

A HEALTHIER YOU

TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR OPTIMAL WELL-BEING

SEPTEMBER 2024



FIGHT THE FLU

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory disease that can lead to serious complications, hospitalizations, or even death. Even healthy people can get very sick from flu and spread it to co-workers, friends and loved ones.

An annual seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself from getting flu and any of its potentially serious complications.

Who should get a flu vaccine?

The CDC recommends annual flu vaccination for anyone six months of age or older. Vaccination is especially important for people at high risk of complications, including pregnant women, older adults, and young children.

What are common side effect of the flu vaccine?

Side effects are caused by the person's immune system making protective antibodies to the killed virus in the vaccine. These antibodies are what allow the body to fight against flu. Common side effects can include soreness, redness or swelling at the vaccination site, low grade fever, aches, and toughness or itching at the vaccination site.

Can I get flu from the flu vaccine?

No. The viruses in the flu vaccine are killed (inactivated), so they cannot cause infection and you cannot get flu from the flu vaccine.

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“The weather just went from 90 to 55 like it saw a state trooper.”

- Unknown



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PROVIDER CORNER

REDUCE STRESS TO IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH

One of the ways stressors can affect the body and play a part in weight gain is by first increasing the body's metabolic needs. Acute stress causes a release of adrenaline, which suppresses the appetite. However, chronic stress over time causes an increase in cortisol that can trigger emotional eating and increase adipose (fatty) tissue around the abdomen. Adipose tissue adds to insulin resistance and increases the risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and breast cancer risk. In addition, this addition of adipose tissue lowers the level of the satiety hormone leptin and increases ghrelin, the appetite hormone leading to further weight gain.

TIPS FOR MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WEIGHT



Mindful Eating

Mindful eating includes making healthy food choices, focusing on the meal not other distractions, and chewing slowly to reduce eating too quickly. This practice helps decrease overeating.



Omega-3 Fats and Vegetables

Eat a healthy diet with Omega-3 fats and vegetables. Studies have shown these foods can reduce cortisol levels. Cortisol is your body's main stress hormone and works with parts of your brain to control your mood, motivation, and fear.



Physical Activity

Participating in regular physical activity reduces blood pressure and muscle tension and decreases stress hormones that lead to weight gain. Just ten minutes of increased heart rate can make a difference. A good goal is to achieve 150 minutes of activity weekly.



Quality Sleep

Stress increases alertness causing sleep delay and multiple awakenings during the night prohibiting REM sleep. REM sleep supports the immune system, mood regulation, and memory.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Using food as medicine is neither foreign nor new; many ancient civilizations utilized herbal remedies and minerals for health. Using nature as medicine through minerals, supplements, and vitamins is increasingly popular today. Plants, or phytomedicines, are central to this approach. For example, turmeric, with its active compound curcumin, has demonstrated anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Ginger has been used for centuries to alleviate nausea and support digestion. These natural substances often contain complex compounds that interact beneficially with the body, sometimes with fewer side effects than synthetic drugs. Minerals also play a crucial role; magnesium in leafy greens and nuts supports muscle function and bone health. When considering supplements and natural remedies, it's important to consult with a healthcare provider to avoid potential interactions with medications.

DO YOU NEED A NATURE PRESCRIPTION?

One interesting area of current research is the impact of nature on general well-being. Being in natural outside environments (NOEs), where you can find green vegetation or blue water, reduces anger, fear, and stress and increases pleasant feelings. Researchers have studied nature's healing effects in such areas as ADHD, dementia, pain, stress and anxiety, medical recovery, immune function, sleep, mood, obesity, and PTSD. Exposure to nature can contribute to your physical well-being. It can reduce blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, the production of stress hormones, and even depression, cancer, and cardiovascular disease risk factors. Research done in hospitals, offices, and schools has found that even a simple plant in a room or even viewing scenes of nature can have a significant impact on stress and anxiety.

Neuroscientist Dr. Rachel Hopman has developed a practical guide for reaping the benefits of the 20-5-3 Rule. According to this Rule, we can significantly improve our health and well-being by spending 20 minutes, three times a week in any natural environment. This could be as simple as a walk on a tree-lined street or time in your garden. To maximize the benefits, aim for 5 hours each month in wilder NOEs, such as a hike in a more rural area, a day at the beach, or fishing. For an annual reset, consider spending 3 days in a more off-the-grid setting.

It's important to note that in studies where people were allowed to use their phones during nature visits, no health benefits were observed. This underscores the importance of disconnecting from technology and fully immersing oneself in the natural environment to fully experience its healing power.

September in the Midwest is a milder month filled with changing colors. Give yourself a nature prescription for 20 minutes at least three days per week, put your phone away, go outdoors, and notice the healing power!

**In every walk
with nature, one
receives far more
than he seeks.**

-John Muir, Father of National Parks



THE RDN IS IN!

A Parkview Workplace Wellness registered dietitian nutritionist will be on-site at the NACS Health and Wellness Center on September 25 from 3 - 5 p.m.

If you are interested in a one-on-one consultation about nutrition or have related questions, stop in on the above date. Participants will be seen on a first-come, first-served basis.

Questions? Contact Alex Degitz at Alexandra.Degitz@parkview.com

EVERYDAY ERGONOMICS

Aging is a natural part of life that affects us all. While we can't stop it, we can make proactive decisions to mitigate these changes. As we notice physical changes, focusing on our safety and well-being becomes increasingly important. We should take proactive steps to enhance our strength, flexibility, and balance and ensure our movements are safe and properly executed. Taking proactive steps aids in a continued transition towards a healthy and productive lifestyle beyond our time in the workplace.

With age comes decreases in our physical ability, including reductions in strength, flexibility, balance and dexterity among others. These can hinder our ability to do work while increasing the potential risk of injury. However, these age-related changes can be mitigated with specific training and lifestyle adjustments. Regular exercise activities such as aerobic-based training and strength training can help with these changes. The key is consistency. Regular aerobic exercises like running, biking, and hiking increases cardiovascular health which can lessen the age-related decline in cardiovascular function. Strength training can both help preserve and build muscle mass as well as improve bone strength. When engaging in any style of training, ensure you're utilizing proper technique to avoid injury risk. These training styles also contribute to better coordination and balance.

Even outside of training, proper movement mechanics are essential to preserving and maintaining physical health. Properly setting up workstations and putting users in a neutral body position, including adjustable table heights, chair settings, and monitor placement, is important to limit unnecessary stress on our bodies. We should avoid awkward lifts and body positions and utilize task-specific equipment to assist when needed. By managing stress, we also manage fatigue, which is crucial to preventing injuries such as strains and sprains.

As we age, it becomes more important that we pay closer attention to how we are managing our health. This would include taking proactive steps such as regular physical activity as well as focusing on sleep, nutrition, and stress management. By prioritizing our health and well-being through these steps we set ourselves up for success both personally and professionally as well as beyond retirement. These simple steps can increase quality of life and help delay symptoms of age-related decline.



Need to see our providers?
Schedule a visit at the NACS Health & Wellness Center by scanning the QR code.



NACS Health & Wellness Center

3905 Carroll Road, Door 27
Fort Wayne, IN 46818
(260) 338-5303

Monday	1 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday	6:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Wednesday	3 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Thursday	6:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m., 3 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Friday	Closed



Brenda O'Hara, MD



Meghan Warrix, FNP



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UPCOMING SEPTEMBER EVENTS

11

Stress Less | 11:20-11:50 | [Join the meeting now](#)
Learn tools to be proactive when faced with stress.

23

Sleep Smart | 2:30-2:50 | [Join the meeting now](#)
Join Jeanette to learn sleep hygiene for energy and resilience.

Check out September's Parkview Activities Calendar for live well-being and in-person classes along with presentations and programs. To sign-up, sign into the NACS wellness portal using the username and password that you created or choose "sign-up" to create an account.

Give Veggies a Starring Role!

Food has the power to change our mood and bring people together, and it has the power to heal.

You may have heard the saying, *"Let food be thy medicine, and medicine thy food."* These words were spoken by Hippocrates -commonly known as the father of modern medicine. Modern science now demonstrates a key to good health is nutrient-dense, mineral rich, fully intact, consciously created real food. Vegetables fit the bill perfectly. If you are looking for a way to improve or maintain your health, put rich dark colored veggies in a starring role!

Breakfast can be a hard place to fit veggies in. Try these Loaded Egg Muffins! These muffins are a great dish for a grab-and-go breakfast. For a make-ahead version, simply allow to cool completely, before dividing into individual portions and freezing for future enjoyment. When you're ready to cook them, simply microwave for 60-90 seconds.

Recipe Notes:

Be sure to coat muffin pan cups thoroughly so that the eggs can easily be removed. A toothpick can be used around the edges to help release them from the tin. A silicone muffin pan can be useful here too, but you'll still need to coat the cups with non-stick spray or oil.

Veggie Loaded Egg Muffins



Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Yield: 12 servings

Ingredients

2 jarred roasted red bell peppers
1 green onion
2 cups, packed baby spinach
½ cup crumbled reduced-fat feta cheese
12 large eggs
¼ cup low-fat milk
1 tsp Italian seasoning
¼ tsp kosher salt
¼ tsp ground black pepper

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray the cups of a 12-muffin pan generously with non-stick cooking spray.
2. Finely chop the two roasted red bell pepper, green onion and spinach; divide evenly among muffin cups. Top with feta cheese.
3. Whisk eggs with milk, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper in a large bowl.
4. Pour egg mixture evenly among muffin cups and bake until eggs are set, about 22-25 minutes.
5. Cool muffin tin for 5 minutes before removing.

This recipe and photo were developed for the Egg Nutrition Center by Sara Haas, RDN, LDN. The USDA recommends cooking egg dishes to 160 degrees.

To obtain recipes like this go to www.fruitsandveggies.org

You can sign up for: Have a Plant, your weekly fruit & veggie inspiration.

Have questions or want to meet with a Wellness Coach?

Contact me at jeanette.roberts@nacs.k12.in.us or 419-630-2114

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