

SPRING 2020



# NEWSLETTER

## EAT RIGHT FOR AN ARMED IMMUNE SYSTEM

An easy to load weapon for a strong immune system and optimal health lies on your plate. The USDA MyPlate provides a simple nutritious, balanced meal guide packed with essential nutrients your body needs to stay healthy. The health of our immune system is crucial for our survival. Without a strong immune system, our bodies are open to attack from bacteria, viruses, parasites, and other invaders.

The immune system operates as the body's defense against disease and infection, therefore it is responsible for destroying foreign or abnormal invaders in the body. This frontline defense has five primary components. First, the lymphatic system which traps bacteria, viruses and other invaders. These invaders are then destroyed by white blood cells. White blood cells act as soldiers to protect the body from infection. Bone marrow, the soft tissue found within the bones of the arms, legs, vertebrae and the pelvic bones supply the white blood cells. The spleen removes old or damaged cells. Lastly, the tonsils and the thymus supplies antibodies to fight against foreign invaders in the body.

Choosing healthy food choices from MyPlate every day can allow your immune system the ammunition to battle infection and disease. According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), it identifies certain vitamins and minerals such as vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin D, vitamin E, folate, magnesium, selenium, and zinc as playing an important role for the immune system to work properly. These nutrients are also critical for the function of many enzyme reactions. Conveniently, these immune boosting nutrients are found in the USDA MyPlate food groups.

Many of the nutrients for optimal immunity are hidden in plant based food groups, such as the vegetable, fruit and grain groups. Citrus fruits, leafy greens (spinach Brussels sprouts, and kale), bell peppers, strawberries, and papaya are excellent sources of vitamin C. Vitamin E is found in almonds, peanuts, hazelnuts, sunflower seeds, spinach, and broccoli. Folate rich foods are beans, peas, and leafy green vegetables. In addition, fortified foods such as 100 percent whole-grain enriched breads, pastas, and rice contain folate.



Other immune building nutrients are present in both plant and animal based foods groups. Vitamin A is found in carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, cantaloupe, squash and fortified milk. Increase your intake of Vitamin D foods by consuming fatty fish (such as salmon, mackerel, tuna and sardines) and fortified foods such as milk, orange juice, and cereals. Rich sources of magnesium are greens, spinach, nuts, pumpkin seeds, dry beans, 100 percent whole-grain enriched breads, and low-fat dairy products. Selenium is found in garlic, broccoli, sardines, tuna, brazil nuts, and barley. Lastly, zinc is found in oysters, crab, lean meats, poultry, and baked beans.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), other wellness strategies to strengthen your immune system for combat include no smoking, exercise regularly, maintain a healthy weight, get adequate sleep, manage stress, and if you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation (women 1 drink a day, men 2 drinks daily). Remember to stock up on these nutrient rich foods every day to promote a well- functioning immune system. The last sentence should read...For more information on eating right, please print out this handout by Myplate, <https://www.eatright.org/-/media/files/eatrightdocuments/nm/eatrightwithmyplate.pdf>.

## KEEP IT MOVING AT HOME

Get off the couch! Move away from the screen! While it is tempting to use this time to sit and surf, it is good for your physical and mental health to keep moving. Just because you are stuck at home does not mean you should spend hours just sitting around.

Regular exercise is one of the keys of a healthy lifestyle. It unlocks the potential to improve cardiovascular health, lower blood pressure, decrease stress, help control body weight, and protect against a variety of diseases. How to limit your family's sedentary time and increase physical activity consider the following suggestions:

- 1. Identify free times for activity during the week.** Make time to get the whole family moving, not sitting.
- 2. Make a plan to add physical activity to your daily routine.** Be prepared to offer age-appropriate alternatives to TV or video games. Make exercise a regular part of your family's schedule.
- 3. Be active with your kids.** Experts say kids love to spend time having fun with their parents. Create a set of activities for the family to do regardless of weather or circumstance.
- 4. Limit TV, computer, smartphone and video game time.** Don't position your furniture to capture the TV as the main focus of the room. Avoid using any screen time as a reward or punishment.
- 5. Plan TV watching in advance.** Pick the shows for family to watch. Turn on the TV only for those shows and turn it off after the show. Remember to move during the commercials.

- 6. Practice what you preach.** Kids won't accept being restricted to two hours of screen time, if you as a parent watch for more hours. Influence your kids' behavior by being a good role model.

For more ideas on physical activity for the family view the Heart Association's handout on "25 Ways to Get Moving at Home." [https://www2.heart.org/site/DocServer/KHC\\_25\\_Ways\\_to\\_Get\\_Moving\\_at\\_home.pdf](https://www2.heart.org/site/DocServer/KHC_25_Ways_to_Get_Moving_at_home.pdf)



## LESS STRESS IS BEST

When you think of stress what comes to mind? Trying to meet deadlines, missing a flight, or learning a new job? It isn't uncommon for everyone to have moments where they feel overwhelmed and bogged down. Stress is actually a normal occurrence in life, but too much stress can be harmful to your health and cause some serious health issues, if not kept under control or managed. It is how we respond to stress is whether it can help or harm us.



Stress is how our brain and body respond to challenges and demands outside our daily routine. We have two types of stress. Acute stress occurs every once in a while, when there is an event, yet, our bodies and emotions return to normal once event has passed. On the other hand, chronic stress causes the body to remain in the fight or flight mode, always on alert. This type of stress may cause our bodies to ignore the signal of danger leading to problems with our immune system, digestive system, sleep patterns, and even our cardiovascular system.

The following are ways to manage stress and live a more stress-less managed life:

- **Pay attention to your stress.** Know what is normal and what is not.
- **Learn to communicate with your healthcare provider first.** Don't wait until they ask for any changes in your mood or life stressors.
- **Exercise regularly.** Physical activity releases hormones to boost and uplift your mood when feeling down. Aim for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- **Set goals and priorities.** Decide what is important now and what can wait later. This may alleviate anxiety and panic attacks.
- **Develop a support group.** Designate people to lean upon when life gets stressful and full of anxiety. Remember you don't have to go through life alone.

Stress is always a part of our lives, knowing how to handle it will determine if you live a less stressed. Visit the National Institute of Mental Health for a handout to share with others entitled, "Five Things You Should Know About Stress" [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/stress/19-mh-8109-5-things-stress\\_142898.pdf](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/stress/19-mh-8109-5-things-stress_142898.pdf)

## PULSES AS A HEARTY PROTEIN SOURCE

Pulses are a part of a heart healthy diet and lifestyle. They help improve your blood cholesterol, a factor that increases your chance of getting heart disease, if too high. What are these pulses to help a healthy heart beat? They are what we know commonly as beans, lentils, and peas. Pulses are edible seeds that grow in a pod which provide nutritious protein. Protein is a nutrient needed by our body to build and repair tissues, make hormones, and support growth and development.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recognizes 11 types of pulses categories: dry beans, dry broad beans, dry peas, chickpeas, cow peas, pigeon peas, lentils, Bambara beans, vetches, lupins and pulse nes. Commonly, pulses refer to baked beans, red or green lentils, chickpeas or garbanzo beans, northern beans, black-eyed peas, navy beans, broad beans or fava beans,

kidney or chili beans, lima beans, black beans, cannellini beans, field peas, navy beans, and pinto beans to name a few.

Pulses are a hearty protein source from plants that allow a longer feeling of fullness or satiety. Pulses also contain fiber that aid in healthy digestion. However, some pulses are known for their windy effect on



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## LESS WORRY WITH WIC

As the spring season begins, new moms- to- be and present moms wait for the addition of a beautiful baby(s). To add to all the current public health fear is the worry of one or both parents not working presently or being laid off indefinitely. Nevertheless, there is a program working to nourish moms, toddlers, and babies by providing formula and healthy foods to help ease the anxiety.



The USDA Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a federal grant program founded in 1972 to help to protect the health of low-income pregnant women, post-partum women, infants, and children under five years old. Today, it is the third largest food and nutrition assistance program in the nation and serves almost half of the infants born in the United States.

WIC provides nutritious foods consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and USDA MyPlate. Fresh fruits and vegetables, milk, cheese, yogurt, beans or peanut butter, whole grain cereals, and 100% fruit juice are featured WIC items. These foods offer the nutrients needed for growing children, new moms, and breastfeeding moms. Iron-fortified formula is provided to non-breastfeeding infants, as well as baby fruits, vegetables, and cereals given at the appropriate age.

In addition, fully breastfeeding mothers and their infants receive increased food benefits and free use of a personal breast pump, if desired. WIC also provides screening and referrals to other health, welfare, and social services. To be eligible for WIC, you must meet certain income and health requirements, live in Alabama, and see a health professional at the WIC clinic.

To possibly help reduce the burden of buying infant formula and other supplemental foods contact your local county health department to schedule a WIC appointment. Make sure to bring proof of identification, proof of residence, and proof of income to your first appointment. Families who qualify for Medicaid, SNAP benefits, or TANF already meet the income requirement for WIC. To check current income eligibility guidelines go to <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/wic/eligibility.html>.

### ***Pulses as a hearty protein source, continued***

the bowels. Soaking and rinsing dry beans before cooking reduce this response. In addition, rinsing canned beans can help to decrease bloat. Keep in mind, people react differently and may find that symptoms subside, especially if increasing intake gradually.

Pulses have a cost advantage. They are an inexpensive protein source compared to animal protein meat. For example, a pound of lean chicken breasts may cost around \$5 a pound verses a 16 oz. can or a pound of black beans may cost less than a dollar, however, both

## GERM CONTROL: SAFE HANDWASHING

More than two centuries ago, in 1864, a Hungarian physician, Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis became known as the father of infection control. He won this title when he demonstrated that proper and effective hand washing could prevent the spread of disease and infection. Today, it is a safe and valuable practice everyone can do to decrease the spread of bacteria and viruses.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), handwashing helps fight disease and spread of infection because people often unconsciously touch their eyes, nose, and the mouth, and respectfully, germs enter the body through the eyes, nose and mouth. In addition, germs from unwashed hands can be transferred to other surfaces like handrails or door knobs to another person's hands. Handwashing for everyone can help prevent or reduce the spread of skin, eye, and respiratory infections.

In 2018, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported up to 97 percent of the nation wash their hands incorrectly. Baby wipes are not designed to remove germs from your hands, only washing hands with soap and water is recommended according to the CDC. If there is no water source available, an acceptable substitute is an alcohol-base hand sanitizer or gel with 60 percent or greater alcohol.

To effectively use a hand sanitizer, make sure to rub it over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. To know if the sanitizer contains the recommended amount of alcohol look at the product label. Remember to store alcohol sanitizers away from children. Ethyl alcohol or ethanol based hand sanitizer is safe when used as directed. However, it can cause alcohol poisoning if anyone, especially a child swallows more than a couple of mouthfuls.

Let's continue the practice started by Dr. Semmelweis and help promote safe, correct handwashing. Please watch a 2- minute video on handwashing entitled, "What You Need to Know About Handwashing." Also, there are many informative fact sheets and handouts available at the CDC website, [https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/family\\_handwashing-508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/family_handwashing-508.pdf)



sources provide about 24 grams of protein per serving. So, stock up on reduced sodium or salt free canned beans to get more for your dollar.

Add beans to soups, salads, and pasta to create a tasty main meal dish. Toss pulses into sautéed vegetables or mix them with cooked greens or wild, brown rice, or quinoa to make the dish hearty. Tuck beans into whole grain tortillas or pita bread to add protein. For more creative ideas on cooking with pulses. Visit Cooking Light for healthy, heart recipes. <https://www.cookinglight.com/food/recipe-finder/pulse-recipes?slide=134656#134656>

**"In all things, it's better to hope than to despair" - Von Goethe**



The Healthy Wellness Initiative (HWI) staff would like to express our concern for all of our 21st Century Grantees, teachers, students, and their families during this Covid-19 pandemic. The information given in this spring edition is provided to offer resource information, health and safety guidelines during this difficult time. For updates and further information about Covid-19 in our state please visit, <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases/2019-coronavirus.html>.

# NEWS AND EVENTS

## **(APRIL) NATIONAL MINORITY HEALTH MONTH**

The Office of Minority Health (OMH) and the Move Your Way campaign are teaming up to promote the benefits of physical activity! [info@minorityhealth.hhs.gov](mailto:info@minorityhealth.hhs.gov) or [www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov](http://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov)

## **(APRIL) NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH**

The National Child Abuse Prevention month is an opportunity to learn about the signs of child abuse and how to prevent it. Focused on family well-being and protecting children, free from abuse and neglect. [info@childwelfare.gov](mailto:info@childwelfare.gov) or [www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/)

## **(MAY) MENTAL HEALTH MONTH (MHA)**

The MHA is the nation's leading community based non-profit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and to promote the overall mental health of all Americans. [www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may)

## **(MAY) NATIONAL STROKE AWARENESS MONTH**

May is World Stroke Month where health and heart organizations come together to raise awareness about the causes and effects of stroke. One of their biggest campaigns is FAST, teaching the world to know the symptoms of stroke and how to respond quickly to help save a life. <https://nationaldaycalendar.com/national-stroke-awareness-month-may/>

## **SNAP BENEFITS FOR FAMILIES**

On the morning of May 16, 1939, New Yorker Ralston Thayer, a 35-year-old machinist, who had been out of work for nearly a year received \$4 of orange stamps and \$2 of blue stamps for free. He smiled as the orange "food stamps" were used to buy groceries, while blue stamps were used to buy surplus agricultural items such as butter, eggs, prunes, flour, oranges, cornmeal and beans. This pilot food assistance project was initiated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.



This new "food stamps" pilot fed 20 million Americans until it was discontinued in 1943 when World War II eased unemployment and crop surpluses. The Food Stamp Act of 1964 signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson named the new food assistance program, Food Stamps. Today it is known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP eligibility assesses total household income, resources, and size of the household. A household is defined as people living together who purchase and prepare food together.

During the coronavirus emergency, the federal government is making it easier to receive SNAP benefits. Currently, SNAP recipients may receive supplemental funding and enroll in food programs remotely rather than in person. Also, parents can pick up school meals for their kids to eat at home. Check out your child's school or school district website for information on school meals. If you are interested in receiving SNAP benefits for your family contact your county's Department of Human Resources Department (DHR) or go to the USA.gov Food Assistance page, <https://www.usa.gov/food-help>.