

SUMMER 2022

KACO Connections

Welcome note

Dr. William Dempsey,
M.D.
The Wright Center for
Community Health



Welcome to the summer 2022 edition of KACO Connections, as my colleagues and I work together to bring you the high-quality health care and quarterly resources you deserve for a stronger, healthier you. As you know, there are many ways to lead a healthy lifestyle that enables you to live life to the fullest extent possible. I hope the articles in this newsletter about healthy eating, gardening, stress reduction and more make it easier for you to reach that worthwhile goal.

The highly contagious omicron subvariant BA.2 reminds us that the COVID-19 pandemic remains a public health threat. Therefore, I want to remind everyone how important it is to receive your vaccinations and boosters. It remains our best weapon against the virus.

Overall, it has not been an uneventful 2022. Inflation, a war overseas and the pandemic have raised anxiety and stress levels for many of the people we serve. One of our articles offers some smart stress reduction techniques that can provide some added benefits to your overall health and well-being. One of my colleagues also included an article about the importance of improving your heart health through better habits - eating, exercising, rest and more. It's an important read full of good advice.

Our series of articles have a common theme woven throughout that I feel you will find useful. Who does not like healthy eating tips in which you can also save money? We also address the timely therapeutic effects of gardening and how to do it safely.

The summer issue also provides information about reducing your overall out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs and upcoming events that will introduce you to new friends while also improving your physical and mental health.

Thank you for reading our articles and I hope they accomplish our organization's overall mission of providing you better and more coordinated care by working together.

Thank you,
Dr. William Dempsey

With the cost of groceries on the rise, planning a healthy and affordable meal plan is more challenging than ever. Try these easy tips to help you get the most of your shopping trips while still being easy on your wallet.

- Shop seasonally-buy fruits and vegetables currently in season as they are grown closer to home and don't need to be transported long distances which can lead to higher prices at the store. Support your local farmers' markets and roadside stands to fill your plates with vegetables and fruits. Choose fruit for snacks instead of highly processed snacks like potato chips and cookies.
- Buy less meat-meats have seen the highest rise in overall price, including beef and chicken. Plan your meals around vegetables and whole grains such as brown rice and whole grain pasta. Trade meats for dried or canned beans such as black beans and cannellini beans. These legumes are not only inexpensive but also are great sources of protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals.
- Try store brands-they can be the same quality as brand names but cost much less.
- Limit soda and other sweetened beverages. Choose water as your main beverage instead of more expensive sweetened teas and juices.
- Shop the sales-most stores feature their best prices on the first and last pages of their advertisements. Don't forget to use coupons which are still available in most Sunday newspapers and "digitally" through store smartphone apps.

Try the following meatless recipe that uses split peas and brown rice as a whole grain. Serve with a fresh green salad or steamed broccoli!

Kim Marie Segiel, RDN, LDN

Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center



Additional grocery saving tips

- Plan weekly/monthly menus
- Purchase ingredients that can be used in several recipes
- Avoid purchasing pre-packaged food
- Cut your own fruits, vegetables, cheese
- Grow your own vegetables
- Swap expensive meats for cheaper protein options like beans, lentils, canned tuna, eggs, peanut butter
- Keep a grocery list and try to stick to it when shopping
- Freeze leftovers for another meal

Split pea chowder over brown rice

Courtesy of: DCE.org (Diabetes Practice Group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics)



Ingredients:

For the chowder:

- 4 cups water (or broth)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup split peas
- 1 medium onion, diced (about 1 cup)
- 1 medium potato, cubed (about 1 cup)
- 1 medium carrot, sliced
- 1/2-1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/4 cup chopped celery tops (the leaves)

For the brown rice:

- 2-1/2 cup water
- 1 cup brown rice

Directions:

1. Bring water to boil, add salt and split peas. Simmer about 1 hour. Add onion, potato, carrots, and simmer about 1 hour longer, until peas are cooked. About 15 minutes prior to serving, add basil and celery tops.
2. For the brown rice, 1 hour prior to serving soup, boil 2 1/2 cups water, add brown rice. Cover and turn heat down to low. Cook 40 minutes, turn heat off and let stand with cover on 10 minutes.
3. To serve, put 1/4 of cooked rice in large soup bowl, and cover with 1/4 of the split pea chowder.

Nutritional facts - servings per recipe: 4

Amount per serving - calories 370

Total fat - 2.0g

Saturated fat - 0.4g

Monounsaturated fat - 0.6g

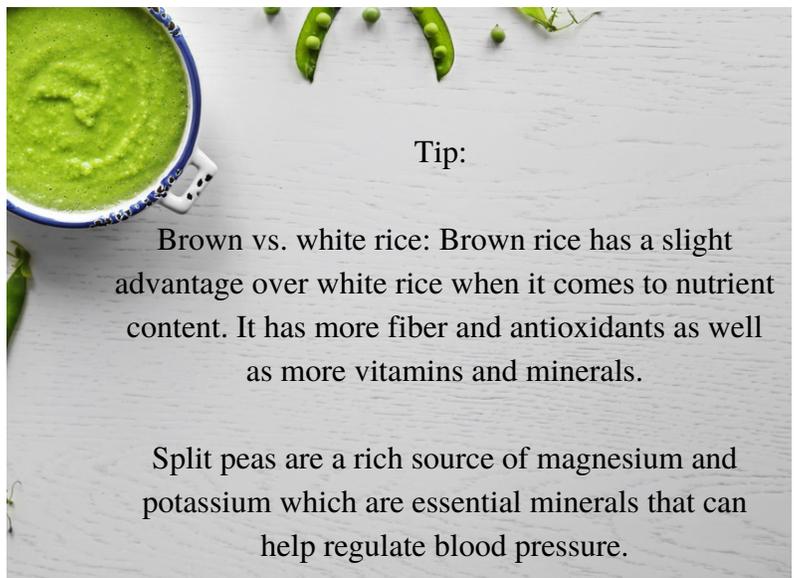
Polyunsaturated fat - 0.7g

Sodium - 164.2mg

Total carbohydrate - 72.5g

Dietary fiber - 15.2g

Protein - 16.4g



Tip:

Brown vs. white rice: Brown rice has a slight advantage over white rice when it comes to nutrient content. It has more fiber and antioxidants as well as more vitamins and minerals.

Split peas are a rich source of magnesium and potassium which are essential minerals that can help regulate blood pressure.

Smart stress reduction techniques for anyone in these crazy times

Given recent events - the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, inflation and gas prices - it's safe to say most of us are feeling a bit stressed these days.

April is National Stress Awareness Month, an annual observance where much focus is placed on combating the harmful effects of chronic stress.

Stress is an unavoidable part of life, and we all experience it in big and small ways. But prolonged stress can lead to physical problems, including fatigue, headaches, muscle tension and, when it's very serious, cardiovascular disease.

The good news is that we can prevent and manage stress in fairly simple ways that will allow us to live happier, healthier lives. Here are a few tips to manage stress:

Maintain a healthy diet: Eat whole foods, which ward off stress naturally, and greatly reduce stimulants like caffeine, alcohol and nicotine, which affect sleep and increase stress.

Exercise: This is an easy one, since increased exercise can lower your blood pressure, boost your endorphins and just make you feel better. Join a gym, or even just get outside and walk or run several days a week.

Get more sleep: Many people suffer from lack of sleep, and the fatigue can lead to a severe lack of overall well-being and eventually lead to increased anxiety and depression. It's important to establish a calming vibe every night before you go to bed, and to reduce or eliminate your screen time. Instead of scrolling through your phone, read or listen to some soothing music.

Relax: This one sounds simple, but for many, learning how to properly relax can be difficult. Try meditation or mindfulness as a daily practice - it can greatly decrease stress levels. Or, make time to simply sit and daydream. There's nothing wrong with turning off our brains for a bit.

Prioritize your schedule: Most of us tend to try to do too much in the course of a day, whether in our jobs or personal lives. That can be very stressful, so instead, make a list and check off things that need to get done, while pushing aside the things that can be done at another time.

Talk to someone: When you're feeling over-stressed, sometimes the best thing you can do is simply work through your problems with a trusted family member, friend or a licensed professional therapist.

Do something fun: Obviously doing something you enjoy is a great de-stressor. Find a fun activity of your choice - go to a movie or sporting event, start a hobby or just have dinner with friends.

Have a laugh: Sometimes all you need is a good chuckle, which can quickly lighten any mood and take our stress levels down several notches.

Again, we could all use less stress in our lives. I know it's easier said than done, but if you mindfully practice some of these things on a regular basis, there's a good chance you'll feel better mentally, physically and emotionally.

Dr. William Dempsey, M.D., Deputy Chief Medical Officer, The Wright Centers for Community Health, Medical Director, The Wright Center for Community Health's Clarks Summit Practice

Sadness, grief, and even passing feelings of hopelessness or despair are part of the "human experience". Most people face these feelings at some time(s) in their lives, but generally last only for short periods of time as situations change. However, a depressed mood that lasts longer than two weeks may need some form of therapy, either counseling or medication to resolve.

Depression affects people from all walks of life, no matter what their background. About 1 in 15 people age 65 and older (seniors) suffer from depression with women trending more than men. Yet depression can go untreated as these signs may be considered a normal part of aging or stigmatized as weakness and shameful. Depression is not a normal sign of aging. Depression is a physiological condition caused by chemical changes in the brain out of a person's control and nothing to be ashamed of. Mild depression may be treated with effective counseling alone. Moderate to severe depression will require medication.

People with depression may experience a change in appetite and/or sleep, low energy, poor concentration, loss of interest in activities, feelings of emptiness, increased anxiety or agitation. As a matter of fact, half of the people with depression also suffer from an anxiety disorder. If left untreated, severe depression and/or anxiety may result in not caring for oneself (not eating, drinking, bathing) and having thoughts of self-harm.

Seniors may experience other signs of depression such as memory problems, increased agitation, or delusions. These same signs may also indicate another type of problem, such as an infection or inflammatory response that can cause a person to become very ill if left untreated. Either cause warrants early diagnosis and treatment by a medical professional.

If you believe that you or a loved one may have depression, talk to your primary care doctor who can properly assess, diagnose, and start treatment. And do not be surprised if you are asked questions about possible signs of depression during your next primary care visit. Your doctor and team want to assure you do not have an unrecognized depression that is treatable.

Janet Comrey, RN, BSN, MHSA
Director of Payment Transformation
Keystone Accountable Care Organization

**Depression is not
A normal part of aging, a sign of
weakness, or something to be ashamed of.**

**If you think you or a loved one might
have depression, talk to your healthcare
provider.**



The Therapeutic Effects of Gardening: Local Non-Profit is Planting Laughter & Growing Smiles

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Spring has sprung! Have you thought about growing an outdoor or indoor garden? In an effort to decrease social isolation and loneliness, Partners for a Healthy Community (PHC), a local non-profit organization, is launching an innovative intergenerational vertical gardening project. The project is conducted in partnership with PHC, Susquehanna University students and community-dwelling seniors. It is envisioned that the project will be used to plant smiles, grow laughter, harvest love and social connection.

There are many therapeutic benefits of gardening for seniors. Gardening can improve physical, mental, social, and emotional health. Growing plants can improve memory, mood, and functional mobility. It can also decrease risk for heart disease and stroke and increase overall wellness. Gardening for seniors may also decrease loneliness and the risk for dementia. Oxygen produced by plants can have a calming effect. Spending daily time with plants and connecting with nature can provide tranquility and decrease anxiety and depression. You can always start small. Planting herb gardens can stimulate the sense of smell which can produce strong memory triggers. This can be helpful for reminiscence.

Kimberly A. Delbo, MSN, RN-BC, CSN, CDP
Community Innovation Director
Partners for a Healthy Community

Tip:

Try growing your own vegetables at home. It does cost money for seeds and supplies to get you started, but a single plant often produces a lot of vegetables, saving you time and money later.

If you don't have a lot of space, try planting a few container gardens. Some great options are tomatoes, peppers, herbs and many more.



To learn more about Partners for a Healthy Community visit www.healthycommunity.digital

Upcoming Event

UNION COUNTY FOOD HUB

POP-UP PRODUCE STAND

FREE, LOCAL PRODUCE!

THURSDAYS, 4-6 PM AT THE MILLER CENTER COURTYARD (120 HARDWOOD DR, LEWISBURG, PA)

- NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED
- AVAILABLE MAY THROUGH OCTOBER

UNION COUNTY
foodhub



Union-Snyder
COMMUNITY ACTION
AGENCY

QUESTIONS? CALL UNION-SNYDER CAA AT 570-374-0181

We all know how important normal pressure is for the proper flow of blood from the heart to the body's organs and tissues. After all, every beat of our heart forces blood to the rest of the body.

The leading cause of cardiovascular death in the United States is coronary artery disease, which is caused by atherosclerosis, the deposition of fat, cholesterol and calcium inside the coronary arteries. These deposits cause plaque build-up, which ultimately blocks our coronary arteries and lead to the loss of blood flow and oxygen to our heart muscle causing heart attacks. So, how can we prevent this? Well, we can start by adopting a healthier diet, which allows us to lower bad cholesterol that protects us against blockages and lowers the risk of high-blood pressure.

Today, all major physician and nutritionist guidelines recommend including more whole grains and vegetables, mostly green leafy plants, into our diet, while limiting animal products.

As a practicing vegan, I cannot stress enough the importance of avoiding harmful saturated fats and reducing the amount of sugar, sodium and alcohol we consume. It's all about lowering the fat and increasing the fiber in our diet.

Of course, diet is just one part of the heart-healthy equation. We should also be getting regular exercise, whether it's weight training, running or even daily walks. And it's important to decrease the amount of stress in our lives. Practicing mindfulness, through meditation and yoga, or simply participating in other activities that decrease your mental and physical stress, can lead to a healthier lifestyle.

The Wright Center for Community Health offers a Lifestyle Medication program that helps patients achieve the right balance of exercise, diet and more.

The program focuses on the pillars of health: nutrition, exercise, sleep, stress management, social connectivity and the avoidance of risky substances. Lifestyle medicine is not an alternative medicine. Rather, it uses evidence-based strategies that demonstrate the value of lifestyle interventions on achieving and maintaining good health. The program enables health care providers to complete a thorough patient assessment of current health habits and then introduce individualized treatment plans based on specific risk factors, such as weight management.

In addition, it's extremely important to get a restful sleep every night because it provides the body with essential time to rejuvenate, recharge and restore itself to an optimal state. Poor, broken sleep adds to increased strain on the cardiovascular system. Simple changes such as avoiding screen time prior to bedtime, or cutting off caffeine intake in the late afternoon can lead to a better night's sleep. And, for those of you who experience excessive snoring, stop breathing during sleep, or feel fatigued despite a full night's rest - you may have sleep apnea, so I would advise being evaluated by your family physician as soon as possible.

There is no question a healthy lifestyle is the key to long-term cardiovascular health. So, let's put some healthier habits into practice. Your heart will thank you for it in the long run.



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Programs which provide assistance with all medications

Medicare / Social Security: Extra help program

Contact: 1-800-772-1213

<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Prescription-Drug-Coverage/LimitedIncomeandResources/index.html>

Online application: <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/prescriptionhelp.html>

Requirements: currently on Medicare, reside in the US and meet income and asset limits

Benefits: copays will be no more than \$8.95 for brand medications and \$3.60 for generics

State of Pennsylvania: PACE and PACEnet program

Contact: 1-800-225-7223

Requirements: 65 years or older, resident of PA and meet income limits:

Married: less than \$41,500 per year

Single: less than \$33,500 per year

Benefits: copays will be no more than \$15 for Brand medications and \$9 for generics

Pharmacy Prescription Savings Cards - pharmacy discount only

RxAssist: www.rxassist.org

GoodRx: www.goodrx.com

SingleCare: www.singlecare.com



Programs which provide assistance with specific medications

Drug Manufacture Patient Assistance Programs (PAP)

Most drug manufactures offer programs to help pay for medications they produce, including those enrolled in Medicare prescription drug coverage (Part D).

If medication in the PAP, coverage available for income less than \$70,000 per year per couple.

Web sites:

www.rxassist.org: easy to use, can search by medication or manufacture

www.needymeds.org: can only search by medication



Now more than ever, you may need access to resources for your most immediate and life sustaining needs. Neighborly is available as an easy-to-use online tool that helps you connect to free and reduced-cost programs and services, including food, housing, childcare, transportation, utility assistance, healthcare and financial assistance. If you or someone you know needs more information about what is available in your neighborhood, go to NeighborlyPA.com.

Recipe Courtesy of: Emily Newhard, Program Manager, Foodservice Geisinger



Ingredients:

- 1 large cucumber chopped (about 2 cups)
- 1 15 oz can (1 1/2 cups) chickpeas, rinsed (look for no salt added)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, sliced in half
- 1/4 cup red onion diced small
- 1/4 cup fresh herbs, chopped (mint, parsley, basil, or dill)
- 1/4 cup Feta cheese, low fat or fat free
- 2 Tbsp. Extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 Tbsp. Lemon juice or red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp. garlic minced

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, mix the chickpeas with the chopped cucumber, tomatoes, onion, herbs, and cheese.
 2. In a smaller bowl, use a fork or whisk to combine olive oil, lemon juice, and garlic. Pour over bean and vegetable mixture and toss to coat.
 3. Serve immediately, or as time allows, let marinate in the refrigerator for 1 hour before serving.
- Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 3 days.

Nutritional facts - servings per recipe: 5-1 cup servings

Amount per serving - calories 167.5

- Total fat - 8.4 g
- Saturated fat - 1.7 g
- Polyunsaturated fat - 1.2 g
- Monounsaturated fat - 4.3 g
- Cholesterol - 4.0 mg
- Sodium - 146.2 mg
- Potassium - 222.8 mg
- Total carbohydrate - 18.0 g
- Dietary fiber - 4.3 g
- Sugars - 2.6 g
- Protein - 6.9 g

*Nutrition information calculated using low-fat cheese

Tip:

Feta Cheese is a soft cheese made from sheep or goats milk and is a good source of vitamin B, calcium and protein. It may also support gut health. Choose low fat or fat free options and crumble on salads. If you are on a low sodium diet, eat this cheese in moderation.



Gardening safety tips

- Work in short sessions and be careful not to overdo it.
- Ensure work area is free of trip hazards such as hoses, branches or exposed roots.
- Avoid standing on ladders, chairs or overturned buckets.
- Wear gardening gloves, comfortable stable footwear, lightweight long-sleeved shirt and pants, hat and sunglasses.
- Have chairs available in a nearby shaded area and rest often.
- Work early in the morning or early evening to avoid heat and extreme sun exposure.
- Use lightweight garden tools with soft grip handles.
- Carry a phone so you can call for help in an emergency.
- Stay hydrated with plenty of water.
- Apply sunscreen and insect repellent.
- Be cautious of overexposure to heat and the elements.
- Treat all insect bites and minor cuts or scrapes immediately.

Resources

To contact Medicare

For additional information on accountable care organizations, contact Medicare at 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227) and ask for the Medicare ACO Department. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. You may also visit [medicare.gov/acos.html](https://www.medicare.gov/acos.html).

Stress management tips

- Meditate
- Exercise/walk
- Experience nature/get outdoors
- Spend time with friends/family
- Eat healthy
- Avoid sugar and caffeine
- Take time to relax
- Practice positive thinking
- Surround yourself with positive people
- Get organized
- Find a hobby
- Volunteer
- Garden
- Stay active
- Set positive goals that you can achieve
- Read
- Watch a favorite movie
- Learn about a new topic that interests you
- Try a new healthy recipe

REMINDERS

- Schedule an annual wellness visit with your primary care provider.
- Make sure all your vaccines are up-to-date.
- Talk to your healthcare provider on whether or not you need the COVID-19 vaccine or booster.
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you are having difficulty affording your medications.
- If you use tobacco, talk to your doctor about a method that will help you quit.
- Mental health is just as important as physical health. Talk to your doctor if you're feeling lonely, stressed, isolated or depressed.

Senior Health & Fitness Day



"Exercise Your Way
to a Better Day!"

Wednesday, May 25
9 am-noon
The Miller Center
120 Hardwood Drive, Lewisburg

FREE and open to the public.

This nationwide effort has one goal: to keep older Americans healthy and fit. Throughout the morning, participants can choose to visit vendors, take part in health screenings, and join a variety of instructor-led activities.

This event is an open house format. Join us for the entire time or stop in for a quick visit. This event is sponsored by Asbury RiverWoods.



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KeystoneACO.org.