

HEALTHY

You!

"Your Source For A Happy and Healthy Lifestyle."

May 2014



THIS EDITION FEATURES:

Biking:

The benefits of exercising on two wheels

- Banishing the bedtime blues
- Could broccoli be the key to preventing arthritis?
- Don't go it alone: The power of support
- Eat mindfully for less stress

Brought to you by **Independence** 



Biking:

The benefits of exercising on two wheels

Cities across the U.S. are adding new bicycle lanes for environmental benefits — in Philadelphia there are more than 200 miles of lanes established in the city with more in the works in both the city and surrounding counties. Along with saving the planet, riding a bike is an effective, great way to get in shape. You don't need any special skills, and you can ride almost anywhere.

In addition to burning calories, riding a bike can actually make you feel good! When you pedal to your destination, you arrive feeling more relaxed, energized, and content than if you had battled car traffic.

Not only is riding a bike fun, it's also one of the best all-around activities for improving health. Here are just a few of the major benefits:

- **You'll tone muscle and gain strength.** Biking strengthens leg muscles and improves muscle tone in the legs, thighs, glutes, and hips.
- **You can burn approximately 300 calories per hour.** Biking for a steady 30 minutes every day could burn approximately 11 pounds of fat in a year!
- **You'll improve your cardiovascular health.** Biking helps to reduce the risk of heart disease.

Since biking isn't a weight-bearing activity, it's easier on your joints than running or walking because there's less stress on the knees, ankles, and spine.

Whether you ride for fun, as a mode of transportation, or for health benefits, always put safety first. Wear a helmet and proper equipment, stay hydrated, and pay attention to your surroundings. Be sure to check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your health and physical activity.

Recipe of the month: Garlic roasted asparagus

1 ½ lbs. fresh asparagus spears

¼ teaspoon of sea salt

2 cloves of garlic (diced)

¼ teaspoon of ground black pepper

2 tablespoons of olive oil

Preheat oven to 450° F. Bend and break off the woody ends of the asparagus. Place the asparagus and garlic in a baking pan, drizzle with olive oil, then sprinkle with salt and pepper. Toss to coat. Roast for 10 minutes, stirring once halfway through roasting.





Banishing the bedtime blues

How's your sleeping routine? If you find yourself feeling sleep deprived by mid-day, it's time to rethink how you approach a good night's rest. Perfecting your bedtime routine may be the key to getting a peaceful night's sleep.

Here are a few common issues that can disrupt sleep, and some simple ways to deal with them:

- **Can't wind down.** Juggling responsibilities all day at work and home can make it challenging to "turn off" your thoughts. Set the mood for bed with rituals like taking a warm bath, reading, or listening to soothing music.
- **Nighttime exposure to artificial light.** Nowadays, bedrooms have become brightly lit entertainment centers — complete with TV, iPads, and smartphones — instead of quiet, dark, and relaxing places dedicated to sleep. There is evidence that artificial light disrupts the body's natural sleep-wake cycle. Turn the lights off and leave emails and social media for morning.
- **Waking in the middle of the night.** Avoid caffeine and alcohol and stay away from large meals near bedtime. Have a comfortable pillow and mattress. If you can't sleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something relaxing, like reading.

Driving drowsy?

Turning up the radio, opening the windows, or turning on the air conditioner does NOT help a person stay awake when driving. Driving when you're feeling sleepy is dangerous. If you're feeling tired while driving, the best thing to do is to pull off the road in a safe rest area and take a 15 – 45 minute nap. Caffeine can help, but it takes about 30 minutes before the effects are felt.

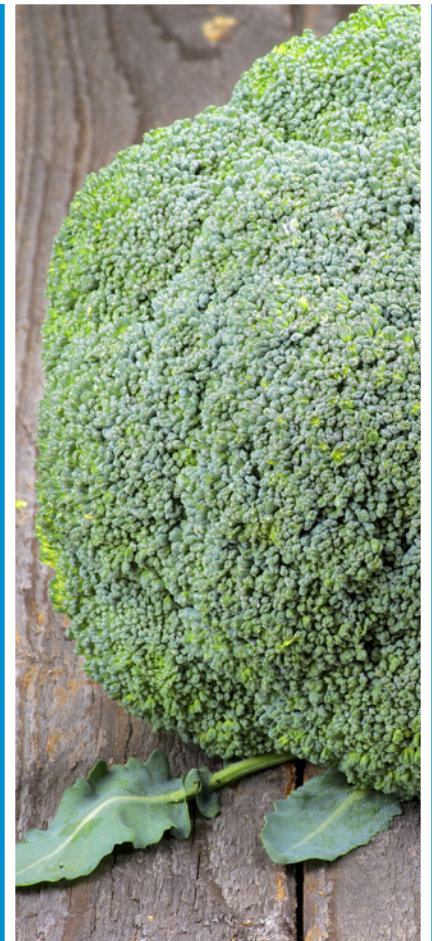
Could broccoli be the key to preventing arthritis?

Osteoarthritis is a painful, degenerative joint disease with no cure or effective treatment other than pain management or joint replacement. Broccoli is a green vegetable packed with vitamins A, B, K, and C and nutrients like potassium, zinc, and fiber. What does one have to do with the other? A recent study* shows that a compound found in broccoli may help battle inflammation, which is at the root of osteoarthritis.

Broccoli has already been associated with reduced cancer risk, but this new study shows that a compound called sulforaphane, which is found in broccoli, brussels sprouts, and cabbage, blocks the enzymes that cause joint destruction in arthritis in mice. Current research is underway to see if the reduction in cartilage damage that occurred in mice will also happen in human test subjects.

Preventing osteoarthritis, or slowing its progression with lifestyle changes like weight management and exercise, is the best way to help protect joints and delay or avoid joint replacement surgery.

* Clark, I. *Arthritis and Rheumatism*, Volume 65, Issue 12, December 2013.



Don't go it alone:

The power of support

Do you ask for help when you need it? Or does handling it on your own seem like the right thing to do? Our society values independence, and making it on your own can be seen as a strength and achievement. Unfortunately, these ideals leave many people feeling uncomfortable with accepting the help and support they need.

The old adage about it taking a village to raise a child could just as easily be applied to well-being. There is no substitute for the power of social support from a group engaged in a common goal.

If you are striving for a healthier lifestyle, consider help with:

- **Losing weight.** Social support through meetings and online tools, such as community message and discussion boards, may provide the encouragement and reinforcement you need to achieve milestones.
- **Financial planning.** Seeking professional advice to help you prepare for retirement or dig your way out of debt can provide you with a personalized plan and clear steps to achieve greater financial stability.
- **Working out.** Find a friend to join you on walks, runs, or trips to the gym. When you depend on each other, you are less likely to skip a workout.
- **Managing stress.** A thoughtful listener can often help us get through tough times.



Eat mindfully for less stress

Food can be soothing, but fighting emotional or stress eating can be difficult. Stress often leads to cravings for sweets and carbohydrates, which are foods that may give a temporary sense of calm, but burn away quickly and leave you in an even worse mood than when you started. The good news is that by choosing the right foods to snack on in these situations, you actually can relieve your stress.

Some calming foods that may soothe you:

- **Cottage cheese** is high in protein content but won't cause a spike in blood sugar. Pair it with fruit that's high in vitamin C, such as oranges or blueberries. Vitamin C is an antioxidant that fights the free radicals that get released when you are stressed.
- **Asparagus** is high in folic acid, which can help to stabilize your mood.
- **Tuna** is a great lunch option that's high in stress-fighting vitamins B6 and B12.
- Whole grain carbohydrates, such as **oatmeal**, can stimulate the release of serotonin, your feel-good brain chemical.
- **Dark chocolate** can help reduce levels of cortisol and other stress hormones. Nibble only a little though, as too much calorie-dense chocolate can pack on the pounds.
- **Chamomile tea** at bedtime can create a wonderfully warm, calm feeling.





Monthly Quiz:

See what you learned!

1.) Biking can burn approximately how many calories per hour?

- a. 100
- b. 300
- c. 450

2.) Which of the following is considered a calming food?

- a. Cupcakes
- b. Dark chocolate
- c. Waffles

3.) If you wake in the middle of the night and can't go back to sleep after 20 minutes, what is the best thing to do?

- a. Get out of bed and do something relaxing, like reading
- b. Toss and turn until you fall back asleep or morning breaks
- c. Turn on the TV

ANSWERS

1.) b. 300

2.) b. Dark Chocolate

3.) a. Get out of bed and do something relaxing, like reading

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