



In Touch, In Tune

www.extension.purdue.edu/dearborn



January 2024

Dear Friends,

We are almost 2 weeks into 2024! What has happened in 2024 for you? I have discussed “Operating On Your Best” for two audiences. I enrolled myself in One to One Health Kick, a virtual lifestyle education program. I am reading *Die With Zero* by Bill Perkins. I finished my cross-stitch, so I took up an old hobby of latch hooking.

Yes, I teach, but I am a learner. I learn to be a better teacher and to maintain my wellbeing. I am learning that you need to be accountable in some way for different aspects of wellbeing. For instance, I have a Home Financial Organizer for my financial wellness. I am involved with Walk-a-Weigh for my physical wellness. I have hobbies for my mental health.

What are you doing for your wellness in 2024? I encourage you to make the healthy choice, the easy choice and to have an accountability method or person for your wellbeing.

I invite you to participate in Sensational Soup at the Aurora Public Library on February 20th. If you want to enter a soup, you need to register it by January 31st.

I wish you a healthy, happy 2024!

Warm Regards,

Marcia Parcell

Extension Educator, Health and Human Sciences

DATES TO REMEMBER

- January 31- Register your soup for Sensational Soup on February 20th
- February 5—In The Kitchen, North Dearborn Public Library, “Cooking Fish”, 6:00pm
- February 15 – at 10 AM Purdue Extension-Dearborn County Health and Human Sciences Advisory Meeting
- February 20—6:00PM Sensational Soup at Aurora Public Library
- 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

SENSATIONAL SOUP COOK-OFF

The Aurora Public Library District would be honored to have you participate in our upcoming “Sensational Soup” program. At 6:00pm on the evening of Tuesday, February 20th, the upper level of the Aurora Public Library will transform into a café filled with slow-cookers of all shapes and sizes. Submissions may arrive at 5:30pm.

The evening will feature a presentation on making soups healthier by Marcia Parcell from Purdue Extension Dearborn County, along with door prizes, taste-testing of soup entries, and presenting the People’s Choice award to one organization and one individual who receive the most votes. All attendees will receive a booklet of recipes for the soup entries.

Soup tasting does not require a registration, however soup entries need to be registered by January 31, 2024. For more information or entry forms contact the Library at 812-926-0646 or email sarah@eapld.org. The Purdue Extension Office also has entries forms that can be picked up.



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10 HEALTHY CHOICES TO MAKE IN 2024

Meaningful, small changes can have a big impact on your overall health and well-being. In 2024, commit to taking small steps to change your daily routines and habits to benefit your health.

1. **Eat a healthy diet.** What a healthy diet looks like may differ from person to person, depending on your culture, where you live and what food is locally available. Yet, the principles are the same – making informed choices can help you improve the way you eat. Cutting down on foods high in salt, free sugars, saturated fats and trans-fatty acids may sound overwhelming at first, but easy steps add up – such as swapping a lunchtime soda for water. Eat at least five portions of a variety of fruits and vegetables every day. Think about a balanced and diversified diet, and keep fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts in mind as you plan your daily meals.



2. **Be active.** Being active every day can be challenging, but did you know that every move counts? Adding a walk after a meal, sweeping floors or taking the stairs can all help your cardiovascular health. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate activity per week if you are an adult. For additional health benefits, adults should increase their moderate-intensity physical activity to 300 minutes per week or the equivalent. If you have children or teenagers, be active together and help them reach their 60 minutes of exercise per day. There can be many environmental or mental barriers to physical activity, but always remember physical activity has significant health benefits for hearts, bodies and minds.

3. **Avoid harmful use of alcohol.** Did you know that alcohol consumption is a contributor to more than 200 diseases, injuries, and other health conditions? Alcohol consumption increases your risk of injury, as well as longer-term effects like liver damage, cancer, heart disease and mental illness. Any level of alcohol consumption carries risk. If you drink alcohol, you may wish to discuss your alcohol consumption with a health-care professional.

4. **Don't use tobacco or vape.** The benefits of quitting tobacco begin as quickly as 20 minutes after the last cigarette. Any tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke is harmful. Quitting tobacco reduces your risk of heart disease, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and other diseases. Quitting vaping can also be part of the step towards a healthier you. E-cigarettes are harmful to your health and have long-term consequences, especially for your people, because users are exposed to nicotine and other harmful chemicals.

Commit to quit. There is help to get you started on your quitting journey today.

5. **Look out for your sexual health.** Sexual health is essential for a healthy life. Sex is much more than just physical connection – it's about respect, pleasure and safety. Sexual activities involving other partners require explicit consent and should be free from coercion, discrimination and violence. It's also important to be safe during sex! Using condoms during sexual activity can help prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unplanned pregnancies and HIV.

6. **Connect in person to support your mental health.** Loneliness is a serious health risk. A large body of research shows that social isolation and loneliness have a serious impact on physical and mental health, quality of life and longevity. Face-to-face or digital contact with friends or family can help you form meaningful social connections. It's also important to be kind to yourself and practice good mental health habits, to help manage any mental health conditions or stressful situations in your daily life.

7. **Get vaccinated.** Make sure you and your family are up-to-date with routine vaccinations. Vaccines reduce the risks of getting a disease by working with your body's natural defences to build protection. If you have children who missed out on essential vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic, check with your health provider to help them catch up and protect their health.

We now have vaccines to prevent more than 20 life-threatening diseases, helping people of all ages live longer, healthier lives.

8. **Take antimicrobials the right way.** Bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites have changed over time and some no longer respond to medicines. Antimicrobial resistance makes infections harder or sometimes impossible to treat, increasing the risk of diseases spreading, severe illness and death. To do your part in combating antimicrobial resistance, take antibiotics and other antimicrobials only if prescribed by your health provider, complete your treatment days and don't share leftover antibiotics with others. Don't ask for antibiotics to treat common colds and flu – antibiotics won't work against viral infections.

9. **Wash your hands.** Clean hands help stop the spread of infections. Make sure you wash your hands the right way using soap and water or an alcohol-based rub.

10. **Get regular check-ups.** See your health provider for regular, yearly check-ups. These visits can help you monitor your blood pressure to control and prevent hypertension – the number one silent killer in the world. Many people don't know they have hypertension and without proper treatment, uncontrolled hypertension can lead to severe health complications later in life.

Regular check-ups with your health provider will also help you keep track of your health status if you're at risk for hepatitis, HIV, tuberculosis or STIs.

Essential tests, such as those measuring your cardiovascular health or sugar levels, can help with diagnosis and management of noncommunicable diseases like heart disease or diabetes early on. For women and men, health screenings like pap smears or prostate exams, respectively, can help detect cancer. Check with your health provider to find out which tests or screenings you need.

Let's all choose to be healthier in 2024!

Source: *World Health Organization*

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR MONEY?

Last month, did you spend more or less money than you brought in? Positive cash flow—having more money coming in than going out—is a timeless fundamental principle of financial health.

Dive Deeper. Add up how much money you bring home each month. Then review several months of credit card statements and bank statements to total up your outlays. Subtract average monthly spending from average take-home pay. Is the number positive or negative? Or try this simpler method: Look at a year-old bank statement. If you have more money in the bank now than you did before, that's good. Then compare any credit card debt you're carrying with your balance from a year ago. If the balance has grown more than your bank account has, that's not so good.

If what you spend on shelter, food and health care for yourself and your loved ones leaves you little or no cash for anything else, consider making major changes, such as trading down to a smaller dwelling. And take a hard look at your discretionary spending, says Kathryn Peyton, a financial planner at Abacus Wealth Partners in Sebastopol, California: "Ask yourself, 'Are those really the categories I want to be spending money on, and, if not, how do I change my patterns?'"

What is the highest interest rate you're paying on any debt? The higher the interest rate on a particular loan or credit card, the bigger the benefit of paying it off as quickly as you can. Let's say, for example, that you have 10 years remaining on a 30-year, 4 percent fixed-rate mortgage, and you're also carrying a big balance on a credit card with an interest rate of 21 percent. Put an extra \$1,000 toward your mortgage and you've cut your interest costs by an average of \$48 per year. Put that same amount toward your credit card balance and you've saved yourself \$234 in interest in a single year.

Dive Deeper. Find the rate you're paying on each of your debts by looking at your monthly statements. "If you are over 50 and want to pay off debt before retirement, it's a good idea to aggressively focus on higher rate debt, such as credit cards," says Gerri Detweiler, who writes about credit and other topics.

Comparing the rates on your debt to the interest on your savings may also spur you to use more cash for payoffs. "It's amazing how often I'll see someone with a lot of money in the bank earning 2 or 3 percent, and with credit card debt or a home equity line of credit at a 7 to 9 percent rate," says Mark Cortazzo, a financial adviser at Wealth Enhancement Group in Parsippany, New Jersey.

Source: *AARP The Magazine*



DINNER FOR TWO?

You might be preparing to host or attend holiday meals in the next couple of months. While gatherings of groups of people are common during holidays, many people live in one- or two-person households throughout the U.S.

About 37% of two-person households (ages 45 to 64) were empty nesters, while 80% of people ages 65 and older were in one- or two-person households, according to 2019 statistics. Sometimes cooking for one or two may not seem to be worth your effort; however, a little meal planning can save you money and time.

Before you begin planning meals, "shop" your refrigerator, freezer or pantry first. Try to plan your menu a week at a time and place the list on your refrigerator or counter. If you want to save some money, use the sale adds to help you

plan and shop in season.

Try these tips to reduce quantities of your favorite recipes.

- Choose recipes that are easy to divide mathematically. In recipes calling for three eggs, use two eggs and remove 2 to 4 tablespoons of liquid (if present) from the recipe.
- If a recipe calls for a can of beans or soup and you would like to divide the recipe in half, use what you need and either refrigerate or freeze the remaining food. Place in a freezer-safe container and label the container with the contents and date.
- Add seasonings gradually. Sometimes you may need to add more (or less) of the spice to reach the desired flavor.
- Check for doneness of halved recipes five to nine minutes sooner than the original recipe.
- Keep notes about what works—and what doesn't

TURKEY OR CHICKEN VEGETABLE SOUP FOR TWO

1 cup chopped cooked turkey or chicken	2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
¼ cup chopped onion	Pepper (to taste)
¼ cup chopped celery	1 cup cooked pasta (such as bowtie, shells, macaroni, etc.) or
½ cup sliced carrots	1 cup cooked rice
¼ teaspoon thyme or seasonings of choice	

Add all ingredients, except pasta or rice, to pan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to a simmer and cook covered until vegetables are tender crisp, about 10 to 15 minutes. Add cooked pasta to rice and cook a few more minutes until pasta or rice is heated.

Source: Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., L.R.D., Food and Nutrition Specialist, NDSU Extension

REASONS TO EAT MORE SOUP

In winter, soup is the new salad. To me, making a salad is like therapy. The slicing, dicing and chopping helps my creative juices flow while also helping me feel good about making a meal that's going to provide satisfying health benefits. But when the temperature drops, so does my attraction to a cold dish. In the months of winter, I'd much rather reach for a steamy bowl of soup than a chilly salad.

Besides the many nutritional benefits of a bowl of soup—including being a home for valuable veggies, providing hydration and helping to make meal planning easy, soup just might play a more important role in your life than you realize. Here are just a few more reasons to make soup a regular part of your menu—as well as four nutritionist-approved recipes to get you inspired.

Soup may help you lose weight. Studies have shown that eating a bowl of soup before a meal can help you feel more satisfied and significantly cut back on calories in the meal that follows. Soups – especially thick soups – empty out of your stomach more slowly, thereby making you feel fuller for a longer period of time.

Soup can help you recover from illness. Hot foods and beverages like soup may soothe a sore throat and decrease inflammation. Soup can also be the answer for those who have trouble chewing or digesting whole foods or help those who are recuperating from an illness where digestion is compromised.

Soup can squash cravings for less healthy food. Instead of reaching for bags of chips or cookies or snacks that may be void of value, a late afternoon mug of soup could provide a perfect pick-me-up.

Nutritionally speaking, soup can provide a medley of veggies you might not otherwise reach for. Unlike other sugary snacks, soup rarely, if ever, contains added sugar.

If you're watching your sodium intake, you could choose a lower sodium type or use water as your base instead of broth to slash sodium even further. The sodium content of snack foods could be much higher than that of homemade soup. Soup can be a low-calorie food and prevent you from overeating other, less valuable foods.

Soup gives a hug from a mug. Especially these days, many of us turn to food for comfort, but at the same time, we're also looking to stay healthy. A mug of soup can check both boxes. Soup's warmth can make us feel soother inside and out, providing nourishment for body and mind.

Soup can make you a more mindful eater. A warm bowl of soup is something you can sip or slurp slowly, allowing you to eat mindfully and pay attention to its taste, texture and temperature.

In most cases, you'll take more time to eat this hot dish than you would other foods you might otherwise gulp in big bites. Eating soup is also something that's not easy to eat while leaning over a keyboard – so you might get to grab a needed break from working or checking emails to enjoy the food in front of you.

Source: <https://health.usnews.com>



HEALTH BENEFITS, NUTRITION FACTS, AND HOW TO PREPARE QUINOA AND QUINAO FLAKES

Quinoa (pronounced KEEN-wah) has only recently become popular in the United States, but it has been cultivated by native peoples in the Andew Mountains of South America for over 5,000 years. Quinoa flakes are flattened grains of quinoa that still contain all the nutriton of quinoa, but cook more quickly.

Higher in protein than any other grain, quinoa is so nutritious that NASA has used it to feed astronauts on long-term space missions

Health Benefits—Unlike most plant-based foods, quinoa is a complete protein, which means it contains all of the essential amino acids. Amino acids are the building blocks of the proteins that make up your muscles, bones, skin, and blood. The nine classified as “essential” must be obtained from food daily – your body cannot produce or store them – and quinoa provides all nine.

Disease Prevention—The USDA recommends that at least half of the grains you eat be whole grains like quinoa. Refined grains have been stripped of most of the fiber, iron, and vitamins present in the whole grain. Including whole grains in your diet can help lower your risk of diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.

Quinoa is a great source of fiber. Fiber can prevent or treat constipation and may lower your risk of intestinal cancers. It also helps you feel full longer, so it may help with weight loss.

Heart Health—Maintaining a healthy weight is important for heart health. The fiber in quinoa can also help with cholesterol and blood sugar levels, lowering your risk of diabetes and heart disease.

Quinoa is rich in antioxidants, which can prevent damage to your heart and other organs. A diet high in antioxidants has been linked with a decreased risk of heart disease.

Nutrition—Quinoa and quinoa flakes are also good sources of:

- Folate
- Iron
- Thiamine
- Copper
- Magnesium
- Manganese
- Phosphorus
- Potassium
- Zink

Nutritients per serving—A half-cup of cooked quinoa contains:

- Protein: 4 grams
- Carbohydrates: 20 grams
- Fiber: 3 grams
- Sugar: 1 gram

Things to watch out for—As is the case with many superfoods, quinoa has been used to make packaged snacks and cereals sound healthier than they are. Quinoa chocolate bars and sweetened cereals are often still high in sugar, so be sure to consult the nutrition facts on all processed quinoa products.

Source: <https://www.webmd.com/diet/health-benefits-quinoa>



KALE AND RED QUINOA SOUP

Servings: 4/Serving Size: 1 ½ cups

1 (14.5oz) can no-salt-added whole tomatoes, undrained

1 (14.5oz) can no-salt-added great northern beans, rinsed and drained

4 cups coarsely chopped kale (1/2 of a 5oz bunch), any large stems discarded

2 cups fat-free vegetable broth, low sodium

½ cup red quinoa, rinsed and drained in a fine-mesh sieve

1 medium carrot, cut into ½ inch slices (about ½ cup)

1 medium rib of celery, cut into ½ inch slices (about ½ cup)

½ cup chopped red onion

2 medium minced garlic cloves

1 tablespoon olive oil

¾ teaspoon dried herbes de Provence or dried thyme, crumbled

- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika (sweet or hot)
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Put all the ingredients in the slow cooker. Cook, covered, on low for 6 to 8 hours or on high for 2 to 3 hours, or until the vegetables and quinoa are tender.

6 MOST EFFECTIVE WEIGHT-LOSS STEPS TO TAKE TODAY

Eat less, move more: Losing weight comes down to just those four words, right? Not really. Decades of research show that effective weight loss involves food choices as much as, if not more than, food volume. And certain lifestyle choices significantly affect success or failure. These six steps are widely accepted as key to effective weight loss.

1. Start your day with protein. Studies show that “protein timing”—eating 25 to 30 grams of protein in the morning, and the same amount at lunch and dinner—helps people at midlife and beyond maintain muscle mass, which in turn reduces fat gain. This is the basis of *AARP’s New York Times* bestseller *The Whole Body Reset*. The average American currently eats about 10 grams at breakfast and about 60 grams at dinner.
2. Choose farm foods over factory foods. That means fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, seafood, olive and avocado oils, low-fat dairy and lean meat throughout the day. The fewer processed foods, the better. Foods in their natural form are the basis of the Mediterranean and DASH diets, which are consistently rated as the best programs for weight management, heart health and longevity.
3. Move at least 30 minutes a day. Daily active living beats a few weekly gym sessions and sitting around the rest of the time. Aim for a total of at least 150 minutes of movement per week—walking, swimming, biking, gardening—for cardiovascular fitness, and at least two days a week of resistance training for muscular strength, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
4. Cut down on simple carbohydrates, especially sugar. That means minimizing cookies, sodas and other sweets. Simple carbs not only fill you up with calories while providing minimal nutrition, but a higher carbohydrate intake leads to water retention, making you look, feel and weigh heavier.
5. Stop eating at 7:00pm. Eating later in the evening increases your next-day hunger, decreases your next-day calorie burn and triggers your body to store more fat, according to a recent study.
6. Go to bed at least seven hours before you need to wake up. Ghrelin is the hormone created in the stomach that signals us to eat. Sleeping less than seven hours a night has been shown to elevate ghrelin, meaning you may be driven to consume more calories the next day.

Source: *AARP The Magazine*



HOW HOBBIES IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health can be impacted by many different things, from life-changing events to everyday tasks. And while there are many strategies we can actively engage in to improve our mental health, an often-overlooked factor is spending time on an activity that you enjoy – otherwise known as a hobby.



What “counts” as a hobby? A hobby can be any activity done regularly during spare or leisure time for pleasure. Whether you do something creative, athletic, academic, or something more individualized, what really matters is that it is something you find meaningful and enjoyable. Hobbies can range from spending quiet time alone, visiting or eating with others, communing with nature, playing sports, and even vacationing. When we

dedicate time to voluntarily engage in pleasurable activities, research shows our mental health can flourish.

Some mental health benefits of hobbies:

- **Reduced stress:** participating in activities during leisure or spare time has been shown to reduce stress levels. For instance, one study showed approximately 75% of participants’ cortisol levels (one of the most widely studied hormonal markers of stress) were lowered after making art. Don’t consider yourself

to be an artistic person? That's okay! This study also showed that prior experience wasn't needed to reduce stress.

- **Enhanced well-being:** a study in New Zealand found that engaging in creative activities can lead to an improved sense of wellbeing that may have long lasting effects. Participants felt a higher positive affect or mood and sense of flourishing after days where they engaged in a creative activity.
- **Improved social connection, decreases in depression and anxiety:** while there are many mental health benefits related to hobbies on your own, group or 'team' hobbies have also been shown to provide important opportunities for social connection, friendship and support. Research also shows that adults who regularly participate in some kind of team sport are less likely to experience symptoms of depression, anxiety, or stress.
- **Improved mental health:** hobbies that include physical activity have been linked to many health benefits including reduced stress, reduced blood pressure, and a lower heart rate. But if you take physical activity outside, there are many additional positive benefits. Experts agree that spending as little as 10 minutes in nature can lead to improved mood, focus, and overall wellbeing.

Tips to make time for hobbies:

A common barrier that seems to make it difficult to do the things we love is TIME. When it comes to how our lives are typically structured, work tends to come before play. And although many of us feel like there isn't enough time in the day for hobbies, there are changes we can make to help find and spend free time doing the things we love:

1. Rather than trying to find 'hobby time' every day, try thinking of time in weeks to discover extra time hidden in your schedule. Dedicate a few hours for something you enjoy each week. Still struggling to find time for fun? Take a step back and say 'no' (or delegate) to lighten your load and make space for hobbies.
2. There are many times during the day we may find ourselves in autopilot mode. It's easy to lose track of time doing mindless things like checking social media or watching television. Tune in to how you're spending down time, whether it's in the morning or evening, and consider how you might use that time to indulge in something you enjoy.
3. More and more research supports taking 'micro breaks' during the work day to increase overall productivity. Take advantage of these short breaks throughout the day to do something that brings you joy, like taking a walk outside, listening to your favorite podcast or music, reading a chapter or two of a good book, or visiting with others.

Source: By Emma Parkhurst, Professional Practice Extension Assistant Professor



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

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.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

Month-long observances:

- National Mentoring Month
- Poverty in America Awareness Month
- Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month

Important January DE&I calendar dates:

- January 4 – World Braille Day
- January 7 – Coptic Orthodox Christmas
- January 25 – Mahayana New Year (Buddhist)
- January 13 – Maghi (Sikh)
- January 21 – World Religion Day
- January 15 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- January 24 – International Day of Education
- January 26 – International Customs Day
- January 27 – International Holocaust Remembrance Day