TEAM KENTUCKY®
CABINET FOR HEALTH
AND FAMILY SERVICES

Senior Health & Wellness Newsletter

NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

March is recognized at National Nutrition Month. Choosing healthy foods to incorporate in your diet paired with physical activity, sleep and stress management are all components of a healthy lifestyle. Eating healthy does not have to be boring and bland. Meals do not have to be boring and bland to be healthy, yet they can be colorful, inviting and exciting. Meals are first eaten with your eyes. If meals are bright and colorful, you will be excited to eat them. If meals bring back special memories of special times of year or special loved ones, you are more likely be more excited about the different components of the meal.

Continued next page...

Inside:

National Nutrition Month

We all have that food item that we despised when we were children, and we were told to eat them. Whether it be boiled mushy cabbage, slimy asparagus or baked fish, we all have that memory and our feelings about that food item. We all have certain feelings with some foods; however, have you tried those foods again but just prepared or seasoned differently? For example, rather than cooking something in lard/vegetable shortening, switching to olive or avocado oil will be a healthier choice. Another option would be changing the way the meal is prepared all together. Rather than frying the food item, try a different preparation method, like roasting or baking. Though some ways of preparing foods may not always be your favorite or as healthy as you are following, there are ways to modify the meal to prepare it in a healthier manner. There are different ways to cook and season foods that will change the texture and taste of food items.

Eating nutritious meals does not have to be hard or stressful. Make your plate half fruits and vegetables accompanied by a lean protein source (fish, chicken or beans) and a whole grain (wheat roll, whole grain pasta or rice). Make your plate a variety of different colors and textures. As warmer weather starts to approach, eat fruits and vegetables that are in season, and you can get fresh at a cheaper price.

For the 2026 National Nutrition Month, we challenge you to try a new fruit and vegetable. Something you have always wanted to try but never had the courage to do it, whether it be a recipe or simply a food item. Something that you did not care for when you were younger but try in a way that is not the same was as before. Try something you have heard of, but you didn't know you could get at a local grocery store. Some examples may be dragon fruit, pomegranate, papaya, edamame, or Bok Choy. You are never too old to try new things!

Health Promotion!

National Nutrition Month

Poor nutrition can make exercise more difficult, while exercising without proper nutrients can lead to fatigue. When combined nutrition and physical activity are crucial for life-long health. Working together they can prevent chronic diseases, manage weight, and improve both physical and mental well-being. To give your body the energy and nutrients it needs to function, you need to eat a balanced diet; and to strengthen muscles and improve cardiac (heart) health, you need to exercise.

Nutrition Importance:
- Fuels the body.
- Supports recovery: Nutrient-dense foods, such as protein, are essential for muscle repair after physical activity.
- Prevents disease: Lowers the risk of heart disease, diabetes and hypertension.
- Boosts immunity: Vital for the immune system to function.
- Maintains a healthy weight.

Physical Activity Importance:
- Reduces disease risk: heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes
- Improves physical health
- Boosts mental well-being
- Aids in daily life: makes everyday tasks easier and can help prevent falls
- Supports weight management

St Patrick's Word Search!

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K Z U C M N I B N W Q Z W F Q
W C Z Q C W T E Y X W J B A P
F P U Z S E R M J K P G U N O
D D W L B B E E L G C R B J T
H W R O W K M R Q N O E N U A
J T U N O J I A V G D E L C T
L D L O G W L L G F M N I F O
S D N G S I D D S W R U B E F
A I E I R M O Z G T H H K H I
T S H A M R O C K A C A D Q F
I F O J C L J S N A N X K F B
A D F Z X S U Y H S P J I C E
S A J L I M E R I C K O T Z K
Q W E G D B T L B M P V Y P B
F P Q E C N U A H C E R P E L
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SHAMROCK
EMERALD
LUCK
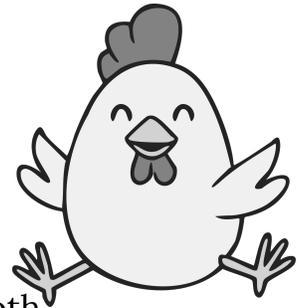
LIMERICK
LELPRECHAUN
POTATO

GREEN
GOLD
SNAKE

Can you find it? Somewhere in the newsletter is a tiny Kentucky. Did you spot it?

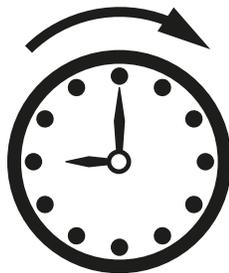Last month's was located on Page 5 next to "Solution".

Recipe

Chicken Divan for One

- 1 c broccoli florets
- 1 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 1 (4-5 oz) boneless, skinless chicken breast cut into ¼ in strips
- ⅛ tsp salt
- ⅛ black pepper
- 3 tbsp panko breadcrums
- 1 tbsp butter, melted
- ¼ c chopped onions
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ⅓ c low sodium chicken broth
- 3 tbsp heavy cream
- 2 tbsp sour cream
- ¼ tsp Italian seasoning
- ⅔ shredded sharp cheddar cheese, divided

- Heat the oven to 375 degrees. Lightly butter a 5x5 baking dish and set aside. Bring a medium pot of water to boil. Add broccoli florets and cook for 2 minutes until tender-crisp. Drain and set aside.
- Heat ½ tbsp of olive oil in skillet over medium-high heat. Season chicken with salt and pepper. Cook 2 minutes per side until cooked through. Remove and set aside. Add ½ tbsp of olive oil to the pan. Cook onions for about 2 minutes until translucent, stirring occasionally. Add garlic and cook for 30 seconds, stirring often. Pour in chicken broth and bring to a simmer. Stir in heavy cream and simmer for 1 minute, stirring frequently. Remove from heat and stir in sour cream and Italian seasoning.
- Add cooked chicken, half the cheese, and broccoli to the sauce. Stir to combine. Transfer mixture to the prepared baking dish and spread evenly.
- In a small bowl, mix breadcrumbs, remaining cheese, and melted butter. Sprinkle evenly over the casserole. Place dish on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake for 20 minutes until topping is golden brown.

Important dates in March

March 08 ... Daylight Savings Time Begins

March 14 ... Pi Day

March 17 ... St. Patrick's Day

March 20 ... Spring Equinox

March 29 ... Palm Sunday

Solution

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K  Z  U  C  M  N  I  B  N  W  Q  Z  W  F  Q
W  C  Z  Q  C  W  T  E  Y  X  W  J  B  A  P
F  P  U  Z  S  E  R  M  J  K  P  G  U  N  O
D  D  W  L  B  B  E  E  L  G  C  R  B  J  T
H  W  R  O  W  K  M  R  Q  N  O  E  N  U  A
J  T  U  N  O  J  I  A  V  G  D  E  L  C  T
L  D  L  O  G  W  L  L  G  F  M  N  I  F  O
S  D  N  G  S  I  D  D  S  W  R  U  B  E  F
A  I  E  I  R  M  O  Z  G  T  H  H  K  H  I
T  S  H  A  M  R  O  C  K  A  C  A  D  Q  F
I  F  O  J  C  L  J  S  N  A  N  X  K  F  B
A  D  F  Z  X  S  U  Y  H  S  P  J  I  C  E
S  A  J  L  I  M  E  R  I  C  K  O  T  Z  K
Q  W  E  G  D  B  T  L  B  M  P  V  Y  P  B
F  P  Q  E  C  N  U  A  H  C  E  R  P  E  L
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Dementia Corner

Brain Health Matters at Every Age: Understanding Brain Injury

As we age, taking care of our brain is just as important as taking care of our heart or joints. Brain health helps us think clearly, remember important moments, stay independent, and enjoy life in our communities across Kentucky.

According to the Brain Injury Association of American each year, millions of Americans experience a brain injury. While some people recover fully, many live with long-term changes that affect memory, thinking, balance, mood, or daily activities. In fact, more than 5 million people in the United States are living with a permanent brain injury related disability and older adults are at higher risk.

What Is a Brain Injury?

A brain injury happens when the brain is damaged after birth and does not work the way it should. Every brain injury is different. A common saying is:
 "If you've seen one brain injury, you've seen one brain injury."

Brain injuries generally fall into two categories:
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): Caused by a blow or jolt to the head, such as from a fall or car crash. Falls are the most common cause of brain injury among older adults.
- Non-Traumatic Brain Injury: Caused by medical events like stroke, lack of oxygen, infections, or brain surgery.

Why Brain Health Is Important for Older Kentuckians

Brain injuries and brain health conditions can affect memory, decision-making, balance, and emotional well-being. These changes may increase the risk of hospital stays, and loss of independence. The good news is that many brain injuries can be prevented, and brain health can be supported at any age.

Brain Injury Association of America. (n.d.). Brain Injury Awareness Month.
https://biausa.org/public-affairs/public-awareness/brain-injury-awareness