

Fight the Flu and Covid

E I N S T A Y A C T I V E H D A B
S M O U Z D F X O E S Y G Q R X H
S J O B T I I N C D A U F O I A P
E N S H W R Q S N I O I T L N E L
R I I I Y H I A I C A C Q D K E E
T U K M Q A H T R N O J S Y F T N
S U G I A H T U I D F A P E L A T
E O Y M S T O S R O N E N X U N Y
G C T A R Y I U K I U W C Y I I O
A O W H R E O V T C P S D T D C F
N A U E G Y M I E K I F D L S C R
A P V U E P Z D N K O S B I H A E
M O O E N E L W K A A K F T E V S
C K S F R J S G X W F T Q I I T T
S T I B A H Y H T L A E H D J I X
C O V E R Y O U R S N E E Z E F F
M A S K U P W H E N N E E D E D U

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|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Cover Your Cough | Hand Sanitizer | Mask Up When Needed | Stay Active |
| Cover Your Sneeze | Healthy Habits | Nutritious Diet | Take Vitamins |
| Disinfect | If Sick Stay Home | Plenty of Rest | Vaccinate |
| Drink Fluids | Manage Stress | See Your Doctor | Wash Hands |

January Jests

When I ask for directions, please don't use words like "North."

Swarms of flying insects threaten town! Police deploy SWAT team!

I believe in the hereafter.

When I enter a room, I have to remember what I'm here after.

The hardest thing about learning to ride a horse is the ground.

Last year I joined a support group for antisocial people.
We haven't met yet.

"Some people try to turn back their odometers.
Not me, I want people to know "why" I look this way.
I've traveled a long way and some
of the roads weren't paved."

— Will Rogers



Did you know?

Aging Resources provides free nutrition counseling with a registered dietitian. To learn more, call: Carol Schmidt, Nutrition Services Director, at (515) 633-9518.

This Month in History



January 1, 1892

Ellis Island in New York Harbor opened. Seventeen-year-old Annie Moore, from County Cork, Ireland was the first immigrant to be processed at the new federal immigration depot. Over 20 million new arrivals to America were processed until its closing in 1954.

January 28, 1915

The U.S. Coast Guard was founded.



January 17, 1927

The Harlem Globetrotters played their first game.



January 19, 1946

Singer Dolly Parton was born.



January 12, 1966

The Batman TV series debuted.



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NUTRITION NEWS
January 2024

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Happy New Year!

Beat the Winter Blues

Aerosmith's Steven Tyler said, "My get up and go must've got up and went" During the winter months, many of us are left feeling less motivated. The National Institute of Health says that common so-called "winter blues" are marked by feeling more down than usual, sad, less energized, or less interested in activities one usually enjoys. Estimates suggest anywhere from 10 to 20 percent of American adults experience such seasonal mood changes at some level. If you find yourself feeling down, sluggish, or not quite yourself during the winter, beat the winter blues with a few simple activities in your daily routine.

Balance Your Diet

It is tempting to eat all the heavy, high-carb, comfort foods during the winter, but it is important to maintain a balanced diet, rich in vitamins, to help ward off the winter blues. Studies show a strong connection between diet and mental health, particularly if you are prone to depression. Try adding serotonin-boosting foods to help lift your mood, including salmon, poultry, eggs, spinach, seeds, and nuts. Be sure to eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins, as well as carbohydrates, such as whole grain breads and pastas, which are needed to help your body create serotonin.

Snacking on nutrient rich foods throughout the day will keep energy levels stable and your mood and your brain functioning. Keep your freezer stocked with frozen fruits and

vegetables during months when fresher produce is harder to find and more expensive.

Get Outside

Getting outside for your daily dose of sunlight during the winter months could do your body and mind some good. Sunlight elevates our mood by boosting our serotonin levels, making you calmer but more alert. The more Sun you get during the day, the more melatonin you produce at night, improving sleep, synchronizing your bodily clock, and reducing stress. Research also shows that spending time outdoors reduces stress, inspires creativity, and improves overall mood. Sunlight plays a significant role in regulating our mood and sleep-wake cycles. Get outside for your daily dose of sunlight and Vitamin D.

Start a Gratitude Journal

It is normal for our brains to focus on the negative things, so reversing your thoughts and focusing on the positive can change your mood. Studies show that focusing on the positive and feeling grateful can improve your sleep quality and reduce feelings of anxiety and depression. Try keeping a daily journal of things you are grateful for—you can simply list a few things before you begin your day or before you fall asleep each night.

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Beat the Winter Blues

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Move Your Body

While winter has us craving for the couch and cozy blanket, movement is important year-round. Engaging in regular physical activity releases endorphins, which are natural mood enhancers and are known to alleviate depression. Even short walks outdoors, getting in some sunlight can significantly improve your mood and help you beat the winter blues!

Practice Hygge

If you’ve got the winter blues, a dose of hygge in your life may ease the chill of the season. Hygge (pronounced “hoo-geh”) is a Danish concept of taking pleasure in everyday things, simplifying life, and creating coziness in the home. The word derives from an old Norwegian term, hugga, meaning “to comfort” or “to console,” and while there is no literal translation in English (the closest is “hug”), it’s a mindset that has helped sustain the people of Denmark through long, chilly winters — Danes rank as one of the happiest people on the planet. The Danes embrace winter as a time to slow down, enjoy being at home, and spend time inside with friends and family. It is an attitude and approach to living that prioritizes togetherness, slow-living, coziness, and gratitude.

Stay Hydrated

Proper hydration helps combat fatigue and keeps your body functioning optimally, allowing you to beat the winter blues. Proper hydration, regardless of the season, is vital in keeping your energy levels up, your brain functioning, curbing overeating, and regulating mood. Add drinking water to part of your daily routine, carry around a bottle, eat fruits and vegetables high in water content, such as cucumbers, celery, watermelon, strawberries, and spinach, drink a glass of water half hour before and after each meal, helping your feel fuller and improve digestion.

Not a fan of plain water? Spruce up your water with a squeeze of a lemon or lime or add citrus slices, berries, mint, pomegranate, or cucumber slices.

Spend Time with Friends & Loved Ones

Staying social is important for our health and well-being. Being surrounded by good friends and family creates a support system to help you make the most of the winter months. Socializing can boost your mood and create a sense of belonging and support during the winter months.

Establish A Regular Sleep Pattern

Researchers have found a link between sleep and depression. This is particularly important when the winter blues come creeping in. Aim to get seven to eight hours of quality sleep each night to feel refreshed. Too much sleep is common in the winter when the sunlight and temperatures decrease and can have adverse effects. Lengthy napping can also negatively impact your nightly sleep cycle, worsening your winter blues.

Listen To Music

Listening to music and uplifting songs causes the brain to release dopamine, a feel-good chemical. If you feel those winter blues rolling in, turn on your favorite tunes.

Unplug

While technology brings so much to our life, it is beneficial to unplug from time to time, allowing time to reconnect to ourselves. Experts suggest that periodic breaks from your phone and technology and temporarily unplugging from the busyness of life can help recharge your batteries and benefit your well-being. If you’re bored this winter, try allowing your mind to wander and think, rather than pulling out your phone—this has been shown to improve creativity and problem-solving. If you’re struggling with the winter blues, try reducing your screen time, including social media. Unplug from all electronics at least one hour before bedtime to improve your quality of rest.

Make A Winter Bucket List

There are so many fun things to do throughout the winter if you really look. Make a list of activities you want to do: read a book you have been putting off, finish a puzzle, organize your photos, or even pick up a new hobby. Winter is a great time to learn new skills that you have been putting off: learning how to play an instrument, learn a new language, how to knit, or pick up a new indoor sport, such as pickleball or indoor tennis.

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Volunteer

When you find a balance of helping others and taking care of yourself, you will feel better mentally. Using your extra free time to volunteer can bring immense satisfaction and can be a gateway to a healthier mental and emotional space. Research has shown that it leads to lower rates of depression and gives people a sense of purpose.

Check out an animal shelter, help at your local school or church, collect things for those in need, volunteer at a local food bank, library or your congregate meal site.

Get Cleaning

There is something about a clean, tidy house that makes you feel happy. Studies show that cleaning and decluttering living and workspaces can have a profound impact on stress levels and mood. People with clean and organized homes tend to be happier, more productive, less stressed, and even get better sleep. A dirty and cluttered house may increase cortisol levels and reduce focus, putting unnecessary stress on us.

Laugh Out Loud

Author Victor Hugo once said, “Laughter is the Sun that drives winter away from the human face.” Experts believe that laughter can stimulate processes in your brain that counter depressive symptoms, decreasing stress hormones and lighten your mood. Put together your winter movie list with some laugh out loud comedies, spend time with friends, grandkids and loved ones who put a smile on your face.

A Final Thought

If you believe you are feeling more than a little blue and your mood is affecting your ability to live, you could be experiencing Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a major depressive disorder with a seasonal pattern. You may benefit from speaking to your health care provider.

SOURCE: FARMERSALMANAC.COM



Credit Card and Fraudulent Gift Scam

As the holiday season comes to an end and the frenzy of gift buying, exchanging and returning slowly dissipates, finding time to review bank and card statements can help protect you and your loved ones from fraudulent purchases by scammers. It is always good practice to review credit card and bank activity for unauthorized activity, but even more so after the busy holiday season. Cross checking gift receipts and online purchases, even contacting your credit card company to verify charges, can help you detect fraudulent activity and pinpoint when and where the activity occurred. Along with checking bank activity, being skeptical of any cold calls regarding your credit or debit card can also help protect you from scams. If you receive a call that asks you to verify or give your personal information – hang up! It is good practice to never give out this information over the phone. To ensure you are speaking to a legitimate business, hang up and make a call to your bank or credit union. If you have questions or need help disputing credit card charges, please contact Aging Resources at (515) 255-1310 and ask to speak to an Elder Rights Specialist.

Stay safe by following these 3 rules:

1. Don't share any personal or account information over the phone.
2. Use multi-factor authentication when available to protect your accounts.
3. Regularly check your account for any unauthorized activity.

If you do find yourself a victim of a scam, don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help. Call Aging Resources at (515) 255-1310 and ask to speak to an Elder Rights Specialist.

