



Letter From the Director



The weather is warming, the grass is greening and the birds are chirping; all signs that spring has finally arrived! Our new winter incentive programs "Maintain Don't Gain" and "New Year, New U" were very well received with nearly 1,000 participants and a great deal of encouraging feedback. In the next week we'll be rolling out our latest program "Ready, Set, Move!" This new program is a hybrid of our popular "Walk on Wednesdays" and "Walk to Win" programs, but on a bit more flexible platform to encourage increased participation and engagement. We're very excited with the changes that we have made and are confident you will be as well. More information will be communicated as soon as available.

As you know Stony Brook University went tobacco-free on January 1. The response has been tremendously positive. The "Air of Respect" campaign has resonated with the campus community and we will continue to provide education and support about the initiative. Healthier U is now able to provide nicotine replacement therapy in the form of gum to all Stony Brook employees, regardless of work location. Those interested in this resource may call or stop by the Healthier U Office (Social & Behavioral Sciences, N116A) to learn more about how to receive this free smoking cessation resource.

In this issue we interview wellness advocate and senior leader Nicholas Scibetta, Colleen's Corner talks about coping with grief, our Environmental Health & Safety team provides tips for spring cleaning, the Core Nutrition folks discuss the hot topic of gluten, and our resident RD offers a delicious chia oatmeal breakfast cookie recipe.

If you'd like to contribute health and wellness articles to HEALTHIER NUWS, please email me at bryan.weiss@stonybrook.edu. Thank you for reading our newsletter and look for our next issue in the coming months.

Wishing you a happy and healthy spring,

Bryan Weiss



Leading the Charge

Nicholas Scibetta

*Vice President for Communications and Marketing
Chief Communications Officer*

Q: What is your healthy breakfast on the run?

A: Oatmeal with almonds and fresh fruit or PB&J.

Q: What is your idea of a near-perfect day?

A: Spending time with my family on the soccer field for an obscene amount of hours every weekend watching my kids play.

Q: What is your current health and fitness goal?

A: Learning to like cardio!

Q: What are three things that are always in your refrigerator?

A: Orange juice, Smucker's Natural Chunky Peanut Butter and low-fat milk.

Q: What was the last book you read?

A: Soccernomics by Simon Kuper



Colleen's Corner

EAP for a Happier U

By Colleen Stanley, MFT, CEAP
Lead Coordinator
Stony Brook University Employee Assistance Program

Q: The holidays are over and I find myself feeling blue, depleted and somewhat disappointed. I have a pile of bills and I miss my father who passed away two years ago. The holidays are now something our family gets through, rather than celebrates. Will it ever get better?

A: Losing someone we love is never easy. It changes us. We have no choice about that; however, we do have some choice over how it changes us. When facing the loss of a loved one, we are also forced to look at our own mortality. We begin to understand how fragile it all is. While moving through the loss of my brother, father and mother, I have found this quote helpful: "Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness. *It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve.*" - Dr. Earl A Grollman, *Rabbi and Counselor*. There is no right or wrong amount of time to grieve. Every loss is different. Be gentle with yourself and those around you during this transition time. Allow quiet time to reflect, release and renew. Focus on revitalization in the New Year, with the goal of increasing self-care. Imagine the power of loving kindness extended to oneself.

Decide now to keep things simple next holiday season. Review your budget while you are still feeling the sting and create a spending plan. Mindful organization and planning can reduce stress. Ask yourself - was spending x in 2015 self-loving? How can I take care of myself better? As you move forward consciously create the new normal. The holidays will never be the same without your loved one, and neither will you. To reduce stress see how you can simplify. Keep the traditions you truly love and release the ones that no longer make you happy. Try new ideas that spark joy. My father always put one large red ball on the blue spruce in our backyard. Last year, I tried doing the same and felt sadness every time I looked at it. This year I put solar fairy lights in my backyard that made me smile and feel childlike every time I saw them.

Sometimes talking to a grief counselor or therapist can be helpful. If you want assistance getting connected to an outside provider call the EAP at 632-6085, or go to the the therapist locator section of the EAP website, www.stonybrook.edu/eap. Click on "I want help with" and then "locating a therapist".

APRIL IS STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

Go to www.stonybrook.edu/eap/happieru/stress to take a stress test and find tools for managing stress.

Environmental Health and Safety Focus

Spring Cleaning

By Dale Clarkson, *Safety Specialist*

As of March 20, Spring has *sprung!* As the weather begins to change many people start to think about their spring cleaning tasks. Here are some safety tips to consider:

- Household and pool chemicals, paints and poisons should be properly marked and stored under lock and key, out of children's reach. Dispose of any products that are leaking, expired or that generally look bad.
- Wear rubber gloves and follow the safety directions on packages when cleaning up chemicals and other toxic substances.

- Never mix chemicals in the same container if you do not know how to properly dispose of them. Seek outside advice and never throw them in the garbage or flush them down the drain.
- Make sure gasoline and other flammable containers are stored in appropriate containers, well-marked and kept in cool, dry place away from the house and out of the reach of children and pets.
- Never use gasoline to clean stains off skin, clothes, auto parts or floors.
- Clean up work areas and make sure dangerous tools, adhesives, matches and other harmful items are out of reach of children.
- Check your barbecue grill for leaks and cracks and be sure to store any propane tanks away from your house and garage.
- Remove all fire hazards including stack of rags, newspapers and magazines. Pay special attention to areas around your furnace, hot water tank, fireplace, space heater, dryer and under the stairs.

With spring also comes the start of Daylight Savings Time (DST), one of two times per year that you should be replacing the batteries in your smoke detectors. The second time of year is at the end of DST. Remembering to change to batteries at the start and end of DST will ensure that these life-saving devices are ready to use in an emergency situation. FYI, even new units that are hardwired into the home's electrical system have battery back-ups, so make sure you check those as well. Some other points to consider:

- Test your smoke detectors monthly.
- To help prevent nuisance alarms, gently vacuum your smoke detectors every six months or as needed.
- Never borrow smoke detector batteries to use for toys, remotes or other equipment.
- Replace all smoke detectors every 10 years or as recommended by the manufacturer.

For more tips and resources to keep you and your home hazard free this spring season, visit the Environmental Health and Safety homepage at stonybrook.edu/ehs/.

Core Nutrition

Gluten Confusion

Basic Facts About This Popular Dietary Trend

By Leah Hdbrook, MS, RD, *Coordinator, Graduate Nutrition Programs, Department of Family Population and Preventive Medicine, Stony Brook Medicine*

While the phrase "gluten free" has become a household name, many people may not know exactly what gluten is. Gluten is a combination of several proteins found in specific grains, namely wheat, rye, barley and sometimes oat. For most people, gluten passes through the digestive tract and causes no ill effects. For others, however, it does. The term "gluten intolerance" is an umbrella term that is often used to describe two different types of conditions: celiac disease and non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS).

Celiac disease is an autoimmune disorder whereby dietary gluten damages the integrity of the lining of the small intestine causing inflammation and nutrient deficiencies. Symptoms of celiac disease can vary, but include bloating, chronic diarrhea, vomiting, unexplained iron-deficiency anemia, fatigue, infertility, bone or joint pain, arthritis and osteoporosis. Celiac disease can also be less obvious with few overt symptoms.

NCGS, oftentimes simply called "gluten intolerance", causes the body to mount a stress response different from the immunological response that occurs in those who have celiac disease. While not much is yet known about NCGS, it does appear that in these individuals the intestinal lining is not damaged in the way it is in a celiac sufferer. Individuals with NCGS often complain of just not feeling "well" when they include gluten in their diet. Other complaints may include those similar to the symptoms of celiac yet these individuals do not test positive for celiac disease.

The cells lining the intestine are linked together by a complex system commonly referred to as "tight junctions." It has been suggested that if these tight junctions are not working well, either due to genetic predisposition, poor diet, or both, an individual may be more likely to suffer from a variety of ills. The prevalence of NCGS in the general population is unknown, largely because many people are self-diagnosing and adopting a gluten-free diet without medical advice or consultation.

A visit to a Registered Dietitian (RD), may also be a worthwhile step for someone who struggles with non-specific gastrointestinal symptoms as there may be reasons other than dietary gluten responsible. An RD can also help construct a healthy, wholesome dietary pattern for someone who is

avoiding gluten to ensure adequate nutritional intake. Foods containing gluten include the obvious - bread, pasta, crackers, baked treats, etc. - as well as less common offenders such as beer, certain prepared foods and some convenient snack items.

While following a gluten free diet takes careful planning, an individual can maintain a very high quality diet while avoiding gluten. For someone with celiac disease, following a gluten free diet is a must. Despite the unavailability of a concrete diagnostic test for NCGS, if an individual "feels better" or enjoys relief from specific symptoms when adhering to a gluten-free diet, this is not a harmful lifestyle to adopt. In fact, while complete avoidance of gluten is not necessary or recommended for someone without a gluten intolerance or sensitivity, naturally gluten free foods offer a multitude of health benefits. A well-balanced, gluten free diet can be built around high quality foods such as fruits, vegetables, beans, legumes, nuts, low fat and low sugar dairy, poultry and seafood. Gluten-containing grains can be substituted with gluten-free sources of carbohydrate such as sweet potatoes, winter squash, brown rice and lesser known "ancient grains" such as millet, quinoa and buckwheat.

Important to note, however, is that with the increasing popularity of the gluten-free diet there comes an avalanche of ready-to-eat snack items catering to the gluten-free shopper. While some convenience items are necessary for most, those following a gluten-free diet should do their best to avoid relying too heavily on these packaged foods and instead, choose more "whole foods," prioritizing the preparation and cooking that is associated with the increased consumption of a higher-quality diet. For what it's worth, this last bit of advice should be taken to heart by all - not just those who avoid gluten.



Healthy Eats

Chia Oatmeal Breakfast Cookies

By Stephanie May, *Campus Dining Registered Dietitian*

Serving Size: 1 cookie

Makes: 15 cookies

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 tablespoons chia seeds
- 1/4 cup unsweetened vanilla almond milk
- 2 ripe bananas, mashed
- 3/4 cup old-fashioned oats
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1 tablespoon creamy nut butter (peanut, almond, cashew, sunflower)
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350F.
2. In a small bowl, stir together the chia seeds and almond milk and let the mixture sit for about 10 minutes until a gel-like consistency is formed; best if stirred every few minutes.
3. Pour the chia seed gel into a medium-sized mixing bowl, and add in the mashed bananas, oats, almonds, nut butter and cinnamon. Combine slowly then gently stir in the raisins.
4. Scoop out a generous tablespoon of the mixture onto a greased cookie sheet and use a form to press down the mixture. Batch should yield about 15 cookies.
5. Place in the oven and bake for 18-20 minutes or until the bottom of the cookies have browned.
6. Remove from oven, cool and enjoy. Cookies should last 4-5 days in an airtight container or can be frozen to enjoy at a later time!

Nutrition

Serving size: 1 cookie
Calories: 60, Fat: 2 g, Saturated Fat: 0.5 g
Cholesterol: 0 mg, Sodium: 4 mg, Carbohydrates: 10 g, Fiber: 2 g, Protein: 2 g



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