



WELCOA'S
spark16
IGNITE YOUR BEST YOU.

FEATURING
16 GREAT WAYS TO...
SEE THE
BRIGHT SIDE
OF THINGS
Pages 4-5

A MONTHLY HEALTHLETTER FROM THE WELLNESS COUNCIL OF AMERICA

Guidelines On Going Generic

The vast majority of generic drugs are safe and effective, but do talk to your doc or pharmacist if you:

Experience any changes. If you switch from a brand name to a generic drug, note any changes or side effects you feel and tell your doctor immediately—you may want to discuss possible alternatives.

Take extended-release meds. Extended-release medications have special coatings or ingredients that control how fast the drug is released from the pill into your body. The delivery system can vary from product to product. Some extended-release medications have the letters "XL" or "LA" or "XR".

Take thyroid medications, anti-seizure drugs or blood thinners. These drugs affect your blood level, and even the slightest change in medication (i.e., switching to generics) could possibly have adverse effects. Ask your doc or pharmacist if your medication falls into this category, and if he/she can advise on a generic equivalent.



Is GENERIC Good Enough?

You may not think twice about grabbing the generic store brand laundry detergent or cereal at the supermarket, but should you maintain the same brand blindness when it comes to the medications you're taking? In most cases, the answer is yes.

The Name Game

Brand name drugs are expensive because many are still under patent, and this means that only one company can make each medication. As the patent nears expiration, however, manufacturers can apply to the FDA for permission to make and sell generic versions of the drug. Since the drug has already been developed and tested, drug companies do not have to assume those start-up costs, and can afford to make and sell it more cheaply. Many major drugs—like sleeping and cholesterol meds—have become available as generics.

Can You Rely On Generics?

Generics are required by the FDA to measure up to the original in every aspect—dose, safety, strength, efficacy and purity. They must act just as fast and meet the same rigorous standards as their brand name counterparts.

Generics can differ from the originals in shape, color and inactive ingredients such as preservatives and fillers. If you're considering switching from brand name to generic, you may want to run this by your doc or pharmacist first. But if you've heard that generic drugs are manufactured in poorer-quality facilities or are inferior in quality to brand name drugs—that is simply not true.



Rx Over 3 billion prescriptions are filled every year in retail U.S. pharmacies.

MORE HEALTH TIPS INSIDE

This Month's Recipe:

This easy-to-prepare wrap hosts a luscious array of flavors, colors, textures and nutritional pop that is sure to please your taste buds along with the rest of your body. And because it features six separate super star foods it is guaranteed to make you feel great by mid-afternoon.

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups red cabbage chopped into thin strips

1 medium red bell pepper, diced

¼ cup chopped fresh parsley or cilantro

Juice of ½ lime (more if you like it)

Hot sauce to taste

2-3 Tbsp seasoned rice vinegar or vinegar of choice

1 ripe avocado

1, 15-ounce can rinsed cannellini or other white beans

2 Tbsp red onion, finely diced

½ cup crumbled goat cheese or feta cheese

Salt and pepper to taste

4, 100% whole wheat 6-8 inch tortillas

INSTRUCTIONS:

Combine the cabbage, bell pepper, fresh herbs, lime juice, hot sauce and vinegar in a bowl.

Mash the avocado and beans together in a separate bowl. Stir the cheese and onion into the avocado/bean mixture until thoroughly blended. Spread ¼ of the cheese/avocado/bean mixture onto the center portion of a tortilla and top with ⅔ cup of the cabbage mixture. Roll up the tortilla into burrito form so the ends are folded in and secured. Repeat with the rest of the tortillas. Wrap the tortillas in foil for safe and easy transport.



Dr. Ann
Ann Kulze, M.D.

With formal training in nutrition and medicine, plus hands-on experience as a mother of four and family physician, Dr. Ann is a unique nutrition expert for the real world.

The whole food ingredients found in Dr. Ann's recipes are the right foods for health and vitality. Nutritional excellence naturally follows.

For more, visit DrAnnWellness.com.

Green Goddess Bean Wrap



SUPER STAR FOOD OF THE MONTH: BEANS!

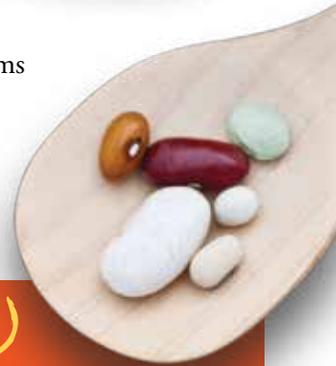
Beans have megawatt nutritional power. They provide a hefty dose of vegetable protein, more fiber and folate than any other food group, a load of potent antioxidant flavonoids, and key minerals including iron, potassium and magnesium.

Measure for measure, beans provide more fiber than any other food. A single half cup serving dishes up six-plus grams. Enjoy any variety in any form—canned, fresh, frozen or dried.



Fiber:

Your Secret Fat Fighter?



Dietary fiber has a well-deserved and sparkling reputation as a key defense against several chronic diseases, but fighting fat is arguably where it shines most brilliantly. In fact, one of the most predictable and defining features in the diets of people who achieve long-term success with body weight is their abundant intake of fiber-rich foods. And it's no wonder. Fiber offers a multitude of slimming features—it effectively “fills” your stomach up while providing little to no calories.

In addition to providing a physical sense of fullness in your tummy, fiber’s “volumizing” effects can also augment the release of appetite-suppressing hormones from the gastrointestinal tract. As a final bonus, fiber can also slow the digestive process, which has two key benefits.

First, food will ultimately stay in your stomach for a longer period of time, which means you will feel satisfied longer.

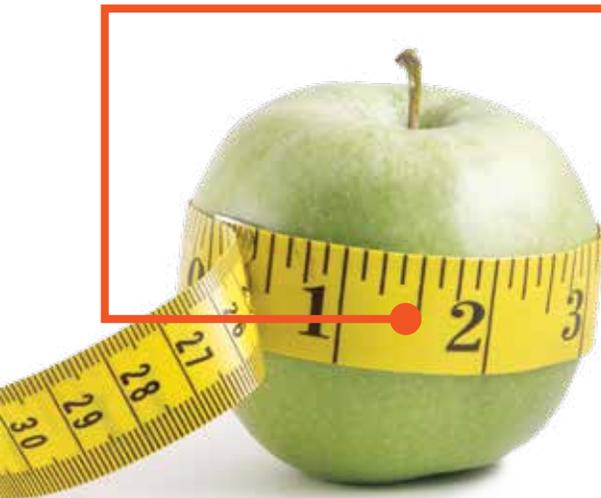
Second, because fiber hinders digestion, it will naturally soften the peaks and valleys of blood glucose fluctuations that can awaken and incite your “inner cookie monster.”

Tragically, despite fiber’s awesome benefits for health and body weight, we are running a huge fiber deficit in this country. The average American diet is painfully deficient in this natural appetite suppressant. Current intakes hover around a paltry 12

grams daily. For optimal health and appetite control, you need at least 14 grams for every 1,000 calories consumed. This translates to a minimum of about 25 grams daily for women and 30 grams daily for men. For a big dose of aspiration, consider that our ancient ancestors likely consumed around 150 grams a day.

Here are your best food choices for fiber.

- Beans (any variety)
- Peas
- Flax & chia seeds
- Avocado
- Carrots
- Collards
- Oranges
- Apples
- High-fiber whole-grain cereals—choose those with at least five grams of fiber per serving.
- Physically intact whole grains like oatmeal, brown rice, quinoa, barley, bulgur, etc.



Fiber & The Fight Against Belly Fat

There is now a mountain of scientific evidence that belly (visceral) fat is particularly dangerous to our health. Fortunately, results from a recent report identified two simple strategies for fighting this type of fat.

For this evaluation, Wake Forest researchers followed

1,114 people over a five-year period to determine what dietary and lifestyle factors may reduce belly fat accumulation. The researchers found that both soluble fiber and moderate physical activity proved to be winning waist-whittling endeavors.

For every 10 grams of soluble fiber consumed daily, belly fat was reduced by 3.7%.

Moderate physical activity (like brisk walking) proved to be an even better belly fat buster—slowing the buildup of belly fat by 7.4%

GIVE BELLY FAT A ONE-TWO PUNCH: Have that apple or bean salad before or after your brisk walk!

BRIGHT SIDE

Another Reason To Be An Optimist...

A 9-year study of cardiovascular health in more than 900 men and women in the Netherlands found that pessimists not only die sooner of heart disease than optimists, but they also die sooner of just about everything.



1 Act like you're happy, even if you're not feeling so chipper. You can indeed "trick" yourself into being happy. Researchers at Wake Forest University asked a group of 50 students to act like extroverts for 15 minutes in a group discussion, even if they didn't feel like it. The scientists found that the more assertive and energetic the students acted, the happier they were.



2 Throw your negative thoughts in the trash—literally. Writing down what's bugging you and then immediately throwing it away will make you feel better. Try it!



3 Set two or three small goals. Ambitious goals are great, but those goals usually take time and patience to achieve, which can be discouraging. Set two or three small and achievable goals to keep your motivation and spirits up.

4 Look forward to something—anything. It could be your favorite TV show or your weekly lunch with a friend. Having something you truly and eagerly anticipate generates optimism.

5 Reflect on two or three things that went right today. Even if you had a bad day, there are things you can be grateful for (your health, a funny joke you heard, your children, etc). If you are not grateful for the good things in your life, you will never be satisfied.



6 Set a limit on media exposure. There is no shortage of horrific and tragic events in this world—and all are seemingly covered in the media. Get the news you need to stay updated, but don't dwell on the negative events covered in the media.



7 Share your success stories with others. Not only will you re-live your positive experiences by sharing them, but you will also foster hope in yourself and others—which is a key component to optimism.

Ways To See The BETTER OF THINGS!

Be An Optimist!

Remember to talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.



8 Use and build on your strengths daily. If you don't have the ability to use and build upon your natural talents, you probably aren't as happy as you could be. Make sure you have an outlet to exercise your talents!

9 Exercise every day. Exercising releases natural feel-good chemicals called endorphins. Research has also shown that exercise (even just a daily walk) can reduce stress, ward off feelings of anxiety and depression and boost self-esteem.

10 Smile as much as you can. A study published in *Psychological Science* found that participants who smiled (even if it was a forced smile) felt less stress and increased happiness compared to those who did not smile.

11 Visualize the best (not worst) outcome. There's a lot of power behind positive thinking and visualization. Doing so doesn't make you naïve or blind to reality—it gives you extra motivation to achieve your goals.

12 Take action on what makes you feel down. A sense of control is key to maintaining an optimistic view. If you feel down about your weight, take a walk. If you feel stressed about your finances, create a budget, etc.

13 Reframe negative situations. Take any disappointment or negative event and reframe it in a way that allows you to see new possibilities. Didn't get that promotion? Maybe you now have time to re-evaluate what you really want, which will allow you to find the role that truly makes you happy.

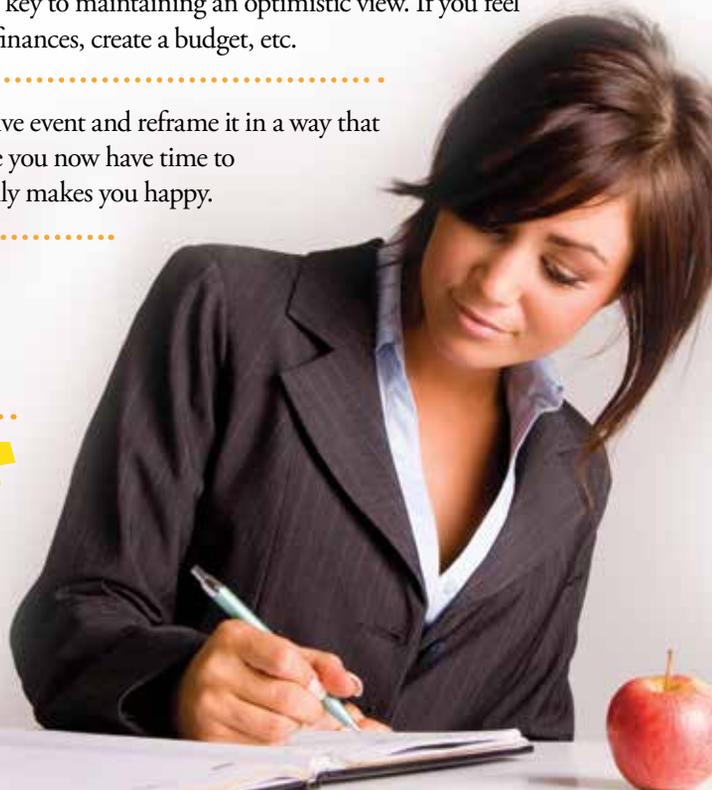
14 Identify who or what makes you feel down and avoid them like the plague. Like the saying goes, "misery loves company." Separate yourself from the people and things that drain the positive energy from your veins.

15 Don't dwell on things you have no control over. No matter what you do, you can't control the weather, the stock market or someone else's feelings. Worrying about such things will only cause undue anxiety.

16 Keep trying. Optimists aren't quitters. In fact, in one study, optimists continued to work on unscrambling an impossible-to-solve anagram 50% to 100% longer than pessimists.

GOALS:

- * Exercise daily
- * Limit TV time
- * Smile! 😊



Got Back

Pain?

Try
Yoga!



If you're an adult chances are you've suffered from back pain at some point in your life. Maybe you're experiencing it right now. The Institute of Medicine estimates that more than 100 million Americans suffer from chronic pain at a cost of around \$600 billion a year in medical treatments and lost productivity.

Say Yes To Yoga?

If you have back pain or want to help prevent it, you may want to consider yoga. In fact, a recent study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* found that practicing yoga or intensive stretching may improve chronic lower back pain and reduce the need for pain medications.

There are several different types of yoga, but the most commonly practiced form of yoga is Hatha yoga. Hatha yoga incorporates a series of simple and complex body poses, while relying on a specific breathing technique, referred to as Pranayama. The goal of yoga is to provide the practitioner (you) with several lasting physical and mental benefits.

How Does It Help?

Many of the poses in yoga gently strengthen the muscles in the back, as well as the abdominal muscles (also known as your "core"). When these muscles are well conditioned, you can maintain better upright posture and movement, and thus greatly reduce or avoid back pain.

It's highly recommended that you don't try learning yoga on your own. Work with an experienced and credentialed instructor to learn the proper way to perform the exercises and avoid injury. Yoga studios and classes are commonplace in most communities. Shop around until you find one that suits your liking and skill level.

Keep in mind that yoga is not intended to replace professional medical care. Seek the advice of a healthcare professional if you suffer from severe pain or any other health condition.

What Causes Back Pain?

There are several causes of back pain—here are some of the top reasons:

- Lack of strength and flexibility
- Excess body weight
- Poor posture
- Degenerative disks
- Scoliosis
- Osteoporosis
- Trauma
- Arthritis

Preventing Back Pain

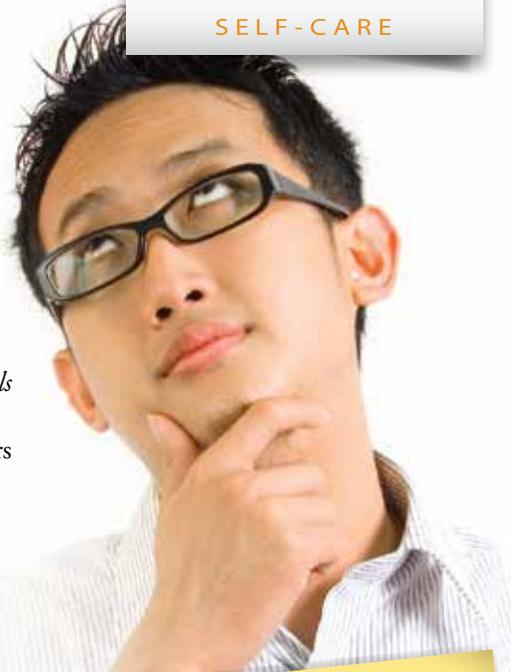
To help prevent back pain and injury, follow these healthy habits:

- › **Practice good posture.** Don't slouch when you sit and be sure to pull your shoulders back while you stand or walk.
- › **Avoid heavy lifting.** If you do lift something, lift with your knees, not with your back.

- › **Work on your "core."** Do exercises to strengthen the muscles that support your back, like the abdominals, hips, and pelvic area.
- › **See your doctor.** If the pain does not subside, see a health care professional and get treated for back pain early on, so it doesn't develop into something more severe.

5 Tips

To Improve Your Memory



1. Keep learning. You don't necessarily have to devote hours completing crossword puzzles, sudokus and other brain teasers to keep your brain sharp. However, to prevent cognitive decline, it's important that you keep your brain active by learning something. The challenge of the unknown is likely more beneficial than putting together the same jigsaw puzzle over and over again. More educated people, studies suggest, are at lower risk of Alzheimer's disease and show less mental decline with aging.

2. Drink coffee. Findings published in the journal *Neurology* found that study participants who drank over three cups of coffee a day were less likely to experience as much memory decline as those who consumed a cup or less. This doesn't mean you should necessarily start guzzling coffee—but if you already enjoy the beverage, this is encouraging news. Just make sure you drink it in the morning, and not in the afternoon, as the caffeine may interfere with restful sleep. And, as always watch the hidden calories in cream and sugar.

3. Eat berries. A study published in the *Annals of Neurology* reported that women who ate berries more frequently over a period of years showed slower decline in brain functions such as memory and attention when they got older than women who ate berries less often. It's thought that the antioxidants and polyphenols in blueberries, cranberries and grapes can help improve the ability of brain cells to communicate with each other, and lessen the brain's susceptibility to injury.

4. Exercise. Physical activity improves function throughout the entire body, including the brain. Mounting research shows that any type of exercise (i.e., walking, running, basketball, resistance training, etc.) has profound effects on overall cognitive function. Aim for 30 minutes of activity a day.

5. Get 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night. Research shows that when we don't sleep, proteins build up on synapses, possibly making it hard to think and learn new things.

Forgot what's on your to-do list?

Can't find your car keys?

What Is Dementia?

Dementia is the progressive deterioration in cognitive function—the ability to process thought (intelligence).

Dementia is not a specific disease, rather it's all-encompassing term that describes a wide range of symptoms associated with a decline in memory or other cognitive skills that impact a person's ability to perform everyday activities.

Alzheimer's disease accounts for the vast majority of dementia cases. Those who suffer from strokes may develop vascular dementia, which is the second most common type of dementia.

Symptoms Of Dementia

According to the Alzheimer's Association, symptoms of dementia can vary, however, at least two of the following core mental functions must

be significantly impaired to be considered dementia:

- Memory
- Communication and language
- Ability to focus and pay attention
- Reasoning and judgment
- Visual perception

If you or a loved one is experiencing trouble with memory or everyday thinking skills, see a doctor soon to

determine the cause and treatment. There are many other conditions that can cause symptoms of dementia, including some that are reversible, such as thyroid problems and vitamin deficiencies.

In every issue you'll find 16 ridiculously simple ways to stay healthy!

IN THIS ISSUE

- » Are There Better Options For Your Scripts?
- » The Secret Fat Fighter
- » Unlocking The Keys To Happiness
- » 5 Easy Ways To Improve Your Memory



DID YOU KNOW?

25 to 30

THE GRAMS OF FIBER YOU SHOULD AIM FOR DAILY.

3 cups



ONE STUDY FOUND THAT THOSE WHO DRANK THREE CUPS OF COFFEE A DAY WERE LESS LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE AS MUCH MEMORY DECLINE AS THOSE WHO CONSUMED A CUP OR LESS.

3+
billion

THE NUMBER OF PRESCRIPTIONS FILLED EVERY YEAR AT RETAIL PHARMACIES IN THE U.S.



Save
On Your Scripts

Consider **splitting your pills**. Many pills cost about the same even if they contain twice as much medication. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if your medication is safe for pill splitting.

Talk to your doc about cheaper options. According to a Consumer Reports survey, only four percent of those polled said they had a conversation with their doctors about the cost of a drug. Ask your doc about price and alternatives—it's nothing you should shy away from.

Find a prescription assistance program. There are several programs and organizations that can help people who can't afford their prescription drugs. The Partnership for Prescription Assistance is one reputable option—www.pparx.org

Negotiate with your pharmacist. Your pharmacy wants to retain your business. Let your pharmacist know if there's a better deal at another pharmacy—chances are they will match the price.

What's In A Number?

MONTHLY COST

\$4

SEVERAL
GENERIC DRUGS



MONTHLY COST

\$50 & UP

BRAND NAME
EQUIVALENTS

