them up. You will incorporate cardio into your daily routine and save on gas! If your job is local, or if your bus stop is local, walk there as well. As you become more comfortable with this, maybe you can fit in a morning jog before work as well. While exercising, it's important to push yourself but never to the point where you are putting yourself in danger. Always remember that exercising alone isn't enough to keep up a healthy lifestyle either. Eat healthy and incorporate vegetables, lean meats, and organic foods into family dinners. Soon enough, you're bound to see a great difference in your lifestyle.



Debunking Winter Myths

By Susan Heckler

Growing up, we all heard health information from our elders that we accepted as fact. But are they fact or an old wives' tale?

Cold air can make you sick

FALSE; cells that fight infection in body actually increase if you go out into the cold, so the opposite is true. Cold viruses grow best at about 91 degrees.

A roaring fire will keep you warm

TRUE; as long as you're sitting within a few feet from the source. The rest of your house may be extremely cold because an open hearth fireplace acts as a vacuum.

Drinking alcohol warms you up

FALSE; your core body temperature actually drops and alcohol actually weakens your body's ability to shiver and create extra heat.

Lack of sunlight causes winter depression

TRUE

You shouldn't exercise in the cold

FALSE; in cold temperatures, race times are actually faster—and quicker paces burn more calories in less time. Make sure you warm up first.

Eating chicken soup can zap a cold

TRUE; chicken soup may have a positive effect on the immune system with something called neutrophil aggregation or bringing white blood cells together to help fight infection.

Allergies go away in the winter

FALSE; one in five people suffer from indoor/outdoor allergies, and the indoor variety can actually be worse in the winter.

You don't need sunscreen in the winter

FALSE; The Earth's surface is closer to the sun during the winter months; we are actually exposed to more harmful rays. Actually, snow and ice can both reflect up to 80% of harmful UV rays so that they can hit the skin twice. You have less exposed skin but it needs protection.

You lose most of your body heat through your head

FALSE; this information was based on a flawed study by the army where volunteers visited the Arctic with their heads exposed. However, the rest of their body was outfitted in gear designed to protect against the cold, so it's logical that they lost most of their body heat from their heads. Any exposed parts make you lose heat.

Women gain 10 pounds over the winter

Partly true; the average woman only gains one or two pounds over the winter, weight gain during the six-week holiday season accounts for 51% of annual weight gain.

Vitamin C prevents colds

Partly true; 75mg recommended daily allowance of vitamin C is important in maintaining a healthy immune system to prevent and even fight off colds, and studies have shown that taking a large dose of vitamin C at the first symptoms may help shorten the length and reduce the severity of a cold.

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Resolve to Resolve Healthy New Year's Resolutions

By Susan Heckler

Here we go again, another New Year's Eve and another New Year's resolution. This year, let's make a resolution to stick to your resolution. How can you make this happen?

Just because you have had a bad track record of sticking to them in the past doesn't mean you can't do it in the future. Your future starts now.

You have to be realistic and set your goals that are attainable. Choose a safe, attainable goal and make the time- frame realistic. You can have your goal in increments. Take it one resolution at a time so you don't overwhelm yourself and everyone around you. You also want to be certain that your resolution is something that is in your control.

Many people make the mistake of setting their goals to please other people. **MISTAKE!** It needs to express your own wants, need and desires and be something you feel strongly about.

One of the greatest resolutions you can make is toward your health and wellness. Any progress you make, even if you don't achieve your goal, is a positive for you. A 2002 study found while about 75% of people stick to their goals for at least a week, less than half (46%) are still on target six months later. A week of healthier living is a plus.

The more you use your willpower, the stronger it gets. Once you start feeling the rewards of your resolution; slimming down, feeling healthier, it will encourage you to keep up the good work.



Some of the most popular healthy resolutions for anyone at any age are:

Lose weight	Volunteer
Practice portion control	Continuing Education
Stay in touch	Drink less alcohol
Stop smoking	More sleep
Save money	Travel more
Reduce stress	Be more active
	Reduce sodium intake
	Increase Anti-oxidants
	Floss
	Protect from sun
	Strength train

Ways to Walk More This Winter

By Brianna Siciliano

The freezing temperatures are here, and we are all coming up with more and more excuses to stay indoors and sit by our fireplaces with hot soups, hot coffees, and hot chocolates in our hands. Our bodies are craving comfort foods and sleep during winter, but we need to fight those cravings and do our best to walk as often as we can. Walking in the winter can do great things, such as:

- Keep your bones strong and working
- Improve your mood
- Motivate you to continue working out in the days, weeks, and months to come
- Burn calories

When walking in the winter, try to avoid constantly walking on the treadmill day by day. After a few days, you will get bored following the same routine, unless you find that you like walking on the treadmill. Then by all means, keep it up! Walking while watching an episode of your favorite television show is much better than lounging on your couch, eating a bag of popcorn, and being lazy! However, if you are looking for different ways to get moving, try walking when doing simple things, for example when you are on the phone.



Whether you are on a business phone call, talking to your parents or children, or catching up with friends, phone calls can take a while. If you were to walk throughout your entire phone call, even if you are just pacing around your house, you'll be burning calories. Imagine if you

took a little less than 100 steps per minute and you were on the phone for an hour... you would have walked around 6,000 steps already! On average, a mile is about 2,000 steps, which means you could walk three miles just by making a phone call.

If you have friends or family in the area that you'd like to catch up with while being busy, go to the mall together. By browsing around the stores and making conversation, you won't even realize that you're walking! You can catch up on gossip, spend quality time together, and maybe even get some shopping in. By the time you leave the mall,

you could lose some calories (and possibly money, too!).

Walking may not seem like exercising, but it is! It is important to not give up and keep moving. Walking can be done at anytime, anywhere, whether you are at work, outdoors, in your home, or in the mall. Why not stand up and get walking right now?

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