

Family and Community Health "Connections" in Tom Green County



Daily Habits for a Long and Healthy Life

As we get older, it is important to stay on top of our health and practice helpful habits. Since September is recognized as healthy aging month here are some tips to help you live a long and healthful life.

1. **Stay positive!** Surround yourself with positive friends, families and thoughts.
2. **Pick up the phone!** Stay in touch with family and friends, volunteer your time or pick up a new hobby that helps you stay social.
3. **Get moving!** If you haven't already, start a new exercise routine. Anything as simple as walking each day will boost your mood, keep you in shape and offer an handful of healthful benefits.
4. **Call your doctor!** This is a great time to set up your annual check ups, physicals and screenings to stay on top of your health.
5. **Get creative!** Start drawing, painting, knitting or anything that keeps your creative juices flowing.

<https://blogs.bellevue.edu/library/index.php/2020/09/health-aging-month-september-2020/>

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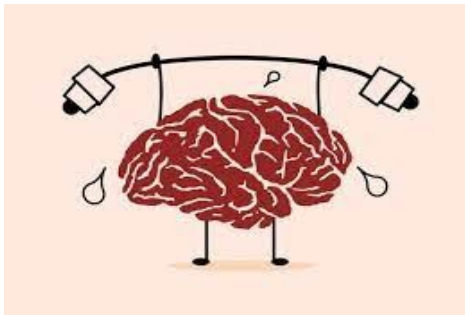
Promoting Healthy Mindsets Within Your Family

A healthy mind helps in all aspects of a person's health. Since healthy habits start at a young age, it is important to promote mental health awareness in your household. Positive mental health makes it easier for kids to build strong relationships with family and friends, be successful in school, learn new things and strengthens critical thinking and problem solving skills. When your child develops poor mental health, it becomes increasingly hard for them to make friends, follow directions, express their feelings and do well in school. When children start to understand their mental health, they are also learning to understand and share their feelings, develop close and healthy relationships, explore, develop patience, focus, and most importantly, ask for help when they need to.

What can you do to help?

Listen. Lending an ear when someone in your family is expressing their feelings can go a long way. It helps promote a comfortable and welcoming environment and encourages your kids to express their feelings and thoughts more often.

Support. Supporting your family looks different in each setting. This might include getting help when you or another family member needs it. Being understanding of each other's struggles and checking in on each other often by having open conversations.



Show Interest. Showing interest in what your child enjoys doing is a great way to build a stronger relationship with them, instills confidence in your child and encourages them to get more involved and try new things they might enjoy.

Source: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>

Get Up & Get Active

Staying active is one of the most important habits you can keep throughout your life. Just 30 minutes of exercise a day helps you control your weight, reduces your risk of heart diseases, helps your body maintain blood sugar and insulin levels, improves your mental health and so much more. Not only that, but it is also a way to sneak some fun family quality time into our hectic and busy lives. Living an active lifestyle does not have to mean running on the treadmill, going to a traditional gym or going on a long and dreadful jog after work. There are so many ways to get active and it looks different for everyone. It is important to find an activity that you enjoy so that you and your family will look forward to everyday.

In the age of social media and online learning, getting off the screens and getting active is crucial for kids and adults. Some fun activities to do as a family include going for a hike, going for a walk around the neighborhood, going swimming when the weather is warm, or even playing sports like volleyball, basketball or frisbee as a family. When the weather is not so nice, it might be best to opt for a small dance party in the living room, a game of hide and seek or even an indoor obstacle course. This is the perfect time to get creative and let your kids have a say in how they want to live their active lifestyles.



Source: <https://medlineplus.gov/>

Conquer Cravings with These Healthy Substitutions

We have all experienced food cravings – and often those cravings have to do with texture – like something creamy or crunchy. Food textures play a big role in whether we like or dislike certain foods. For example, while you may not like mushy canned peas, you may be surprised that you like fresh or barely cooked peas. Luckily, eating healthy includes foods of all sorts of textures and flavors. Here are some suggestions on satisfying your cravings with nutritious snacks of a variety of textures:

Creamy

Instead of this: While ice cream may come to mind first, there are a variety of other smooth snacks that can be just as satisfying.

Try munching on this:

- Fresh avocado spread on whole grain bread OR ½ avocado eaten plain with a spoon
- Warm 1 tablespoon creamy peanut butter in the microwave for 10 seconds and drizzle over ½ cup low-fat, no added sugar frozen yogurt.
- Puree some berries and swirl into a cup of low-fat yogurt with no sugar added.

Crunchy

Instead of this: Pretzels and chips have a crunchy texture that you may crave, but they can come with a lot of extra sodium that you don't need.

Try munching on this:

- ¾ cup whole grain cereal, no added sugar
- Crunchy unsalted nuts
- Whole grain crisp breads
- Plain popcorn; to add some flavor, experiment with various spices like cinnamon or your favorite spice or herb

Liquid

Instead of this: Sweet tea or soda may sound refreshing, but it can take a while to work off all those empty calories. A medium-sized fancy mocha coffee drink with whipped cream can be 400 calories- and that's before adding sugar or honey.

Try sipping on this:

- Plain iced tea made with a squeeze of lemon. You can sweeten with berries or a non-caloric sweetener
- Add fruit slices to a glass and fill with club soda
- Instead of the fancy mocha drink, choose a small latte made with nonfat milk and topped with cinnamon which is about a quarter of the calories.

Squishy

Instead of this: Jelly-like candies or even kids' "fruit" snacks might sound like squishy fun in your mouth, but other options pack more nutrition.

Try munching on this:

- Fresh grapes are sweet and juicy; freeze them for a few minutes for a fun texture
- Make tapioca pudding with squishy tapioca pearls; follow the directions on the box, only use half the amount of sugar or a non-caloric sweetener and fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk
- Cherry tomatoes and room-temperature string cheese are squishy, stringy fun

Source: www.heart.org

Winter Squash and Spinach Lasagna

Ingredients

- 10 oz of frozen spinach
- 3 oz part skim mozzarella cheese, grated
- 4 tbsp. of grated pecorino
- 1/8 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 10 oz of frozen pureed squash
- 8 no-boil lasagna noodles
- 1/2 cup creme fraiche
- 1tbsp of water
- Salt
- Pepper



<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/food-recipes/easy/a46935/winter-squash-and-spinach-lasagna-recipe/>

Directions

1. Heat oven to 425F. In a food processor, puree the cottage cheese and spinach until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and fold in 1/2 cup mozzarella, 2 tablespoons pecorino, nutmeg, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper.
2. Spread 1/2 cup squash on the bottom of an 8-inch square baking dish. Top with 2 noodles and spread a third (about 1/4 cup) of the remaining squash over the top. Dollop with a third (about 3/4 cup) of the cottage cheese mixture; repeat twice.
3. Place the remaining 2 noodles on top. In a small bowl, combine the crème fraiche and water and spread over the top of the noodles. Sprinkle with the remaining 1/4 cup mozzarella and 2 tablespoons pecorino.
4. Cover tightly with an oiled piece of foil (to prevent sticking) and bake for 15 minutes. Uncover and bake until the noodles are tender and the top is golden brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Broil 2 minutes.

Tom Green TEEA News

Veribest EEA Meeting
September 14th at 9:00 a.m.
Hello Breakfast at Dunbar East

Reminder:
Yearly TEEA Dues will be
\$27**

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<https://www.facebook.com/TomGreen-Count-yFCH/>

Family and Community Health "**Connections**" is provided by the following Texas A&M AgriLife Extension *Family and Community Health Agents:*

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