



# Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc. Health & Wellness Newsletter

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## Reducing Food Waste

Food waste is a huge problem in the U.S. and across the world, with far-reaching impacts and social, economic, and environmental ramifications. According to the United Nations, approximately one-third of all food produced for human consumption is wasted every year, amounting to about 1.3 billion tons. In the U.S. alone, an estimated 27% of all food, or 63 million tons, becomes food waste.



### The Environmental Impact of Food Waste

When food is wasted, we have to consider not only the food itself, but all the resources used to grow, process, and transport that food that are also wasted. This includes the water, energy, and labor required to produce the food, as well as the emissions from transportation and storage. For example, it takes approximately 1,800 gallons of water to produce just one pound of beef, and when that beef is discarded, all that water is also lost.

ReFED, a U.S. based nonprofit that aims to reduce food waste through evidence-based practices, estimates that uneaten food is responsible for about 4% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, 16% of freshwater use, 16% of cropland use, and 24% of landfill inputs. That's an enormous amount of resources being wasted on discarded food.

### Economic Costs of Wasting Food

The financial implications of food waste are also staggering. The global economic cost of food waste is estimated to be around \$1 trillion each year. In the U.S., the average household throws away approximately \$1,500 worth of food each year. Food businesses, such as restaurants and grocery stores, are also affected by food waste which eats into profits and leads to higher costs for the consumer.

### Social Consequences of Food Waste

Perhaps most significant is the social impact of so much wasted food. Millions of people around the world struggle with hunger and food insecurity. Food insecurity is defined as having limited or uncertain access to sufficient, affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food. An estimated one in seven Americans, many of them children, live in food-insecure households. Much of the food that is wasted in our country is perfectly edible and could be going to help those in need.

*(Continued on page 2)*



# Reducing Food Waste (continued)

## Practical Ways to Reduce Food Waste

There are many practical steps that we can take to minimize food waste.

1. **Plan Your Meals:** One of the easiest ways to reduce food waste is by planning meals and creating a shopping list. When you plan ahead, you are less likely to buy excess food that might end up going bad before you can use it. Avoid impulse purchases and buy only what you need. If you do end up with random ingredients at the end of the week, look for a website or app that generates recipes based on the ingredients you have on hand—you might be pleasantly surprised at the results.
2. **Understand Expiration Dates and Practice FIFO:** Many people mistakenly throw away food because they misunderstand expiration dates. "Sell by" and "use by" dates do not necessarily indicate that food is unsafe to eat. In addition, practice first-in first-out (FIFO)—in other words, place recently purchased items behind older items so the older get used up first. This reduces the chance that items will end up sitting in the back of your fridge or pantry until they are spoiled.
3. **Proper Food Storage:** Properly storing food can extend its shelf life and reduce spoilage. For example, storing fruits and vegetables in the right part of the fridge or using airtight containers can keep them fresh longer. Portioning and freezing leftovers is another great way to preserve food for later meals.
4. **Save and Repurpose Leftover Food:** Reducing food waste doesn't have to work against your health goals. Many people practice "leaving something on the plate," or stopping eating when they are full, not necessarily when their plate is empty, as a way to maintain healthy body weight. You can still do this with food waste in mind—just save your leftovers for later. Leftovers can be eaten as later meals or even be repurposed into new meals. Soups, stews, and stir-fries are excellent ways to use up ingredients that are nearing the end of their shelf life.
5. **Composting:** If you do have food scraps, consider composting them instead of sending them to a landfill. Composting organic waste reduces methane emissions and provides nutrient-rich soil for your garden, which you can then use to grow more food.
6. **Support Food Recovery Programs:** If you regularly have unused food that could be donated, look into food recovery programs that redistribute unsold food to those in need. Many organizations, such as Feeding America and City Harvest, connect businesses with local food banks and charities to help reduce hunger and food waste simultaneously.
7. **It's Not a Beauty Contest:** We are used to seeing picture-perfect produce at the grocery store, but a lot of produce doesn't end up looking like we expect. Much of it goes to waste because consumers won't purchase it, and so sellers don't want it. If you see a strangely shaped pepper, or an apple with a small bruise, consider buying it anyway. It is still perfectly nutritious. There are even companies that sell "ugly" produce at a discount for people who don't mind less than perfect produce and are environmentally conscious.
8. **Eat Whole Foods:** When food is processed from its original form, much of it goes to waste. Think about potatoes being processed for French fries. The peels and more end up wasted. That is edible food that ends up in a landfill.



landfill. Composting organic waste reduces methane emissions and provides nutrient-rich soil for your garden, which you can then use to grow more food.

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## Reducing Food Waste (continued)

### The Role of Governments and Industry

While individual actions are crucial, systemic change is also necessary to tackle food waste on a larger scale. Governments can implement policies to encourage food waste reduction, such as providing incentives for businesses that donate excess food, creating public awareness campaigns, and funding food waste research.

In fact, certain businesses and organizations are required by California's "Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction" law, or SB 1383, to donate any surplus edible food that would otherwise go to waste to those in need. For healthcare facilities, that means any facility that has 100 beds or more. For the most part, our campuses produce very little food waste because of procedures in place that minimize waste. For example, Dietary staff adjust serving numbers based on alternative meal selection, unfilled beds, and persons served being outside of the campus at mealtimes. Extra food is offered to staff working overtime or placed in staff breakrooms. Some leftovers

and extra food are repurposed into snacks, subsequent meals, or for special events. Dietary staff also practices first-in first-out (FIFO) so that older food is used first before expiry dates. However, if your campus regularly has unused edible food, you should contract with a food recovery organization that can deliver that food to others who can use it. (See <https://calrecycle.ca.gov/organics/slcp/foodrecovery/> for more information.)

### Conclusion

There are so many steps in the food system that provide opportunities for us to reduce waste. Individuals, households, businesses, and governments must all get involved to not only reduce the impact food waste has on the environment and the economy, but to also potentially feed the millions of people who experience hunger and food insecurity.

For more information on reducing food waste, watch the latest Health & Wellness In-service titled "Food Waste Reduction" in the Crestwood Learning Center.

Are you passionate about...

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Contact Margaret Clayton,  
Director of Nutrition & Wellness,  
at [mclayton@cbhi.net](mailto:mclayton@cbhi.net).





## Interview with Blue Zone Participant Lisa Whitney, Recovery Coach

In the last edition of this newsletter, I wrote an [article on Blue Zones](#), or areas of the world in which people tend to live longer and healthier lives. After the newsletter came out, a staff person at one of our campuses reached out to say that she has been a participant in the National Blue Zone study for many years, so I requested to interview her on her experience. This is an interview with Lisa Whitney, a Recovery Coach from our Chula Vista Campus. (Some of our conversation has been edited for brevity.)

***You participate in the National Blue Zone Study because you are part of the Seventh Day Adventist Community. What does this participation entail?***

It's a questionnaire, and they have questions like, since they last contacted us, what kind of health concerns do we have, how we exercise, how often, our eating habits, our spiritual habits. That sort of thing.

***How long have you been participating in this study?***

More than 3 decades.

***There are several places around the world that have been identified as Blue Zones. What is your understanding of the Blue Zone lifestyle, and how does your lifestyle compare?***

We're all different, we are not all Seventh Day Adventists, but the things we have in common are a strong sense of community, a good nutritional lifestyle, the 8 Laws of Health—are you familiar with the 8 Laws of Health?



***No, can you tell me about that?***

Good health and nutrition; good water intake; good spiritual connection (with me, that's God.) Abstaining from harmful things, like not eating junk food, or being around unhealthy things. Restful sleep; proper breathing; deep breathing. A lot of Blue Zone communities talk about being in the country and deep breathing when you walk outside. It's about filling your lungs when you are outside, taking walks in the morning and evening and facing the sun when you make the most vitamin D. Healthy work and exercise.



***What does your diet look like? Are you vegetarian, vegan, pescatarian, etc.?***

Right now it's between kosher and halal. I am working toward a vegan plant-based diet.

***Do you consider yourself physically active? People in Blue Zones have activity built into their daily lives, not necessarily going to the gym, but gardening, walking, etc.***

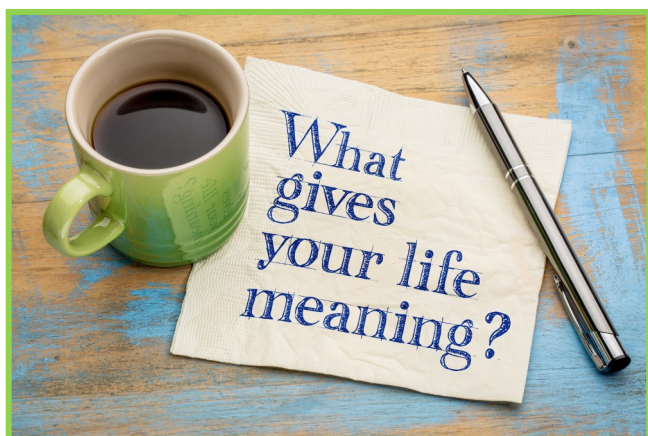
I live in a city setting, so I am not gardening or riding horses, but walking—one thing I love about work is that we are constantly walking or moving. We are encouraged to walk with the persons served. We are encouraged to encourage them—we can't sit and say, "you go for a walk." It's about we—"why don't we go for a walk?"

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## Interview with Lisa Whitney (continued)

***There is a Japanese word that I read while researching Blue Zones. It is ikagai, which means purpose in life, or reason for getting up in the morning. That is another aspect of the Blue Zones. Would you say you have that, whether it's your family, your job, your role in the community? Do people in your community have that?***

Absolutely, even with the infirm, or bed bound, we give them a reason to do something. Everybody can do something. Even if you're paralyzed, but can still talk, you can counsel others, give information. We try to allow a person to have a purpose.



***It sounds similar to the meaningful roles we talk about at Crestwood.***

Yes! I went through Peer Support training when I joined Crestwood, and its core principles so parallel what we believe in SDA community, that I wanted to integrate Crestwood into my lifestyle, because it was a natural fit.

***How do you manage stress or find peace in difficult times?***

For me, it's God and my community. When I'm feeling like my battery needs to be recharged, I reach out to other members of my community, and there is always somebody who knows exactly what I'm going through. Somebody is always there.

***Do you feel this lifestyle contributes to longevity? Do you have friends or family who have lived to old ages?***

Oh yes, but it's not just to touch the goal of being 100, it's to do that and be healthy. The nursing homes are full of people who are elderly and in bed and just existing. My friend is 88 this year, and even though she's had knee surgery, you are hard pressed to keep up with her. She walks 2-3 miles a day. She gets up at 5 in the morning and goes to bed at 9 at night. She is cognitively and physically with it. That's what they mean by living to 100. A friend of mine just passed away at 98 or 99, but she was still taking care of her son.

***And what is your role at Crestwood? How long have you been with us?***

I've been a Recovery Coach for a year.

***And do you feel you bring some of the Blue Zone lifestyle into your work at Crestwood?***

Oh yes, absolutely. I got hired during chemotherapy. I was diagnosed the same day I started school. Crestwood Chula Vista hired me knowing I was going through chemotherapy. All during chemo, I was working off and on as I could, and the exercise, and the positivity, just really blended. At work right now there are several people who are trying to eat healthier, and we are all exchanging recipes and encouraging each other.

It's really an open atmosphere without judgement. There are those of us who eat fast food, or drink, or smoke, but we meet people where they are at. At least I hope we do, I hope no one feels they are lesser because they are not changing their eating habits, or being healthier. I have not experienced that here.

***Yes, Crestwood is a pretty special place. That's all the questions I have for you. Thank you for talking with me today!***

Thank you so much! Let me know if there is anything else I can do to help!



# Spirituality Corner: What is Cold Therapy?

by Erin Lubniewski, Occupational Therapist at Crestwood Treatment Center Fremont

In its most general form, **cold therapy is when you expose your body to uncomfortably cold, yet safe, temperatures for short periods of time.** It may include immersion to the neck in ice baths or cold water, cold showers, or cryo chambers.

Whichever the mode, cold exposure has the potential benefit of being a spiritual practice as it connects the mind and body to foster a deeper connection with yourself.

Benefits for the mind include increased resilience and grit. When we choose it for ourselves without anyone compelling us, it gives us an opportunity to test ourselves. Do we give up because it's uncomfortable or do we push beyond self-imposed limits? When we choose to push forward, we find empowerment and possibilities. We become connected with the deeper parts of ourselves and gain greater understanding of our potential. Such an experience naturally generalizes to other areas of our lives, "If I can push through this, what else can I push through?" And when presented with stressors in our personal or work lives, we're more likely to cope better.

In addition, **there are numerous other benefits for the mind, including increased mindfulness, sensory perception, and connection with nature.**

The many benefits for the body include increased blood circulation taking oxygen throughout the body, vasoconstriction and reduction of inflammation, increased muscle recovery and reduced muscle pain, and immune function boost. The release of neurotransmitters like epinephrine and norepinephrine help us feel alert, and dopamine enhances our attention, energy, and mood. The release of hormones like endorphins reduce stress and improve mood.

In addition, cold therapy increases our metabolism to warm our body (which is why it's better to avoid doing it too close to bedtime as heat tends to wake us up).

**Cold therapy is an ancient concept and has been practiced across a wide variety of cultures, countries, and religions.** Greeks and Romans used cold water in their bathhouses for restorative properties; in Japan, Shinto practitioners engage in Misogi cold water rituals

for spiritual cleansing; Finnish people plunge in ice holes after a hot sauna; Dutch do New Year's dives and many Americans do "Polar Bear Plunges;" Russians practice an "Epiphany dip;" Sikhs value a dip in the cold holy Sarovar for inner purification; Christians participate in water immersion for baptism to symbolize spiritual renewal; and athletes sit in ice baths for the physiological benefits.

However, to experience the benefits of cold therapy, one is not limited to these practices. **The most accessible exposure is a cold shower/ending a shower with a blast of cold water, and natural cold water bodies (lakes, rivers, oceans).**



Experts, like neuroscientist Andrew Huberman from Stanford, recommend keeping safety in mind and starting small and increasing slowly. To get a lot of benefit it doesn't take much time. **Consider doing 1-5 minute sessions 2-4 times per week, for a total of 11 minutes per week.**

Avoid hyperventilating. Some experts recommend intentional breathwork, such as diaphragmatic breathing or the Wim Hof Method which involves deep, rhythmic inhalations and exhalations followed by holding the breath.

***Cold exposure can be a transformative experience that brings together your mind and body to improve mood, expand your inner strength and endurance, instill a sense of calm, and prompt a deeper sense of understanding and connection with yourself. Consider adding it to your own spiritual wellness practice.***



# Recipe: French Lentil Salad

Lentils are nutritional powerhouses, full of protein, fiber, iron, and other vitamins and minerals. They are also incredibly inexpensive, shelf-stable, and easy to cook. Fancy up the humble lentil in this classic French Lentil Salad.

## Ingredients

- 1 cup brown or green lentils
- 3 cups water or low sodium broth of your choice
- 1 large carrot, peeled and diced
- 1 shallot or half a red onion, diced
- ½ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tsp fresh thyme
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp honey (substitute agave to make vegan)
- Juice of 1 lemon
- ¼ cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste



**Directions:** Rinse lentils and make sure they are free of any pebbles. Place lentils and carrots in pot and add water or broth. Bring to a simmer and let cook for about 20 minutes or until the lentils are tender. Drain any excess liquid and let cool to room temperature. Add the rest of the ingredients and toss to combine. You can vary this basic recipe endlessly, adding different vegetables like celery, tomatoes, bell pepper, etc. You can also add crumbled cheese like feta or blue cheese. This salad makes a great side dish or a hearty vegetarian main dish.

***“A recipe has no soul. You, as the cook,  
must bring soul to the recipe.”***

*~ Thomas Keller*

**Any Health and Wellness News Questions?**

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