Prairie County Homemakers,

Happy Valentine’s Day! This edition of the Domestic Engineer has your heart in mind. You will find some delicious healthy recipes, nutrition information, and other tips for healthy living.

I am pleased to report that our Extension Winter Series was a success. Thanks to all of you who make the annual Bake Sale and Luncheon possible. What a great event to benefit the community.

Please feel free to stop by the Extension Office if you have any questions or need information. We are happy to help you!

Sincerely,

Sharla Sackman
Prairie County Extension Agent

Bake Sale and Luncheon
- February 8, 2019
- American Legion Hall
- 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
The Critical Role Nutrition Plays in Mental Health
By Darren DeYoung from psychcentral.com

One of the most unrecognized factors in the development of mental health is the role of nutrition. The link between diet and mental health is growing as the field of Nutritional Psychiatry/ Psychology expands. This field is becoming more impactful as epidemics continue to make headlines surrounding the health of our country and world. We know nutrition has substantial physical impacts, but it is the mental impacts of nutrition that are gaining traction with additional research and heightening awareness around this topic.

Proper nutrition is what fuels our bodies and our bodies need a regular supply of fuel. Oxygen is part of that formula and food is another part. If we supply our bodies with a sugar-laden diet, we are filling up on poor fuel. But if we supply our bodies with a healthy diet, we are giving our brains the fuel it needs to affect our cognitive processes and emotions. Similar to a high-end vehicle that uses premium gasoline, our brains function best when it receives premium fuel.

How nutrients help your brain
The fuel we use can make all the difference and directly affects the function of your brain and mood. Eating high-quality foods that contain vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants will nourish the brain in a positive way. Similarly, just like an expensive car, your brain can be damaged if you ingest anything other than premium fuel. A diet high in refined sugars can impair brain functions and worsen the mental health symptoms.

When food interacts with the chemicals in our brains it keeps us going throughout the day. And when we eat a variety of foods, there are a variety of effects on our brain. For example, carbohydrates increase serotonin which is a chemical that has a calming effect. Protein-rich foods affect our brain by increasing alertness. And certain healthy fats that contain omega-3 and omega-6, are linked to reducing rates of depression. Since our bodies cannot produce some of these, it is important that they are included in our diets.

What should I eat?
It is important to avoid the high sugar, processed foods and focus on foods containing the nutrients that benefit brain health. A brain-friendly diet includes fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean protein, and limited amounts of sodium, saturated fat, and sugar. Working these foods into your diet will help protect your brain, fight fatigue, and boost your mood and alertness.

Common brain-friendly foods include:
- Avocados
- Blueberries
- Fish
- Turmeric
- Broccoli
- Dark chocolate
- Eggs
- Almonds

Helping youth understand how nutrition improves mental health
Nutrition and how it affects mental health is especially important during adolescence due to rapid growth and brain development that occurs during the teenage years. At a time when eating patterns are being established, it is also a time when psychiatric illnesses may develop. Although getting young people to eat healthy can be challenging, putting in the effort can improve their mental well-being and instill practices that will benefit them into their adult lives.

Engaging youth in food preparation and limiting their access to high-fat and sugary foods is a start. Keeping plenty of fruits and vegetables stocked at home while encouraging small changes like swapping out soda pop for sparkling water, or fruits instead of potato chips for an afternoon snack, might lead to more healthy choices. It takes a lot of effort to change one’s diet to include healthier food choices, especially for adolescents. But encouraging them to make smart choices can help them build habits that will have a positive impact on their mental health.

What now?
Start by paying attention to how eating different foods can make you feel. Not just how they feel hitting your taste buds, but how they make you feel a few hours later or the next day. Experiment with a healthy diet for three to four weeks. Cut out the processed and sugar-laden foods and replace them with healthy alternatives. See how you feel. If you feel great, you might be onto something. If you feel more alert, are in a better mood, and have more energy, you are definitely onto something. Then slowly introduce foods back into your diet and see how you feel. This will be the “aha moment” when you realize how critical nutrition is for your mental health and truly realize that premium fuel is the best fuel for your brain.
“Mama, a few chocolate chips, please!” my 3-year-old requested. “Did you have a rough day at preschool?” I asked. She gave me a puzzled look and held out her hand. I grabbed a bowl and added some chips. I didn’t want melted chocolate from her hands on the walls. “Don’t share any chocolate with our puppies, though,” I said. The theobromine naturally present in chocolate, especially dark chocolate, can be toxic to pets, particularly dogs. In humans, the compound is linked to chocolate’s reported mood-improving characteristics. I started a trend. Now, whenever we arrive at home, my daughter smiles her most dazzling, dimpled grin and requests chocolate chips.

I’m not sure if her smile is all that sincere, but it usually nets her a half-dozen chocolate chips. She likes dark chocolate the best. At least she’s having the type with some potential health benefits. “We need to buy chocolate stars at the store,” she noted the other day. She’s a savvy preschooler. Chocolate stars are bigger than chips.

Chocolate is a popular treat. On average, we each consume about 10.6 pounds of chocolate yearly, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture food consumption surveys. Chocolate is sometimes touted as a “health food.” The good news: Several studies show some health benefits associated with moderate chocolate consumption.

According to researchers at Cornell University, a cup of hot cocoa may be better for us than some other beverages linked with heart health. The researchers measured the presence of antioxidants, or “phenolic phytochemicals,” in cocoa, green tea and red wine. Antioxidants protect cells and tissues from damage by “free radicals” that roam the body and promote heart disease, cancer and other health problems.

The Cornell researchers reported that cocoa has more antioxidant compounds than either red wine or tea. The researchers recommended enjoying all three beverages at different times of the day.

Researchers in Finland reported some potential heart health benefits of consuming chocolate, too. For three weeks, 45 healthy volunteers consumed about 2.5 ounces daily of white chocolate, dark chocolate or dark chocolate enriched with cocoa polyphenols along with their regular diet. The researchers monitored their blood chemistry.

White chocolate had a negative effect, lowering HDL (“good cholesterol”) levels. Dark chocolate had a positive effect, but dark chocolate enriched with extra cocoa polyphenols had the greatest potential health benefit by raising HDL levels the most.

Enjoy some chocolate, especially dark chocolate, but keep moderation in mind. Remember that chocolate bars are energy dense, with about 240 calories and 13.5 grams of fat per 1.6-ounce bar. Try a few chocolate chips or chocolate kisses. Consider having a cup of antioxidant-rich cocoa with an interesting twist, such as the following recipe from Hershey’s Kitchens at http://www.hersheys.com/recipes/home.asp.

**Cocoa Café Ole**

1/2 c. sugar
1/3 c. cocoa (unsweetened)
3 Tbsp. powdered instant coffee
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
4 c. milk

Combine the sugar, cocoa, instant coffee and cinnamon in a large saucepan. Gradually stir in the milk; heat, stirring occasionally, to serving temperature. Pour into cups and serve immediately. Makes four servings.

A one-cup serving has 180 calories, 35 grams (g) of carbohydrate, 1 g of fat, 1 g of fiber and 105 milligrams of sodium.
See “Red” on Valentine's Day and throughout the year. Red fruits and vegetables contain many health-promoting phytochemicals including lycopene and anthocyanins. This color group may help promote:

- A lower risk of some cancers
- A healthy heart
- Memory health
- Urinary tract health

Red fruits and vegetables include: Tomatoes, spaghetti sauce, pizza sauce, tomato juice, red peppers, red onions, beets, red cabbage, kidney beans, apples, pink grapefruit, red grapes, strawberries, cherries, watermelon, raspberries, cranberries and pomegranates. Some "red" ideas for Valentine's Day (or any day!) include:

- Heart-shaped pizza. Shape pizza dough into a heart. Or, use a heart-shaped cookie cutter to make individual hearts from pizza dough. Spread with your favorite tomato pizza sauce. Add your choice of toppings.
- Pasta with tomato sauce. For added fun, serve heart-shaped pasta — check with stores offering specialty pasta shapes or order some online. Check delivery time if you order online.
- Add a few of those tiny red hot cinnamon heart candies to a popcorn snack
- Tossed salad with such red additions as red bell peppers, cherry or grape tomatoes
- Make a polka-dotted open-faced peanut butter sandwich. Cut bread into a heart shape, spread with peanut butter and dot with dried cranberries. Or, make a smiley face with the dried cranberries. Another idea would be to purchase some heart-shaped crackers, if available at your local store; substitute for the bread.
- Cole slaw made with such red foods as red peppers, red onions, and apples or made with red cabbage
- Cranberry sauce — use that bag of cranberries in your freezer that you bought when they were on sale
- Oatmeal topped with a heart shape, made with dried cranberries or dried cherries
- Raspberry smoothie — Put 3/4 to 1 cup vanilla-flavored yogurt in a blender. Add a few tablespoons of frozen raspberries at a time; blend until desired consistency. After mixing — if desired — blend in 1 or more teaspoons of sugar or no calorie sweetener to taste.
- Pink/red grapefruit half topped with a sprinkle of brown sugar
- Red grapes as a side dish to your sandwich for noontime nibbling
Did you know February is American Heart Month, and not because of Valentine’s Day? Since 1963 Congress has required the president to proclaim February "American Heart Month" to raise awareness about heart disease. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and is a major cause of disability. Your best weapons to fight cardiovascular disease are to know your risks, understand warning signs, and have a healthy diet and lifestyle. Although many associate heart disease with men, it is also the leading cause of death among women. Check out the following tips on how to be heart smart this February.

Tips to Be Heart Smart:

**Know your Risks:** Risk factors commonly associated with heart disease are high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, and secondhand smoke. Learn about your health risks at hearthub.org by taking risk assessments on diabetes, heart attack, and high blood pressure. Remember, knowledge is power, and knowing your risk is the key to keeping yourself healthy. Go to [www.hearthub.org](http://www.hearthub.org), scroll down the page and click on “What’s Your Risk?”

**Warning Signs:** Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, whereas most start slow, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people are not sure what is wrong and wait too long before getting help. Heart attack warning signs can include chest discomfort, discomfort in the upper body, shortness of breath, a cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness. The most common heart attack symptom for men and women is chest pain or discomfort. However, women are somewhat more likely than men to have other common symptoms, especially shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain. Remember that minutes matter and fast action can save lives.

**Bump up the Nutrition:** Aim to eat a diet high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, fat-free and low-fat dairy and limit items that are high in sugar, sodium, and fats. Reading food labels on packages and containers can help you choose healthier products and make comparisons between similar products.

- **Vary your veggies.** Try buying vegetables in season for better flavor and lower cost. Stock up on frozen veggies for quick cooking in the microwave. Watch out for extra sauces or seasonings, which can add fat, calories and sodium, by checking the Nutrition Facts Label.
- **Focus on fruits.** Put fruit where you will see it, such as a bowl on the table, counter, or cut-up in a container in the fridge. Buy fruit in season for better taste and lower cost. Buy fruits in different forms (dried, frozen, canned [in water or juice], and fresh), to increase your options.
- **Choose more whole grains.** Substitute a whole-grain product for a refined one, such as eating whole-wheat bread instead of white or brown rice instead of white. Try brown rice in baked green peppers and whole-wheat macaroni in macaroni and cheese. Use whole wheat or oat flour for up to half of the flour in pancake, waffle, and muffin recipes. Try an unsweetened, whole grain ready-to-eat cereal as croutons in salad or in place of crackers with soup.
Complete these easy tips for a healthier lifestyle!

- **Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy.** Include fat-free or low-fat milk at meals. If you usually drink whole milk, switch gradually to fat-free milk, to lower fat and calories. Have fat-free or low-fat yogurt as a snack, as a dip for fruits and vegetables, or a topping for a baked potato. Top casseroles, soups, stews, or vegetables with shredded low-fat cheese.

- **Go lean with protein.** Start with a lean choice. Examples of lean cuts of beef include round steaks and roasts, top loin, top sirloin, and chuck shoulder and arm roasts. Examples for pork include pork loin, tenderloin, and center loin. Boneless, skinless chicken breasts and turkey cutlets are the leanest poultry choices. Keep your choices lean by trimming away visible fat from meats and poultry and broiling, grilling, roasting, poaching, or boiling meat, poultry, or fish instead of frying.

  **Get Active:** Research shows exercise helps prevent heart disease and obesity, and lowers blood pressure. Aim for 30 to 60 minutes on most days. You can even spread it out over the course of your day. Choose activities you enjoy and can do regularly.

  **Tips to be more active at home.**
  - Join a walking group. Recruit a partner for support.
  - Walk up and down the soccer or softball field sidelines while watching the kids play.
  - Take some laps around your local mall or grocery store.
  - Walk, skate, or cycle more, and drive less.
  - Do stretches, exercises, or pedal a stationary bike while watching television.

  **Tips to be more active at work.**
  - Replace a coffee break with a 10-minute walk.
  - Take part in an exercise program at work.
  - Join the office softball or bowling team.

  **Tips to be more active at play.**
  - Walk, jog, skate, or cycle.
  - Swim or do water aerobics.
  - Take a class in martial arts, dance, or yoga.
  - Golf (pull cart or carry clubs).
  - Play racquetball, tennis, or squash.
  - Play basketball, softball, or soccer.

  **Quit Smoking:** Did you know that cigarette smokers are two to three times more likely to die from coronary heart disease than non-smokers? Don’t waste time when it comes to quitting smoking. Within a few years of quitting, your risk of stroke and coronary artery disease are similar to non-smokers. Visit [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) and [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov) for more information and resources on quitting.

When it comes to changing your habits, there are lots of different ways to make it happen. Experiment and try different methods and find out what works best for you. Go to food.unl.edu for more food, nutrition, and health information.

**Additional Resources:**

1. **Omega-3 and Omega-6 Fatty Acids.** Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids, found in foods, are important to health. Learn how much you need and which foods are the best sources. [http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/sendIt/g2032.pdf](http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/sendIt/g2032.pdf)

2. **How Much Sodium Are You Eating?** Although some sodium is good for the body, Americans typically consume about twice the amount considered healthy. Learn how to reduce sodium intake through food choices. [http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/sendIt/g1974.pdf](http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/sendIt/g1974.pdf)

**Sources:**


**Updated:** January 2012
TO REORGANIZE YOUR REFRIGERATOR, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Remove everything.
2. Throw out food that has spoiled or expired and leftovers more than four days old.
3. Put perishables, such as milk, cheese, yogurt, meat, and eggs, in a cooler.
4. Wash all shelves, drawers, and walls with hot soapy water. Rinse with clean, hot water and let air dry. Replace drawers and shelves once they are dry.
5. Make sure the refrigerator temperature is 40°F or below, so your food is safe to eat.
6. Group similar foods together as you put them back in the refrigerator.
   a. Fruits and vegetables go in the crisper drawers.
   b. Deli meats and cheeses go in the deli drawer.
   c. Raw meats go on a plate on the lowest shelf, so they do not drip onto other foods.
   d. Milk and eggs go in the back of the refrigerator, so they stay coldest.
   e. Leftovers should be labeled with their name and the date and can be grouped together on a shelf. Put the oldest leftovers in the front as a reminder to use them first.
   f. Sauces and condiments go in the door.

How to Organize Your Refrigerator

A well-organized refrigerator can help you save time and money. You save time on preparing meals because you can easily find the foods you need. You save time on making grocery lists because you can easily see what foods are low or gone. You can save money by preventing food spoilage. You save money by preventing food-borne illness and the medical bills that come along with it.
Legal and Financial Resources for Caregivers and Others Concerned About Memory Loss

A packet of resources is available as the result of a recommendation in The Montana’s Alzheimer’s and Dementia State Plan—Addressing the Current and Future Need of Individuals and Families with Alzheimer’s disease and Related Dementias.

Members of the Alzheimer’s Workgroup who developed the plan want to make sure Montanans with memory loss and their caregivers have access to Montana-specific materials about legal and financial alternatives. The Workgroup also wants to provide access to printed materials for Montanans who do not have computers or difficulty accessing Internet services.

Packet Order Form

The order form for the packet is also online: http://msuextension.org/alzheimers/orderpacket.html

Your mailing address (Please print. Thank you)

Name: ____________________________________________ ____________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________ ____________________________________________

Box number Street

City State Zip Code

Please return this form to:

Keri Hayes
MSU Extension Economics
P.O. Box 172800
Bozeman, MT 59717

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