

Wellness Newsletter



March 2024

Let's SPRING into Wellness

As March arrives, it brings with it a feeling of fresh starts and a boost in energy, signaling the start of spring. There's a natural desire to shed the layers of winter and embrace a fresh start. This March, let's spring into wellness by prioritizing both our physical and mental health. As the days grow longer with the time change, we're presented with more opportunities to engage in outdoor activities, soak up the sunshine, and revitalize our spirits. It's the perfect time to kickstart our wellness journey and set positive intentions for the season ahead.

Spring cleaning isn't just for our homes; it's also essential for our well-being. Just as we declutter our physical spaces, it's crucial to declutter our minds and bodies. Start by incorporating healthy habits into your daily routine, such as eating nutritious foods, staying hydrated, and getting regular exercise. Take advantage of the longer daylight hours to go for walks, bike rides, or exercising outdoors. Additionally, prioritize mental health by carving out time for relaxation and self-care activities like meditation, journaling, or spending quality time with loved ones. By embracing the spirit of spring and committing to self-care, we can cultivate a sense of balance and vitality in our lives as we welcome the new season.



What is Social Wellness?

Social wellness is defined as developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support system.

Goals for your Social Wellness

- Develop the ability to create and maintain close friendships
- Feel comfortable interacting with diverse individuals and groups
- Become aware of your responsibilities for the welfare of different communities
- Respect and embrace people who are different from you in terms of who they love, how they identify, their race, culture, faith, financial situation, life story, and more.
- Understand the concepts of sex and gender role stereotyping and explore appropriate sex and gender role behavior for yourself
- Develop a "global consciousness" by recognizing the interrelatedness of cultural, global and national issues and needs
- Work toward becoming a responsible world citizen





Unlocking Social Wellness: The Power of Positive Relationships

Building positive relationships is essential for social wellness. Social wellness refers to the quality of our relationships and interactions with others, as well as our sense of belonging, connection, and support within our communities.

Here's how building positive relationships relates to social wellness:

Support System: Positive relationships provide us with emotional support, encouragement, and assistance during challenging times. Having a strong support system enhances our social wellness by buffering against stress and promoting resilience.

Sense of Belonging: Positive relationships foster a sense of belonging and acceptance within social groups, whether it's with family, friends, coworkers, or community members. Feeling connected to others is fundamental to social wellness as it reduces feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Communication Skills: Building positive relationships involves effective communication, including active listening, empathy, and assertiveness. Developing these communication skills enhances our ability to connect with others, resolve conflicts constructively, and maintain healthy boundaries, all of which contribute to social wellness.

Positive Influence: Positive relationships can have a significant impact on our attitudes, behaviors, and overall well-being. Surrounding ourselves with supportive, encouraging individuals who share similar values and goals can motivate us to pursue healthier lifestyle choices and personal growth, thus improving our social wellness.

Sense of Purpose: Meaningful relationships provide us with a sense of purpose and fulfillment by giving us opportunities to contribute to the well-being of others and our communities. Engaging in acts of kindness, cooperation, and collaboration strengthens social bonds and enhances social wellness by fostering a sense of interconnectedness and collective identity.

Building positive relationships is crucial for social wellness as it promotes support, belonging, effective communication, positive influence, and a sense of purpose within our social networks and communities. Investing in nurturing and maintaining these relationships is essential for cultivating a fulfilling and meaningful social life.





BEAN SHAPED Organs

Your kidneys are two bean-shaped organs that filter blood, and remove waste and extra fluid from the body. They also balance water, salts and minerals in the blood to allow nerves, muscles, and other tissues in your body to work normally. Some foods place stress on the kidneys, causing damage, and some foods may boost the performance of the kidneys.

The foods below generally support healthy kidneys, but not all of them are suitable for people who have kidney disease:

Water is the most important drink for the body. The cells use water to transport toxins into the bloodstream and filter the toxins out of the body through urine.

Salmon, tuna and other cold-water, fatty fish that are high in omega-3 fatty acids may reduce fat levels in the blood and slightly lower blood pressure.

Sweet potatoes may help balance the levels of sodium in the body and reduce its effect on the kidneys. Sweet potatoes are high in potassium so anyone who has kidney disease may wish to limit their intake of this vegetable.

Dark leafy greens, such as spinach, kale, and chard contain a wide variety of vitamins, fibers and minerals. These foods are also high in potassium, so may not be suitable for people on a restricted diet or on dialysis.

Berries are a great source of nutrients and antioxidants. Enjoy strawberries, blueberries and raspberries to satisfy sweet cravings.

Apples contain an important fiber called pectin, that may help reduce risk factors for kidney damage, such as high blood sugar and high cholesterol.

What Goes In, MUST COME OUT

The food we eat is fuel for the body. All fuel sources that produce energy, such as gas, oil, coal, and yes, food, also create emissions. The quality of the fuel impacts the discharge process. When food enters the body, vitamins and minerals are extracted in the small intestine. What's left of the food moves into the colon where it is broken down to prepare it to leave the body. Try incorporating these five foods that contain high amounts of fiber, calcium and vitamin D, into your daily diet to help to keep your digestive system working properly to move waste through the colon and out of the body.

Broccoli is known to improve gut health. Delicious in stir-fry, crunchy raw, or soft and steamed, it is healthy in a variety of ways.

Dark, leafy greens like spinach, kale and chard are loaded with magnesium and a great way to cleanse your colon. Incorporate these stellar greens daily as a simple salad, rolled into wraps, added to soups and stews, blended into smoothies, or pureed into sauces.

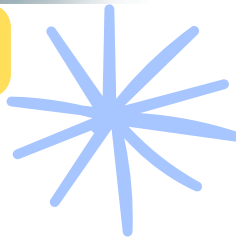
Milk does a colon good. Low-fat dairy products including cheese and yogurt provide calcium that helps to reduce irritation to the colon.

Raspberries' sweet delicate taste pales in comparison to its powerful antioxidants, anti-cancer, anti-neurodegenerative, and anti-inflammatory properties which have ability to prevent colon cancer. Enjoy a bowl for dessert, as garnish in a spritzer, topped on yogurt, blended into smoothies, or frozen in a popsicle.

Oatmeal is good for the entire digestive system because it is high in fiber, but oats also help to increase nutrient absorption. Old-fashioned or steel-cut oats provide the most fiber.



4 TIPS TO LIVE A HEALTHIER LIFE



1. Drink More Water



2. Go on a Vacation



3. Love Yourself



4. Exercise Regularly



≡ International Women's Day ≡

March 8th, 2024



In acknowledgment of International Women's Day, let's engage in discussions about challenging topics that impact women globally. We'll dive into these issues, offer valuable insights, and provide resources to empower and assist women in navigating these challenges.

Let's reflect on some challenges women struggle with everyday

Coping with Infertility

Career aspirations

Struggling with postpartum depression or anxiety

Balancing multiple roles

Work-Life Balance

Menopause and Mental Health

Being a Leader but also being a Mom

Taking on too much housework, and balancing childcare

Stigma around mental health

Societal Expectations

Emotional labor and the myth of "women's work" | Regina F. Lark | TEDxFolsom



Dr. Regina Lark, founder of A Clear Path in 2008, has been instrumental in revealing how our ability to manage household organization is closely tied to our executive functions. She highlights the significance of acknowledging and addressing emotional labor to foster gender equity within households. By recognizing and appreciating this often unnoticed aspect of household management, we can promote more equitable dynamics.

Understanding the Emotional Labor Lifecycle helps in anticipating and effectively managing these responsibilities. Embracing radical delegation allows for a fair distribution of tasks, empowering both men and women to fulfill their potential both at home and in the workplace.

Coping with infertility

Dealing with infertility can be an emotionally challenging journey.

Here are some coping strategies that don't involve medical treatments:

- **Seek Support:** Share your feelings with your partner, friends, or family members you trust. Join support groups where you can connect with others who understand what you're going through.
- **Take Care of Yourself:** Prioritize self-care activities such as exercise, meditation, or hobbies that bring you joy and relaxation. Pay attention to your mental and emotional well-being.
- **Educate Yourself:** Learn about infertility and the various options available, even if you're not currently pursuing treatment. Understanding the condition can help you feel more empowered and in control.
- **Set Boundaries:** It's okay to establish boundaries with well-meaning friends and family who may unintentionally say or do things that are hurtful. Let them know what you need from them during this time.
- **Communicate with Your Partner:** Keep the lines of communication open with your partner. Express your feelings and listen to theirs. Remember, you're in this together as a team.
- **Find Meaning:** Explore ways to find meaning and purpose outside of parenthood. Focus on other aspects of your life that bring fulfillment, such as career, hobbies, or volunteer work.
- **Seek Professional Help:** If you're struggling to cope, consider talking to a therapist or counselor who specializes in infertility issues. They can provide guidance and support tailored to your unique situation.
- **Practice Gratitude:** Cultivate a mindset of gratitude by focusing on the positive aspects of your life. Keep a gratitude journal to remind yourself of the good things, no matter how small.
- **Take Breaks:** It's okay to take breaks from thinking about infertility. Engage in activities that help you relax and recharge, whether it's going on a weekend getaway or spending time in nature.
- **Stay Hopeful:** While coping with infertility can be difficult, try to maintain hope for the future. Remember that there are many paths to building a family, and your journey may take unexpected turns.

Postpartum depression (PPD) is a serious mental health condition that affects some women after childbirth. It can manifest as feelings of sadness, anxiety, and exhaustion, often interfering with the mother's ability to care for herself and her baby. PPD can occur shortly after giving birth or develop gradually over several months. Factors such as hormonal changes, sleep deprivation, and the challenges of adjusting to motherhood can contribute to its onset.

Recognizing the symptoms of PPD is crucial for early intervention and treatment. Seeking support from healthcare providers, therapists, and support groups can help mothers navigate through this challenging period and facilitate their recovery. It's important for loved ones to offer understanding and empathy, as well as practical assistance, to support mothers experiencing postpartum depression.

Leaders Supporting Women's Mental Health in the Workplace

[Click Here](#)



Women often face heightened stressors at work, impacting their mental health and productivity. This episode highlights the need for leaders to support women's well-being and offers practical steps for improving workplace conditions.

What is Postpartum depression?



Postpartum depression symptoms may include:

- Depressed mood
- Difficulty bonding with your baby
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Changes in appetite
- Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Loss of interest in activities
- Irritability and anger
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide.



Women's health options, mental health resources and family support

Expected and unexpected circumstances in women's health and mental wellbeing are difficult and stressful to deal with. You're not alone. Here is a list of websites with helpful information on women's health, mental health care and family development.

Adoption

Child Welfare Information Gateway

[Understanding the Emotional Impact of Adoption — Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)

[Considering Adoption](#)

[Considering Adoption](#)

Anxiety and depression

Anxiety & Depression Association of America (ADAA)

[Postpartum Disorders | Anxiety and Depression Association of America, ADAA](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Depression During and After Pregnancy \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Family support

All-Options Talkline

all-options.org/find-support/talkline/

Live and Work Well

liveandworkwell.com

March of Dimes

marchofdimes.org

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

mchb.hrsa.gov

National Child & Maternal Health Education Program

[Mom's Mental Health Matters — Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development \(nih.gov\)](#)

Behavioral health provider

Find providers here:

[Find your plan | Find Care \(werally.com\)](#)

Postpartum

Postpartum Support International

[Get Help | Postpartum Support International \(PSI\)](#)

Pregnancy loss

American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

[Finding Emotional Support After Pregnancy Loss](#)

Return To Zero (H.O.P.E)

rtzhope.org/

Share: Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support

[Home — Share Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support \(nationalshare.org\)](#)

Sisters in Loss

sistersinloss.com/

Substance use

Indian Health Service

ihs.gov/asap/resources/

National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare

ncsacw.acf.hhs.gov/topics/pregnancy/

10 Reasons Why Spring Is the Most Positive Season

[Full Article Click Here](#)



1. Lean into Hope

Welcoming spring calls for acknowledging the palpable hope imbued in every seed, bulb, and chirping bird, resonating with the promise of growth and renewal.

2. Clean Out

Give your home a thorough spring cleaning. Get rid of things that no longer bring you joy.

3. Open Up

Open the windows. Visualize the fresh air swirling through your home and through your lungs.

4. Get Moving

Take a walk in the woods—or around the block. Breathe deeply and luxuriate in the invigorating feeling the spring air brings.

5. Look Closely

Go “searching for spring” in your yard or a local park.

6. Freshen Your Plate

After a long winter of warming, comforting foods, it's a joy to welcome spring by celebrating the season's flavors.

7. Watch the Sun Set

As evenings warm up in springtime, step outside to watch the sun sink into the horizon, relishing the slowly-but-steadily lengthening of each day

8. Plan (and Plant) Your Garden

Crack into the soil in your backyard garden or potted containers to sow early-season crops like lettuces, radishes, and peas

9. Splash in the Rain

Each time a nourishing spring rain shower taps on our windows, spring's positivity washes over us, elevating our outlook and mood.

10. Listen to the Birds

Not only is birdsong a relaxing, delightful sound—so much so that it's featured on many meditation and white noise apps—it is also a reminder that sometimes in life, beautiful things recede from view, but return again

SPRING BACK Into Shape

Your lower back is the anchor of the core support system for your entire body. Keeping it strong and stable provides support for everyday tasks and movements like standing, lifting and bending. There are many exercises to strengthen the lower back that help alleviate and prevent pain while strengthening the core, leg and arm muscles.

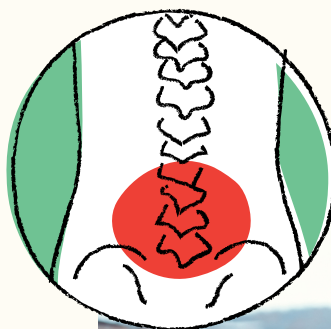
Try these exercises that also increase blood flow to the lower back area, which may also reduce stiffness.

Supermans can strengthen back extensors to maintain good posture.

- Lie face down on the ground and stretch both arms out in front of the body keeping legs stretched out and flat on the ground.
- Raise both the hands and feet, aiming to create a gap of about 6 inches between them and the floor. (If both arms and legs are too difficult, just lift arms off the ground with feet down.)
- Keep arms and legs outstretched and hold position for 2 seconds.
- Return to starting position and repeat 10 times.

Floor bridges can help strengthen the core, glutes, and hamstrings, while having minimal pressure on the low back.

- Lie on back with knees bent, feet flat on floor, hip width apart.
- Place your arms at your sides.
- Draw in your core and abdominals.
- Lift the hips off the floor until about inline with knees.
- Hold position for 5–10 seconds and return slowly to the floor.
- Repeat 10–12 times.



Knee-to-chest stretches can help to elongate the lower back, relieving tension and pain.

- Lie on the back on the floor.
- Bend the knees, keeping both feet on the floor.
- Use both hands to pull one knee in toward the chest.
- Hold for 5 seconds, keeping the abdominals tight and pressing the spine into the floor.
- Return to starting position and repeat with opposite leg.
- Repeat with each leg 2–3 times.

Exercises for the lower back are simple to do and may be modified depending on your fitness level. As with any exercise program, consult with your primary physician before starting.

Don't forget to stretch your back!

Featured Recipe of the Month

Chicken Alfredo Broccoli Rice Casserole



Cook Time

Ingredients 1hr
Serves 6

- 6 cups fresh broccoli florets
- 3 cups microwaveable cooked brown rice
- 1 1/4 cups prepared Alfredo sauce
- 1/2 cup half-and-half
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 (1 1/4-pound) package diced chicken breast
- 1 tablespoon salt-free onion-and-herb seasoning
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 (8-ounce) package shredded Italian cheese blend

Directions

- Step 1
Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Stir broccoli, rice, Alfredo sauce, half-and-half and flour together in the prepared dish until well combined.
- Step 2
Top the mixture evenly with chicken; sprinkle with onion-and-herb seasoning, garlic powder, pepper and salt. Sprinkle evenly with cheese. Cover tightly with foil.
- Step 3
Bake until a thermometer inserted into the chicken registers 165°F and the cheese is melted, about 45 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Upcoming Webinars

- Intergenerational Caregiving
Tuesday, March 19, 2024 | 11AM to 12PM
Mutual of America 403B
- Tuesday, April 2, 2024 | 11AM to 12PM

To sign up for the upcoming webinars, please visit the **NEW WELLNESS PORTAL** and click on the registration link.

Please click on the link down below:
<https://lacatholics.org/wellness/>

Quote of the Day

"The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity." — Amelia Earhart.

Fitness Tip of the Day

Stretch Regularly

To alleviate tension from prolonged sitting, incorporate daily light stretching targeting the back and glutes, such as downward facing dog for the glutes and prone back extensions for the back, while also ensuring adequate hydration and a balanced diet.

Health Tip of the Day

Breathing Exercise

Breathing exercises can help alleviate anxiety and stress, and promote calmness, which can be useful to employees in a range of situations. Give employees information about breathing exercises they can use at work, at home and when out and about. You could send them a link to a tutorial video or arrange a workshop during the working day.