

SEPTEMBER 2024

PLAN FOR HEALTH NEWSLETTER

THIS MONTH'S TOPICS:

- **Social Health**
- **Mindfulness**
- **September Recipe: Lemon-Blueberry Oatmeal Bars**

Social Health

The relationships you have from the time you are born through adulthood play an important role in navigating your world. You learn how to express yourself, interact with others, be a part of a community and create different habits. A positive and mature social circle can help you stay healthier mentally, physically and spiritually. Below are some strategies to improve your social health.

• **Make Connections**

- Join a group that focuses on a common hobby like reading, hiking or painting
- Join a new physical activity class like tai chi, yoga or spinning
- Get involved in your own community by gardening, roadside clean up, or neighborhood gatherings
- Volunteer at a school, hospital or library

• **Get Active Together**

- Commit to a physical activity routine with a neighbor or friend to stay accountable
- Join a local community sports team like softball, kickball, pickleball or disc golf
- Stay active at work by participating in workplace wellness activities

• **Stay Healthy with Your Family**

- Walk or ride bikes to minimize screen time and watching TV
- Prepare and eat healthy meals together
- Have fun by going to the park or plan a family vacation



• **Build Healthy Relationships**

- Surround yourself with people that make you feel good
- Listen to others without judgement or blame; be caring and empathetic
- Set boundaries with others and be comfortable saying no
- Understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships

• **Take Care of Yourself While Caring for Others**

- Stay organized by making to-do lists and set a daily routine
- Ask for help when you feel overwhelmed
- Keep up with your own hobbies and interests
- Join a caregiver's support group

• **Be Mindful of Social and Digital Media**

Technology has changed the way we interact with each other. Social media puts other people just keystrokes away. This helps some feel like they have more social support. But for others, it can increase isolation and depression. Use your time wisely, connect carefully and seek out mental health support and resources when necessary.

Mindfulness

In a world that seems to constantly be picking up speed, it can often feel as if we are searching for ways to get more done in less time. This usually leads to multi-tasking; watching the kids while cleaning the house, sending an email while talking on the phone or eating a meal while planning your day. It is quite common to start to feel overwhelmed, anxious, and disconnected from the present moment. Introducing a mindfulness practice can be a key tool to help reduce stress, boost mental clarity, and improve your overall feeling of well-being.

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a state of being fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing without judging or feeling overwhelmed.

Benefits of Mindfulness

Mindfulness has been shown to provide several improvements in various aspects of physical and mental health including:

- Reduced stress
- Improved memory
- Increased attention
- Improved mood
- Enhanced willpower
- Better sleep
- Less pain
- Lower blood pressure
- Improved immune function
- Less anxiety
- Less depression
- Greater compassion



How To Get Started

Starting a mindfulness practice doesn't have to be daunting. Any time you find yourself focused on the present moment is a time you have practiced mindfulness. A simple way to use your senses to bring yourself into the present moment is the 5-4-3-2-1 technique: Take a moment and look for 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste.

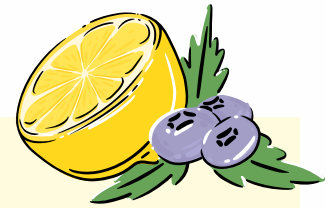
Here are some ways to incorporate mindfulness into daily living:

- Take some deep breaths- As you go throughout your day, try to take a few moments to pay attention to your breath and re-center yourself.
- Enjoy a stroll- As you walk notice the sights and sounds around you. As thoughts and worries enter your mind, notice them but then return to the present.
- Practice mindful eating- Be aware of taste, textures and flavors in each bite and try chewing slowly and intentionally.
- Find mindfulness resources in your local community- yoga classes, meditation classes and mindfulness-based stress reduction programs, books, apps and videos to continue learning about different mindfulness methods.

Program Highlight: Daily Mindfulness

When life gets busy, just one minute of mindfulness per day can have a positive impact on your mood, stress levels and productivity. This program will guide you through a series of daily practices to help you build a daily mindfulness habit. Go to your member app or website and explore the Program Library on the Journey tab to learn more.

September Recipe: Lemon-Blueberry Oatmeal Bars



Servings: 9

Ingredients:

- 2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- ½ cup chopped toasted almonds plus 2 tablespoons, divided
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ cup well-stirred coconut milk or low-fat milk
- 4 ½ tablespoons honey
- ¼ cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1 large egg, at room temperature
- 1 large egg white, at room temperature
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup fresh blueberries, divided

Directions

1. Stir oats, 1/2 cup almonds, baking powder, salt and baking soda together in a large bowl. Whisk coconut milk (or low-fat milk), honey, applesauce, egg, egg white, lemon zest and vanilla in a medium bowl until well combined. Add the milk mixture to the oat mixture; stir until well combined. Fold in 2/3 cup blueberries. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350°F. Coat an 8-inch-square baking pan with cooking spray; line with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on all sides.
3. Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared pan. Top with the remaining 1/3 cup blueberries and 2 tablespoons almonds, pressing gently into the surface.
4. Bake until set and edges are starting to turn golden, 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool in the pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Using the parchment overhangs as handles, remove from the pan and cut into 9 bars using a sharp knife. Serve warm or at room temperature.



Stay tuned for October's topics:
Women's Health and Self Care

