Tips to Spring into Health

Spring represents a new beginning. Trees are turning green and plants are blooming again. Use this time of new beginnings to bring new healthy habits into your life.

- **Eat Breakfast.** Start your morning with a healthy breakfast that includes lean protein, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Try a bright colored fruit smoothie or a low-fat yogurt parfait with granola.

- **Be Active.** Incorporate enjoyable movement into your day. Aim for 30-60 minutes a day. Start with what you can do, even if it’s only 10 minutes at a time. Get your family/friends together for a walk or a game of catch.

- **Stay Hydrated.** Stay well hydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout the day. Try replacing sugar sweetened beverages with fruit flavored water.

- **Start Cooking More.** Cooking meals can be a cost-effective way to incorporate healthy eating habits. Buy a healthy cook book to improve your cooking skills and try new foods.

- **Family Meals.** Start having more meals as a family. Set a regular meal time and turn off all electronics. Get the kids involved in planning and cooking meals.

- **Try One Meatless Meal a Week.** Expand variety in your meals by incorporating plant-based proteins. Substitute meat in your recipe with vegetables, beans, or lentils.

- **Watch Portion Sizes.** Use MyPlate as a guide for your portions. Make half your plate fruits and vegetables and the other half, whole grain and protein.
No Cook Beet and Carrot Slaw Wraps

Makes: 5 servings

**Ingredients**
- 2 tablespoons of orange juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 5 raw beets, with greens
- 2 carrots
- 2 apples, cored and sliced
- 5 slices cheddar cheese
- (5) 8-inch whole wheat tortillas

**Directions:**
1. Put orange juice, oil, vinegar, mustard, salt, and pepper in a bowl and whisk together to make the dressing.
2. Cut the greens off the beets and pull the leaves from the stems. Wash the leaves, stack them, roll them, and slice the roll crosswise into ¼ inch ribbons.
3. Peel and shred the beets and carrots
4. Put the beets, carrots, and beet leaves in the bowl with the dressing and toss them to coat.
5. For each wrap, put 1/5 of the slaw, 1/5 of the sliced apples, and 1 slice of cheddar in the tortilla. Roll the tortilla from the bottom up, tucking in the sides as you go. You may hold the wrap closed with a toothpick.

Growing Cucumbers

The cucumbers peel and seeds are unique as they are the most nutrient dense parts of the cucumber. Cucumbers contain fiber, vitamin C, vitamin A, vitamin K, magnesium, potassium and manganese. Cucumbers are also an excellent source of water, they are 95% water. They are a great way to stay hydrated during hot summer months and in hot climates.

**Materials:**
- Cucumber seeds
- Peat pots or plastic pots
- Potting soil
- Water

**Instructions:**
- Fill your pots with potting soil.
- Make an indent about 1/2 inch deep into the soil.
- Place the seed into the indent and cover seeds loosely with soil.
- Water the seeds.
- Place in space that has direct sunlight.

Cucumber seeds take as little as 3 to 10 days to sprout. In cooler temperature the longer it will take for seeds to sprout. At about 3 weeks the seedlings should be transplanted into a garden or larger pot. After transplantation ensure that the seedlings are consistently watered, so to never allow the soil to dry completely. Cucumber plants grow rapidly so be sure to watch them carefully and check them daily.

Cucumbers are typically ready to harvest when they are ripe and are medium to dark green in color and firm to the touch. This is anywhere between 50 and 70 days after planting.

**Important Note:** Cucumber plants are highly sensitive to frost. So before moving your plants to the garden be sure to make sure all frost is gone, and the danger of frost has passed.
Fitness Corner

Spring is here and it’s the perfect time to increase your physical activity. Get the whole family involved! Go on a family walk on the weekends. Get off the bus one stop earlier and walk the rest of the way. Replace a coffee break with a 10-minute walk. Do activities you enjoy: swim, go for a nature walk, play basketball, or join a movement class at your local library. Physical activity doesn’t have to mean going to the gym. Most importantly—Have Fun!

What’s in Season?

Buying fruits and vegetables in season is a cheaper way to buy fresh produce. When we buy produce out of season, the store must get it shipped from other areas, increasing the cost of the food. When the produce comes from farms in your area, there are lower travel costs. So what fruits and vegetables are in season in the Spring?

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The goal of this initiative is to reduce the onset of obesity and certain diseases by teaching principles of healthy eating and encouraging physical activity.

Last winter, Ron Stelzer, Pastor at Our Savior Lutheran Church and School became a healthy partner agency with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Eat Smart New York Long Island (ESNYLI) as part of their Faithful Family Initiative.

ESNY Nutritionist coordinated a healthy walking challenge, provided MyPlate nutrition workshops to the adult and children’s bible study groups. Budget friendly, healthy recipes along with 10 tips were shared. The pumpkin muffins were a bit hit with everyone.

During church meetings, fresh fruit flavored water is now offered as a choice. This has helped to cut down on sugar sweetened drinks. Other positive changes have taken place. Bagels and donuts are cut into halves to guide selecting smaller portions of less healthy food choices. Fresh fruit is also being donated by the Best Yet Market in Lake Grove and provided to their food pantry members. The Best Market has joined ESNY to display their healthy lifestyle messages to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. A healthy “recipe corner” is also in place for shoppers to choose to make an easy, healthy family meal.

With the help of an ESNY grant, Our Savior Church and School is planning a garden this Spring for the elementary school students to plant and learn about growing vegetables and fruits. The Science Enrichment teacher is using the USDA Team Nutrition curriculum and has started the students starting to plant seeds in the classroom. Having students try new vegetables and fruits that they have grown, will likely increase their eating these at home. Everyone involved is very happy to be given this chance to have a garden.

ESNY Nutritionists Show Support for National Nutrition Month

- ESNY educators read the book, “Before We Eat: Farm to Table” to nearly 300 school children grades K-5th grade this month to also support Agriculture Literacy Week.
- Workshops on MyPlate were given to adults and children at the Brentwood, Centereach, Copaigue, West Islip and Wyandanch Libraries.
- In the Bellport and Brentwood BOCES, the following topics were presented in English and Spanish: Make a Better Beverage and The Power of Planning.
- Students at the JW Dodd Middle School, Freeport learned about MyPlate, Choosing fruits and vegetables and the benefits of whole grains.

Visit our website for more information about our free programs: www.eatsmartnyli.com