

Berkshire Health Group

WELLNESS CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

By Mark Pettus, MD

The covid-19 pandemic has changed every aspect of our lives. As true of every big challenge that rattles our sense of stability, opportunities to grow and to learn will present themselves. A great opportunity to consider is how your lifestyle and the choices you make can enhance your immune system in a way that can give you greater resilience against the many infectious viruses and bacteria that pose threats in our environment. Did you ever imagine you can strengthen your defense systems? There are many lines of research that are revealing how lifestyle and the “metabolic landscape” you create can either enhance your susceptibility or strengthen your defense. These tendency are not as genetically predetermined as we once thought.

We are learning a great deal about the metabolic risk factors that seem to place many at greater risk for covid infection and complications. These risks include being overweight, having a higher blood sugar, having a higher blood pressure, having other medical challenges like autoimmunity, etc. As it turns out, these risks have been seen with other infections like influenza. While healthy people can of course become infected and become very sick, the overall odds are much, much lower for those in good health and with consistent healthy lifestyle behaviors. As you become your “Secretary of Defense” you may notice that the annual patterns of cold, flu, and GI distress will change dramatically.



TAKE A PEEK AT WHAT'S INSIDE:

- 30 Day Immunity Challenge
- How to Reduce Stress by Being in the Present Moment
- Immune Resilience Recipe
- Upcoming Wellness Initiatives and Your Wellness Benefits

Based on much that has been researched, the following tips can greatly improve your health, your happiness, your quality of life, and your immune resilience during these challenging pandemic times:

1. Reduce-eliminate foods and beverages with added sugar.
2. Reduce or eliminate high-glycemic (quickly raise your blood sugar) flour-based foods. This includes grains like whole wheat. Eliminating wheat all together for 30 days could serve you very well! Try it!
3. Plant-based foods rock. All vegetables have powerful nutrients that build your health and resilience at many levels. The fiber in plant-based foods will support your gut "biome", the ecosystem in our guts that impact our immune response and general health.
4. Quality fats from unprocessed sources e.g.meats, fatty fish e.g. salmon, trout, sardines, whole fat dairy (butter, whole milk, heavy cream, sour cream), olive oil, pasture-raised eggs, nuts (macadamia, almonds, pecans, walnuts, pistachios), coconut oil.
5. Being outdoors in nature and getting morning and late afternoon-evening sunshine.
- 6 Laughter. It is a good time to watch the shows that really make you laugh and lift your spirits.
7. Be still for 5" whenever you are able, just sit quietly. Do nothing. Breathe slowly and deeply. Pay attention to what you observe.
8. Go to bed and wake up at consistent times. Keep your bedroom as dark as possible at night.
9. At the end of the day, take a "positivity break". What was your best moment of the day? What are you grateful for?
10. Some supplements have been shown to reduce respiratory infection risk and severity e.g. zinc (15-30 mg/day); vitamin C (1,000-2,000 mg/day); Vitamin D (2,000-4,000 units/day to achieve a blood level of 30 or greater. Sunshine is your best source during the sun seasons).



30 DAY

Improve your Immunity Challenge

Draw an X on all the days you have completed the challenge. Complete 75% of the challenge by November 6th and you will be entered into a raffle drawing for a wellness prize. Submit your form by November 9th. Email epiantonie@bhs1.org or fax 413-395-7653

Go for a 30 minute walk

Turn off electronics 45 minutes before you go to sleep

Try a fermented food or drink

Consume 2 foods today that are rich in Vitamin C

Floss your teeth before bed

Drink 8 glasses of water

Listen to your favorite song while working out

Incorporate a healthy fats in 2 of your meals today

Try a new workout routine

Try a 5 minute meditation

Go for a walk or a hike with a friend or family member

Incorporate 3-4 vegetables into your meals

Avoid any added sugar today

Enjoy 10-15 minutes outside in the sun

Read a chapter of a book before bed

Aim for 10,000 steps today

Make a smoothie or incorporate fruit and veggies into your breakfast

Wash your hands for a full minute

Avoid social media for the entire day

Incorporate 30 minutes of stretching or Yoga

Avoid touching your face today

Incorporate a strength training or body weight workout

Call someone you love today

Take 5 long deep breaths

Aim for 60 minutes of exercise today

Appreciate 3 things about your life right now

Avoid eating after 6pm tonight

Do something fun today

Spend time with someone that makes you laugh today

Incorporate a healthy snack 2 hours before dinner

Name _____ Email: _____

HOW TO REDUCE STRESS BY BEING IN THE PRESENT MOMENT

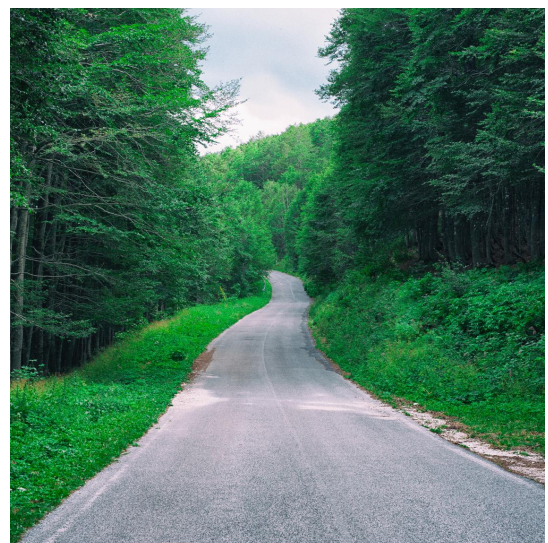
It is normal to experience more anxiety during times of stress, and the current COVID-19 pandemic is most certainly a time of great stress to all.

The ancient Chinese philosopher and writer Lao Tzu said, "If you are depressed, you are living in the past. If you are anxious, you are living in the future. If you are at peace, you are living in the present."

It's true this present moment may look different than life did even a week ago. It's also true that our worries about what could happen can motivate us to make wise decisions – wash our hands more often, avoid large gatherings, etc. But beyond that, worry and anxiety about all the possible "what if's" largely aren't helpful and might result in missing the sweet moments happening right now and the peace that tends to come when we live in the present.

Since life today is filled with changes that can be unsettling, here are two mindfulness suggestions to help you maintain a sense of focus in the present.

1. Start the day with a pause. While still lying in bed, before you begin the day, check in with your breath, your body, and the sounds around you. If your mind is already busy or anxious, acknowledge it, but then take some time to really ground yourself by focusing on sensations in the body. Even 1-2 minutes of "check in" with yourself in this way can allow you to begin the day more centered and in touch with the current moment.
2. Live One Day at a Time. When the past is done and the future is uncertain, we only have the present to focus on. To cherish every breath, sight, sound, and feeling. Make your day meaningful, productive, and fruitful as much as you can. Learn to accept that yes we have good days but also bad days too. What helps is that we have new mornings each day. And every day is an opportunity to make it better. I trust that it will turn out for good, one step at a time.





Chicken Soup

IMMUNE RESILIENCE RECIPE

Chicken soup is a nutrient-dense tradition, containing ingredients like garlic, mineral-rich bone broth & hearty vegetables that have been known to strengthen our immune systems for centuries.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tbsp. butter (grass-fed)
- 1 1/4 small yellow onion, finely diced
- 2 medium carrots (washed, peeled + chopped)
- 1 small leek, chopped
- 1 tsp. thyme, chopped
- 1/8 cup of fresh parsley
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1.5 litres of organic chicken stock
(bone broth is preferred for greater nutrients)
- 2 bay leaves
- 1/2 tsp. salt (to taste)
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper (to taste)
- 1 whole organic (or all-natural) chicken
- 2 cups of kale, chopped

DIRECTIONS:

Place 1/2 the chopped vegetables (*leaving the kale out*) and 1/2 of the bone broth/stock in the bottom of a crock pot. Place the chicken on top. Add the remaining vegetables and broth around the chicken. Lather the chicken with the butter, salt, pepper and fresh herbs. Cook on high for 2 hours and then change to low for an additional 2 hours, adding in the kale for the last 20 minutes.

Once the chicken is done, let it cool and then shred (avoiding the bones) to make soup! Save the chicken bones to make your own bone broth.

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WELLNESS INITIATIVES AND BENEFITS

Build Your Armor **September 9th-November 4th**

A FREE 9-week program to help build the immunity of the community. This online program offers weekly webinars, fitness classes, email connections as well as the opportunity to participate in a 30 day challenge. The Berkshire Health Systems Wellness at Work Team along with special guests will bring you Integrative Medicine topics such as: Nutrition, Sleep, Exercise, Stress Management, and proper hygiene along with the Power of Positivity, Spirituality, and Nature to protect yourself during the coronavirus pandemic and flu season.

Here is the link to register:

Weekly Webinars:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_KVZj4S9gRSGPg9xsiFwfbw

Weekly Fitness Classes:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_iIOupfa6SeGTTM1v4AtVBA

Walk October Challenge **October-November**

Fall is the perfect time to walk in the Berkshires; cooler air, the crunch of leaves under foot and the sweet smells of fall surround you as you move in the right direction. Challenge yourself to take a walk daily in the month of October and be entered for your chance to win! There is no minimum that you have to track in order to qualify. Just take the challenge and try your best!

Take Advantage of your Wellness Benefits

Diabetes Care Program- Earn up to \$360

Colonoscopy Incentive Program- Earn \$50

BCBS Fitness Reimbursement- Earn up to \$300

BCBS Weight Loss Reimbursement- Earn up to \$150

BHG HERO Coaching Program- Earn up to \$250

BHG 2020 Wellness Program Menu

Visit Berkshirehg.com for more info

For more information regarding any BHG
Wellness Programs, please contact:
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