

Wellness Corner Connection



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Taking the Plunge...H2O

Some Healthy Trivia:

1.) True or False: Eating with family and friends causes you to eat more.

2.) Start with this appetizer before a big holiday meal to consume fewer calories overall:

- A. Soup
- B. Salad
- C. A glass of beer
- D. Anything on a tiny cracker.

3.) Which is the healthiest cup of holiday cheer?

- A. Mulled wine
- B. Champagne
- C. Eggnog

Answer Key on page 3.



True Meaning of the Holiday

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart." (Helen Keller)

IT IS NOT HAPPY PEOPLE WHO ARE THANKFUL. IT IS THANKFUL PEOPLE WHO ARE HAPPY.

WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?



With the end of year fast approaching, I was thinking about a tradition my husband and I have been doing for the last several years...well for me, only the last two since it took that long to get up the nerve. I'm referring to the "New Year's Day Polar Bear Plunge"! I'm not a fan of water at least not the freezing cold kind. I prefer my swimming water to be in the 80's! However, when it comes to drinking water, that is a different story! I am an advocate of hydration! So I'm not going to talk about the "plunge" (sorry to disappoint) but I do want to talk about how important it is for you to drink good old H2O.

In working with many of you over the years, this water-drinking-business is a real challenge! Therefore, I wanted to take this opportunity to offer some simple ways you might be able to meet this challenge head on as we look forward to a new year. Some may sound obvious but we all need a little reminder now and again. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for your overall health (after all, our bodies are 75% water!). With every gulp, water can help to control calorie consumption, invigorate you during exercising, boost kidney function, aid in digestion, help you burn calories, and improve your skin. As I'm sure we have all heard before, many experts suggest aiming for at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water per day (some feel ideally, half your weight in ounces is preferred but for many that is just not going to happen in this lifetime!) Strive to drink throughout your day to stay hydrated. But maybe one of these ideas might help you meet your goals for 2018.

Establish a Routine: Just like planning your meals, plan your water consumption. Have a set amount you want to drink in a day. I drink 8 to 12-ounces with my vitamins as soon as I get up in the morning. I have a 32-ounce container that I use to measure my consumption the rest of the day. I know I need to get through 2 a day! I finish one in the morning (counting my first glass at wakeup) and another 32-ounces before bedtime. Having an 8oz. glass before eating every meal might be another option for you. Find what works for you. To start just try replacing one non-water beverage and build from there.

Add flavor: I get it...water can be pretty bland and tasteless. Jazz it up by infusing your water with fruit slices. Squeeze a lemon, lime or orange into your container. You can even freeze fruit and use it in place of ice cubes. If you need the fizz or carbonation from sodas, try sparkling water or club soda. Maybe drop your favor tea bag into the water container to give it some flavor.

Use your phone: Keep track of how many ounces or glasses you consume with the help of a free applications like Waterlog, Daily Water Free from iTunes, or The HydrateMe Smart Water Bottle (so cool!). Also if you are already tracking your food through MyFitnessPal, you can also track your water consumption.



Eat More Hydrating Foods: Okay maybe this is cheating a little bit but if drinking water is challenging for you at first add more of these foods, it will be a help. Water consumption is cumulative. So adding foods such as cucumbers, lettuce, watermelon, strawberries, grapefruit, apricots, zucchini, grapes, cherries, cauliflower, radishes, celery, spinach, broccoli, tomatoes, eggplant, and bell pepper is a bonus! This does not REPLACE drinking water, however!

Buy Different Water Bottles: I thought this was a good idea. Maybe the water "looks" boring out of a plastic bottle. Why not buy yourself a container in your favorite color or with a nice design. It might just inspire you enough to keep it handy so you will drink more often! Try inspirational post-it notes on your water bottle to keep you going!

Stay Active: Drinking more will probably increase your visits to the rest room which is a great thing if you are typically sitting all day! It's recommended that you stand up every 30-60 minutes. Make that your signal to drink water. Refilling your water container is also a great reason to get up and move!

Use Rubber bands: Take your water bottle and place colorful rubber bands around it. Every time you finish the bottle, you get to remove the rubber bands and add them to your wrist. It's a clever way to monitor your progress throughout the day. (<http://www.cookinglight.com/healthy-living/beauty/how-rubber-bands-can-remind-you-to-drink-more-water>)

Handling the Holiday Stress

The holidays are that time of the year when people feel even more stressed than they usually do. Shopping, limited finances, gift demands, family interactions, loneliness and several other factors all go into making this time of year unique. For some, this stress can cause you to turn to food to help you cope. Add to this the actual physical demands that the holidays place on the heart (increased rate of heart attacks) and the stress of this time of year is clearly not something to take lightly. So what are some simple, yet often ignored, ways to help decrease your holiday stress? I'm so glad you asked! 😊

Exercise: Remember that mental stress can be relieved through physical exercise. But we hear so much about what we should do: how many minutes per day, how many times per week, etc. Yet so many of us find an excuse to avoid doing something because it's not fun. Find something that YOU enjoy doing and will stick with. What do you enjoy that requires movement? A brisk walk in the park, taking a fun exercise class with friends, chopping wood, playing catch with your grandkids, walking your dog? Physical exercise is anything that enhances or maintains physical fitness and overall health and wellness. It strengthens your muscles, especially your heart and helps to manage your weight. It also helps to keep your immune system elevated to help ward off colds and flu. Best of all...reduces stress!

Politely decline: Don't feel obligated to attend every holiday party you are invited to. Decide ahead of time which ones you can afford to go to (mentally) and which ones you simply do not have the time for. Remember, over-commitment is not a sign of love...it is simply a sign of your own guilt. Free yourself this year!

Relax: Give yourself 10-15 minutes each day for peace and quiet, a time to be reflective, meditate, or simply unwind. If you have small children, ask someone to watch them while you take a short break. Or simply escaping to a quiet room for a few deep breaths could reenergize and empower you. You deserve it!

Eat healthfully: At least most of the time. Proper nutrition promotes health, well-being and rejuvenation, which in turn enhances your resilience to stress.

Enjoy natural sunlight: Winter is tough on those of us who need sunlight. It can be depressing being stuck inside. But if you can plan a brisk walk during your day, it can be a mood enhancer. No time? Then stand in front of a window and let the warm rays fall upon your face while you take deep breaths in and out.

Music: Listen to music that you love. If the holiday music gets monotonous, take a break and listen to something that energizes you. Why not put on a set of headphones while shopping especially if you've heard one too many "Chestnuts roasting on an open fire."

Set some ground rules: Knowing that this is a time of rich and tempting foods, set ground rules about eating such as only eat while seated at the table, no food after 8pm, no second helpings, no "saving up calories" for that one meal. Know the difference between real hunger and stress eating!

Don't deprive yourself: Enjoying the foods you love is important because if you deprive yourself of them, it could lead to binge eating. The key is planning to eat a small portion of the desired food, eat it slowly and savor every bite.

Be good to yourself: Have a list of motivational sayings that inspire and strengthen your resolve. Use affirmations daily to help you feel good about yourself and your mission to stay healthy and enjoy the holidays with minimal stress! Show a little self-compassion!

Resources: *Psychology Today* and *WebMD*



What Does a Day of Fruit & Veggies Look Like?

We all know we should be eating more fruits and veggies—but many of us fall short on the daily recommended amount. For most adults that's 2 cups of fruit and 2.5 to 3 cups of vegetables (it's recommended that men get a little more veggies). Only 14 percent of adults are getting the recommended amount of vegetables and only 18 percent get enough fruit. That's really low, especially when you think about how good they are for you. Produce is loaded with fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. A typical response I have gotten is that there is "there is no way I can eat that many in a day". You would be surprised at how quickly and easily you can meet this healthy goal. Here are a few ways you can get the recommended daily amount of fruits and vegetables (2 cups of fruit, 2 1/2 cups of vegetables). I am a very visual person so I found this to be very helpful! I hope you find it to be the same.



- 1 small apple (2.5" diameter)
- 1/2 cup dried fruit (raisins, prunes, apricots)
- 1 cup broccoli, cooked
- 2 cups raw leafy greens + 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes



- 1 cup diced watermelon
- 1 large peach
- 1 cup baby carrots (about 12 baby carrots)
- 1 cup black beans
- 1/2 cup shredded cabbage



- 1 cup pineapple
- 1 medium pear
- 1 cup cucumber
- 1 cup red peppers
- 1 large stalk of celery



- 1 cup frozen mixed berries
- 1 cup grapes
- 1 cup spaghetti squash
- 1 small raw whole tomato
- 2 cups raw kale



- 8 large strawberries
- 1 cup diced plums (about 2 large plums)
- 1 cup green beans
- 1 cup diced onions
- 1/2 cup diced potato



- 1 medium (4" diameter) grapefruit
- 1 large banana
- 1 large baked sweet potato
- 1 cup Brussels sprouts
- 1 small green pepper



- 1 cup diced cantaloupe
- 1 cup blueberries
- 2 cups salad greens
- 1 cup chopped cucumber
- 1/2 small ear corn

So what do you think? Doable? And think of all the combinations you can make. They look beautiful right? And just think how great they are for your overall health!! Bon Appetite!

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you celebrate the holidays:

1. Do not skip meals in order to "save room" for your holiday dinner. Your metabolism will slow down; you will be ravenous and will eat way more than you should and probably of the wrong stuff too.
2. Eat what you want but control your portions. Try to fill your plate with more fruits and veggies to start. Survey the entire buffet line before filling up your plate and pick 2 or 3 things you must have.
3. Don't stand or sit around the food table while you chat. You may mindlessly pick at the food even though you are not hungry.
4. Downsize your plate. Put your fork down between each bite. Chew slowly and taste/savor your food.
5. Don't forget to keep exercise as part of your routine! It's a great stress reliever and will help burn off some of those extra calories!
6. If you are determined to indulge, make sure to drink a glass of water between every adult beverage.

Many folks go into the holidays thinking "all bets are off" after all, this is the holiday and you are going to indulge, right? Well you can enjoy your holiday favorites and still keep on track to overall health and weight management. Don't rely on those New Year Resolutions...they typically don't work. Think lifetime! And enjoy!



holiday
tips



Answer #1: TRUE. A study by Pennsylvania State University found that when people ate among friends or family, they consumed about 50 percent more than if they were alone or among strangers. One theory? Drinking and watching others indulge lowers your resolve, while conversation prolongs the meal and distracts us from being aware of how much we're eating.

Answer #2: A. Soup. A study conducted by Baylor College of Medicine in Houston found that people who consumed a bowl of hot soup before meals ate less, lost more weight, and kept it off longer.

Answer #3: B. Choose champagne for a holiday toast that'll go a little easier on your health than the others. Eggnog is loaded with cream, sugar, fat, and calories -- and that's before it's

Feeling SAD? Seasonal Affective Disorder

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that's related to changes in seasons — SAD begins and ends at about the same times every year. If you're like most people with SAD, your symptoms start in the fall and continue into the winter months, sapping your energy and making you feel moody. Treatment for SAD may include light therapy (phototherapy), medications and psychotherapy. Don't brush off that yearly feeling as simply a case of the "winter blues" or a seasonal funk that you have to tough out on your own. Take steps to keep your mood and motivation steady throughout the year.



Symptoms

In most cases, seasonal affective disorder symptoms appear during late fall or early winter and go away during the sunnier days of spring and summer. Less commonly, people with the opposite pattern have symptoms that begin in spring or summer. In either case, symptoms may start out mild and become more severe as the season progresses. Signs and symptoms of SAD may include:

Fall and winter SAD

Symptoms specific to winter-onset SAD, sometimes called winter depression, may include:

- Oversleeping
- Appetite changes, especially a craving for foods high in carbohydrates
- Weight gain
- Tiredness or low energy



- Feeling depressed most of the day, nearly every day
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Having low energy
- Having problems with sleeping
- Experiencing changes in your appetite or weight
- Feeling sluggish or agitated
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty
- Having frequent thoughts of death or suicide

Increased cravings for carbohydrates!

5% of people experience severe SAD

15% of people experience milder symptoms known as subsyndromal SAD (S-SAD)



Smile and your brain will think happy thoughts!

Causes

The specific cause of seasonal affective disorder remains unknown. Some factors that may come into play include:

- **Your biological clock (circadian rhythm).** The reduced level of sunlight in fall and winter may cause winter-onset SAD. This decrease in sunlight may disrupt your body's internal clock and lead to feelings of depression.
- **Serotonin levels.** A drop in serotonin, a brain chemical (neurotransmitter) that affects mood, might play a role in SAD. Reduced sunlight can cause a drop in serotonin that may trigger depression.
- **Melatonin levels.** The change in season can disrupt the balance of the body's level of melatonin, which plays a role in sleep patterns and mood.

Risk factors

Seasonal affective disorder is diagnosed more often in women than in men. And SAD occurs more frequently in younger adults than in older adults.

Factors that may increase your risk of seasonal affective disorder include:

- **Family history.** People with SAD may be more likely to have blood relatives with SAD or another form of depression.
- **Having major depression or bipolar disorder.** Symptoms of depression may worsen seasonally if you have one of these conditions.
- **Living far from the equator.** SAD appears to be more common among people who live far north or south of the equator. This may be due to decreased sunlight during the winter and longer days during the summer months.

Complications

Take signs and symptoms of seasonal affective disorder seriously. As with other types of depression, SAD can get worse and lead to problems if it's not treated. These can include:

- Social withdrawal
- School or work problems
- Substance abuse
- Other mental health disorders such as anxiety or eating disorders
- Suicidal thoughts or behavior

Treatment can help prevent complications, especially if SAD is diagnosed and treated before symptoms get bad.

Resource: MayoClinic

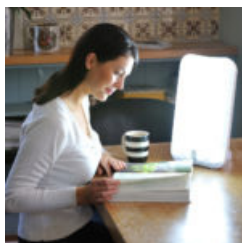


Strategies To Deal with SAD

Researchers don't fully understand what causes SAD, only that it is connected to light received by the brain through the eyes. One theory is that light affects the hormone melatonin, which peaks in the brain at night and regulates your internal body clock. Another theory holds that light tinkers with the neurotransmitter serotonin, a mood-regulating chemical in the brain. Because other conditions such as low thyroid functioning can mimic SAD, talk with your doctor before attempting to treat yourself, especially if you are severely depressed. Some of the suggestions below may complement treatment. If your seasonal affective disorder symptoms are mild, try a few of these tips to dash the winter blues.

Bring In The Light

Make your home shine. Add more lamps, brighten rooms with light-colored paint and carpets, raise window shades, and open draperies.

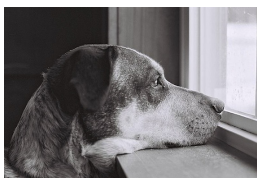


Duplicate The Sun

Specially designed light fixtures, boxes, and visors offer full-spectrum lighting that replicate natural light without the harmful ultraviolet rays. Light therapy is a proven treatment for SAD. Typically, people with SAD benefit from sitting in front of a light box for 30 minutes to 2 hours daily, Rosenthal says. **A study of 96 Canadians with SAD found that light therapy was just as effective as Prozac, at improving mood.** The light therapy brought relief after only 1 week, compared with Prozac which took twice as long. As a bonus, light therapy doesn't come with side effects such as agitation or difficulty sleeping.

Awaken To Light

If your symptoms are mild, put a bedroom light on a timer set to come on about an hour before you arise in the morning. It helps people wake up in the morning, it helps them to feel better—even though it's just a regular bedside lamp—simply because the eyes are so very sensitive at that hour of the morning. For more severe SAD, purchase a specially designed dawn simulator.



Take A Window Seat

Sit by a window at work if you can. "Everybody wants a window seat," Rosenthal says. Even though the window's glass diminishes the sunlight's potency, you'll likely reap some mood-enhancing benefits.

Seek Warmth

Some experts believe that temperature affects seasonal changes in behavior. Lots of people with SAD also hate cold weather and have trouble getting warm in winter, no matter how many layers of socks they put on. People who dislike cold may simply avoid the outdoors in winter and get less sunlight, worsening their blues. Some possible strategies for staying warmer: Nudge the thermostat upward, wrap yourself in an electric blanket, or sip hot beverages.



Walk Outside

Go outdoors on a bright winter day, and you'll naturally soak up some of that feel-good light, says Rosenthal. Even on a cloudy day, you'll get more light than you would indoors. And it doesn't matter if you are bundled up. It's the light that is received through the eyes that helps to lift your mood. Aim for at least 30 minutes daily for an emotional and physical boost.



Get Fit

Whether you walk, jog, or cycle indoors or out, aerobic activity heightens mood-boosting brain chemicals that banish winter blues. For a one-two punch against SAD, combine exercise with light. For example, walk outside or set up a light box in front of your stationary cycle.



Curb Carbs

Many, many SAD patients claim to be carbohydrate addicts. But overdosing on carbohydrate-rich foods—comfort foods such as candy, cookies, cakes, potatoes, breads, and pastas—can lead to lethargy and weight gain. Substitute protein-dense meals, especially in the morning and afternoon. Instead of cereal at breakfast, try an omelet. Rather than a sandwich at lunch, opt for a chicken Caesar salad without the croutons.

(www.prevention.com)



CHICKEN ENCHILADA SOUP (SLOW COOKER)

Everything you love about chicken enchiladas... in one big bowl! Turning classic meals into soups, it's an easy (maybe even lazy) way to make a dish that only dirties one pot! Who says good healthy food has to be time consuming!

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 cups less sodium chicken broth
- 8 oz can tomato sauce
- 1-2 tsp chipotle chili in adobo sauce (or more to taste)
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro (plus more for garnish)
- 15 oz can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 14.5 oz can petite diced tomatoes
- 2 cups frozen corn
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1/2 tsp dried oregano
- 2 skinless chicken breasts (16 oz total)

For topping:

- 3/4 cup shredded part skim cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped scallions
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
- 4 oz (1 small) haas avocado, diced
- 6 tbsp reduced fat sour cream, optional



NUTRITIONAL INFO:

Yield: 6 Servings, Serving Size: 1 1/2 cups

Amount Per Serving:

Smart Points: 2

Points +/-: 8

Calories: 368

- Total Fat: 12g
- Saturated Fat: g
- Cholesterol: 58mg
- Sodium: 821mg
- Carbohydrates: 28g
- Fiber: 8.5g
- Sugar: 6g

DIRECTIONS:

Slow Cooker:

1. Heat oil in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Add onion and garlic and sauté until soft, 3-4 minutes. Slowly add the chicken broth, tomato sauce and chipotle adobo sauce and bring to a boil. Add cilantro and remove from heat. Pour into crock pot.
2. Add the drained beans, diced tomatoes, corn, cumin, oregano and stir. Add the chicken breasts; cover and cook on low heat for 4-6 hours.
3. Remove chicken and shred with two forks. Add chicken back into the soup, adjust salt and cumin to taste. Serve in bowls and top with cheese, avocado, scallions and cilantro. Also great with sour cream or crushed tortilla chips. Enjoy!
4. or Instant Pot:
5. Press saute on the Instant Pot. Add onion and garlic and sauté until soft, 3-4 minutes. Slowly add the chicken broth, tomato sauce and chipotle adobo sauce and cilantro.
6. Add the drained beans, diced tomatoes, corn, cumin, oregano and stir. Add the chicken breasts; cover and cook on high pressure for 20 minutes. Quick or natural release.
7. Remove chicken and shred with two forks. Add chicken back into the soup, adjust salt and cumin to taste. Serve in bowls and top with cheese, avocado, scallions and cilantro. Also great with sour cream or crushed tortilla chips. Enjoy!

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Wishing everyone a healthy and safe holiday season!!!

