



# Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc.

## Health and Wellness News



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## Health & Wellness In-Services Update

In November, we finished our 6-part series of in-services highlighting aspects of our Health and Wellness Foundational Tool and challenging you to take on healthy habits like getting daily exercise, improving your gut health, practicing mindfulness, eating less red meat, and more.



All of our presentations were recorded and uploaded to our intranet in a new folder titled "Health and Wellness."

They are also part of Crestwood University and can be used for in-service hours. If you are looking for an in-service for your campus, please check them out!

Going forward, the Health and Wellness Foundational Tool Team will be bringing you quarterly in-services.

The next one is scheduled for mid-March. Keep a lookout for flyers and join us then!

## More Reasons to "Spice Up Your Life!"

Herbs and spices are a wonderful addition to many dishes, adding nuance, flavor, and evoking memories of past meals. The use of herbs and spices in cooking is also a great way to reduce your sodium intake because well-seasoned food is flavorful with the addition of less salt.

New research now suggests another benefit of consuming herbs and spices in your diet—improved gut health. The study, published in the *Journal of Nutrition* in 2022, added herbs and spices such as cinnamon, ginger, cumin, turmeric, rosemary, oregano, basil and thyme to the diets of people at risk for cardiovascular disease. They gave subjects one of three doses, roughly an 1/8 of a teaspoon, 3/4 of a teaspoon, or 1 1/2 teaspoons a day. At the end of the month, they found that those subjects given the two higher doses had increased gut microbiome diversity, and in particular more of the beneficial bacteria *Ruminococcaceae*.



More and more research suggests that gut health has an immense impact on many other aspects of health, including immune health, cardiovascular health, and even mental health. Our intestines are populated by millions of bacteria that not only help us digest

and absorb food, but also play other important roles in our health. Much of our immune system is located in the gut, and gut microbes are responsible for making neurotransmitters like serotonin, which can influence mood.

Poor diet, smoking, antibiotics and other medications can alter our gut microbiota and let harmful species thrive. People who experience regular gastrointestinal issues, sleep disturbances, and skin issues should consider looking into their gut health. To improve gut health, include fiber-rich foods like vegetables, whole grains and legumes in your diet. Cut back on processed foods and red meat.

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## More Reasons to “Spice Up Your Life!” (cont.)

Eat more fermented foods like yogurt, kimchi, miso, and kombucha. Include prebiotics, or foods that feed your gut bacteria, such as apples, asparagus, garlic, and onions. And, according to the study mentioned above, include at least 1 teaspoon of herbs and spices in your daily diet.

In addition to gut health, many herbs and spices are linked to other health benefits. For example, some research shows that cinnamon can help control blood sugar, chili powder may improve heart health by lowering blood pressure and cholesterol, and turmeric may reduce inflammation, easing joint pain and lowering one's risk for dementia.

There are many ways to add herbs and spices to your food, even if you aren't cooking it from scratch yourself. Try adding a bit of cinnamon to your coffee, or ginger to your tea. Herbs like oregano, basil, and thyme are very commonly used, and can be sprinkled into salad dressings, soups, pasta dishes, poultry or meat. Herb mixtures, like Mrs. Dash, contain many of the herbs and spices used in the study. (Just watch out for mixtures that contain salt.) You can also buy individual herbs and spices and create your own mix. Consider keeping a shaker of these herbs on your kitchen table, or even bringing one with you if eat away from home often. And instead of spreading butter on your bread, try an herby, garlicky olive oil dip instead.... check out the recipe in this newsletter!

## The Best Way to Eat Your Vegetables!

Including a variety of fruits and vegetables in your diet is important for good health. You might wonder what is the best way to eat those vegetables? Do you get the most nutrients when they are eaten raw or cooked? And if cooked, what is the best cooking method? Read on to learn how some of the most commonly eaten vegetables are best consumed for ideal nutrition.

### Spinach

You are probably reaping the most benefits from spinach when you eat it cooked. Spinach is rich in vitamin C, B6, iron, magnesium and calcium. Cooking spinach makes the minerals, like iron and calcium, more easily absorbed. In addition, spinach is high in oxalates, which can bind to iron and calcium, preventing them from being absorbed. Cooking the spinach breaks down some of the oxalates allowing more absorption of these minerals. Even so, don't overcook your spinach because cooking can break down some of the larger vitamins. Steaming or sautéing with a little olive oil is a good way to go.

### Carrots

Carrots, those beta carotene powerhouses, are best eaten cooked. Steaming, boiling, or even microwaving carrots makes their antioxidants, beta carotene, and potassium more available for digestion and absorption.

### Garlic

Garlic, both raw and cooked, has many health benefits, but most experts agree to get the most benefits, it should be eaten raw. When garlic is cut, it begins to activate many healthful compounds, such as allicin, in order to repair its cells. These compounds are linked to heart health and reduced risk for cancer, and they are mostly broken down by cooking. However, most people can't stomach enough raw garlic to reap the benefits, so eat garlic however you like it!

### Onions

Like garlic, onions provide the most micronutrients when eaten raw. However, light cooking, like sautéing or baking, can increase their antioxidant levels. And many people find onions more palatable when cooked, so eat onions however you enjoy them.

### Kale

Kale is a powerhouse of nutrients, like most cruciferous vegetables. They all contain compounds that, when chopped or chewed, are converted into powerful antioxidants that provide anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer effects. However, cooking kale breaks down these compounds, and breaks down its significant amount of vitamin C. So, kale is best eaten raw.



## The Best Way to Eat Your Vegetables! (cont.)

### Mushrooms

Mushrooms are best eaten cooked. Studies show that cooking mushrooms can increase their antioxidant activity and may make the protein and fatty acids they contain easier to absorb.

### Celery

Cooking celery increases the availability of vitamin K and probably also folic acid. It does, however, lower celery's fiber content, so if you are eating it for fiber, choose raw.

### Beets

Surprisingly, beets are best eaten raw. They retain most of their abundant nutrients, like antioxidants and flavanoids, as well as the deep pigments that give them their color and have heart and liver protecting properties. The long cooking time that beets require breaks down a lot of these nutrients. However, raw beets can add a delicious crunch to salads, sandwiches, and other dishes. Check out the recipe for raw beet salad in this newsletter!

### Green Beans

Green beans are another vegetable best eaten cooked. They contain an anti-nutrient called lectin, which can not

only cause digestive disturbances, but also interfere with the absorption of certain minerals. Cooking green beans breaks down the lectins and also makes the antioxidants they contain more available. Steaming, boiling, or even microwaving them are all good options.

### Tomatoes

Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, which is an antioxidant thought to be protective against both heart disease and cancer. Cooking tomatoes makes the lycopene more available for the body to absorb. And even more good news—lycopene is fat-soluble, so it's best eaten with a little fat, like olive oil, for best absorption.

For many of these vegetables, there is a trade-off between eating them raw and eating them cooked. Certain nutrients, like vitamin C, may be lost in cooking, but others, like vitamin K and antioxidants, become more available after heat is applied. For most vegetables, light steaming, sautéing, or boiling is probably the best way to prepare them for maximum nutrient value. Any vegetable, however it is prepared, is better than no vegetable, so eat them however you enjoy them. **Aim to eat a variety of vegetables, and at least two to three cups a day.**

## Studying the Specials Program at Idylwood Care Center

The Specials program at Idylwood Care Center, initially implemented at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, has served the purpose of providing additional calories and familiar foods to residents. The objectives of this project were to quantify the time allocated to the Specials program and its success measured in terms of consumption. A survey was conducted with residents receiving special food items to identify factors to optimize the Specials program. Over the course of four weeks, we estimated the percent intake of a subset of items offered as part of the Specials program, as well as the time allocated to it. Intake of the sample items evaluated was highly variable. For example,



the intake of the spinach dish served to one of the residents was 0% during the week this item was tracked.

The results of this survey were used to make recommendations to

the Registered Dietitians at the campus, including the substitution of the spinach dish by an alternate dish, changes in the frequency in which items such as cakes and pies

were offered to residents, and the adjustment of portion sizes for other items like the lentil dish, pancit and spaghetti. These modifications have the potential to reduce the time allocated to specials and increase the consumption of special food items by the residents, as well as a potential reduction in food waste.

*Contributed by: Adriana Telias, Dietary Intern*



**The Dietary Team at Idylwood Care Center**

**From left to right:** Margo Schlieff (Diet Tech), Manu Misra (Registered Dietitian), Annaleis Strom (Registered Dietitian), Susan Huynh (Registered Dietitian), Adriana Telias (Dietary Intern), Elise Silva (Dietary Volunteer), Desiree Albert (Dietary Intern), Elizabeth Velazquez (Dietary Supervisor), Elsy Rodas (Assistant Dietary Supervisor)



## Spirituality Corner: Connecting to Your Values

Spirituality can involve a feeling of connection to something bigger than ourselves. One way to think of it may be when what is true within ourselves recognizes what is true in what we are attempting to connect. For example, someone may understand the truth of what it feels like to be rejected and then feel connection when volunteering at an organization that seeks to find homes for abandoned pets. Better understanding our inner-self can help facilitate the connections we seek.

With the start of a new year, it naturally brings to mind new beginnings and goals for the year ahead. So it can be a good time to be intentional in taking time and space to reflect on our inner-self, our values, and what is most important to us. Having such clarity can help us make important decisions more purposefully, which leads to greater satisfaction and peace as those decisions better align with our values.

So, how can we go about reflecting on our inner-self and assessing our values? One thing you can try is a values clarification exercise. There are many online methods, and the one below was inspired by resources found on [www.therapistaid.com](http://www.therapistaid.com). Start by reading through the list of values below, select 10, and then rank them in order of importance from 1 to 10. Then, as you look towards making goals or decisions, reflect on your list to help guide you as you intentionally make decisions that align with those values. For example, you may learn one of your core values is adventure, which may lead you to explore a new hiking trail instead of a familiar one, thus helping you feel connected. Through this process you will hopefully gain important insight into yourself that will help support you as you seek connection.

### List of Values

- ◆ Abundance
- ◆ Adventure
- ◆ Balance
- ◆ Career
- ◆ Certainty
- ◆ Challenge
- ◆ Diversity
- ◆ Empathy
- ◆ Experiences
- ◆ Fairness
- ◆ Family



- ◆ Freedom
- ◆ Friendship
- ◆ Happiness
- ◆ Health
- ◆ Helping
- ◆ Honesty
- ◆ Individuality
- ◆ Integrity
- ◆ Justice
- ◆ Kindness
- ◆ Learning
- ◆ Loyalty
- ◆ Peace
- ◆ Playfulness
- ◆ Positivity
- ◆ Power
- ◆ Praise
- ◆ Prosperity
- ◆ Respect
- ◆ Safety
- ◆ Security
- ◆ Truth
- ◆ Teamwork
- ◆ Toughness
- ◆ Uniqueness
- ◆ Wealth

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*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).)*

## Olive Oil Bread Dip

This luscious dip will make you feel like you are at a nice Italian restaurant. This recipe uses dried herbs, but if you wish to use fresh, just double the amounts.

### Ingredients

1/2 tbsp dried basil  
1/2 tsp dried thyme  
1/2 tsp dried oregano  
1/4 tsp dried rosemary  
1/4 tsp red pepper flakes  
1 cup extra virgin olive oil  
2-3 cloves of garlic, minced  
1/2 tsp lemon juice or balsamic vinegar  
2 tbsp parmesan cheese, grated  
Salt and pepper to taste



Combine the herbs in a bowl and drizzle in olive oil. Add the garlic, lemon juice, and parmesan, and swirl to mix. Serve with crusty bread.

## Raw Beet Salad with Citrus Vinaigrette

This beet salad is crunchy and bright. It makes a nice side dish but could also be used as a slaw on sandwiches.



### Ingredients

3-4 large beets, peeled  
1 large carrot, peeled  
1 orange, juice and zest  
1 lime, juice and zest  
2 tbsp olive oil  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1/2 cup fresh chives or parsley  
1/2 cup pepitas or sunflower seeds

Shred the beets and the carrots (this is done most easily, and less messily, in a food processor with the shredding attachment). Combine with the citrus juice, zest, and olive oil. Add salt and pepper to taste, and top with the fresh herbs and seeds. Goat cheese is also a nice addition!

**“Simple ingredients prepared in a simple way – that’s the best way to take your everyday cooking to a higher level.”**

**-José Andrés**

### Any Health and Wellness News Questions?

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