

Berkshire Health Group

WELLNESS CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

Healthy for the Holidays

Written by Sarah Hawkins , Registered Dietitian

It is beginning to look a lot like “holiday season” a time to be joyous and to celebrate our in these days of uncertainty. In many ways it is “the most wonderful time of the year” and yet it is ok to acknowledge that it may also be the most stressful time of the year. To top it off, it has been a disruptive year for all of us in one way or another and the holidays might look a little different this year. While we might not avoid the holiday stressors, here are some 2020 vision holiday strategies that aim to protect our overall wellness into the new year.

- Take some time to prepare for the stressful situations by rehearsing some coping mechanisms, practice saying “no, thank you” and think about accepting the compliments that we might usually be quick to dismiss.
- Recognize that food restriction can lead to loss of control which may end up as emotional eating. Address and find ways to manage emotions without using food as a fix for boredom, anger, loneliness. Phone a friend, go for a walk, drink a glass of water, write a letter to yourself.



TAKE A PEEK AT WHAT'S INSIDE:

- 30 Day Healthy Holiday Challenge
- Healthy Savory and Sweet Recipes
- Upcoming Wellness Initiatives and Your Wellness Benefits

- Have a plan: make a YES list– things to say YES to (these be food or social situations). Instead of thinking about all the things that we feel that we must avoid or need to use willpower in order to say NO. Rephrase the inner dialogue in order to allow yourself the enjoyment of your most valuable, seasonal, favorite foods or celebrations. If your grandmother's recipe is something that you look forward to making, sharing, and eating every year but feel guilty because it is so rich in calories and fat – put it on your YES list then savor, enjoy, and let go of the guilt.
- Trust in your body – trust your intuition. Listen to your body's cues, listen to what your body is telling you before and after eating a meal. Your body is an amazing machine that knows how to self-regulate if we provide the proper self-care tools (ex. allow for quality sleep, nutrients, stress management, movement). It is normal and healthy to have seasonal weight fluctuations. Be compassionate with yourself and allow those extra times for “fun eating” knowing that your body will compensate.
- Balance the structure with some flexibility in your holiday eating routine. Knowing that during stressful times it is important to prioritize having a whole food snack on hand keeping your body nourished and functioning optimally (avoiding the blood sugar drop with a stressful situation).
- Be present when eating and moving. In other words, taking a moment to pause and breathe before eating is always a good habit to learn. It sets you up for the experience and allows your body to get into “rest and digest” state to fully absorb the nutrients, digest properly, as well as savoring the experience.



30 DAY

Holiday Challenge

Draw an X on all the days you have completed the challenge. Complete 75% of the challenge and you will be entered into a raffle drawing for a wellness prize. Submit your form by January 4th, 2021. Email epiantoniebhsl.org or fax 413-395-7653

Start your morning with a 30 minutes of activity outside

Write a letter to someone you have not talked to in awhile

Try 5 minutes of slow breathing

Stretch for 15 minutes when you wake up

Write down 2 Health Goals & put them somewhere you will be reminded

Drink 8 glasses of water

Exercise with a partner

Cook a healthy alternative to your favorite holiday dish

Avoid social media 1 hour after you wake up and before bed

Try a Festive Non-Alcoholic Beverage at a Party

Notice What You Feel Grateful For

Practice 10 minutes of meditation

Spread kindness to 3 people today

Donate \$5 to your Favorite Charity

Read a chapter of a book before bed

Take 15 minutes today to just relax

Eat a healthy snack 2 hours before dinner

Write down your best moment of the day

Focus on being more present today

Stretch for 10 minutes before bed

Take a walk during lunch

Eat a small, protein-packed snack before you head to a party

Avoid eating after dinner

Make a homemade gift for someone

Make one of the recipes in this newsletter

Write down your intentions and purpose when you wake up today

Avoid alcohol on the weekend

Do something relaxing on a Friday night

Spend only 1 hour on Social Media

Practice 10 minutes of meditation

Name _____ Email: _____



Butternut Squash Soup

This is quite simply the easiest, most delicious Butternut Squash Soup ever! It'll undoubtedly become a winter favorite for you and your family!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large onion
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2-inch piece of ginger root, peeled and grated
- 1 ½ tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 3 cups diced and roasted butternut squash
- 1 small apple
- 4 cups low sodium vegetable broth or bone broth
- 1 cup milk, almond milk or coconut milk
- Salt, pepper, and hot sauce to taste
- Garnish if desired: roasted chopped cashews or pumpkin seeds, fresh parsley chopped

Directions:

Heat a large soup pot over medium-low heat. Once hot, add the onion, celery, and garlic. Add the dry spices and ginger. If the vegetables begin to stick, add 1 tablespoon of water or vegetable broth at a time, as needed. Cook the vegetables for about 5 minutes, until softened. Add the broth, apple and roasted squash. Simmer for about 15 minutes, until apple is soft. Reduce heat to low. Puree with a food processor or immersion blender. Add your preferred milk until heated (be sure the soup does not come to a boil if using cow's milk). Season to taste. Add desired garnish.



Treat your friends and family with some healthy homemade chocolate this holiday season.

INGREDIENTS:

- ¼ cup melted extra virgin coconut oil
- 3 Tbs pure maple syrup (can use small amount monkfruit instead of maple syrup)
- 1/2 cup raw cacao powder
- ½ tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/8 tsp salt
- Topping suggestions: nuts, seeds, dried fruit: goji berries, banana chips, coconut flakes

Directions:

In a mixing bowl mix together the melted coconut oil, maple syrup, and vanilla extract. Add in cocoa powder and salt, stir until very smooth and all clumps disappear. Pour into desired container (6 muffin cups, silicone muffin cups, spread on baking sheet lined with parchment paper) top with favorite topping. Freeze until solid, about 30 minutes. Store in the freezer or fridge since this chocolate will melt at room temperature.

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WELLNESS INITIATIVES AND BENEFITS

Mindful Eating Challenge

November 16th-December 6th

We tend to live on auto-pilot, always on-the-go, and can become desensitized to our food, meals, and our relationship to both. It's not your fault, we live in a culture that applauds being "on" and connected 24 hours a day, and because of that, our awareness to our bodies, how we truly feel, and our digestion suffers. This Mindful Eating Challenge will help you focus on reconnecting with your body and the food we are blessed to be putting into it.

Maintain Don't Gain

November-January

Give yourself the best gift this holiday season!

Maintain Don't Gain is a six week challenge designed to help you stay healthy during the holidays without the unwanted weight gain. Simply attend your location's weigh-in time before Thanksgiving and again after the New Year. If you cannot attend the weigh-in location, send a picture of you and the number on the scale to Wellness Coordinator, Beth Piantoni @epiantoni@bhs1.org between the week of November 16th-20th and then January 4th-8th. Maintain your weight within 2 lbs. All participants who complete the challenge and maintain their weight within 2 lbs. will be entered into a raffle for some great prizes. Watch for the weigh-in dates and times from your location's wellness champion.

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:
Beth Piantoni, CPT, CHWC, BHG Wellness
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