

Feeling Sluggish?

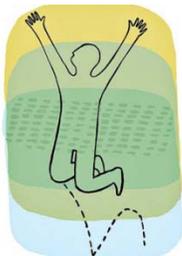
Energy Boosting Tips!

Cold weather, shorter daylight hours, and big work projects have all combined to drive us indoors and onto the couch. New research suggests that stimulating the release of dopamine, the chemical the brain releases when people do something novel that they enjoy, is also a factor in motivating us to do more. Trying something new in one area of your life, such as finally taking those Spanish lessons that have been on your resolution list for years, can translate into more motivation to go the gym or plug in a work-out video.

Paying attention to your body can also help over all wellness. Circulation is essential for feeling energized as blood transports oxygen and nutrients to your muscles and brain. If you have a desk job, get up and move, at least once an hour. You can also increase circulation by standing when you're on the phone, doing neck and shoulder rolls, practicing deep breathing and paying attention to your posture.

You only need 30 minutes of exercise 3 times a week to feel an increase in energy levels. Keep in mind this doesn't have to be in one time chunk. You can get 10 minutes here or there by walking around the block, walking during your lunch hour, walking the stairs on your break of simply walking to work.

(adapted from www.realsimple.com "9 Energy Boosters").



Mark Your Calendars!

Upcoming Wellness Committee Events:

February: Feeling less than motivated? **Want to receive a FREE SIGG BOTTLE? Just work-out at Peak Fitness more than 8 times!** We'll even take it a step further and let you chose your own design!



March: Whether it comes in as a lion or a lamb, the Wellness Committee still wants to help you succeed! **Work out more than 8 times at Peak Fitness this month and receive a free Converse County Wellness Program t-shirt.**



April: Help the Wellness Committee celebrate Earth Day by participating in our second annual Converse County Clean-up Day!

Join us in picking up litter along a county road and have lunch on us!



June: Join the Wellness Committee in the Relay for Life event in Glenrock. **Team members will receive complimentary t-shirts and other prizes.**

More details to come! Contact Sarah Repshire if you would like to help or participate in any of these upcoming activities!



Quote of the Month:

Life expectancy would grow by leaps and bounds if green vegetables smelled as good as bacon.
~Doug Larson

Our Mission: The Health and Wellness Committee is dedicated to providing pertinent health information to the county's employees. In addition, the committee will provide wellness opportunities to increase knowledge about the relationship between lifestyle and health. Through these avenues, the employee will have the opportunity to take control of their health, increase morale and create a more healthy and positive working environment.



Extreme New Year's Resolutions

Do you make New Years Resolutions each year but never seem to succeed at accomplishing them? If you're like most people, you stick with your new attitude for a while but, eventually, slide back into old behaviors in a few weeks. One reason this happens is because we set unrealistic goals. Vowing to get up every morning to exercise when you're not a morning person or promising never to eat sweets again will only set you up for failure. Another pitfall? Not having a plan to achieve your goals. When you make a vague statement to get fit or eat healthy, but don't figure out exactly what you're doing wrong and how to change it, you're doomed to fail. Do not try to change too many bad habits at once. Too much change too soon can be overwhelming and you may revert to your old behavior. Rather than having no resolutions, why not make a plan that will actually work for you? Once you set more reasonable goals, focus on a specific plan to reach those goals. When it comes to changing something in your life, there's nothing magical about a new year. It's important to remember that you can work on these changes throughout the year and what gets you there are the little things you do each day. Find a way to be healthy today and do the same tomorrow...before you know it, you'll be well on your way.

Source: <http://exercise.about.com/od/weightloss/a/resolutions.htm>

Top 10 New Year's Resolutions



Enjoy Life
(No Worries)



Reach Work
on Time



Spend Time
with Friends
and Family



Go for Trips
and Outings



Keep House
Clean



Quit Drinking
and Smoking



Say NO
to Junk Food



Buy and
Read Books



Workout
and Exercise



Write in
Diary

We all make extreme promises from time to time, telling ourselves we'll never drink again after a bad hangover or that we'll exercise for two hours to make up for a missed workout. New Year's resolutions work the same way. Take a look at some of the extreme resolutions and then look at some alternatives:

I will go to the gym every day, even though I haven't been there once in the last six months.

Instead: I will choose a reasonable number of days to go to the gym (i.e., 2-3 days a week) or maybe I'll cancel the gym membership and try something else that I really enjoy.

I will stop using my treadmill as an extra closet and get started on that marathon training schedule I've been reading.

Instead: I'll set a goal to use my treadmill a certain number of times a week. I'll make sure I have some good music or a TV show to watch to keep me motivated.

I will find those dumbbells I bought last year and use them for more than paperweights.

Instead: I'll buy a book or video about strength training or hire a trainer to teach me the best way to use my weights.

I will sign up for that 4 a.m. boot camp class, even though I haven't ever gotten up that early.

Instead: I'll find a time that works best with my schedule and choose a class based on what I like.

I will not eat sweets at work, no matter who's birthday it is or how good that chocolate cake looks. In fact, I'm never eating sweets again.

Instead: I'll make a rule for myself that I can only have sweets one day a week (say, Fridays).

I will cook nutritious meal every night and calculate my calories so I know exactly what I'm eating.

Instead: I'll buy a healthy cookbook and try making one new recipe each month.

I will do a hundred crunches a day - no, TWO hundred!

Instead: I'll educate myself about the best way to get flat abs and then figure out the best use of my time (Hint: it isn't doing 200 crunches).

I will stop consumption of all alcoholic beverages, fast food, desserts, chips, cookies and anything that tastes good. I will eat lettuce and lemon wedges and I will like it.

Instead: I'll choose one thing in my diet to focus on (e.g., eating a healthy breakfast, getting rid of sodas, etc.) and, when I've mastered that, I'll move on to something else.



OWN YOUR Health

WINTER 2010



Health & Wellness Team Captain

You are the captain of your body and everyday you have the opportunity to make choices, both healthy and poor, which can affect the outcomes of your health. Many lifestyle choices can result in neglecting your body's physical need for food, rest, emotional need for connecting with others, and neglecting your spiritual need for quiet time. This imbalance can lead to illness, disease, emotional instability, bingeing on junk food/alcohol or treating others unfairly. If you are dealing with any of these, you might want to call a "time out." Take a long peaceful walk, meet a special friend for a relaxed lunch or dinner, go to a concert, or watch a movie. It doesn't matter what you do, as long as it is something beneficial that will rest and refresh the neglected and overworked team members. With teamwork, you can avoid burnout from work overload, resentment from giving too much of your time to others, physical problems from inactivity and stress, or spiritual emptiness from lack of time spent in reflection.

Train Your Team: The following suggestions are some of the specific ways you can enhance your health and promote your own wellness team.

Physical

- * **Eat fresh, wholesome food:** Avoid or limit sugar, salty and fatty foods. Replace processed foods with fresh vegetables, fruits and whole grains.
- * **Drink water:** It is recommended to drink 8, 8 ounce glasses of water per day.
- * **Exercise:** Find activities you enjoy so that you are more likely to make time for exercise each day. Exercise for at least 20 minutes 3 times per week and work towards 30 minutes of exercise 5 days per week.
- * **Sleep:** Not getting enough sleep may be the reason for your lack of motivation or energy. Typically, adults need 7-9 hours of sleep per night.

Emotional:

- * **Laugh, play and have fun:** Laughter is good medicine, and the ability to play is a necessity for a balanced life.
- * **Create warm, loving relationships**

Mental

- * **Explore new ideas:** Find a hobby, take a class, read a book or play a board game.
- * **Cultivate positive attitudes:** Instead of criticizing, catch yourself and others at being good. Look for the positive in a situation.
- * **Examine your beliefs**

Spiritual

- * **Take time to be quiet with yourself:** Meditate, pray or go fishing. We each get in touch with our inner selves or a higher power in different ways.
- * **Be open to your creativity:** Learn to trust your inner creativity and intuitive thinking. Express the inner you.
- * **Savor the moment:** Enjoy what you are doing now, instead of reliving the past or anticipating the future.
- * **Your winning team needs a goal:** To reach your wellness goals you must first define what wellness is for you. A computer programmer, a new mother, someone who is physically challenged, a tree trimmer and a retiree might each picture different wellness goals to support their individual lifestyles. What kind of lifestyle do you have now? Is it what you want? Think about what isn't working for you. Think about what you want to change. Be specific. Take a moment to write down your wellness goals. For each goal, list all the positive benefits you will gain by reaching your goals. Achieving wellness is continuing a series of small steps, taken one day at a time.

Remember YOU are the CAPTAIN of YOUR WELLNESS TEAM!!

Wellness Quiz

1. Do you wake up with enthusiasm and energy for the day?
2. Do you laugh easily and often, especially at yourself?
3. Do you feel valued and appreciated?
4. Do you appreciate others and let them know it?
5. Do you have a circle of warm, caring friends?
6. Are you following proper nutrition and exercise guidelines?
7. If you answered "no" to any of these questions, you have identified areas in your life that you may want to change or focus on improving.





Sick Day Management for Diabetes

When you have diabetes, sick days often means more than a runny nose and sneezing. An illness such as a cold or the flu, or any condition resulting in nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, may cause your blood sugar to increase. An infection also can raise blood sugar levels. Therefore, it is very important to test your blood sugar when you are sick. Here are some guidelines to follow when you are ill:

- Check your blood sugar more frequently, at least every 4 hours.
- Test for ketones if your blood sugars are above 240mg/dl, or as directed by your health care provider.
- Check your temperature regularly.
- Make sure you are drinking liquids if you are unable to keep down solid food. Drink one cup of liquid every hour while you are awake to prevent dehydration. Do not stop taking your insulin, even if you are unable to eat solid foods. People with type 2 diabetes who are on oral medicines may need to stop taking their medicines when sick. Check with your doctor if you are unsure of what to do.

If you need an over-the-counter medicine to control symptoms such as cough and nasal congestion, ask your doctor or pharmacist for a list of sugar-free products that are available.

When Should I Call My Doctor?

If you have diabetes and are sick, call your doctor if:

- Your blood sugar stays higher than 180 mg/dL or lower than 70 mg/dL.
- You are unable to keep liquids or solids down.
- You have a fever (temperature over 101 degrees F) .
- You have diarrhea or are vomiting. You should eat or drink 45 to 50 grams of carbohydrate every three to four hours to maintain your nutrition needs and to prevent hypoglycemia. Below are listed some of the more easily tolerated sick day foods. Each of these items equal 15 grams of carbohydrates, or one carb choice.

- 1 cup clear soup
- 1/2 cup regular gelatin or 1/2 Popsicle
- 1/2 cup regular soft drink, like Sprite
- 1/2 cup sports drink, like Gatorade
- 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce or 1/3 cup apple juice

Source: <http://diabetes.webmd.com/guide/managing-sick-days>

10 Ways to Fight Indoor Mold

Mold is among the most hazardous household substances for people with allergies and asthma. Mold may trigger asthma symptoms, such as wheezing or coughing. Substances that trigger these reactions are called allergens. Mold grows in humid, damp environments, so the best way to prevent and control indoor mold is to keep your home as dry and ventilated as possible. While bathrooms are an obvious place for mold to get a toehold, there are some other relatively surprising sources of mold in your home, such as firewood. Although there is no strong evidence that reducing damp areas in homes or limiting exposure to them helps decrease allergy and asthma symptoms, taking the following steps may prove to be helpful.

- Store fireplace wood outside the home.
- Clean bathtubs, shower stalls, shower curtains, and windowsills at least once a month with a disinfectant or liquid bleach. Use bleach with caution, because it may irritate your nose.
- Use an exhaust fan in bathrooms and the kitchen to vent excess moisture.
- Use a dehumidifier during humid weather. Try to keep the humidity in the home below 50%.
- Repair water-damaged areas resulting from leaking roofs or basements. Check under your sinks and other plumbing areas for additional leaks. These areas can be prime mold-growing areas.
- Make sure your clothes dryer vents moist air to the outside.
- Because adults spend one-third of their time and children spend half of their time in their bedrooms, it is important that you take steps to prevent allergens in this room.

Source: www.health.com



Dietary Fats Can Help, or Harm Your Heart

Many people with heart disease try to banish fats, but they're missing out on lots of foods that can protect the heart. Avocados, nuts, fish, olive oil, they're all fatty, and they can all help keep you alive.



Fats to avoid

Trans fat: An artery-clogging element of partially hydrogenated oils, trans fats are found in many fried foods, commercial baked goods, and stick margarine. These fats increase your LDL (bad cholesterol) while lowering your HDL (good cholesterol), weakening your natural defenses against heart disease.

Saturated fat: While it isn't quite as destructive as trans fat, saturated fat is much more abundant. The saturated fat in meat or dairy products encourage a buildup of plaques in the arteries by increasing LDL (bad cholesterol) levels in the blood. A recent study found that saturated fat also inhibits the anti-inflammatory benefits of HDL (good cholesterol), while fats from fish, grains, and nuts boosted it.

Heart-healthy fats

Unsaturated fats: The types of fats found in olive oil, canola oil, nuts, avocados, and fish can actually clear LDL while boosting HDL.

A research study found that swapping a diet high in carbohydrates for one that's high in unsaturated fats improved the cardiovascular profile of 164 adults over a six-week period. The unsaturated fat diet decreased blood pressure, increased HDL, caused no significant increase in LDL, and lowered triglycerides.

Omega-3 fatty acids: Found in cold-water fish, omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to prevent blood clots, lower blood pressure, and slow the buildup of plaque in the arteries. Large studies suggest that this fat can lower the risk of heart disease by more than 35% and can reduce the risk of sudden death from heart attack by more than 50%.

Source: www.health.com



Sleep

Standard: 8 hours a night
Good Enough: 7 hours a night

With 7 hours of sleep at night, you may feel less peppy the next day, but you won't be putting your health at risk, says Susan Zafarlotfi, PhD. Research is turning up links between inadequate sleep and heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and obesity. A study from Case Western Reserve University of about 68,000 middle-age women found that those who slept 5 or fewer hours were 32% more likely to experience major weight gain, and 15% more likely to become obese, than those who slept an average of 7 hours. "Sleeping less than 6 hours even just a few nights has been tied to poorer decision making and reduced alertness," says Zafarlotfi. Make it a habit of getting at least 7 hours of sleep a night and decrease your risks of heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and obesity.

Stress-Free Sleep Zone

Anxiety and other frazzled states cause your body to release adrenaline, a brain chemical that triggers alertness, says sleep specialist Joyce Walsleben, PhD, associate professor of medicine at New York University. Stress seems to keep more women awake than men. Try these five solutions to ease worries and get the rest you need:

Shower an hour before bed

The warm water is relaxing. Plus, your body temperature will dip afterward, mimicking the physiological changes that naturally occur before you sleep.

Write away worries

During the day, scribble down your concerns and how you plan to handle them, advises Walsleben. For example, if you're panicked about bills, you might write that you'll go through them and come up with a payment schedule for those you can't tackle right away. Then, if you start to ruminate before lights-out, tell yourself firmly, I've already dealt with this. It's time to go to sleep.

Make exercise a habit

Getting your heart rate up for 20 minutes every day—by walking, gardening, or cleaning the house—can lower anxiety by as much as 40% according to a study of about 20,000 adults at University College in London.

Slip on socks.

Warm feet widen blood vessels, which better enables your body to transfer heat so you sleep more soundly.

Turn out the lights.

Turn your alarm clock away from you. Light signals your brain to wake up, and the "blue light" from your digital clock and cell phone are the worst offenders.

Prevent Type II Diabetes: Calculating Your Risk



Swine flu may get the headlines, but a bigger epidemic is sweeping the country. Type 2 diabetes—the result of the body's resistance to insulin, the hormone that helps regulate blood sugar—affects more than 20 million Americans; another 57 million Americans have prediabetes. More than a 1/3 of people don't even know they have the disease. Researchers recently found that people who didn't smoke, maintained a healthy body weight, exercised regularly, and ate more fruit, vegetables, and whole grains and less red meat had a 93 percent lower risk of diabetes.

WEIGHT	Obesity is the single most important risk factor for type 2 diabetes. The more overweight you are, the more resistant your body is to insulin. A healthy, low-fat diet and regular exercise can help you lose weight gradually and keep it off.
AGE	The risk of type 2 diabetes increases with age, especially after age 45. Although you can't change your age, you can work on other risk factors to reduce your risk.
FAMILY HISTORY	You can't change your family history, but it is still important for you and your doctor to know if diabetes runs in your family.
RACE/ ETHNIC BACK- GROUND	For reasons still unclear to doctors, some ethnic groups have a higher risk of diabetes than others. You are at greater risk if you belong to one of these groups: Native American, Hispanic American, African American, Pacific Islander, and Asian American.
LACK OF EXERCISE	Exercising and maintaining a healthy weight can reduce your risk of diabetes. Any amount of activity is better than none, but try and exercise for 30 to 60 minutes most days of the week.
POOR DIET	A diet high in fat, calories and cholesterol increases your risk of diabetes. In addition, a poor diet can lead to obesity and other health problems. A healthy diet is high in fiber and low in fat, cholesterol, salt and sugar. Also, remember to watch portion sizes-how much you eat can be just as important as what you eat.
POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME	Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a condition that occurs when an imbalance of hormone levels in a woman's body causes cysts to form on the ovaries. Women who have PCOS are at an increase risk of developing type 2 diabetes.
Source: Living with Diabetes	

10 Forgotten Winter Fruits and Veggies



Radishes: A good source of vitamin C, radishes have a crunchy texture and slightly sweet taste. Cook them with a little salt or sugar, and they develop into a tender side dish. Or stir-fry them with other veggies, and they'll complement soy sauce perfectly.



Blood oranges: Include these tangy citrus fruits in winter salads, desserts, and drinks. Just like other varieties of oranges, they're rich in vitamin C and fiber. However, it's their deep red color that makes them an eye-catching addition to holiday meals.



Snow peas: A stir-fry favorite, snow peas are low-calorie veggies packed with plenty of vitamins C and K. Their crunchy texture also makes them a delicious contrast in pastas. Just remember that they'll only keep for a few days in the fridge, so cook them shortly after you buy them.



Cabbage: In a nutritional showdown, don't get cabbage confused with iceberg lettuce. A cup of this leafy veggie packs almost 100% of your DRI of vitamin K, plus vitamin C and fiber. And, like other cruciferous vegetables, it contains phytonutrients that naturally detox the body.



Rhubarb: This stalk vegetable thrives in the cold weather and has a distinct tart and somewhat sour taste. Just like other tart flavors, rhubarb is best sweetened with sugar, honey, or fruit juice to balance out the acidity. And this low-cal veggie contains vitamins C and A and calcium.



Chestnuts: The fruits of chestnut trees produce a holiday favorite that is only in season for a brief time each winter (from approximately October–December). They're a good source of vitamin C, but more importantly, they bring a subtly sweet, nutty flavor to a variety of vegetables and breads. Fresh chestnuts may be tricky to find, so try bottled varieties or visit specialty grocery stores.



Artichokes: Artichokes come into season in early spring and then again in early winter. Though it may be convenient to buy them in a can, fresh artichokes are naturally savory and delicious. They're rich in fiber, vitamin C, and folate, which is essential for producing new cells.



Persimmon: These sweet fruits have a unique texture that can be either mushy or firm. They're a good source of vitamin C and fiber, and are used to add a tangy flavor to salads. However, the fruit can also be blended into baked goods or festive drinks.



Kale: Kale is a delicious winter veggie that actually gets sweeter when the frost hits the ground. Plus its earthy flavor makes it a great addition to a variety of savory meats. In terms of nutrition, kale is a superfood, containing high amounts of vitamins K, A, and C, and even a bit of calcium.



Cranberries: You probably have your share of these tart berries on Thanksgiving, but they're so delicious—and healthy—that they're worth mentioning. Not only do they reduce the risk of certain infections, but they also contain vitamin C and may even improve HDL (good cholesterol) levels.

Source: www.health.com



Chicken and Wild Rice Soup

- 1 cup uncooked quick-cooking wild rice
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 cups fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
- 1 1/2 cups cubed peeled baking potato
- 3 cups 2% reduced-fat milk
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 10 ounce light processed cheese, cubed (such as Velveeta Light)
- 2 cups chopped roasted skinless, boneless chicken breasts (about 2 breasts)
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley (optional)

Cook rice according to package directions, omitting salt and fat. Heat a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add onion and garlic; sauté 3 minutes. Add broth and potato; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 5 minutes or until potato is tender. Combine milk and flour, stirring well with a whisk. Add the milk mixture to potato mixture; cook 5 minutes or until slightly thick, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; add cheese, stirring until cheese melts. Stir in rice, chicken, pepper, and salt. Garnish with parsley, if desired.

8 servings (serving size: 1 1/4 cups)

Nutritional Info

CALORIES 280 (23% from fat)

FAT 7g (sat 4g, mono 1g, poly 0.5g)

PROTEIN 24.9g

CARBOHYDRATE 28.7g

FIBER 1.6g

Drink Instant Energy:

Drinking a big glass of water as soon as you get up is a good way to replenish the fluid your body loses overnight, and it provides instant energy. Everything that happens in your body requires water. Without enough of it, your systems have to work harder in every respect, which can cause fatigue. Even a 2% drop in water can tire you physically and mentally.

