

### Have you "herb"?



Here are some Herbs that are good for combating spring allergies:

**Chamomile**—its anti-inflammatory properties offer relief to dry, itchy eyes. Try placing refrigerated, wet chamomile tea bags over your eyes for 3 to 5 minutes.

**Peppermint**—The combination of peppermint's menthol oils and tannins makes it a powerful decongestant. Improved breathing by steeping fresh or dried peppermint leaves in boiling water to create a sinus-clearing tea.

**Thyme**—An antimicrobial and expectorant herb, thyme is useful at treating coughs, clearing congestion and soothing sore throats. Steep 1 to 2 teaspoons fresh thyme to create a tea, or try commercially prepared thyme tea bags.

**Honey**—its healing and expectorant qualities make it a great natural treatment for easing coughs and soothing sore throats. A spoonful in a cup of tea ought to do the trick, or combine the powers of honey with thyme.

**Ginger**—A natural pain killer, ginger can help soothe the irritation of a sore throat. It's especially powerful when combined with honey. Simmer 1 teaspoon of fresh, grated ginger or 1 to 2 teaspoons of the dried, powdered form in a cup of water for 5 to 10 minutes to create ginger tea. Add honey.

**Cayenne peppers** are rich in quercetin, a bioflavonoid that prevents the release of histamines and other inflammatory chemicals that can cause allergy symptoms. Also help ease pain from a sore throat.

Please consult with your doctor first if you are taking any medications as the herbs could interfere with their effectiveness.



# Wellness Corner Connection

**Debby Schiffer, Wellness Director for BURLCO & TRICO JIFs**

## Natural Remedies to Combat Allergies

After the bitter cold winter we have been through, Springtime is like a long lost friend we can't wait to embrace. The days are longer, the trees start to bud, flowers begin popping through the earth, and birds greet the morning with their beautiful songs. But for many of us, spring is the time of year for seasonal allergies. As the trees start to bloom and the pollen is released into the air, allergy sufferers begin their annual ritual of sniffing and sneezing. Each year, 35 million Americans fall prey to seasonal allergic rhinitis, more commonly known as hay fever.

Allergies can really put a damper on this long awaited time of year! But there are some things in our control that can help combat some of these allergy symptoms. Many will seem like common sense, but it's a good reminder.

### Shut Out Breezes

Keeping indoor air free of your allergy triggers can help ease nasal symptoms. Installing special air filters in your furnace and air conditioning systems can remove 90% to 95% of particles from your indoor air. Closing doors and windows when outdoor pollen counts are high also can help keep pollen and other outdoor allergens out of your home.

### Consider Alternative Therapies

There's evidence that some supplements help nasal allergies. Butterbur is one of the most promising and well-researched. Studies suggest that butterbur -- specifically a butterbur extract called Ze 339 -- works as well as antihistamines. Other studies show plant-based phleum pratense and pycnogenol may be helpful, too.

### Wash Away Allergens

Each time you walk into your home, you bring small pieces of the outside world with you. After being outdoors, your clothes, shoes, hair, and skin are covered with tiny particles from everywhere you've been. Taking a shower and changing your clothes will help wash away any allergens. Leaving your shoes at the door will help keep you from tracking allergens through your home.

### Wear a Mask

A mask can prevent allergens from getting into your airways when you can't avoid certain allergy triggers, like when you're mowing, raking, or vacuuming. An N95 respirator mask -- available at most drugstores and medical supply stores -- will block 95% of small particles, such as pollen and other allergens.

### Eat a Healthy Diet

One study found that children who ate a diet rich in fresh vegetables, fruits, and nuts -- particularly grapes, apples, oranges, and tomatoes -- had fewer allergy symptoms. Researchers are still trying to figure out the connection between diet and nasal allergies, but eating a healthy diet is known to do the body a world of good in general. Try adding at least one fresh fruit and vegetable to every meal.

### Use a Nasal Rinse

A nasal rinse cleans mucus from your nose and can help relieve nasal allergy symptoms. It also can rinse away bacteria, thin mucus, and help decrease postnasal drip. Buy a rinse kit or make one using a neti pot or a nasal bulb. Mix 1/2 teaspoon salt with a pinch of baking soda in 8 ounces of warm distilled or sterilized water. Leaning over a sink, gently flush one nostril at a time.

### Drink More Fluids

If you're feeling congested or have postnasal drip from your allergies, try drinking more water, juice, or other fluids. Drinking extra liquid can help thin the mucus in your nasal passages and may give you some relief. Hot fluids -- such as teas, broth, or soup -- may be especially soothing because they add the benefits of steam.

### Learn How to Clean Safely

Keeping your home clean is one of the best ways to avoid indoor allergens. But cleaning with harsh chemicals can irritate your nasal passages and aggravate your allergy symptoms. Try cleaning with ordinary household products like vinegar or baking soda. And use a vacuum cleaner that has a HEPA filter to trap allergens. If your allergies are severe, consider having someone else do the cleaning.

### Try Some Steam

Inhaling steam is a simple way to relieve nasal congestion and can ease breathing when you have allergies. Sit over a hot bowl or sink full of water and place a towel over your head to trap the steam. Or sit in the bathroom with a hot shower running. Use steam several times a day to relieve symptoms.



## How to Manage Your Stress

In today's fast-paced and ever-connected world, stress has become a fact of life. Stress can cause people to feel overwhelmed or pushed to the limit. The American Psychological Association's 2007 "Stress in America" poll found that one-third of people in the U.S. report experiencing extreme levels of stress (that's probably even higher now). In addition, nearly one-in-five report that they are experiencing high levels of stress 15 or more days per month. We actually have more stress in 30 days than our ancestors had in a whole year! While low to moderate levels of stress can be good for you when managed in healthy ways, extreme stress takes both an emotional and physical toll on the individual.

With the consequences of poorly managed stress ranging from fatigue to heart disease and obesity, it is important to know how to recognize high stress levels and take action to handle it in healthy ways. Being able to control stress is a learned behavior, and stress can be effectively managed by taking small steps toward changing unhealthy behaviors.

### The American Psychological Association offers the following tips on how to manage your stress:

**Understand how you stress.** Everyone experiences stress differently. How do you know when you are stressed? How are your thoughts or behaviors different from times when you do not feel stressed?

1. **Identify your sources of stress.** What events or situations trigger stressful feelings? Are they related to your children, family, health, financial decisions, work, relationships or something else?
2. **Learn your own stress signals.** People experience stress in different ways. You may have a hard time concentrating or making decisions, feel angry, irritable or out of control, or experience headaches, muscle tension or a lack of energy. Gauge your stress signals.
3. **Recognize how you deal with stress.** Determine if you are using unhealthy behaviors (such as smoking, drinking alcohol and over/under eating) to cope. Is this a routine behavior, or is it specific to certain events or situations? Do you make unhealthy choices as a result of feeling rushed and overwhelmed?
4. **Find healthy ways to manage stress.** Consider healthy, stress-reducing activities such as meditation, exercising or talking things out with friends or family. Keep in mind that unhealthy behaviors develop over time and can be difficult to change. Don't take on too much at once. Focus on changing only one behavior at a time.
5. **Take care of yourself.** Eat right, get enough sleep, drink plenty of water and engage in regular physical activity. Ensure you have a healthy mind and body through activities like yoga, taking a short walk, going to the gym or playing sports that will enhance both your physical and mental health. Take regular vacations or other breaks from work. No matter how hectic life gets, make time for yourself — even if it's just simple things like reading a good book or listening to your favorite music.
6. **Reach out for support.** Accepting help from supportive friends and family can improve your ability to manage stress. If you continue to feel overwhelmed by stress, you may want to talk to a psychologist, who can help you better manage stress and change unhealthy behaviors.

### De-stressors

- Take some "me time" right now.
- Remember... This too shall pass.
- Walk outside, breathe, connect with Source.
- Talk to yourself as if you were a good friend.
- Laugh.
- Step away from the situation.
- Identify what you really want.
- Get help—you don't have to do it all alone.
- Re-evaluate your priorities.

## Why Meditate?



I'm sure you have heard that meditation can be a great way to manage stress. But if you're like most of us, the thought of sitting still for any length of time seems almost impossible and so unproductive, right? Well, I've been making a valiant effort to try sitting in silence even for a few minutes a day, and guess what, I'm more productive because I approach my "to do" list with more calmness and focus. These are some of the proven benefits of meditation:

- **Improved concentration** – A clear mind makes you more productive, especially in creative disciplines like writing.
- **Less bothered by little things** – Do you sometimes allow yourself to get upset by little things? It is the nature of the mind to

magnify small things into serious problems. Meditation helps us detach. We learn to live in the here and now, rather than worrying about the past or future. We do not worry about meaningless things, but see the bigger picture.

- **Better Health** – There have been numerous studies pointing to the health benefits of meditation. The reason is that meditation reduces stress levels and alleviates anxiety. If we can reduce stress, many health benefits follow.
- **Knowledge of Self** – Meditation enables us to have a deeper understanding of our inner self. Through meditation we can gain a better understanding of our life's purpose.

Many people like the idea of meditation, but feel they don't have enough time. When you really want to do something you can find time. Get up just a few minutes earlier or watch 30 minutes less TV or browse the internet. Meditation requires an investment of time, but clearing the mind can help you accomplish more in the rest of your day. Nothing is better than the feeling of inner peace. What is the point in being tremendously busy but unable to enjoy it? Meditation is not about retreating from the world; it gives us inspiration. Whatever you do, if you have peace of mind, your work will be more enjoyable and productive. At first you may have a difficult time "not thinking"! Our minds are cluttered with thoughts that are hard to block. A helpful technique is to concentrate on one object, maybe a candle flame or a small dot or flower. Perhaps begin by repeating a word or phrase to yourself, also known as a Mantra. This is a good place to start. Give it a try. It takes practice but will be so worth the time and effort. Good luck. **Namaste!**



\*The definition of **Namaste** (pronounced na, ma, stay) is both a physical gesture and a spoken spiritual salutation, which is the recognition of the divine spirit (or soul) in another by the divine spirit in you.

The word **Namaste** translates simply to "I bow to the divine in you."

## Is There a Stress Management Diet? Resource: WebMD

**STRESS**...we all have it, and how we handle it can make all the difference. Stress management can be a powerful tool for wellness, since too much stress is bad for you. There are many strategies, and one of them includes what you eat.

### Stress-Busting Foods: How They Work

Foods can help tame stress in several ways. Comfort foods, like a bowl of warm oatmeal, boost levels of serotonin, a calming brain chemical. Other foods can cut levels of cortisol and adrenaline, stress hormones that take a toll on the body over time. A healthy diet can help counter the impact of stress by shoring up the immune system and lowering blood pressure. Do you know which foods are stress busters?

#### Complex Carbs

All carbs prompt the brain to make more serotonin. For a steady supply of this feel-good chemical, it's best to eat complex carbs, which take longer to digest. Good choices include whole-grain breads, pastas, and breakfast cereals, including old-fashioned oatmeal. Complex carbs can also help you feel balanced by stabilizing blood sugar levels.

#### Simple Carbs

Dietitians usually recommend steering clear of simple carbs, which include sweets and soda. But in a pinch, these foods can hit the spot. They're digested quickly, leading to a spike in serotonin. Still, it doesn't last long, and there are better options. So don't make these a stress-relieving habit; you should limit them.

#### Oranges

Oranges make the list for their wealth of vitamin C. Studies suggest this vitamin can curb levels of stress hormones while strengthening the immune system. In one study of people with high blood pressure, blood pressure and levels of cortisol (a stress hormone) returned to normal more quickly when people took vitamin C before a stressful task.

#### Spinach

Too little magnesium may trigger headaches and fatigue, compounding the effects of stress. One cup of spinach helps you stock back up on magnesium. Don't like spinach? Other green, leafy vegetables are good magnesium sources. Or try some cooked soybeans or a fillet of salmon, also high in magnesium.

#### Fatty Fish

To keep stress in check, make friends with naturally fatty fish. Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish such as salmon and tuna, can prevent surges in stress hormones and may help protect against heart disease, depression, and premenstrual syndrome (PMS). For a steady supply of feel-good omega-3s, aim to eat 3 ounces of fatty fish at least twice a week.

### De-Stress With Exercise

Besides changing your diet, one of the best stress-busting strategies is to start exercising. Aerobic exercise boosts oxygen circulation and spurs your body to make feel-good chemicals called endorphins. Aim for 30 minutes of aerobic exercise most days of the week. If you're not active now, tell your health care provider you're going to start exercising -- they'll root for you and make sure you're ready to get moving. Or tell a friend to help you by making you accountable.

#### Black Tea

Drinking black tea may help you recover from stressful events more quickly. One study compared people who drank 4 cups of tea daily for 6 weeks with people who drank another beverage. The tea drinkers reported feeling calmer and had lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol after stressful situations.

#### Pistachios

Pistachios, as well as other nuts and seeds, are good sources of healthy fats. Eating a handful of pistachios, walnuts, or almonds every day may help lower your cholesterol, ease inflammation in your heart's arteries, make diabetes less likely, and protect you against the effects of stress. Don't overdo it, though: Nuts are rich in calories.

#### Avocados

One of the best ways to reduce high blood pressure is to get enough potassium, and half an avocado has more potassium than a medium-sized banana. A little bit of guacamole, made from avocado, might be a good choice when stress has you craving a high-fat treat. Avocados are high in fat and calories, though, so watch your portion size. And chose to dip veggies over chips.

#### Almonds

Almonds are chock-full of helpful vitamins: vitamin E to bolster the immune system, plus B vitamins, which may make you more resilient during bouts of stress or depression. To get the benefits, snack on a quarter of a cup every day.

#### Raw Veggies

Crunchy raw vegetables can help ease stress in a purely mechanical way. Munching celery or carrot sticks helps release a clenched jaw, and that can ward off tension.

#### Bedtime Snack

Carbs at bedtime can speed the release of the brain chemical serotonin and help you sleep better. Since heavy meals before bed can trigger heartburn, stick to something light.

#### Milk

Another bedtime stress buster is the time-honored glass of warm milk. Research shows that calcium eases anxiety and mood swings linked to PMS. Dietitians typically recommend skim or low-fat milk.



## Proven Reasons Why You Should Walk

[By MedinineNet.com](http://By.MedinineNet.com)

With the warmer weather fast approaching, one of the easiest and least expensive ways to stay physically fit is to walk. You'd think a simple activity like walking would be just that, simple. Yet fewer than 50% of American adults do enough exercise to gain any health or fitness benefits from physical activity.

Here are some reasons why you should start walking:

- ♥ Walking can prevent Type 2 diabetes. The Diabetes Prevention Program showed that walking 150 minutes per week and losing just 7% of your body weight (12-15 pounds) can reduce your risk of diabetes by 58%. A great reason to offer a weight loss AND a walking challenge at work.
- ♥ Walking strengthens your heart if you're male. In one study, mortality rates among retired men who walked less than one mile per day were nearly twice that among those who walked more than two miles per day.
- ♥ Walking strengthens your heart if you're female. Women in the Nurse's Health Study (72,488 female nurses) who walked three hours or more per week reduced their risk of a heart attack or coronary event by 35% compared with women who did not walk.
- ♥ Walking is good for the brain. In a study on walking and cognitive function, researchers found that women who walked the equivalent of an easy pace at least 1.5 hours per week had significantly better cognitive function and less cognitive decline than women who walked less than 40 minutes per week. Think about that!
- ♥ Walking is good for your bones. Research shows that postmenopausal women who walk approximately one mile each day have higher whole-body bone density than women who walk shorter distances, and walking is also effective in slowing the rate of bone loss from the legs.
- ♥ Walking helps alleviate symptoms of depression. Walking for 30 minutes, three to five times per week for 12 weeks reduced symptoms of depression as measured with a standard depression questionnaire by 47%.
- ♥ Walking in short bouts improves fitness too! A study of sedentary women showed that short bouts of brisk walking (three 10-minute walks per day) resulted in similar improvements in fitness and were at least as effective in decreasing body fatness as long bouts (one 30-minute walk).
- ♥ Walking improves physical function. Helps prevent physical disability and weakness especially in older adults.

The list of benefits goes on and on but if I continued, there'd be no time for you to start walking!

If you're a seasoned walker, keep doing what you're doing. If you've been inactive and tire easily, it's best to start slow and easy. At first, walk only as far or as fast as you find comfortable. If you can walk for only a few minutes, let that be your starting point. For example, you might try short daily sessions of five to 10 minutes and slowly build up to 15 minutes twice a week. Then, over several weeks' time, you can gradually work your way up to 30 to 60 minutes of walking most days each week. Set realistic goals for yourself. Track your progress. Walk with a friend. It helps keep you going and accountable. And keep in mind that usually the first step is the most difficult. But once you start I know you will be glad you did...so will your health!

We are the choices that we make. Every choice gives us the opportunity to create our course...our life's journey. Right now we are one choice away from a new beginning.

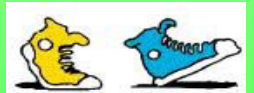
For a moment, think about what YOU really want, what is your intention? What will make you happy, fulfilled, content, safe, confident, empowered? What choices (or changes) do you need to make to get there? If you have struggled in the past, perhaps one way to succeed this time is to be accountable. Find someone you trust. Someone who can be your ally and hold you accountable to your intentions.

You really only have 3 Choices in life: Give up, Give in, or Give it all you've got.

What are you going to do?

### What type of shoe?

One of the advantages of walking is that you don't need lots of fancy equipment, but shoes can make a difference. There are many athletic shoe types to choose from: running, walking, cross-training, etc. If you are only going to use them for walking, it's suggested you get a walking shoe. Walking shoes typically have heels and toes that are rounded up to reduce impact on heel strike and increase energy during push-off.



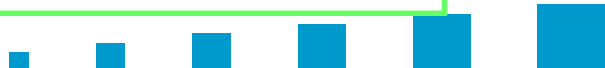
**Wednesday April 29th is Walk@Lunch Day.**

Why not take a walk with a co-worker during your lunch break and see how refreshed and de-stressed you feel when you return.

Map out a few safe routes at work so employees know where and how far to walk.

Start a walking club or challenge to keep everyone motivated to move!

900-505-0000





## Clean Eating—Weeknight Dinner Recipe

### Quinoa Pilaf with Seared Scallops

**Resource:** EatingWell.com

**Makes:** 4 servings, about 3 scallops & 3/4 cup salad each

**Serving Size:** about 3 scallops & 3/4 cup salad

**Active Time:** 35 minutes

**Total Time:** 35 minutes

#### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 3 scallions, sliced, greens and whites separated
- 1 cup quinoa
- 1 cup water
- 2 medium blood oranges or navel oranges
- 1/4 cup toasted sliced almonds (see Tip), divided
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 pound dry sea scallops



#### Preparation:

1. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add scallion whites; cook, stirring, until beginning to brown, about 1 minute. Add quinoa; cook, stirring until toasted and fragrant, about 1 minute more. Add water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Let stand, covered, for 5 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, slice ends off oranges. With a sharp knife, remove the peel and white pith; discard. Working over a large bowl, cut the orange segments from their surrounding membranes. Squeeze juice from the membranes into the bowl before discarding them, if desired. Add the scallion greens, almonds, cilantro, 1/2 teaspoon cumin, 1/4 teaspoon coriander and salt to the bowl; gently stir to combine.
3. Pat scallops dry and sprinkle both sides with the remaining 1/2 teaspoon cumin and 1/4 teaspoon coriander. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon oil in a large cast-iron or nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the scallops and cook until golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes per side. (To prevent overcooking, transfer the scallops to a plate as soon as they are done.)
4. Add the quinoa to the bowl with the orange mixture and gently stir to combine. Serve the scallops over the warm quinoa salad.

#### Tips & Notes:

Tip: For the best flavor, toast chopped nuts or seeds: Heat a dry skillet over medium-low heat. Add nuts or seeds and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, 2 to 4 minutes.

#### Nutrition:

Per serving: 368 calories; 13 g fat (2 g sat, 8 g mono); 27 mg cholesterol; 41 g carbohydrates; 0 g added sugars; 9 g total sugars; 22 g protein; 6 g fiber; 597 mg sodium; 668 mg potassium.

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**We're so busy watching out for what's just ahead of us that we don't take time to enjoy where we are.**