



## IN THIS ISSUE

### Nutritious Bites 1

Carbohydrates may have a bad reputation in the “diet” world, but we need **healthy carbohydrates** in our diets.

### Recipe of the Month 2

This quick **High Energy Trail Mix** is full of antioxidant power.

### Keep On Moving 2

**Endurance exercise**, also known as Aerobic exercise, is healthy for our hearts. How much endurance exercise do you need?

### Chair Exercise 2

**Side leg lifts** strengthen the outer thighs and improve flexibility of the hips.

### Living Better 3

**Managing stress** is healthy for your heart.

### Medication Management 3

Did you know that some **foods can interfere** with your medications?

### To Your Health 4

Chronic inflammation is linked to several chronic diseases, including diabetes and heart disease. A diet rich in **anti-inflammatory foods** may help.

## Nutritious Bites

### Back to Basics: Carbohydrates

By Whitney Bignell, PhD, RDN, LD

You’ve probably heard that carbohydrates are bad for you, hence the “low-carb” diet craze. However, our bodies need carbohydrates for energy and other nutrients. It’s important to choose the best carbohydrates.

### Sources of Carbohydrates

You may think that carbohydrates are only found in sweets or breads or pastas. However, carbohydrates are found in fruits, legumes, vegetables, and milk products, too. We know that these foods are all part of a healthy diet.

It’s true that breads, pasta, and sweets can contain refined sugars. But you can enjoy healthier versions of these items, as well.



### Healthy Carbs

Fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grain breads or pasta contain fiber in addition to the sugars. Fiber can help you feel full longer, lower cholesterol, and control blood sugars. Also, fiber is important for digestive health - keeping you regular.

### Carbohydrate cravings

The following snack ideas will satisfy your sweet tooth without going overboard on the sugar.

- 6 ounces plain fat-free Greek yogurt with 1 tablespoon dried cranberries and slivered almonds
- One small pear and one light cheese stick
- Two graham cracker squares and 1 tablespoon light cream cheese
- One small whole-wheat tortilla with one tablespoon peanut butter and about 3-4 slices of apple

## Recipe of the Month

### High Energy Trail Mix (Serves 12)

You'll want to keep this quick snack full of antioxidant power on hand for yourself or guests.

(Adapted from Ellie Krieger, MS, RDN)

#### Ingredients

- ¾ c. slivered, blanched almonds
- ¾ c. pumpkin seeds, unsalted
- ¾ c. sunflower seeds, unsalted
- ¼ c. dried cherries, chopped
- ¼ c. dried apricots, chopped
- ¼ c. raisins
- ¼ c. dried cranberries, unsweetened
- ¼ c. chocolate chips (dark preferred)

#### Directions

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Divide snack mix into 1/3 cup portions and store in individual snack or sandwich bags.



Recipe and photo courtesy of FoodNetwork.com

## Keep on Moving Go the Distance

Endurance, or aerobic activity, is any type of movement that increases your heart rate and gets you breathing faster. This type of exercise is especially good for your heart.

You should aim for 150 minutes of endurance activity each week, or about 30 minutes each day. The good news is that you don't have to do it all at one time. You can break it up into 10- or even 5- minute increments.

If you haven't exercised in awhile, be sure to check with your healthcare provider to see which exercises are safe for you, and if you need to modify any exercises. Also, start slow – you don't need to run 30 minutes on your first day!

We may think of endurance activity as walking or running. However, dancing, swimming, or any other exercise that moves all of your large muscles is aerobic, too. So, choose an activity you enjoy so that you will keep up with it for the long term.

## Monthly Chair Exercise Side Leg Lifts

This exercise is important for strengthening the outer thighs and improving flexibility in the hips.

Begin by holding onto the back of a chair as needed, standing with feet slightly apart. Take 2 to 3 seconds to lift your right leg 6 to 12 inches out to the side, keeping the knee and toes pointed forward. Hold the position for 1 second. Take 2 to 3 seconds to lower your leg back to the starting position. Perform 8 to 15 lifts. Switch to the opposite leg. Do another set of 8 to 15 repetitions for each leg.

**Modification:** For a less advanced version, tap the toe out to the side and pull back in, rather than lifting and lowering the leg. For a more advanced version, change the count of the movement by lifting the leg and holding for 5 seconds or lifting and pulsing the leg and releasing back down.

### Side Leg Lifts



For more exercises, visit the following link:

[https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/livewellagewell-archive/Exercise+Resources/13-ChairExercisesBallsBands+\(1\).pdf](https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/livewellagewell-archive/Exercise+Resources/13-ChairExercisesBallsBands+(1).pdf)

## Living Better Aim to Stress Less

Managing stress is important for your overall health. While more research is needed to determine the effect of stress on heart disease, we do know that stress can affect your behaviors that increase your risk for developing heart health problems.

Stress can lead you to over-eat or eat poorly, prevent you from exercising, and zap you of your energy. So, it's important for your health to learn to better manage stress.

### Ways to Decrease Stress

The following ideas may help you release tension and decrease stress:

- Go for a walk or do other exercises
- Practice a few minutes of deep breathing
- Pray or meditate
- Call a friend
- Practice a craft, such as crochet, knitting,

beading, needlework, painting, or coloring

- Listen to relaxing music
- Read a book
- Watch a funny movie or television show
- Write down your thoughts or worries in a journal
- Do something nice for yourself

The key is to take yourself out of the stressful moment or situation. You don't have to physically leave the space – you can simply distract yourself or practice stress management techniques such as deep breathing.

If you feel that stress is overwhelming and unmanageable, talk to your healthcare provider. You may need medication to help with anxiety, or you may need a referral to a therapist who can help you develop ways to cope with the stress.

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## Medication Manager Sometimes, Food and Medications Don't Mix

Your pharmacist or doctor may have told you to take some of your medications with food. However, there are some foods that do not mix well with certain medications. The following are common examples:

**Grapefruit juice** – affects the way your body absorbs some cholesterol-lowering statins, and may alter metabolism of other drugs, such as antihistamines, blood pressure medications, thyroid medications, the cough suppressant dextromethorphan, and stomach acid blocking drugs.

**Green leafy vegetables** – interferes with blood thinners, such as Coumadin or warfarin. You can continue to eat greens, so long as you eat about the

same amount each day.

**Natural black licorice** – depletes the body of potassium, and interferes with digoxin, blood pressure medications, and Coumadin.

**Tyramine-containing foods** – interferes with monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs) and drugs used to treat Parkinson's disease.

When you receive a new medication, it's important to read the information pamphlet that comes from the pharmacy. You should talk with your doctor or pharmacist about the best way to take your new medication, and ask if there are any interactions with food or other medications that you're taking.

## To Your Health

# Anti-Inflammatory Foods

Your immune system uses inflammation as a tool to protect the body from foreign invaders, such as bacteria, viruses, allergens, or chemicals.

Unfortunately, sometimes our inflammatory response is not appropriate – there’s no foreign invader to kick out. Instead, we can have chronic inflammation. It’s this kind of inflammation that has been linked to many of our chronic diseases, such as heart disease, Alzheimer’s disease, and diabetes.

There are many foods that promote inflammation, such as sugar sweetened-beverages, refined carbohydrates, red meats, processed meats, and fried foods. These foods may also lead to weight gain, which is also associated with inflammation.

Fortunately, there are many good foods that fight inflammation. These foods are often high in antioxidants and polyphenols. Many fruits and vegetables, such as strawberries, blueberries, and leafy greens, are anti-inflammatory. Fatty fish, such as salmon, contain omega-3 fatty acids that also protect against inflammation.

One of the healthiest diets in the world is the Mediterranean diet. People in the Mediterranean region tend to eat fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, fish, and olive oil, and do not eat as many refined sugars or processed foods. They also use fresh herbs and spices for seasoning instead of salt.

In addition to this eating pattern, people in the Mediterranean also value meal time, enjoying meals

with family in a relaxing atmosphere. They also tend to get plenty of exercise.

Healthy eating and healthy living often go hand-in-hand – and this lifestyle is good for protecting against inflammation!

For more information about the Mediterranean diet, visit: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/mediterranean-diet/art-20047801>

## Upcoming Events

### A Matter of Balance Workshops

April 2018  
Iris Place  
Athens, Georgia

### Living Well Workshops

April 2018  
Morgan County Senior Center  
Madison, Georgia

If you’d like to host a workshop, please contact Whitney Bignell (web1975@uga.edu)

Check out our website for upcoming workshops:  
<http://www.negahealthmatters.org>

### Support for this newsletter is also provided by:

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### Questions or Comments? Contact us!

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