

Welcoming Wellness

In Rural Transit

Vol. 1 Issue 4

Full Night's Rest Challenge

October - December 2021 Wellness Challenge

Adults need anywhere between seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Getting good, restful sleep is key to living a healthy lifestyle and maintaining high well-being. According to the [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#), sleep can affect a person's mental health, physical health, quality of life, and safety.

Mental Health

Sleep helps prepare a person for the coming day and can enhance learning and problem-solving skills while also aiding in decision-making, creativity, and increased attention span. Lack of sleep can be attributed to mood swings, impulsivity, anger, depression, or lack of motivation.

Physical Health

Sleep is essential to allow the body to repair itself each day. It helps your immune system fight off infections and can help heal heart and blood vessels. Lack of sleep increases the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and obesity.



Quality of Life & Safety

Sleep helps people function properly throughout the day and remain productive. Lack of sleep slows reaction times and allows for an increased number of mistakes. This can lead to microsleep where a person misses short period of times during their day, like when they drive somewhere, but do not remember part of the trip. Lack of sleep can be a serious safety concern for not only the individual, but for others as well.

Strategies for Improved Sleep

- Going to bed and waking up around the same time every day
- Quiet time away from screens an hour before bed
- Avoiding heavy/large meals a few hours before bed
- Avoiding nicotine and caffeine

Agency Participation

Agencies who wish to participate can email [Carrie](#) by Wednesday, October 13. The challenge will run from October 13 to December 17. Participants will track the number of hours slept each night. Agencies grouped together due to size will be notified.

Issue Highlights

- 2 Coffee Cake & Apple Dip
- 3 "Fad" Diets
- 4 Winter Blues

There are two supplemental documents available on the [Nebraska Public Transit Website](#): a weekly sleep tracking tool for employees and an agency wide tracking tool. Some fitness watches have a sleep tracking feature that participants can utilize. Otherwise, participants can estimate hours slept from when they fell asleep and when they woke up.

At the end of the quarter, participating agencies will be asked to email tracking materials to [Carrie](#). The winning agency and individual will also win a prize!

Healthy Summer Potluck Participant Winner!

Congratulations to Tri Valley Public Transportation for winning the Healthy Summer Potluck! Thank you for participating and sharing your recipes!



October Recipe: Tri Valley's Coffee Cake & Apple Dip

Get your health-conscious sweet tooth on this fall with a Coffee Cake and Apple Dip

Coffee Cake Ingredients:

- 1 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1 1/2 cups sugar or splenda
- 2 eggs slightly beaten

- 1 cup lite sour cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda

- 1/2 cup chopped nuts
- 2 tablespoons sugar/splenda mixed with 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon

Directions:

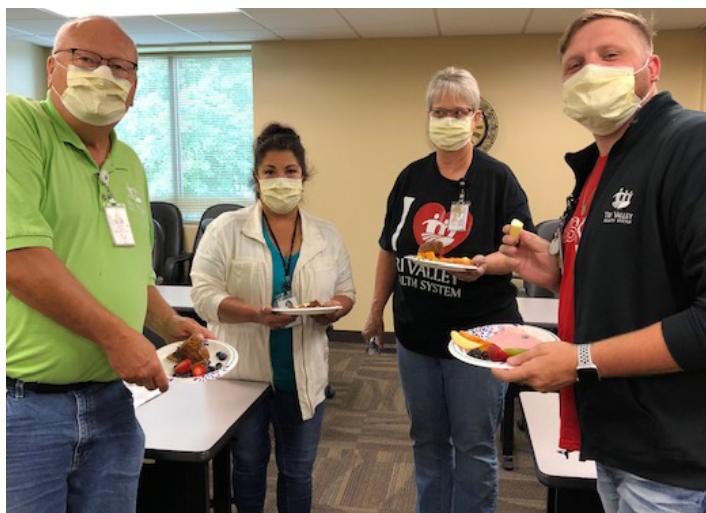
Step 1 – Thoroughly cream together applesauce and sugar

Step 2 – Add eggs, sour cream, and vanilla. Mix well

Step 3 – Blend in flour, baking powder, and baking soda. Mix until smooth

Step 4 – Spoon half of the batter in a well-greased 9-inch angel food cake pan or bundt cake pan. Sprinkle with half of the nuts and half of the cinnamon/sugar mixture. Spoon remaining batter into pan and sprinkle remaining nuts and cinnamon/sugar mix on top

Step 5 - Bake for 50 to 55 minutes at 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Cool 20 minutes then remove from pan



Apple Dip Ingredients:

- 8 strawberries
- 1 cup plain or vanilla Greek yogurt
- 2 Tablespoons honey

Directions:

Step 1 – Grind strawberries in a food processor and add to Greek yogurt. Blend in honey.

Step 2 – Cut up apples or other fruit and enjoy!

Have a Healthy Recipe to Share?

Email it to [Carrie](#) along with photos of you and your agency enjoying the recipe for the chance to be featured in an upcoming issue of Welcoming Wellness!



The Problem with "Fad" Diets

Some popular diets will help cut pounds in the short-term, but most are not long-term sustainable

Many people are lured into the promise of “losing weight fast”. In fact, according to Reid Medical, half of all Americans who diet annually choose a “fad” diet like Atkins, South Beach, or Paleo. Unfortunately, no pills, powders, or specific foods will aid in quick weight loss. These “fad” diets often work in the short-term, but once a user stops the diet, there is a likely chance that weight will be gained back.

“Fad” diets can also have negative effects on the body depending on what it entails. These include nutritional deficiencies, weakness or fatigue, loss of water, loss of lean muscle, and changes in hormonal health and metabolism. Oftentimes, the diet’s restrictions are just unhealthy and unrealistic to maintain as well.

It is important to note, there are medical conditions that do require a strict diet. In those cases, consult with a medical provider.

Changing Food Mentality

Thinking of some foods as “bad” or “cheat” foods is pretty common. Having this sort of mentality about those foods can lead to guilt after consuming them and cause anxiety about eating.

A more sustainable mentality to have is thinking of no food as off limits, while recognizing that some

Spotting a “Fad” Diet

- 1** It sounds too good or easy to be true.
- 2** Promises rapid weight loss (5-10 pounds in a week) or “miracle cures.”
- 3** Allows only certain foods or food groups (cutting out others).
- 4** Promotes a product, special herb, vitamin or other compound.
- 5** Can only be “followed” temporarily but it's not supervised by a doctor.
- 6** It's hard to imagine or difficult to follow the diet forever.
- 7** It doesn't recommend a form of exercise or says that it's unnecessary.
- 8** Warns that one food or food group will make you seriously ill or worse.
- 9** Makes recommendations based on published science that are not endorsed by credible organizations or peer reviewed by other scientists.
- 10** Cites research that is preliminary, based on animals or has very few subjects.

Photo: University of Illinois Extension, all rights reserved

foods are simply healthier than others and those less healthy foods should be eaten in moderation. A few tips to keep in mind according to Better Health Victoria are:

- Eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner
- Eat slower and enjoy your food
- Try to avoid eating when you’re not hungry, or to fill the time
- Eating until you’ve had enough, not until you are full



Managing the Upcoming Winter Blues

Many individuals notice that when the temperatures start to drop, so does their mood



It is not uncommon for people to start to feel more down, lethargic, unsociable, irritable, or depressed during the winter months. The days are shorter, colder, cloudier, and snowier which results in less mood-boosting sunlight and Vitamin D. Everyone is affected differently by the changes in the seasons, and some may even have Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) where the lack of sun upsets the complex chemistry and biological rhythms of the body.

According to Health Scotland and Kaiser Permanente, there are some steps you can take to try and overcome the winter blues. Just remember what works for someone, may not work for another, so it is important for individuals to try different methods and find what is a good fit for them.

1. Keep Active – Light to moderate exercise can work well to combat mild depression symptoms. A good example of a light exercise would be going for a daily walk.
2. Keep Warm – Being too cold can negatively affect one's mood. Try drinking warm drinks, like tea, and wear warmer clothes and shoes. Keep a spare blanket handy too!
3. Get outside when possible – While it may be too cold or overcast to go outside all the time, on brighter days spend some time outside in the sun or set up shop near windows when possible.
4. Eat healthy – Whole grains can boost energy and fruits and deep green or orange vegetables, like broccoli and carrots, can promote better mood and overall health.
5. Seek out friends and family – Socializing has a positive impact on a person's mental health. It can be difficult at times, but make sure to keep in touch with friends and family and accept invitations to social events.
6. Try a new hobby – An active mind can ward off winter blues because it gives a person something to focus on and look forward too.
7. Try Therapy or a Support Group – If you suffer from SAD or intense winter blues to the point where it negatively impacts your day-to-day life, make an appointment with a counselor or therapist, or find a support group. Sometimes the simple act of just honestly expressing how you feel can help a person cope with symptoms.



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