



IN THIS ISSUE

Nutritious Bites 1

Happy National Nutrition Month! Learn how to “**go further with food**” by choosing nutritious foods while being mindful about waste.

Recipe of the Month 2

Stretch your leftovers with this **Three Bean Chili and Baked Sweet Potato**.

Keep On Moving 2

While losing some muscle is normal as we age, we can take steps to **prevent muscle loss through exercise**.

Chair Exercise 2

These **Chair Stand** exercises will strengthen your buttocks, front and back of legs.

Living Better 3

Follow these 9 habits for **brain health**.

Medication Management 3

Your friend or relative is taking a new “wonder” supplement – should you take it, too? There are only a few **supplements you may need**.

To Your Health 4

Can you have your sweets and eat them, too? What we know about **artificial sweeteners and diabetes**.

Nutritious Bites

Go Further with Food

By Whitney Bignell, PhD, RDN, LD

Happy National Nutrition Month! This year’s theme, *Go Further with Food*, reminds us to choose foods that fuel our bodies. It also calls on us to stretch our food dollar and cut back on waste.

Foods for Fuel

Like gas for your car, food is fuel for your body. You want to be physically active most days of the week. It’s important to choose the best foods that have all the nutrients you need to give you energy and keep you running smoothly.

Following MyPlate nudges you towards choosing plenty of fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products or dairy substitutes. MyPlate also encourages you to keep your portion sizes in check.

Practicing good food safety habits protects you from foodborne illnesses, such as Salmonella or *E. coli*.

Cutting Back on Food Waste

While it’s important to focus on the nutrition in foods, it’s equally important to be sure you get the most out of your food budget.

- Planning meals ahead of time makes it easier to buy only what you need, saving money and decreasing food waste.
- Plan to use leftovers later in the week.
- Take stock of what you have on-hand before going to the store so that you don’t purchase duplicate items.

Following the tips above will help you *go further with food*.

If you’d like more personalized information about foods to fuel your health, talk with a registered dietitian nutritionist in your area.

Recipe of the Month

Three Bean Chili and Baked Sweet Potato (Serves 4 – 1 cup chili over ½ sweet potato)

Ingredients

- 1 (16 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (16 oz.) navy beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (16 oz.) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 tbsp. canola oil
- 1 (15 oz.) can tomato sauce, no salt added
- 2 tsp. chili powder or to taste
- 2 medium (about 5 inches) sweet potatoes



Directions

1. Scrub and wash sweet potatoes under running water; dry with a paper towel. Pierce sweet potatoes with a fork several times and place on baking sheet lined with foil. Bake at 400°F for about 45 minutes or until tender. Let cool.
2. In large saucepan, heat canola oil over medium heat; add diced onion and cook until translucent, about 8 - 10 minutes.
3. Add beans, tomato sauce, and chili powder, stirring to combine. Increase heat to bring chili to a boil, then cover and lower heat to simmer about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve over sweet potato.

Keep on Moving

Preventing Muscle Loss

It's true that we lose muscle as we age. Most people lose about 1% of muscle mass each year after age 50 (with women losing at a slightly faster pace). Muscle loss can lead to difficulty doing everyday tasks, such as gardening or climbing stairs. However, you can prevent some muscle loss by staying active.

To maintain lean muscle, and even rebuild muscle, resistance or strength training is key. Aim to practice resistance exercises 2-3 days each week.

You don't need a gym to get stronger. Use small water bottles as hand-weights to work bicep and tricep muscles; stand up and sit down several times to build leg strength; practice pulling your belly-button towards your spine to engage your abdominal muscles.

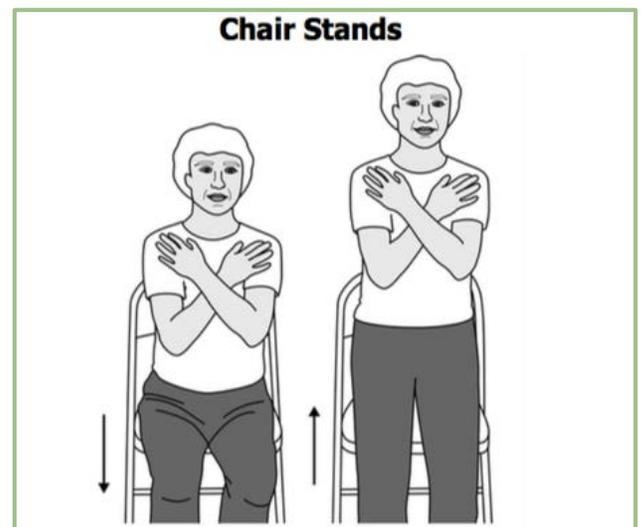
For more exercises to try, visit <https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/exercises/strength> or check with your YMCA or local senior center for classes.

Monthly Chair Exercise

Chair Stands

This exercise is important for strengthening the buttocks, front and back of legs. Strong legs are important for balance and being able to do everyday tasks, such as walking.

In a seated position with good posture and feet flat on the floor, cross your arms over your chest or hold a ball with both hands at chest level. Keeping your weight on your heels, stand up, using your hands as little as possible or not at all. As you bend slightly forward to stand up, keep your back and shoulders straight. Take at least 3 seconds to sit back down. Repeat 8 to 15 times or as many as you can comfortably do with good form. Rest. Do another set of 8 repetitions.



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

Healthy Lifestyle, Healthy Brain

The Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives sponsors “Brain Awareness Week” each March to share what’s been learned about how the brain functions and how to keep it healthy. As you might expect, overall good health habits are also important for maintaining or improving brain health. The following habits may prevent or slow down cognitive decline in aging:

1. Exercise regularly - and engage in active leisure.
2. Exercise your mind regularly, too. Pursue active learning opportunities (ask your grandchildren to show you how to use your new Smart Phone or setup a social media page), as well as new experiences.
3. Stay socially engaged. Visit or talk with friends and family often, and join community groups to prevent feeling isolated at home alone.
4. Stay positive. As the saying goes, life may throw you lemons - so make the tastiest lemonade ever.
5. Manage stress. Short-term memory losses may actually be related to stress.

6. Eat a healthy diet with foods rich in antioxidants (ie, fruits, vegetables) and healthy omega-3 fatty acids (ie, fish, walnuts, flaxseeds, and chia seeds).
7. Mind your numbers. Lose weight if overweight or obese; lower cholesterol if high; keep blood pressure and blood glucose under control.
8. Get enough (good quality) sleep. Poor sleep can increase stress and raise your risk of depression, which may lead to memory problems.
9. Seek medical treatment for any underlying health problems.

Following these 9 healthy habits will be good for both your overall wellbeing and your brain health.

For more information about *Successful Aging & Your Brain*, visit: http://www.dana.org/uploadedFiles/Pdfs/Successful_Aging_Booklet_2017.pdf

Medication Manager

Should I Take Supplements?

Do you have a friend or relative taking a new “wonder” supplement and think maybe you should try it, too? When we have a chronic health condition - or just feel tired all of the time - it’s easy to look for the “miracle” vitamin or mineral to make us feel better.

The bad news is that supplements can’t make up for an unhealthy diet - but that’s also good news because you can change what you eat! However, there are a few vitamins and minerals that you may need as supplements if your doctor recommends them:

- **Vitamin B₁₂** - As we age, our bodies may not be able to absorb this nutrient from food as well. Adults over age 50 should get vitamin B₁₂ in

crystalline form, which can be found in most fortified breakfast cereals and other foods.

- **Vitamin D** - Our skin makes this “sunshine vitamin” from exposure to direct sunlight. As we age, we’re not able to make as much vitamin D. Fortified dairy foods or supplements can help to meet the recommended 800 IU per day. If you have a vitamin D deficiency, your doctor may recommend a higher dose of vitamin D supplement.
- **Calcium** - Dairy and other fortified foods are good sources of calcium. If you’re not having three servings of dairy each day, you may need a supplement to reach the recommended 1000 - 1200 mg each day.

Artificial Sweeteners and Diabetes

Many people recently diagnosed with diabetes feel overwhelmed or deprived by having to avoid desserts, sweets to limit their carbohydrates. One solution is to choose “sugar-free” foods and beverages that use artificial sweeteners. However, a quick internet search will lead you to any number of health dangers caused by artificial sweeteners. What do we know about the safety of artificial sweeteners and diabetes?

Claim: Artificial sweeteners may increase glucose intolerance.

Evidence: A study by Pepino and colleagues in 2013 suggested that sucralose (brand name Splenda®) caused abnormal blood sugar and insulin levels following a glucose tolerance test when participants had a drink containing the artificial sweetener prior to the test. The study was relatively small (17 participants).

Another study by Nettleton and colleagues in 2009 found an association between daily consumption of diet sodas and increased risk of type 2 diabetes. However, this study could not show that it was only the diet sodas leading to increased risk. Perhaps participants ate more sweets because of increased cravings, or they ate more food overall because of the “calorie-free” soda.

Claim: Artificial sweeteners cause cancer.

Evidence: Saccharin (brand name Sweet and Low®) once carried a warning about its association with bladder cancer. The original studies linking saccharin with bladder cancer were rodent studies that used a very high concentration of saccharin - much higher

than what an average person would consume. The FDA now publishes an “Acceptable Daily Intake” of artificial sweeteners and sugar substitutes that is 100 times less than an amount that would cause harm.

General Advice

While artificial sweeteners are “generally regarded as safe,” it’s a good idea to limit the amount you consume so that you can focus on an overall healthy diet with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy. Finally, talk with your healthcare provider about any concerns you have regarding artificial sweeteners.

Upcoming Events

A Matter of Balance Workshops

Iris Place
Athens, GA
April 5 – May 24, 2018

Living Well Workshops

Morgan County Senior Center
Madison, GA
April 24 – May 29, 2018

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/index.php/calendar-2/>

Support for this newsletter is also provided by:

The University of Georgia

- College of Family and Consumer Sciences
 - Dept. of Foods and Nutrition
- College of Public Health
 - Dept. of Health Policy and Management
 - Institute of Gerontology

Questions or Comments? Contact us!

Whitney Bignell, PhD, RDN, LD
Wellness Coordinator
NE Georgia Area Agency on Aging
Limited-term Clinical Assistant Professor
The University of Georgia
(706) 542-4067 | web1975@uga.edu
Visit our web site! www.negahealthmatters.org