



Sandoval County Senior Program Administration

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CENTER LOCATION

JANUARY 2024

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Hours of Operation:
Monday—Friday 8-5pm

Sponsorship

Funding for this newsletter is provided by
**Sandoval County Commission and
Non Metro New Mexico
Economic Development District
Area Agency on Aging**

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**All Sites individualize their newsletters to their local area
information, activities calendars and games.**

Health & Wellness

Celebrate National Staying Healthy Month throughout January to kick off the new year with a special health-focused celebration. After the partying and festivities of the previous year, this month encourages everyone to focus on overall wellbeing and self-care. The goal was to encourage people to embrace a healthier lifestyle by promoting healthy routines throughout January.

HISTORY OF NATIONAL STAYING HEALTHY MONTH

People have always wanted to know what makes the human body healthy. In the ancient ages, this revolved around spiritual beliefs; the medical and scientific understanding of the body came much later. The ancient Egyptians believed that headaches were caused by demons, while the ancient Greeks believed that people who were sick needed to satisfy the gods by making pilgrimages to sacred sanctuaries.

This all changed around the 5th century B.C.E. when Hippocrates developed his concepts of medicine. The 'Father of Modern Medicine' as he was called, first documented the concept of bodily health as we know it.

Gradually, as the world learned more about themselves and their environment, humanity's understanding of health developed too. The ancient Romans made amazing innovations (for that period) in sanitation and public health. Ancient Indians routinely performed procedures for tumor removal and cataract removal, and much later, throughout the Middle Ages, the Muslim Empire and the Church played a role in the growth of medicine.

New innovations came about, such as vaccinations, surgical procedures, and with it, more knowledge about what the body needed to function. By the 18th and 19th centuries, people began figuring foods and other items to eat (and avoid) to prevent illnesses. Mental wellbeing also began to be explored, and mental impairments were no longer considered signs of otherworldly influences.

Today, health is viewed as a holistic ecosystem of the mind, body, and spirit. People seek balance, and this is the knowledge that National Staying Healthy Month strives to instill in everyone.

The health benefits of a balanced lifestyle

All these areas of our lives are interrelated, meaning that neglecting one of them can have a negative impact on other aspects too.

For instance, if we prioritize our career over our family and friends, we may also experience higher levels of stress that can impact our physical health and fitness.

Health & Wellness continued

A meta-analysis of the impact of long working hours on employee health found that employees working long hours were more vulnerable to multiple health conditions, including fatigue, sleep problems, and workplace injuries.

Strong relationships with family and friends can also have significant benefits for our health, and neglecting this area of our life carries major health risks. Julianne Holt-Lunstad, PhD, a Professor of Psychology at Brigham Young University, has found that “Lacking social connection carries a risk that is comparable, and in many cases, exceeds that of other well-accepted risk factors, including smoking up to 15 cigarettes per day, obesity, physical inactivity, and air pollution.”

Equally, carving out time for a more “spiritual” practice, such as meditation or prayer, has been shown to reduce stress and boost the immune system. Finally, making time for rest can have dramatic benefits for everything from your physical health to your work performance. For instance, Harvard Medical School reports that people who get eight hours of sleep every night are less likely to become obese, develop Type 2 diabetes, or suffer from hypertension.



4 quick tips to create a more balanced lifestyle

It can be challenging to find a healthy balance between all the aspects of your life that are important to you. However, there are some simple steps you can take to regain control over your time and create a more balanced lifestyle:

1. Set limits.

The Mayo Clinic warns that “If you don’t set limits, work can leave you with no time for the relationships and activities you enjoy.” Their advice? Learn to say no confidently, and avoid overscheduling your time. Seek guidance from your work manager on what is expected from you, and then develop strict boundaries around work time and family or social time.

2. Build a healthy daily routine.

Northwestern Medicine advises that setting up a daily routine that includes exercise, rest, and relaxation can reduce your stress levels, improve your work-life balance, and improve your sleep and your overall well-being.

Health & Wellness continued

3. Take your sleep seriously.

To make sure you get regular, high-quality rest, practice good sleep hygiene. Stick to a consistent bedtime and get up at the same time every day. Remove electronic devices from your bedroom, and make sure that the room is dark and comfortable. Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

4. Make time for your hobbies.

Research shows that people with hobbies are less likely to suffer from stress and depression. Schedule time every week for the activities that make you happy. Building a balanced lifestyle can be tricky but even the busiest among us can bring more balance into their lives with these simple steps. A more balanced lifestyle can improve your quality of life, your mood, and your overall physical and mental health.

Nutrition

IMPORTANCE OF BALANCED DIET IN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

The importance of a balanced diet can't be emphasized enough for a healthy lifestyle. A healthy lifestyle can be attained by maintaining a balanced diet and keeping into consideration to meet all the essential nutrients required by the body. A proper meal plan helps to attain ideal body weight and reduce the risk of chronic diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular and other types of cancer.

What is a balanced diet?

But what exactly is a balanced diet? In simple words, it's a diet that offers the nutrients to help your body function properly. The importance of diet lies in the intake of the right amount of calories. Your body gets the right nutrition when you consume a wide variety of food rich in calories such as fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and proteins.

Calories

Calories are an indicator of the energy content in the food. Once you intake the food, the calories are consumed when you walk, think, or breathe. On average, a person may require about 2000 calories a day to maintain their body weight. Generally, a person's calories may depend on their gender, age, and physical activity. Moreover, men need more calories than women. Again, people who are more into exercising require more calories in comparison to people who don't. It's also important to remember that the source of calories is equally important as the amount. Stuffing your food with empty calories, i.e. those that don't contain any nutritional value doesn't help in any way. Empty calories can be found in foods such as:

Nutrition continued

Sugar	Butter	Cookies
Cakes	Energy drinks	Ice cream Pizza

Importance of a Balanced Diet

Eating a healthy diet is all about feeling great, having more energy, improving your health, and boosting your mood. Good nutrition, physical activity, and healthy body weight are essential parts of a person's overall health and well-being.

There's no questioning the importance of healthy food in your life. Unless you maintain a proper diet for a healthy body, you may be prone to diseases, infection, or even exhaustion. The importance of nutritious food for children especially needs to be highlighted since otherwise they may end up being prone to several growth and developmental problems. Some of the most common health problems that arise from lack of a balanced diet are heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes.

Being physically active manages many health problems and improves mental health by reducing stress, depression, and pain. Regular exercise helps to prevent metabolic syndrome, stroke, high blood pressure, arthritis, and anxiety.

What falls under a balanced diet?

A balanced diet includes some specific healthy food groups under it:

Vegetables such as leafy greens, starchy vegetables, legumes like beans and peas, red and orange vegetables, and others like eggplant

Fruits that include whole fruits, fresh or frozen fruits but not canned ones dipped in syrup

Grains such as whole grains and refined grains. For example, quinoa, oats, brown rice, barley, and buckwheat

Protein such as lean beef and pork, chicken, fish, beans, peas, and legumes

Dairy products such as low-fat milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, and soy milk

A wide variety for the selection of food choices should be from each of five food groups in the specific amounts recommended. These food sources from each food group provide a similar amount of key micro and macro-nutrients to meet the body requirements.

A balanced diet typically contains 50 to 60 percent carbohydrates, 12 to 20 percent protein, and 30 percent fat. All the organs and tissues need proper nutrition to work effectively by consuming the right amount of nutrients and calories to maintain an ideal weight. The overall health and well-being of a person are dependent on good nutrition, physical exercise, and healthy body weight.

Nutrition continued

A proper meal pattern is a complete combination of food ingredients, food items and quantities required for breakfast, lunch, snack, and dinner for each specific age group. All you need is protein for your muscle mass and blood cells which brings oxygen and nutrients to your muscles.

The body requires quality carbohydrates, lean protein, essential fats and fluids accompanied by regular exercise in maintaining physical health and well-being.

These are effective in preventing excess weight gain or in maintaining weight loss but healthier lifestyles are also associated with improved sleep and mood. Physical activity particularly improves brain-related function and outcomes.

As with physical activity, making small changes in your diet can go a long way to attain the ideal body weight. Consuming the right kind of carbohydrates is important. Many people rely on the simple carbs found in sweets and processed foods.

Fruits and vegetables are rich sources of natural fiber, vitamins, minerals, and other compounds that your body needs to function properly. They're also low in calories and fat. Unsaturated fats may help reduce inflammation and provide calories.

The importance of a healthy lifestyle

It's not just a balanced diet that's enough but also healthy practices of eating. Some of them which you can follow are:

Eat-in smaller portions – You can do this by eating in small bowls to trick your brain into thinking it to be larger portions.

Take time to eat – Not rushing your meals in between other work but taking the time to nourish your meals can send signals to your brain that you've had enough food necessary for functioning.

Cut down on snacks – Unhealthy snacks are a strict no as they hamper your hunger. Switching to healthy bite-sized food can help.

Curb emotional eating – Binge eating can be extremely harmful. Using it to relieve yourself from stress, sadness, or anxiety may affect your health. Instead, you can use healthier alternatives to beat negative emotions.



Staying Active

The Science of Exercise and Mental Health

Recent research, as outlined in Forbes, has highlighted the undeniable connection between exercise and mental well-being. Engaging in regular physical activity releases endorphins, the body's natural mood elevators. This chemical reaction has a significant impact on reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. The link between exercise and mental health is further supported by a study published in the journal Applied Research in Quality of Life, which reveals that individuals who engage in physical activities experience higher life satisfaction and overall well-being. In essence, exercise is nature's prescription for a happier, healthier life.

Exercise: Not Just for Athletes

For many, the idea of incorporating exercise into an already hectic lifestyle can be overwhelming. The good news is that exercise is not the exclusive domain of athletes and fitness enthusiasts. Anyone, regardless of their athletic background, can harness the mental health benefits of exercise without embarking on a radical transformation.

Getting Started: Tips and Tricks

Starting a regular exercise routine doesn't require a complete lifestyle overhaul. Here are some tips and tricks for individuals looking to introduce exercise into their daily lives:

Set Realistic Goals: Begin with achievable goals. Rather than aiming for intense, hour-long workouts, focus on setting aside 15-30 minutes a few times a week. Gradually increase the duration and intensity as you become more comfortable.

Choose Enjoyable Activities: The exercise regimen should be enjoyable, not a chore. Whether it's a leisurely walk in the park, dancing, swimming, or a fun group class, pick activities you look forward to.

Incorporate It into Your Routine: Embed exercise into your daily life. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, walk or bike to work if possible, or engage in mini-workouts during breaks.

Find an Exercise Buddy: Partnering with a friend or family member can make the experience more enjoyable and provide motivation.

Use Technology: Fitness apps, wearables, and online workouts can help you stay motivated and track your progress.

Prioritize Consistency: Consistency is key to reaping the mental health benefits of exercise. Stick to your routine, even on days when you don't feel like it, as this is when exercise often has the most significant impact on your mood.

Experiment and Explore: Don't be afraid to experiment with different activities until you find what resonates with you. Variety can keep exercise interesting and engaging.

Volunteer



Investing in Community Solutions to Address Today's Challenges

As an RSVP or Senior Companion Volunteer, each of you are part of a national movement in volunteering. Our overarching organization, AmeriCorps, continues to evolve and advance service solutions to address the most pressing national and local challenges for our communities. As we celebrate **AmeriCorps 30th anniversary year**, here are some updates on what AmeriCorps is doing and what you are a part of as an AmeriCorps volunteer.

- AmeriCorps continues to be an essential nonprofit and community partner that invests in programs to help improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through national service and volunteering.
 - ◊ In 2023, AmeriCorps invested more than \$960 million in federal funding to address the nation's most pressing challenges, including climate change, learning loss, disaster recovery, creating healthy futures for seniors and more.
- AmeriCorps funding empowers State Service Commissions, nonprofit organizations, community, faith-based, tribal, state and local governments, and education institutions to deliver services unique to local communities and individuals.
- AmeriCorps continues to spearhead service and volunteering efforts across the nation through National Days of Service and awards to inspire more to serve.
 - ◊ AmeriCorps has led the September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance with 911Day.org since Congress' designation in 2009.
- AmeriCorps was created as a government corporation that invests limited federal dollars to leverage substantial private investment to improve lives and communities. This model enables us to build strong public-private partnerships and relationships with businesses, foundations, and other partners to:
 - ◊ Leverage federal dollars in partnership with communities and philanthropy to stretch the federal investment and increase community impact.
 - ◊ Fund innovative solutions to community challenges through service.
 - ◊ Provide support and capacity for nonprofits.

Sandoval County is proud to be part of the celebration of over 1.25 Million AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers that are supporting recovery efforts after devastating disasters, helping create the September 11 Day of Remembrance and Service and doing so many things that make a difference in

Volunteer continued

The past 3 decades show how ***AmeriCorps is not just a moment in our history but a movement*** to bring out the best of America. Thank each of you for being a part of the movement to make Sandoval County a great place to live!



BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Gina Aragon

Polly Benavides

Irma Gonzales

Bessie Gonzales

Janice Grann

Marta Hanley

Georgianna Heise

Marion Lustig

Lisa Massey

Cindy Mullen

Patrcia Smith

Joan Thomson

Christine Lenore Walker

