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Wise & Well

Welcome to the new Wise & Well Newsletter, where we promote whole-person well-being each month and highlight health-related topics to help you be your best.

March 12 - 18

March is National Nutrition Month and features National Sleep Awareness Week, March 12 – 18. Both nutrition and sleep are essential for supporting our immune function and overall health.

Source: ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

Better Immunity through Sleep and Nutrition

"The first wealth is health." — Ralph Waldo Emerson.

One of the most valuable things we can possess is our health. The cornerstones of maintaining good health are health promotion and disease prevention. These two activities work together to improve and maintain personal health. Think of two sides of the same coin. On one side, we are developing positive behaviors; on the other, we are avoiding negative exposures.

Health Promotion. The development of behaviors that improve bodily functioning and enhance an individual's ability to adapt to a changing environment.

Disease Prevention. Actions to reduce or eliminate exposure to risk that might increase the chances that an individual or group will incur disease, disability or premature death.

So, how do we encourage health promotion and disease prevention in our routines? Well, we must focus on improving our immunity through sleep and nutrition. Luckily for us, March is National Nutrition Month and features National Sleep Awareness Week, March 12 – 18. Both nutrition and sleep play fundamental roles in our immune function and have a tremendous impact on our overall health. When one or the other skews out of balance, we put ourselves at risk.

Without enough sleep on a consistent basis, our chances of developing obesity, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke, poor mental health, or even early death increase. Consequently, poor nutrition can add to stress and tiredness while diminishing work capacity, further contributing to the risk of developing unwanted health problems.

Some foods and drinks affect our sleep in ways that make it more difficult for us to fall and stay asleep. By the same token, not getting enough sleep can affect our appetite, leaving us experiencing more hunger, feeling less full and likely craving more foods and drinks that can wreck our sleep. To better maintain our long-term health and well-being, it is in our best interests to shut down this negative feedback loop and take steps to be more proactive in managing our sleep and nutrition.

Each night when we count the appropriate number of sheep and clock in at least seven hours of sleep, we are providing essential support to our immune system. When we wake, we are better equipped to deal with various infections and inflammatory conditions trying to take us down. Some helpful tips to encourage better sleep include sticking to a sleep

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schedule, daily physical activity and resolving the day's stress before lights out.

Of course, another hot tip for a good night's sleep is to pay attention to what you're eating and drinking. Caffeine and alcohol are two of the heavyweight champions of sleep disruption — that oat milk cappuccino you had in the afternoon can still keep you up at bedtime. Alcohol, although it might make you sleepy at first, disrupts sleep later in the night. Even spicy, sugary and fatty foods have the potential to negatively affect your sleep pattern if you're having too much of them late in the day.

If you're having trouble sleeping, odds are you're not feeling all that great. That's because good sleep is just as important as diet and exercise. Just like the thigh bone is connected to the hip bone, and the hip bone is connected to the backbone, optimal health and well-being are connected to sleep which is connected to nutrition which is fueled and enhanced by exercise.

Our bodies are biological machines comprised of systems that all work together. A healthy lifestyle promotes a robust immune system. By taking care of yourself, including paying attention to the relationship between sleep and nutrition, your immune system will ultimately take care of you.

Source: ncbi.nlm.nih.gov | mayoclinic.org

Monthly Moves

Forearm Stretch

Working on a computer all day can cause soreness in the front side of your forearms. That's because we use these muscles to help bend the wrist and fingers. This stretch is good for getting the muscles of the anterior compartment of the forearm to relax, as well as adding some motion to the nerves. Although this is especially true on the computer, we all overuse the muscles of this compartment on a daily basis, regardless of our occupation.

This forearm stretch can be performed either sitting or standing:

01 Straighten your arm in front of you with the underside of your wrist up.

02 With your opposite hand, pull your hand back toward your body.

03 Hold this stretch for three breaths.

04 Repeat with your other arm.

Tap here for a video demo.

Source: biofunctionalhealth.com

Walnut-Crusted Lemon Chicken Piccata

A 2003 study at the University of Texas Health Science Center found that eating walnuts naturally increase melatonin levels in the bloodstream. (Melatonin is a sleep hormone that helps regulate your internal body clock.) Now toss in some zucchini noodles and capers, and you've got two tickets to flavor town with this walnut-crusted lemon chicken piccata.

Ingredients

- 4 medium-sized chicken breasts
- 1 cup walnuts
- Salt and pepper
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cloves crushed garlic
- 2 lemons
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 2 tbsp drained capers
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tsp arrowroot starch (optional)
- 1 tbsp water

Directions

1. Begin by heating a large skillet to medium-high heat.

2. While the pan is heating, pound chicken breasts so they are about half an inch thick. Season with salt and pepper.

3. Pulse walnuts in a food processor until it resembles a coarse crumbly mixture and place inside a shallow bowl.

4. Place seasoned chicken breasts in the walnut coating, getting both sides.

5. Add 2 tbsp olive oil to the skillet and all the chicken breasts into the pan. Reduce the heat to medium. Cook for approximately 2-3 minutes per side. The outside should be golden and crispy, and the inside should be cooked through. If your pan is too hot, remove it from heat to prevent burning the walnuts. Make sure not to overcook. Remove to a plate and cover with foil to keep warm.

6. Juice one of the lemons and slice the other for serving (or juice it for the sauce if you want extra lemon, adjust to your taste).

7. Now, to make the lemon sauce, add the remaining 1 tbsp olive oil (may need an extra tbsp) and scrape up any brown bits on the pan. Add garlic and cook for about 30 seconds. Add lemon juice, chicken broth and capers while you scrape around the pan. The sauce should bubble and begin to thicken after 2-3 minutes. If you want the sauce to be thicker, you can always add 2 tsp arrowroot starch with 1 tbsp water and mix it into the sauce.

8. Pour sauce over chicken and serve immediately with lemon slices and chopped parsley.

Source: wholesomelicious.com

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