



# Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc.

## Health and Wellness

### News

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## Purposeful Breaks Improve Health & Productivity

Many people work for hours at a time sitting at a desk. Prolonged sitting has been shown to increase one's chances of high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and excess abdominal fat – a trio of conditions called metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome puts one at higher risk of type 2 diabetes, heart attack, and stroke. Some studies have even shown that sitting for 8 hours a day with no physical activity creates a risk of dying that is similar to smoking and obesity. What's worse is that it also appears that hitting the gym after work doesn't entirely negate the effects of all that prolonged sitting during the day.

Other research has shown that people may be more productive while working, studying, or doing other cognitive tasks if they take breaks. No matter how engaged we feel we are with a task, our brains eventually tire, and then we begin to be more prone to distractions. Most people are most productive and focused in the morning, and that focus tends to decrease as the day goes on. A study of Facebook users showed that posts gradually increase from about 9am to noon, then there is a small dip while people eat lunch. Then posts continue to increase until about 3pm, which happens to coincide with the time in the afternoon when people are at their most fatigued. Another drawback to just plodding along through fatigue is that we tend to get "lost in the weeds" or "go down rabbit holes." In other words, we lose sight of the overall goal of what we are working on and get sidetracked by the minutia. Taking breaks helps us come back to the task refreshed, with new eyes, and a renewed sense of purpose for what we are trying to achieve.

Breaks, anywhere from 5 to 60 minutes in duration, can help increase energy, productivity, and ability to focus. However, the key is to have "purposeful" breaks. In other words, the break should give you time away from the task to move, laugh, zone out, or be creative. Scrolling through social media does not count. Meditation, tidying up your workspace, listening to music, calling a friend, or getting a

snack are all good options. If you are feeling particularly overwhelmed, keeping a list of chores, errands or other non-work-related tasks to do during these breaks can help alleviate some anxiety and make it feel like time well-spent.

You can combine these two concepts – breaks for health and productivity – by taking

ing breaks that involve physical activity, even if it is not terribly strenuous. A recent study showed that even 5 minutes of walking at a slow speed every half hour can help alleviate some of the risks associated with prolonged sitting. So, get up and make a cup of tea or walk to a colleague's office instead of picking up the phone. Plan periodic breaks checking the mail, going to the copy machine, or visiting the restroom. Stretches or simple exercises at your desk every half hour can also get your muscles contracting and your heart rate elevated.

Taking a walk, especially in nature, can be very restorative and help reset your mindset. Studies have shown that being exposed to nature can improve many aspects of mental health, including decreased stress and cortisol levels, reduced rates of depression and anxiety, and an improved sense of general well-being.



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## Purposeful Breaks Improve Health & Productivity (cont.)

If you have a meeting with a colleague, make it a walking meeting. Go for a walk on your lunch break or tend to a garden, some indoor plants, or an aquarium.

There are some challenges to taking all these rejuvenating breaks. First, once we are fatigued and distracted, we aren't going to remember to take a productive break. If you find this happening to you, try setting a timer or alarm on your phone. Another challenge is that we often feel guilty about taking breaks, even though science supports it improving productivity. Consider that humans didn't evolve to maintain sustained, unbroken

focus for eight hours at a time. We needed to be easily distracted by surrounding stimuli (like a predator) to keep us aware of our environments. So, if you find your mind wandering after hours at a task, give yourself a break.... just make sure it is a purposeful one.

***Interested in presenting this topic to your campus?***  
Check out the most recent Health and Wellness Tool In-Service (March 15, 2023) in the Health and Wellness folder of the Intranet for a presentation on this topic.

## Build Your Own Bowl!

"Bowls," sometimes called Buddha bowls, rainbow bowls, or grain bowls, are all the rage right now. Loosely defined, a bowl is a combination of foods prepared separately and arranged over a grain with a sauce of some kind drizzled over top. Depending on the ingredients, they can be incredibly healthy, or...not so much. Here are some guidelines for creating a healthful, nourishing, and satisfying bowl. Preparing all the different ingredients can be time-consuming, but if you make large amounts of each, you can keep them in the refrigerator and make bowls all week!



**Choose a grain.** This is the first step! Brown rice, wild rice, farro, barley, quinoa, or millet are all good choices. Steer clear of white rice or white pasta.

**Choose a protein.** Tofu, beans like chickpeas, edamame, or black beans, baked or roasted chicken or fish, or hard-boiled eggs are all good. Avoid fried or pre-served meats. Red meat should be kept to a minimum and enjoyed occasionally.

**Vegetables.** Here you can go wild with whatever you like—sautéed kale or spinach, steamed broccoli, shredded raw carrots, zucchini, or beets, sliced cucumbers,

tomatoes, bell pepper, onions, sprouts, fresh greens like arugula, watercress, or endive. Some roasted sweet potatoes or steamed corn can also add color and sweetness.

**Garnishes.** Seeds like pepitas, sunflower seeds, chopped nuts like peanuts, walnuts, almonds, or cashews add crunch and flavor. For brightness, add fresh herbs like cilantro, basil, or mint. If you like spicy, add some fresh sliced peppers like serranoes or jalapenos. Sliced avocado or even a little crumbled or shredded cheese (say a tablespoon) is also ok.

**Sauce.** Salsa, tahini sauce (see recipe in this newsletter), hummus, or a vinaigrette of your choice are all good options.

A few more notes to make sure your bowl is healthy. Choose a small to regular-sized bowl, not a huge serving bowl. Even though there are a lot of ingredients, you want to eat healthful portions of each. If you must go overboard, do it with the veggies. Be especially mindful of your grain and sauce portion sizes. Remember that nuts and avocados, while high in healthy fats, are still high in fat. If you are watching your total caloric intake, go easy on these. Avoid processed foods like chicken strips, store bought croutons, and sweetened pre-made sauces like teriyaki. If you want a particularly low-calorie bowl, make the base a fresh green, like lettuce, arugula, or spinach and treat the grain as a garnish.

The last key component of a "bowl" is that it should be beautiful. You want to arrange the components of the bowl in an artful way to make it look appealing. Fortunately, with all the beautifully colored vegetables and a healthy grain as the canvas, this is easy to do.

Start with the grain as a base in the bottom of the bowl. Add the protein and vegetable components next, arranging them around the edges of the bowl. Sprinkle on any garnishes, and lastly, drizzle the sauce over top. Enjoy!



## Idylwood Care Center: Dietetics Intern Article

### The Impact of COVID-19 on the Expense of Single Use/Plastic Disposable Foodservice Products in a Long-Term Care Setting

As the healthcare industry continues to battle with the impact of COVID-19, long-term care facilities are not an exception. One of the major impacts on long-term care facilities is the cost of foodservice disposable products, which are used as part of COVID-19 infection control protocol. At Idylwood Care Center, residents with orders of "Contact and Droplet Precaution" are served meals with single use/plastic disposable products on a meal tray. Meals for residents with diagnoses are also served this way.



orders during a one-month period. The data was presented in a stacked area chart format, and it showed there is a correlation between the two.

This study is significant because it creates awareness about the impact of COVID-19 on the campus' foodservice product expenses and the importance of reducing the cost of single use/plastic disposable products.

This study, however, has limitations in data collection, which includes a one-month period only. Future research on this topic can examine other factors such as: single use products that are cost-effective and environmentally friendly, and disposable divided plates to reduce the number of food holders on a tray.

*Contributed by: Thu Bui, B.S., Dietetics Intern*



### The Dietary Team at Idylwood Care Center

**Back row from left to right:** Elizabeth (Foodservice Manager), Elsy (Foodservice Assistant Manager), Annaleis (Dietitian)

**Front row from left to right:** Susan (Dietitian), Thu (Dietetics Intern 2022), Manu (Dietitian)



## Spirituality Corner: Connection through Volunteering

Volunteering, or providing acts of service without receiving anything in return, is an aspect of spirituality that involves a connection with something bigger than ourselves. Serving our community can help us feel connected both to the group of people with whom we volunteer, as well as the people we serve. And for those whose personal core values include helping others, this is also a way to align yourself with those values and further deepen your spiritual wellness.

Volunteering fosters connection with others because you are committing to a shared activity, typically with people who share common interests and passions. It provides opportunities to meet people with whom you might not normally socialize, people in a different stage of life, with different life experiences, different ethnicities, and from different socioeconomic groups.

Volunteers may feel a sense of meaning and appreciation by spending time in service to others in their community, thus strengthening local community ties. Many organizations rely on the support of community volunteers and could not function without this essential support. Understanding the value and importance of provided service increases volunteers' sense of purpose.

Even providing compelled community service can provide spiritual benefits. For example, Grammy Award winner Cardi B recently spoke about the impact of her court-mandated 15 days of community service. She tweeted, "Community service has been the best thing that has happened to me. Almost like a spiritual journey because sometimes I leave these centers in tears. Those people that we leave behind, they just need somebody to talk [to] and a lil push and YOU might be able to change their life forever."

Volunteering also increases our sense of gratitude; it adjusts our perspective and focus from what we do not have, to what we do have. It can be intrinsically rewarding. What we feel internally when we do meaningful work is often unique to each of us. After volunteering we may experience a good feeling inside some describe as "the helper's high" or "warm glow." This is because helping others and experiencing empathy triggers the release of oxytocin and vasopressin, the "feel good" neurotransmitters.

We might be hesitant to volunteer because we worry about the time commitment. However, volunteering can be simple and short term – just a single event. And, since the COVID-19 pandemic and rise of Zoom, new virtual volunteer opportunities now exist like having your dog listen while a child reads them a book! Because of the nature of volunteering, we can choose the organizations we want to give our time to. We can seek out causes we feel connected to or are meaningful to us in some way. Spending our leisure time in this way can contribute to our sense of purpose.

Feeling inspired to consider volunteering? Not sure where to start?

One easy place to start is the website [justserve.org](https://justserve.org) to look for opportunities in your geographical area that meet your interests, abilities, and schedule. For example, you could donate blood; help pack and sort items for care packages going to servicemembers in the military; donate children's books to support literacy and access; or be a swim partner to a disabled child. Consider your own time and limitations and then look for opportunities and causes where you have the capacity. Since volunteering is by definition

the act of freely giving our time and labor to a group, we can control when and how we serve. See if volunteering is a way you can tap into your spiritual wellbeing.

*This article was contributed by our Wellness Ambassador, **Erin Lubniewski**, Occupational Therapist at Crestwood Treatment Center Fremont. (If you are interested in becoming a Wellness Ambassador for your campus, please contact Margaret at [mclayton@cbhi.net](mailto:mclayton@cbhi.net).)*



***"The best way to find yourself  
is to lose yourself in the  
service of others."***

***~ Gandhi***



## Tahini Sauce

This tangy, nutty sauce is what you might find on falafel or as a component of hummus or baba ghanoush. It is also delicious as a dip for raw veggies, a dressing for salads or grain bowls, or even a sauce for grilled chicken or fish. Tahini is just ground sesame seeds, which are high in protein, calcium, iron, and healthy fats. The garlic and lemon juice add a nice punch of antioxidants and vitamin C. You can stir in some peanut butter for extra nuttiness or add a little honey for sweetness if you like!

### Ingredients

- 1 cup tahini paste
- 2-3 garlic cloves, pressed or minced finely
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 1/2 tbsp cumin
- 1 tsp salt (substitute soy sauce for a more Asian flavor)
- Water, as much as needed to thin to desired consistency
- 1 tbsp toasted sesame oil or peanut butter for extra nuttiness (optional)
- 1 tbsp honey for sweetness (optional)

Combine all ingredients except water in a bowl, blender, or food processor. Whisk or blend until smooth. Slowly add water until sauce reaches the desired consistency (you might want it thicker for a dip, or thinner for a dressing). Chill until using.



### Any Health and Wellness News Questions?

Contact Margaret M. Clayton, M.S. at:  
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**“Cooking requires confident guesswork and improvisation – experimentation and substitution, dealing with failure and uncertainty in a creative way.”**

**-Paul Theroux**