



In Touch, In Tune

www.extension.purdue.edu/dearborn



September 2025

Dear Friends,

September is a favorite month of the year because it starts with Labor Day. This day is a wonderful day to reset and prepare for the rest of the year. September celebrates Chicken, Better Breakfast, Classical Music, Happy Cat and Honey Month. I have included information to help you take part in these celebrations.

In September, Food is Medicine—Dearborn County has taught participants the importance of a positive attitude, eat smart and healthy even when cooking for one or two, sleep benefits and routines, brain and physical activity to promote well being while aging. Aging is part of life. It is never too late to adopt healthier practices.

As you reset, you might consider eating more fruits and vegetables, practicing new habits like a Wednesday walk to age healthy, or learning strategies that motivate consumers to spend. You might learn about honey or cats. Our lives are filled with many wonders. May you enjoy each moment of September!

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

DATES TO REMEMBER

August 6–October 29—Get Walkin'.

October 1–4—Aurora Farmer's Fair. Exhibit hall entries will be accepted on Sunday, September 28, noon to 5:00pm and Monday & Tuesday, September 29 & September 30, 9:00am–5:00pm. Baked goods and flower entries may also be made on Wednesday, October 1, 9:00am to noon. To contact or for more information call 812-926-1300.



Get Walkin'

Want to improve your health...but short on time...and lack motivation?

This **FREE**, email-based walking program has you covered!

Walk to reduce risk of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, feel energized, add daily physical activity, and get social.

When:

August 6–October 29

To sign up email Marcia Parcell at mparcell@purdue.edu.

SEPTEMBER IS HAPPY CAT MONTH

Happy Cat Month, celebrated in September, is an annual event presented by the CATalyst Council and supported by partners, which aims to educate and inform cat owners about what they can do to make their pets happy and healthy. Did you know that house cats are more like tigers? Yes, a house cat's genome is 95.6% tiger, and they share many behaviors with their jungle cousins. However, they will always be our fuzzy, adorable, feline friends and most importantly we'll always be their willing slaves. So, what exactly is Happy Cat Month?

History of Happy Cat Month

Happy Cat Month is a special awareness holiday that celebrates one of the most lovable pets known to man — yes, cats. These majestic yet simple creatures have lived alongside humans for almost as long as dogs, and have served purposes just as important. From being our cuddly friends to being on patrol, they have been a wonderful addition to our lives.

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Izzy living his best life at the Parcell house.

This unique idea of celebrating Happy Cat Month was started by the CATalyst Council to help spread education and awareness about the health, welfare, and importance of our furry friends. The CATalyst Council was formed after the meeting of two separate efforts, Re-Branding Felix and the CATalyst Summit. This non-profit entity was formed with the main focus on veterinary medicine and shelter in addition to animal welfare. Since the formation of the CATalyst Council, they have been working to advance the image of cats as caring and affectionate and needing human care as much as any other pet.

Having said all this, there is a misconception that cats are incredibly self-reliant, and just don't need the kind of super clingy cuddling you find with dogs. The fact is that cats are incredibly social animals and they require the same level of care and attention that we lavish on our dogs. So, on this Happy Cat Month, whether you have a pet kitty or a bigger cat of a different kind, make sure you have a purr-fectly happy cat.

How to tell if a cat is happy? A good sign of a happy cat is kneading their paws into their bed, blanket, or stomach. This behavior is often accompanied by purring, another sign of contentment.

How to make a cat happy? Here are some things that will make your cat happy: get a nice scratching post, groom them, give them treats and new toys, and upgrade their litter box.

What should you not do to a cat? Some of the things that you should never do to a cat include skipping flea treatment, letting your cat roam outdoors unsupervised, leaving windows open, putting off vet visits, tossing your cat off the counter, and ignoring those hairballs.

1. **Spread the word.** The best thing you can do to celebrate Happy Cat Month is by spreading awareness and educating others about the health and welfare of cats. Talk to your friends and family and let them know.
2. **Visit the vet.** Take your cat to the vet for a check-up and make sure your cat's vaccinations are up to date. While visiting, don't forget to ask your vet about preventative medications for fleas, ticks, mites, or heartworm.
3. **Spend time with your cat.** Although it might not seem like it, cats are social animals and they crave and love human attention, and can't seem to get enough time with humans. So, try to spend time with your kitty and have fun with them.

Source: <https://nationaltoday.com/happy-cat-month/>

10 BENEFITS OF INCORPORATING CLASSICAL MUSIC INTO YOUR WORK DAY



You have most likely heard there are several benefits of listening to classical music. Is there any truth behind this? Studies have shown that listening to classical music has both mental and physical benefits. From pain management to improved sleep quality, and stress levels. Listening to classical music as background noise throughout your workday can have a positive impact on your mood, creativity, and productivity.

Here are some ways Mozart and Vivaldi could help you become sharper, healthier, and even get a better night's rest.

Decreases blood pressure-An Oxford University study has shown listening to classical music can help reduce individuals' blood pressure. When conducting this study, researchers played participants various styles of music, including pop, techno, hip-hop and classical music. Results showed classical music was the most effective at lowering the participants' blood pressure. The other variations of music actually raised their blood pressure. This is a simple way to help keep your heart healthy!

Boosts memory-Listening to Mozart can actually help improve your memory. According to a study by the Daily Mail, individuals that listened to Mozart's music showed an increase in brain wave activity, which is linked directly to memory. If you ever need to memorize a speech or a presentation, have some Mozart playing in the background while you practice.

Sparks creativity-Need to get the creative juices flowing? Listen to some classical music. Now, listening to classical music might not make you immediately creative, but it will help move you into a more creative mindset. The next time you are brainstorming, listen to some Bach or Mozart to get your gears moving.

Reduces stress levels-Another study by the Daily Mail, found that pregnant women who listened to classical music were less likely to feel stressed out. Scientists claim the tempo of classical music is similar to the human heart, which eased depression and anxiety. If you are feeling particularly stressed, try to unwind while listening to some classical tunes.

Supercharges your brainpower-A French study found that students who tuned in to a lecture in which classical music was played as background music, scored higher on a test compared to other students that did not. If you have a project or exam coming up, try that out to help boost your brainpower.

Helps fight depression-A study in Mexico found that listening to classical music can help ease some symptoms of depression. Studies have shown that classical music does in fact help ease depression and melancholy. The next time you are feeling down, ditch the comfort food and opt for some classical music instead.

Improves sleep quality-When we are having trouble falling asleep, many of us are guilty of squeezing in another episode of a Netflix binge worthy series. A study shows people with sleep issues that listened to classical music for just 45 minutes prior to going to bed, had improved sleep quality. So instead of another episode of Game of Thrones or The Vanishing at The Cecil Hotel, put on some classical music while you get ready for bed.

Helps relieve pain-Researchers in London found that patients listening to classical music used significantly less pain medication. Many studies have shown listening to classical music can aid in relieving pain. The next time you are about to reach for another Advil, consider playing some Bach or Beethoven.

Makes you happy-A study showed that music can help put people in a better mood. Listening to classical music can help you get out of a bad mood. It increases dopamine secretion, which then activates the brain's reward and pleasure center.

Improves productivity-Monday mornings can sometimes be such a drag. Implementing classical music into your day can help boost your productivity. A series of studies have proven that classical music can make repetitive tasks seem more enjoyable. A study by the University of Maryland found that Baroque classical music helped improve radiologists' efficiency and accuracy.

Source: <https://skyprep.com/2021/03/16/10-benefits-of-incorporating-classical-music-into-your-work-day/>

YOUR BRAIN ON BARGAINS—Why you should look twice at any price when you're shopping.

Why do even smart shoppers sometimes make not-so-smart choices? According to Nick Kolenda, it's because of how our brains are wired.

Kolenda, a marketing consultant specializing in the psychology of pricing, says people can be swayed not just by the price of an item but also by how that price is presented. Just changing the price tag's color or size can make you think you're getting a better deal. As he says in his new book, *Methods of Pricing*, "Ultimately, price is perception."

Here are 10 of the most fascinating triggers that can get you to spend money.

1. **The color red.** It grabs attention and seems to make shoppers less price-conscious. That's especially true for men, who, according to studies, are drawn to the color; they find women more desirable when they wear red and prefer sports teams in red uniforms. "My take is that men see red and quickly assume that it indicates savings," Kolenda says.
2. **Unusual fonts.** It takes more time and effort to read ugly-looking letters and numbers. That increased difficulty makes you stop and focus on the deal.
3. **Type size.** Small type can convey a good deal, Kolenda says. If the sale price is visually tinier than the original price, it seems to be lower. But large type can also grab your attention if it appears that the retailer is promoting a good product.
4. **"Wow" words.** Pairing descriptors with prices can also make you feel you're getting a better deal. In one study, a "Small \$5 fee" seemed cheaper than a \$5 fee. Other phrases that can have the same effect: "Only \$9.99," "Just 3 payments of \$29" and "For a low price of \$89.95." When numbers are paired with text, Kolenda says, your brain merges the two, associating the price with the words.
5. **Signs and banners.** Even if an item isn't on sale, using bright, colorful signage can boost sales. "Your brain assumes that because there's a banner, there must be some type of special promotion that you should take advantage of right now," Kolenda says.
6. **Positioning.** Prices are often placed on the left because studies show prices on the right feel heftier. In countries where people read from left to right, the left naturally becomes the "visual fulcrum." Imagine there's a diving board: The farther away the price is placed from the base, the more its weight will bend the board. Another contributing factor: when arranging quantities from low to high, left-to-right readers tend to place the lowest number on the left.
7. **Anchoring.** Our brain is biased toward the first number that comes into our head—the so-called anchor. When you see a price of \$3.99, for example, you focus on the leftmost digit because that's what you see first. Although the price is nearly \$4, we anchor on the 3, making a difference of one penny feel like a dollar.
8. **Reference prices.** Advertised prices, suggested retail prices, past prices and competitor prices are all points of reference that our brains use to assess a deal. But they can be deceiving. If, for example, an item's "original price" is inflated, a sale price seems more attractive, Kolenda says. Reference prices can also get you to overlook add-on charges. When you click on an airline ticket deal, your brain is likely to downplay fees you run into afterward for carry-ons and other extras. That's because your brain is "still running the simulation" of paying the low price you first encountered, he says.



9. **Tips screens.** When a cashier swivels a screen around for you to pay and choose a tip amount, a private decision suddenly becomes a public one. “In a split second,” Kolenda writes, “you battle a flurry of questions: Should I tip? How much? Is that enough? Can other people see it? Will they think I’m cheap?” As a result, tip amounts are higher on visible devices, according to a new study Kolenda cites.
10. **Coupons.** They shift your attention from the price you’re paying to the amount you’re saving. “When you look at a price tag that says ‘\$20 marked down to \$15,’ your brain is focused on the final price in that scenario,” Kolenda says. “But if you have a \$5 coupon, you’re focused on the amount you’re saving. That mindset is more pleasing.”

Source: AARP Bulletin September/October 2025

BETTER BREAKFAST MONTH: WHY BREAKFAST MATTERS



“Metabolism never fully sleeps. Essential functions continue overnight, but after 8-12 hours of fasting, blood sugar and insulin are lower and liver glycogen is partly depleted.”—Lida Araghi

Good timing and the right foods can turn breakfast into a something of a superpower — a meal that can improve cognition, memory and metabolic health.

Breakfast — that first meal after sleeping — is important because of what happens to our bodies while we sleep, said Lida Araghi, assistant professor and extension specialist in nutrition and food safety for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

“Metabolism never fully sleeps. Essential functions continue overnight, but after 8-12 hours of fasting, blood sugar and insulin are lower and liver glycogen is partly depleted,” she said. “Breakfast restores blood glucose, stimulates insulin response, and provides the brain and muscles with fuel.

“This is why many people feel more alert and energized after eating in the morning,” Araghi said. “Sleep quality affects morning metabolism: poor sleep impairs insulin sensitivity, raises cortisol, and disrupts hunger hormones” including reducing leptin, which tells the body it’s full and increase ghrelin, which tells the body to eat more.

Timing

Chrononutrition is a discipline that examines the links between time and food and their combined effect on the body. The body has its own clock — the circadian rhythm — which regulates biological processes.

Araghi said that “eating in sync with circadian rhythms supports metabolic health. Front-loading calories earlier in the day lowers risk of obesity, insulin resistance, and metabolic disruption.”

On the other hand, “poor sleep increases appetite and carb cravings; a balanced breakfast helps stabilize metabolism and appetite in the morning,” she said.

Intermittent fasting is an area that has received more attention in the media and has become a focus of research.

Araghi said time-restricted eating in a 14-16 hour fasting window is being studied for benefits such as improved

insulin sensitivity and reduced inflammation, as well as autophagy, the process by which cells repair damage.

“Some adults may find benefits, but evidence is mixed,” she said. “This is not recommended for children, teens, or people with certain health conditions.

Cognition

Research has shown that breakfast means improved attention, memory, and executive function, especially in undernourished children,” Araghi said. “School breakfast programs boost test scores, attendance, concentration, and mood.”

In adults, breakfast can help produce modest, but consistent memory gains, she said.

“Across 45 studies, breakfast improved attention, executive function, and memory in the mid-to-late morning. Low-glycemic index meals — ones that cause only slow rises in blood sugar rather than spikes — had the most consistent benefits.”

Araghi said there is some evidence breakfast before exercise supports endurance and recovery, though findings are still emerging.

Breakfast as balancing act

“Balance is key. Combining protein, complex carbs and healthy fats works best,” she said.

Key players on the breakfast table and their advantages:

- Complex carbs such as whole grains, fiber-rich fruits produce steady glucose and enable sustained focus.
- Protein brings amino acids that support neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin that aid memory and attention.
- Healthy fats such as nuts and seeds provide long-lasting satiety and brain health.

“A small study found walnut-rich breakfasts improved memory and reaction time, likely due to omega-3s and polyphenols,” Araghi said.

Omega-3 fatty acids aid cell function and are found in high concentration in the eyes and brain. Polyphenols can have antioxidant properties and also help with blood flow and pressure.

Source: <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/media-resources/news/2025/august/08-25-2025-ark-bbm-breakfast-physiology.aspx>

CHOCOLATE OVERNIGHT OATS

Servings: 1

½ cup oats (old fashioned or rolled oats work best)	1 Tablespoon cocoa powder*
½ cup milk or milk-alternative (1%, skim, almond, etc.)	½ teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup nonfat Greek yogurt	1 tablespoon chocolate chips
1 Tablespoon chia seeds	sliced fruit, optional
1 Tablespoon maple syrup or honey	

Add all ingredients except chocolate chips to a food-safe jar or food storage container. Mix until well combined. Seal and place in refrigerator for at least 2 hours or overnight. Top with chocolate chips or optional fruit before serving.

*You can omit the cocoa powder and top with fresh or frozen berries for Berry Overnight Oats.

Source: www.MedInsteadOfMeds.com

HONEY OVERNIGHT OATS

Servings: 4

4 teaspoons honey	3 cups milk
2 teaspoons ground flax	4 tablespoons almond butter
2 cups old fashioned oats	2 bananas, divided



On a flat surface, place 4 bowls or lidded glass jars. Fill each with ½ teaspoon ground flax, ½ cup oats, ¾ cup milk and 1 tablespoon almond butter. Peel and mash one banana. Divide mashed banana into the four oat mixtures. Pour milk over the banana and oat mixture and with a spoon, combine ingredients. Refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight. When ready to eat, serve cold or warm-up for 30 seconds in the microwave. Slice remaining banana, top each oat mixture with banana slices and drizzle 1 teaspoon of honey over the top. Combine and enjoy.

Source: National Honey Board; honey.com

SEPTEMBER IS HEALTHY AGING MONTH

Healthy Aging Month is observed annually by organizations including the [National Institute on Aging](https://www.nia.nih.gov/) with the goal of promoting ways to maintain and improve our health as we age. Have you ever heard the saying, “the best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago; the second best time is now?” Well, the same can be said for healthy aging. Even if the best time to begin establishing our healthy habits was years ago, the time is now to make choices to support healthy aging. The choices we make and habits we form today will build the foundation for future health and wellbeing.

“Healthy aging is the process of maintaining good physical, mental, and social health and well-being as we grow older.”

Healthy aging encompasses whole-person wellbeing. Let’s talk about some specific areas of wellbeing that can support healthy aging.

Nutrition. The [2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/) recommend following a healthy dietary pattern at every life stage. This means that what you eat – and how much – affects your health throughout your life, from infancy to older adulthood. A healthy eating pattern should be individualized to each person based on their personal preferences, budget, and cultural considerations. [MyPlate](https://www.myplate.gov/) is a visual meal planning tool that can help guide your choices with a focus on nutrient dense foods, which are foods that contain a lot of essential nutrients relative to their caloric content. For those living with diabetes, the [Diabetes Plate Method](https://www.diabetesplate.com/) is a similar plate method of meal planning that is designed to support glycemic control.

Physical activity. Being physically active is an important part of healthy aging. Vary your exercise routine and incorporate cardiovascular (aerobic) exercise, resistance (muscle-strengthening) training, and balance exercise for optimal health. Each type of exercise provides its own benefits. Aerobic exercise strengthens your cardiovascular system. Resistance training builds muscle strength, which contributes to metabolic health and reduces risk of falls. Balance training, including tai chi and some types of yoga, improves stability and also reduces fall risk. Physical activity guidelines recommend aiming for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week along with resistance training all major muscle groups twice per week. Try to be active most days of the week. Physical activity has numerous health benefits.

Mental and emotional wellbeing. [Social connection](https://www.socialconnection.org/) has been shown to be protective against chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease and dementia. Having a variety of social connections through family, friends, professional organizations, faith-based communities, and other settings reduces social isolation and loneliness. Even small interactions, like waving hello to your neighborhood crossing guard in the morning or saying hello to someone you see at the gym each day, can enhance your sense of social connection and confer health benefits. Managing stress, getting enough sleep, and engaging in supportive relationships are additional ways we can support our mental and emotional wellbeing.

Stay on top of your healthcare. Going to the doctor can be stressful, but it's best to stay current on your wellness visits and recommended health screenings, including preventative care like colorectal cancer screening and mammograms. Check with your healthcare provider for recommendations regarding vaccinations and how to best manage any chronic conditions you have. It's not unusual to find medical appointments stressful. Try writing down your questions or concerns prior to the visit so you can easily refer to them during the appointment. Bringing someone along to act as your advocate and a second set of ears can also be helpful.

Source: <https://site.extension.uga.edu/diabetes/2025/09/september-is-healthy-aging-month/>

Should You Reduce Your Sodium Consumption?

One way to improve health in the long-term is to avoid having high blood pressure or hypertension. Although sodium is a very important nutrient that we all need, eating too much sodium can directly increase blood pressure. Sodium is found in table salt and in many common foods. Many governmental agencies and organizations like the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) have been trying to lower the amount of sodium Americans consume.

Too much sodium can make your body hold on to water in your blood and put more pressure on blood vessels. Having high blood pressure is a risk for cardiovascular disease, heart attack, and stroke. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans currently recommends 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day or less.

Some ways to lower sodium intake are to:

- Try eating less cold-cuts of meats. Many cold-cuts like ham have a lot of sodium or flavor and to keep the food fresh. Try to find cold-cuts that have lower amounts of sodium or no sodium.
- Look at the nutrition label for sodium when choosing to buy sauces and dips at the store. Many packaged foods contain a lot of sodium. Making sauces and dips at home can be another way to lower sodium because you can control the amount of salt that you add.
- Try switching from salt to other ingredients. For example, you can try using things like...lemon, garlic, spices, and salt-free seasoning.

It's important to note that sodium is a very important nutrient to keep the body working as it should. Sodium is an essential mineral and electrolyte that helps the body balance fluids and helps muscles and nerves function.

Source: *Indiana's Emergency Food Resource Network; August 2025*

Chicken with Orange Sauce

4 boneless chicken breasts
1 Tablespoon oil
2 ½ cup orange juice
3 Tablespoons cornstarch

½ cup hot water
3 Tablespoons honey
¼ teaspoon ground ginger, optional



In a skillet, brown chicken breasts in 1 tablespoon oil over medium heat. Cook until chicken is done and juices run clear. Add orange juice to the pan. When juice just begins to bubble around the edges of the pan, add cornstarch that has been dissolved in ¼ cup hot water. Mix ginger and honey in a cup, and add to orange juice. Cook until sauce is thick and slightly browned. Serve over rice and enjoy!

Fun: Going around the table, name cities or countries in alphabetical order (A: Albany! B: Berlin!)

Conversation: If you could teach your class for a day, what would you teach?

Source: <https://thefamilydinnerproject.org/budget-friendly/week-of-september-8-2025/view/thursday>

Laughter to Brighten Your Day

- ★ Why did the teacher wear sunglasses in the classroom? Because her students were so bright.
- ★ Why did the M&M go to school? Because he really wanted to be a "Smartie".
- ★ Why was the math book so sad? Because it had too many problems.
- ★ What is a robot's favorite after school snack? Computer chips.
- ★ Why don't scientists trust atoms? Because they make up everything!
- ★ What do you call a dog magician? A labracadabrador!

