You Snooze, You Don’t Lose

When times get tough you can't afford to let your health decline. A sound body and mind are the most important resources you have to help you make hard decisions and seek solutions to difficult problems. The formula for good health is pretty simple—exercise, eat a healthy diet, and get enough rest and sleep.

Unfortunately, stress and worry frequently tend to rob many people of both the quality and quantity of their sleeping hours. Even two days of inadequate sleep can severely alter a person's judgment, coping behaviors, and physical reaction times. Therefore, you owe it to yourself to be sure you are getting the rest and sleep you need.

Lack of Sleep Can Cause Health Risks: A natural cycle of rest and wakefulness dictates all sorts of biological functions. Disrupting the sleep cycle can cause metabolism, hormone levels, and blood pressure to become irregular and has been associated with heart disease, diabetes, cancer, obesity, depression and infection.

Benefits of Sleep: Beyond just restoring your body’s energy levels, there are many benefits of sleep. At the most basic level sleep is necessary for survival. You also need good sleep so that you can function well—both mentally and physically—during your waking hours. Good sleep can enable you to work productively, make sound judgments, avoid harm, recover from illness, and interact with other people effectively.

Sleep also benefits us in less-visible ways. During sleep, the body secretes a growth hormone that may repair and regenerate tissue throughout the body. Many of the body’s cells also increase in production and reduce the breakdown of proteins during deep sleep allowing the body to help repair damage from things like stress and ultraviolet rays—adding a hint of truth to the term "beauty sleep." The body also builds bone and muscle, and strengthens our immune system at this time. Sleep may also be instrumental in reinforcing our memories and, some experts believe, essential to processing complex emotions.

Overcoming Sleepless Nights: Research has shown that the following actions may help you overcome sleepless nights:

- Go to bed only when you are sleepy. Stick to a regular routine by getting up at the same time each morning.
- Do not take naps.
- Maintain a regular exercise schedule.
- Do not take alcohol or caffeine before bedtime.
- Practice muscle and mental relaxation at bedtime such as yoga, deep breathing or prayer.
- To prevent daytime hangover and improve the quality of sleep, avoid the regular use of nonprescription sleeping pills.
- If you wake up during the night, get up and do something relaxing until you get sleepy. It will probably make you more tense if you stay in bed and worry about your inability to get to sleep.

Take a close look at the way you spend your days, decide what parts of your lifestyle need to be changed, and change them. Your decisions will have a direct effect on whether or not you are ready and able to function at optimal levels of performance. Take charge of your health today.

Sources: Virginia Cooperative Extension
Do You Need Help Paying for Your Medicare Prescription Medication?

If you answered yes to this question and have limited income and resources, you may qualify for ‘EXTRA HELP’ (the low-income subsidy) to pay your prescription drug costs. The Senior's Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) can help you apply. Receiving this help will not change your monthly Social Security benefits. (This program is not available to Medicaid recipients).

Call the Swain County Cooperative Extension at 488-3848 for your Medicare Part D appointment today and talk with a trained SHIIP counselor.

Income Guidelines are $1,353.75 per month for an individual and $1,821.25 per month for a couple.

Other assets and/or resources that will be considered include: up to $12,510.00 for an individual and up to $25,010.00 for a couple. These amounts include $1,500 per person for funeral or burial expenses, counts savings and stocks and does not count the home you live in.

This is a FREE, unbiased community service; we do not sell insurance.

Mixed-Vegetable Pasta Salad

- 12 oz. whole-wheat pasta
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup low fat, reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 (28 oz.) can unsalted, diced tomatoes in juice
- 1 (16 oz.) package button mushrooms, sliced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced
- 2 medium zucchini, shredded
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1 tsp. dried basil
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 8 romaine lettuce leaves (may substitute any other large lettuce leaves)

Bring large pot of water to a boil. Add pasta and cook per package directions until al dente (firm, not mushy). Thoroughly drain pasta. Place in large bowl, add oil, toss and set aside.

Using large skillet over medium heat, heat chicken broth. Add garlic, onion and tomatoes. Cook until onion is softened, about 5 minutes. Add remaining vegetables and cook until tender crisp, about 5-6 minutes. Stir in oregano, basil, thyme, salt and pepper.

Add vegetable mix to pasta. Toss to mix evenly. Cover and refrigerate until well chilled, about 1-2 hours. To serve, place lettuce leaves on plate. Top with pasta salad and serve immediately. Makes 14 servings.

Per serving: 140 calories, 2.5 g. total fat (0 g. saturated fat), 24 g. carbohydrate, 5 g. protein, 3 g. dietary fiber, 140 mg. sodium.

To see more AICR recipes visit: www.aicr.org
Create a Successful Children's Garden Project

Are you getting ready to start your garden project with children? These projects elicit a great sense of wonder and excitement for children—if you follow the easy advice listed below:

1. Pick a perfect site. You will need a spot that receives at least eight hours of sun every day.

2. Gardens come in all sizes and shapes. Start small, so that your first efforts are positive for both you and the children.

3. Feed your soil. Rich garden soil contains plenty of organic matter, so be sure to add it to your soil. Or better yet, use leftover lunch scraps to make compost.

4. Choose plants well-suited to your region and growing season. Check with local nurseries and the Cooperative Extension office in your area for information. Some businesses may even donate seeds or plants for your garden.

5. Get off to a good start with easy-to-grow crops. Cucumbers, zucchini, leaf lettuce, snap peas, summer squash, peppers and Swiss chard are all easy to grow.

6. Give your plants a good start. Wait until the danger of frost has left your area before planting. Water your plants just as soon as they're in the ground.

7. Make the most of your space. Most children do better with raised garden beds that are only 18” across. Experiment with inter-planting. Surrounding tomato transplants with snap peas, for example, saves space.

8. Regularly patrol for pests, but do NOT use pesticides. Children should not be exposed to these neurotoxins. Instead, remove bugs by blasting them with water or picking them off by hand.

9. Teach children how to harvest gently. The more you harvest, the more plants produce—if you remove the produce carefully. Yanking produce off the stems can cause damage.

10. Make sure children have the right clothing and gear. Everyone will need child-size garden tools and clothes that can get dirty and sun protection. You can always get extra clothes from thrift shops if parents cannot supply them. And don't forget the sun protection!


Food Preservation Series

Home food preservation is the way to enjoy the bounty of the summer months all year round.

Three hands-on classes will be offered in this series with opportunities in Swain and Jackson Counties to gain knowledge and confidence in using the water bath and pressure canner methods of food preservation.

The fee per class will be $7 and includes one jar of product and printed materials. The fee for the series (3 classes) is $25 and includes one jar of product, printed materials and a Ball Blue Book.

Space is limited and you MUST register AND pay in advance.

Jams and Jellies:
Swain County, June 22nd, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
OR Jackson County, June 16th, 9:00 - 12:00 p.m.

Pickles and Acidified Foods:
Swain County, July 7th, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
OR Jackson County, July 7th, 9:00 -12:00 p.m.

Tomatoes and Pressure Canning:
Swain County, July 28th, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
OR Jackson County, July 28th, 9:00 - 12:00 p.m.

Please register in the county where you would like to attend. Swain 488-3848 OR Jackson 586-4009
What's Happening?

Call Swain County Cooperative Extension at 488-3848 for more information.

COMING SOON!

Cook Smart Eat Smart: Develop skills you need in order to prepare more meals at home with simple healthy preparation techniques, simple ingredients and simple equipment.

Make Your Own Earth-friendly Cleaning Products: Save the environment and money. You will prepare samples in this class to take home.

Infant Feeding 0-12 months and Making Home-made Baby Food: Find out everything you need to know about feeding your baby for the first year and learn to make your own fresh, organic baby food that your baby will love.

ON-GOING PROGRAMS

SHIIP Senior Health Insurance Information Program is a consumer information division of the NC Department of Insurance that assists people with choosing a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan. Call 488-3848 for an appointment.

Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less is a program that will explore behaviors that help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight by living mindfully and creating new, lifelong habits. Weekly 90-minute meetings include weigh-ins, goal setting, nutrition education, counseling and support, information, recipes and cooking demonstrations.

Pressure Canner Testing: Did you know that if you have a pressure canner with a dial gauge, you should have it tested every year. Please call us if you need to have your gauge tested.