



In Touch, In Tune

www.extension.purdue.edu/dearborn



December 2023

Dear Friends,

December has arrived like a thief of time. A great deal has happened in 2023 for me personally and professionally. I currently serve as the Vice President of Professional Development for the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, so I am continually working with subcommittees scheduling and participating in Professional Development. I love this role as I am a lifetime learner!

I just returned from the Purdue Extension 2-day Professional Development Conference. Professional development energizes me to plan for future programs. I am planning programs for the Lawrenceburg Farmers Market and North Dearborn Public Library. You will find information about A Matter of Balance for February and March to be presented at North Dearborn. I will be presenting programs on organizing in 2024 and Captain Cash. Reach out to me, if you have an idea for a program need.

You will find information around navigating the holidays with strategies to reduce stress, tame our sweet tooth and to take control. I hope you incorporate some of these ideas to make the holidays a season to remember.

I wish you and your family a blessed holiday season!



Warm Regards,
Marcia Parcell
Extension Educator, Health and Human Sciences

DATES TO REMEMBER

- December 22 & 25—Extension Office closed for Christmas
- December 29 & January 1—Extension Office closed for the New Year
- February 5—In The Kitchen, North Dearborn Public Library, “Cooking Fish”, 6:00pm
- February 6, 13, 20 & 27—A Matter of Balance, more information contained in this newsletter
- March 5, 12, 19 & 26—A Matter of Balance, more information contained in this newsletter

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A MATTER OF BALANCE

MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS

A MATTER OF BALANCE

February 6, 13, 20 & 27 and March 5, 12, 19 & 26

Tuesday, 10:00-12:00

North Dearborn Libray

25969 Dole Road, West Harrison, IN 47060

Do you have concerns about falling? Many older adults experience concerns about falling and restrict their activities. A MATTER OF BALANCE is an award-winning program designed to manage falls and increase activity levels.

Participants in the classes will learn to:

- View falls as controllable
- Set goals for increasing activity
- Make changes to reduce fall risks at home
- Exercise to increase strength and balance
- Concerns

Who should attend?

- Anyone concerned about falls
- Anyone interested in improving balance, flexibility and strength
- Anyone who has fallen in the past
- Anyone who has restricted activities because of falling concerns

Classes are held once a week for 8 weeks for 2 hours each. RSVP early to North Dearborn Public Library at 812-637-0777, space is limited. For more information contact: Marcia Parcia, HHS Extension Educator, mparcell@purdue.edu/812-926-1189 or Shannon Chipman, HHS Extension Educator, chipmans@purdue.edu/812-438-3656.



SEASON'S HEALING: 5 TIPS TO REDUCE HOLIDAY STRESS

This time of year, nature's crisp beauty invites us to unwind, embrace family and friends and renew connections that help sustain us. Here are a few ideas on how to tap into the season's healing bounty.

1. Stress Less

Give yourself space — and grace. Try:

- Not saying "yes" to all that is asked of you.

- Making realistic holiday plans and to-do lists and learning what you can “let go.”
- Breathing deeply and slowly before starting each new task.
- Refreshing your coziest spot at home — with a soft chair, warm throw, fire logs or a candle, and a place to rest your head.
- Setting aside time for a book you’ve been meaning to read or show you’ve wanted to watch.

2. Mind Over Matters

No matter what you’re doing, be present. Try:

- Noticing the details that make up one of your favorite places.
- Stretching to reach a falling leaf and crumbling it in your hand.
- Indulging in only your absolutely favorite treats — and experiencing their taste, smell and texture fully.
- Giving someone your complete attention.
- Gazing at the stars or looking for shapes in the clouds.

3. People Power

Connect with your whole heart. Try:

- Turning shopping or cooking into a pairs or team event.
- Scheduling a festive lunch date or a walk outdoors with someone new.
- Sharing a favorite food or recipe with a friend or co-worker.
- Retelling a favorite memory at a gathering or in a holiday greeting.
- Enlisting a friend to help you rake leaves or build a snowman.

4. Giving Thanks

Note blessings big or small. Try:

- Listing objects that comfort you. Think about your morning coffee, a favorite meal, a pair of snuggly socks or a warm, chunky scarf.
- Smiling as the winter sun shines on your face.
- Jotting down all the things that went right today.
- Savoring the abundance of food at a local market (and taking a bite of a perfect apple!)
- Thanking someone for making your life better.

5. Rest for Your Best

Replenish both body and mind. Try:

- Sticking to a regular sleep schedule of seven to nine hours per night.
- Renewing your stamina with exercise, yoga or a good stretch.
- Closing your eyes for a few minutes at work.
- Scheduling “me” time to relax with a hot bath or cup of tea.
- Snoozing one afternoon, for no good reason.

Source: *American Heart Association*

FINANCE CALENDAR ACTION ITEM FOR DECEMBER



- **Negotiate a lower credit card interest rate.** Many credit card companies are willing to negotiate a lower interest rate on balances if you have a record of good payment history. Speak with a customer service representative this week. A decrease of even 1% can save you hundreds or even thousands of dollars in interest payments. Visit powerpay.org for more debt reduction tools.
- **Review tax withholdings.** According to the IRS the average refund in 2022 was about \$3,000. That’s an extra \$250 a month in your paycheck instead of waiting a whole year to get it back! If you paid taxes, review withholdings to make sure enough is withheld from your paychecks. The federal W-4 form was redesigned in 2020, so it’s worth searching for and reviewing the **Tax Withholding Estimator** at irs.gov.

- **Finance Take 5 Task.** There are many simple things you can do with \$5 to make someone's day: take flowers, make a treat, leave a note, put a little gas in the teenager's car, or even pay for the drink order behind you at the drive-through. Giving benefits your physical, emotional, and social well-being, and best of all...it's contagious!



TAMING A HOLIDAY SWEET TOOTH

The holidays are on the way, and many of us are eating our way into the new year. According to the American Heart Association, American adults consume 77 grams of sugar per day, and our kids have about 81 grams per day. This is three times the recommended sugar intake and can add up to 60 pounds of added sugar a year.

The holidays can be a season filled with treats, including festive cookies, pies, pastries, eggnog, hot chocolate and candies. Try the following tips to reduce your sugar consumption this holiday season.

Avoid high-sugar holiday drinks. Sip on hot tea instead of eggnog or hot chocolate. Tea is available in a variety of festive flavors, such as cinnamon, orange spice, chai and peppermint. Add a splash of creamer if desired. Skipping these holiday drinks can save you up to 225 calories. One cup of eggnog can contain 20 grams of sugar. Hot chocolate contains 25 grams of sugar.

Choose naturally sweet fresh fruit. There are many recipe variations to make fruit fun. Try a fruit salad, dip, kabobs or parfait cup. Kiwis, oranges, persimmons, mandarins, apples, pears and grapefruits are some fruits that are in season in the U.S. during December. Many of these are delicious with a yogurt-based dip or make a great winter fruit salad.

Bring your own treat to every holiday party. Trying to eat less added sugar during the holidays may not be on everyone's to-do list. Bring your holiday treat to ensure you have an option with less added sugar.

Eat before the party. Sugary foods can be devoured easily when you are hungry. Make sure to eat a balanced meal before heading to holiday gatherings. If this isn't an option for you, try snacking on the meat, cheese or veggie tray before stopping by the cookie tray.

Drink plenty of water. The Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics examined the dietary benefits of consuming plain water. They found that drinking more plain water was associated with a reduced average intake of total daily energy intake, energy intake from sugar-sweetened beverages and energy intake from discretionary foods.

What can I do in my community? Provide healthful options at potlucks and buffets, such as fruit and vegetable trays.

Source: NDSU Extension

PUMPKIN FROZEN YOGURT BARS

Yields: 18 bars approximately

3 cups nonfat Greek yogurt, vanilla flavor	¼ cup agave nectar
½ cup pumpkin puree	2 teaspoons pumpkin pie seasoning
4 ounces room-temperature cream cheese	Desired topping (coconut, chocolate chips, etc.)

Mix ingredients well in a large mixing bowl using a stand mixer or emersion blender. Spread evenly in a 9x13-inch baking pan. Sprinkle with desired toppings (i.e., coconut, chocolate chips, pepitas [no-shell pumpkin seeds], pretzels, dried fruit). Freeze overnight. Cut and serve frozen.

Nutrition: Without any additional toppings, each bar has 70 calories, 2.5 g fat, 4 g protein, 7 g carbohydrate and 35 milligrams sodium.

Source: NDSU Extension

CHARCUTERIE CUPS

All the buzz is about Charcuterie boards. Here is an idea for Charcuterie Cups.

Five Steps to Creating Individual Charcuterie Cups

1. Select a cup.
 - Clear cups will allow you and your guests to see all the ingredients.
2. Fill the base.
 - Heavier foods items should be placed at the bottom of the cup.
 - Nuts, seeds or a spoonful of dip can provide a base.
3. Include crackers or bread.
 - Long and narrow crackers or breadsticks will fit into a cup better than round or square ones.
 - To avoid soggy crackers, place a layer of vegetables on top of the dip before adding crackers.
4. Thread meats, cheeses, fruits and vegetables onto toothpicks or skewers.
 - Meats and cheeses can be sliced or cubed.
 - Semi-hard to hard cheeses will work best in a cup, and they can be threaded on wooden skewers or toothpicks.
 - Fruit and vegetables that are easy to pierce with a toothpick include grapes, berries, grape tomatoes, cucumber slices and bell pepper strips.
 - Include one to three skewers in each cup depending on its size.
5. Add additional ingredients to fill out the cup.
 - Possible additions include pickled vegetables, dark chocolate squares or herb garnishes.

Source: Adapted from Julie Garden-Robinson, Food & Nutrition Specialist, Nourish, Issue 71, Dec. 2023

7 EXCUSES TO OVERINDULGE AND HOW TO TAKE CONTROL

Excuses, excuses. Don't let them get in the way of eating healthy.

Here are seven ways to overcome common excuses many people make to overindulge.

1. **It's a holiday (or the weekend or date night).** Life has lots of special occasions — and weekends! Indulging a bit on holidays is OK, but you don't want to make that a repetitive behavior. It helps a whole lot if you plan ahead. For example, if you're going to an all-you-can eat holiday buffet, start with a small salad at home so you're not starving when you go down the buffet line. Making holiday cookies? Why not make them festive and healthier this year? Try using oatmeal, fruits and nuts as main ingredients, and cutting the sugar in half.
2. **I'm down in the dumps (or stressed to the max).** You blew a work deadline, had a flat tire or left your wallet at the grocery store. Comfort food is calling you, maybe even yelling to you. Life stresses, such as employment or caring for a sick relative, also can cause you to overeat — even when you're not hungry. Instead of overindulging, try a distraction like taking a brisk walk, taking a few deep breaths or meditating. These tips can help you manage your stress, too.
3. **I already blew it for the day. I had a candy bar from the vending machine.** Nobody's perfect. Focus on what you can do next, not on what you did last. Plan ahead to eat healthy when in the office or on the run. Keep handy snacks, such as a portable piece of fruit (think apple, banana or orange), unsalted nuts and baggies of air-popped popcorn, that you can keep in your desk or grab on your way out the door.
4. **Someone brought doughnuts (or cake or pizza) to the office.** It's OK to pass on the unhealthy freebies. If you do indulge, have a couple of small mouthfuls and then find a way to get in some extra physical activity like taking the stairs instead of the elevator.
5. **I don't have time to eat healthy.** Look for small pockets of time to do something healthy for yourself — even if it's while you're doing something else. Try cutting fruit or vegetables while you're watching the morning news on TV. This can be today's snacks or for tonight's salad. Maybe throw together an easy slow cooker recipe while you're talking to your best friend on the phone.

6. **It's hard to find healthier choices when eating out.** Restaurants can be challenging, but dining out doesn't mean you have to ditch your healthy ways. Look online for the restaurant menu ahead of time to identify good choices. Ask for healthy substitutions and sauces/dressing on the side. Try sharing portions with your dining companion or saving half for another meal.
7. **I'll start being healthy tomorrow (next month, after the holidays).** Why wait? Start now. Take one small step at a time. Building upon these small steps creates lasting healthier habits. You'll be amazed at what you can do — one bite at a time!

Source: American Heart Association

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING
DECEMBER 2023**

December 1 – World AIDS Day: This day highlights the importance of HIV/AIDS awareness and raises money for its cure
 December 3 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
 December 10 – International Humans Rights Day: A holiday adopted by the UN in 1948 following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 December 16 to December 24 – Las Posadas: A religious festival celebrated in Mexico and parts of the U.S. during the Christmas season
 December 7 to December 15 – Hanukkah.
 December 25 – Christmas: A Christian holiday marking the birth of their lord and savior, Jesus Christ
 December 26 to January 1 – Kwanzaa: A 7-day holiday often celebrated by Black Americans that was inspired by African harvest celebrations

INTERESTING FACTS THAT NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE KNOW

- The average human eats 8 spiders in their lifetime at night.
- Mosquito repellents don't repel. They hide you. The spray blocks the mosquito's sensors so they don't know you're there.
- Time magazine's 'Man of the Year' for 1938 was Adolph Hitler.
- The Main Library at Indiana University, USA, sinks over an inch every year because when it was built, engineers failed to take into account the weight of all the books that would occupy the building.
- Bats always turn left when exiting a cave.
- It cost 7 million dollars to build the Titanic, and 200 million to make a film about it.
- A woman's arthritic pains will almost always disappear as soon as she becomes pregnant. No one knows why.
- Your body contains 60,000 miles of blood vessels.
- Nebraska has more miles of river than any other US State.
- Oak trees can live 200 or more years.
- An ostrich egg needs to be boiled for 2 hours to get a hard-boiled egg.

