Employee Newsletter & Resources

October is Health Literacy Month

Health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information needed to make appropriate decisions. Your health care provider may provide medical language you're unfamiliar with or don't understand. This is why it's essential to know how health-literate you are.

October is Health Literacy Month, as health literacy can help people obtain appropriate medical and behavioral health. Those with low health literacy may not receive equal care because they do not have the same level of understanding as their provider. Ways to improve health literacy include asking questions, researching your medical conditions and having further conversations with your provider.

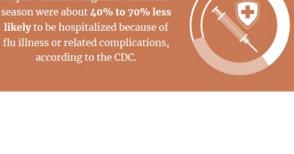


Influenza (flu) season lasts from October through May in the United States, with peak **Tips for Staying Healthy**

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the timing and duration of flu activity have been unpredictable. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported early increases in seasonal flu last year. The Southincreases in seasonal flu last year. The Southern Hemisphere also experienced an early surge of flu activity this year, which may indicate what's to come in the United States.

Furthermore, health experts anticipate another wave of respiratory viral infections this fall, namely from the flu, the virus that causes COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Fortunately, vaccines for all three viruses will be available for the first time in the fall. Vaccinations have been shown to reduce fall. Vaccinations have been shown to reduce hospitalizations and death and may be particularly beneficial for those with compromised

likely to be hospitalized because of flu illness or related complications according to the CDC



ier for germs to spread and linger in the air. Here are some germ hot spots:

any age, but children and older adults are especially

vulnerable. To help keep your household healthy this flu season, consider the following suggestions: Get vaccinated. Being vaccinated against the flu is your best chance of preventing the illness. The

CDC recommends that anyone 6 months and

older get a flu shot every year. The flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same

The flu can cause serious complications for people of

- visit. Avoid close contact with people who are sick, and stay away from others when you feel unwell. Because flu and COVID-19 symptoms are similar, doctors say it's best to get tested to know what you have.
- Wash your hands often using soap and warm water to protect against germs. If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sani-Cover your coughs and sneezes to prevent the
- spread of germs. Sleep well, stay active and drink plenty of water to keep your immune system strong.
- Eat a nutritious diet of healthy grains, fruits, vegetables and fiber.
- September and October are the best months to get vaccinated against the flu, so don't delay getting your shot. Contact your doctor today to learn more about

Where Are the Germiest Places? Germs are a part of life—and they're everywhere. The dry air associated with fall and winter also makes it eas-

Home—Remote controls, kitchen counters, bathroom fixtures and handles, sponges and toothbrush holders Workplace—Desktops, keyboard, mouse, chair armrests, writing tools, handles, switches and doorknobs School—Water fountains, doorknobs, desks and tables, shared school supplies, cafeterias and playgrounds

Hand-washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs, especially after sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose.

Sanitizing vs. Disinfecting



staples on hand to make healthy eating easy:

Canned chickpeas can easily be added to soups or mashed with seasonings for extra protein and fiber. Chicken breast is a great protein to build a meal around. You could make pasta, soups, casseroles, sand-Extra-firm tofu is full of plant-based protein and calcium. Its neutral flavor makes it great for stir-fries and

- Quinoa or lentils are versatile options to round off meals. They are packed with fiber and protein. Whole-wheat spaghetti is a great last-minute meal idea. It has a sizable dose of fiber and helps reduce
- cholesterol. Frozen spinach can easily go in egg dishes, pasta or smoothies. It is packed with four times the nutrients
- of fresh spinach.

With these healthy basics on hand, you can toss together nutritious meals that require minimal effort.

Take Charge of Your Health

Keep Your Eyes Healthy Chronic stress can cause insomnia, depression, a weak immune system, headaches and other mental and

focus, help with weight management and reduce pain. Consider the following tips for practicing mindfulness: Schedule frequent eye exams. Regular eye exams can help you detect

Mindfulness is a state of intentional focus on the present moment. It can boost mood, reduce stress, improve

physical health issues. One way to manage your stress is by practicing mindfulness.

MINUTE

Consume healthy foods. diseases in their early stages when they're Certain foods, such as dark leafy greens and easier to treat. Visit your eye care professional foods high in Omega-3 fatty acids, contain routinely for dilated eye exams. nutrients that contribute to eye health. Eat Stay active. these foods whenever possible.



Being active can help you control your blood sugar levels and maintain a healthy weight, reducing your risk of developing eye disease.

October 2023

Rest your eyes. Too much screen time can strain your eyes. If you work on a computer all day, give your eyes a break every 20 minutes by looking at something at least

20 feet away for several seconds at a time.



damaging rays. Look for sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB

Wear sunglasses.

Sunglasses can protect your eyes from



senses to help you navigate feelings of distress. A ditionally, walking can release endorphins, which technique to physically ground yourself is to put ease stress and discomfort. your hands in water and focus on the temperature Find ways to laugh, such as watching funny videos, of the liquid or switch from cold water to warm washaring jokes with a friend, going online or watch-

Other physical grounding exercises include deep breathing, savoring food or drink, picking up nearby objects and moving your body (e.g., walking, running in place or doing jumping jacks). **Mental Grounding Techniques** You can mentally ground yourself with exercises that prevent mental distractions and help redirect

Such exercises include memory games, category-

thinking (e.g., listing all the types of cake you can

think of), reciting a song or book passage you

know by heart, and visualizing a daily task you

your thoughts to the present.

Soothing Grounding Techniques

ter and back while focusing on the present mo-

Physically grounding yourself involves using your

techniques are intended to promote good feelings that reduce or distract from negative emotions. You can practice soothing techniques by picturing

the face of someone you love, repeating compassionate phrases about yourself, spending time

with your pet, visualizing your favorite place or list-

Soothing techniques can be used to comfort yourself in times of high anxiety or distress. These

ing positive things. Conclusion Your gut health significantly impacts the health of

your brain and body. By eating foods that promote gut health, you may experience improved focus,

Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients

October 2023 Recipe

ing comedians. Try aromatherapy to de-stress. Smells can trigger positive memories and help relieve anxiety or stress. Find your favorite scented soap, smell something that reminds you of a loved one or sam-

Play cheerful and upbeat music. This can help

even improve certain brain functions, such as

boost your mood, ease tension, reduce anxiety and

Do something nice for somebody else, such as a

can make them feel better and may improve your

co-worker or friend. Being compassionate to others

Try These Mood-Boosting Activities

Negative emotions and disappointments can easily

derail your activities. Although it's common to be in

a bad mood occasionally, letting negative emotions

take over your day can leave you feeling worse. Instead of ignoring a bad mood, try a mood-

Walking outdoors is a great activity for improving

your mood. Spending time outdoors and being in

sunlight have both been proven to boost mood. Ad-

boosting activity.

Free Mood-Boosters

ple a new essential oil.

Conclusion

mood as well. Consider small favors, such as doing chores for your housemate or partner, walking a neighbor's dog or helping a stranger with their gro-Talk to people in your life who uplift you. A short call or time spent with a loved one can help you

reduce tension. As a bonus, your loved one may be able to make you laugh, take your mind off your

troubles or remind you that you're not alone.

The next time you're in a bad mood, try one of

and lessen the impact of negative emotions.

these free mood-boosting activities to reduce stress

Vegetable cooking spray 1 acorn squash 1 dash of salt 2 Tbsp. margarine 3 Tbsp. brown sugar 1 tsp. cinnamon ¼ tsp. nutmeg ¼ tsp. ginger

6g

1 g

0 mg

19 g

2 g

7 g

6g

91 mg

Nutritional information for 1 serving

Dietary fiber Total sugars Added sugars included Protein

Calories

Total fat

Sodium

Saturated fat

Cholesterol

Carbohydrate

Source: MvPlate

1 g

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Directions

cooking spray.

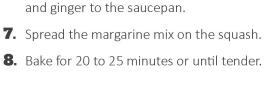
½-inch slices.

- 1. Preheat the oven to 400 F. 2. Coat the baking sheet with vegetable
- Sprinkle with salt. **5.** Melt the margarine on low heat in a small saucepan.

3. Wash the squash. Cut it in half lengthwise.

Remove the seeds. Cut the squash into

4. Place the squash on the baking sheet.



6. Add the brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg

EMPOWERING EMPLOYERS STRENGTHENING EMPLOYEES

