

QUARTERLY HEALTH HUB



JANUARY - MARCH 2020

NEW YEAR, NEW HEALTHY HABITS

New year, new goals? A new year can signify a fresh start, but healthy goal-setting can be a challenge. Often when we set a goal, it's initially lofty or unattainable because we are shooting for the stars (i.e., going to the gym six days a week or getting eight hours of sleep every night). Goals that we make may start strong, but by February, it's easy to feel there is little hope of sustaining motivation through the end of the year.

Rather than focusing on 2020 goals, let's try to focus on 2020 healthy habits. The idea behind healthy habits is that you evaluate where you are now and determine the small steps that will make daily habits part of your long-term lifestyle. In doing so, these habits become sustainable. Let's go back to the example of sleeping eight hours per night: What if you are currently only sleeping five hours per night? Jumping up to eight hours right away may not be realistic, however, beginning to increase your nightly sleep by 15 to 20 minutes over time will successfully help you achieve your goal of eight hours total.



Looking for how you can be successful? Begin with these three steps: Firstly, make goals small enough that you can achieve them daily. This is how habits are formed. Instead of getting down on yourself when this small goal is missed, consider it an opportunity to reset the next day. Secondly, surround yourself with supportive people to maintain momentum. Finally, always remember to celebrate your successes!

Welcome to Empower Health Services' Quarterly Newsletter!

At EHS, we care about the health and wellness of you and your family. Each of our *Health Hub* newsletters is designed to share attainable ways to maintain healthy habits and improve your overall quality of life. Our January issue kicks off the new year with tips for balancing your diet, understanding heart health, and achieving your 2020 goals all year round.

HEALTHY HABITS: HEALTHY HEART

1. Nutrition - Eat healthier by including more fruits & vegetables in your diet, while limiting intake of salt, saturated fats and added sugars

2. Exercise - Aim for at least 150 minutes of exercise weekly

3. Quit Smoking – The benefits of stopping this unhealthy habit can be found within minutes of quitting

4. Know Your Family History – Understand the results of your annual wellness screening and speak with your doctor about your family's medical history

5. Alcohol – If you do drink alcohol, drink in moderation

6. Prescriptions - Take regular medications as prescribed

GO RED FOR HEART HEALTH

February is Heart Health Month. The three major risk factors for heart disease include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that “heart disease is the #1 cause of death in the United States.” However, it does not have to be this way! There are preventive habits that you can continue or implement into your lifestyle to lower your risk for heart disease.



Get Your Numbers: Participate in an annual wellness screening and review results with your doctor.

Own Your Lifestyle: Stop smoking, maintain a healthy weight, eat well and pursue an active lifestyle.

Realize Your Risk: Understand your current health status and where you may need to make lifestyle modifications.

Educate Your Family: Discuss how you, your friends and your family can make healthier choices together -- accountability is key!

Don't Be Silent: Help spread education and awareness on the importance of keeping your heart healthy.

EAT REAL FOOD

March is National Nutrition Month®, which reminds us to be mindful of what we consume and educates us on how to make informed nutritional decisions. Eating well can help reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, and other conditions. Rather than giving up the foods you love and “dieting”, follow these tips to help balance your meals and begin sustainable healthy eating:

Include:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains
- Beans and legumes
- Nuts and seeds
- Fish (oily fish with omega-3 fatty acids)
- Skinless, lean poultry and lean animal proteins
- Plant-based proteins



Try to Limit:

- Sweetened drinks
- Salty foods
- Saturated fats
- Fatty or processed red meats
- Full-fat dairy products

Avoid When Possible:

- Trans fat and partially hydrogenated oils – typically found in commercially baked and fried foods.

Put These Tips to Practice:

- *Watch your calories*- To maintain a healthy weight, it is important to eat only as many calories as you burn through physical activity. Looking to lose weight? Take in fewer calories or burn more calories!
- *Cook your meals at home* – You are then in control of how you prepare your food, the ingredients you include, and the portions that are served.
- *Focus on nutrition labels* – Aim for items with the lowest amounts of sodium.
- *Control your portions* – Rather than eliminating foods you enjoy, try simply to moderate as this is more sustainable than restricting yourself completely.

RECIPE HUB



Take-a-Break Snack Mix

Ingredients (Servings: 10)

- Non-stick cooking spray
- 1/4 cup sliced, unsalted, unoiled almonds
- 1 tbsp. light brown sugar
- 2 tsp. water
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 2 cups whole-grain oat cereal with yogurt-flavored coating
- 2 cups whole-grain wheat and bran flakes with raisins
- 1/2 cup unsweetened, dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup unsweetened, dried blueberries

Directions

1. Put a piece of aluminum foil about 12 inches square on a platter or baking sheet. Lightly spray with cooking spray. Set aside.
2. In a small non-stick skillet, dry-roast the almonds over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes, or until lightly golden brown, stirring occasionally.
3. Stir in the brown sugar, water, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes, or until the liquid has evaporated and the almonds are coated with the mixture, stirring constantly. Transfer to the foil. Let cool completely for 15 to 20 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, stir together the remaining ingredients.
5. Add the cooled almonds to the cereal mixture, stirring to combine. Store in an airtight container for up to 7 days.

Learn more with our monthly *Healthy Habits* email!

Be on the lookout for our monthly email series covering topics ranging from physical and mental health to emotional well-being.

Looking for additional resources?

Log into empowerhealthservices.info for a variety of E-Learning lessons and online health tools available to you throughout the year!

Have a question?

Contact Empower Health Services at (866) 367-6974 or support@empowerhealthservices.com. Always consult with your physician before beginning any wellness program. Please note that this information is not intended to replace your healthcare professional.

Sources: American Heart Association, National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease and Prevention (CDC)

About the Author

Kayla Roeske CHES, CWS is a health educator who enjoys using her passion to make an impact in the workplace wellness space. With over eight years in the field, Kayla's specialties are in designing workplace wellness programs and interacting in the workplace to provide education on how to create and sustain a healthy lifestyle. Kayla's goal for the EHS *Health Hub* newsletter and *Healthy Habits* series is to provide meaningful education and guidance that will enhance the reader's overall well-being.