

HARRIS COUNTY FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

December 2023

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Wishing You a Safe and Happy Holiday Season.

As you prepare for the holidays, we hope that it is filled with joy and warmth. We want to remind you to take the time to ensure that your home is safe for older family members. Check out page 2 for simple adjustments you can make to your home to help older guests feel comfortable visiting.

In addition, we've included some seasonal recipes, winter workout tips, and brain games for you to enjoy.

Don't forget to check out pages 7 & 8 to learn more about the programs we have starting in January.



10 Tips to Help Aging Guests Stay Safe During the Holidays

 **1**

Remove excess decorations and clutter from the floor, safely placing decorations on a shelf or mantel.

 **2**

Make sure there is sufficient lighting inside and outside the home.

 **3**

Arrange furniture so there is plenty of room to move around safely.

 **4**

Move commonly used items within arm's reach to avoid using stepstools or ladders, which can be unstable.

 **5**

Place non-slip pads under rugs or remove them temporarily.

 **6**

Create a dedicated playing area for children and pets to avoid tripping on toys.

 **7**

Tape cords and wires to the wall in high-traffic areas.

 **8**

Check that railings on stairways and porch steps are securely anchored.

 **9**

Add stick-on traction to steps that can become slippery.

 **10**

Set up a chair that is firmly footed and easy to get into and out of.

Food of the Month: December

CRANBERRIES

Fun Facts

- Fresh cranberries float in water, which helps farmers harvest cranberries.
- The same vine can reproduce new cranberries each year. Some vines are over 100 years old and still producing new berries!

Nutrition

- Cranberries are full of fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, magnesium, potassium, and more!



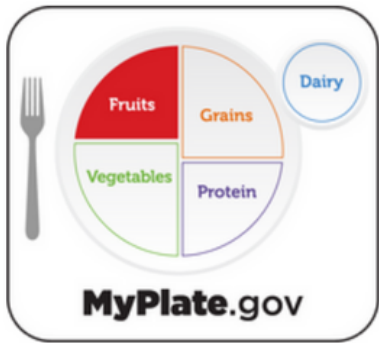
Recipe

- Cranberry Chicken Salad



Ways to Eat

- Buy them dried for an easy snack or ingredient in homemade trail mix, salads, etc.
- Eat fresh cranberries with oatmeal or blend them into a smoothie.
- If you have extra time and want a fun project, turn them into homemade jam or sauce.



CRANBERRY CHICKEN SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- 16 ounce canned chicken breast, drained
- 1 large celery stalk, sliced thin
- 2 green onions, sliced thin
- 3/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup light mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup Greek yogurt
- 2 teaspoon yellow or Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper; to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Wash your hands and clean your cooking area.
2. Clean the tops of canned food items before opening them.
3. Drain the canned chicken. Add it to a medium mixing bowl. Separate with the edge of a spoon.
4. Slice the celery and onion into thin pieces. Add to the chicken.
5. Toss in the cranberries.
6. Add the mayonnaise, Greek yogurt, and mustard.
7. Using a spoon, mix all the ingredients together until blended.
8. Add salt and pepper if desired.
9. Serve with whole grain bread or crackers.





Hearty Lentil Soup Recipe

- 1 cup lentils (dry)
 - 5 cups water
 - 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
 - 1 tablespoon onion (finely chopped)
 - 1 cup tomato sauce (canned)
 - 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder (or 1 garlic clove)
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
 - 1 bay leaf
 - 1 celery stalk (chopped)
 - 2 tablespoons vinegar
1. Sort lentils.
 2. Place lentils in deep pot with water. Bring to a boil and add all ingredients except vinegar.
 3. Reduce heat and cover.
 4. Cook slowly for 1 hour, adding more water if necessary.
 5. Add vinegar.
 6. Remove garlic and bay leaf before serving.

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BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

WINTER WORKOUTS

How to workout when it's cold

- Prepare ahead of time. Have your clothes laid out, water bottle filled, and shoes nearby.
- Enjoy the cooler Texan weather and go outdoors for a bike ride, run, walk or hike
- If it's cold, dress warmly! Wearing a jacket, hat, gloves, or scarf and bringing hand warmers can make a huge difference.
- Exercise during the daytime. Not only will it be warmer, but you'll be more awake too!
- Find indoor options to workout. Gyms, dance classes or online workout videos are all great options!



Jolly Minds: Unwrapping the gifts of brain health and riddles during the holiday season

Did you know riddles can help with brain health? There are many ways they can help fighting off dementia as well. Many people have a hard time struggling with the holidays, so reading and sharing Christmas riddles and brain teasers is the perfect way to get them going. Brain teasers that keep you challenged can increase cognitive function. Life requires good problem-solving skills and playing any kind of brain game can help you hone these essential skills. A brain-teaser or puzzle challenges the brain to discover new solutions to problems, boosting critical thinking skills. Try the riddles below for fun...

- 1. Who is the most impolite and disrespectful of all the reindeer?**
- 2. Which one of Santa's reindeer is the fastest?**
- 3. When does Christmas come before Thanksgiving?**
- 4. Why are Christmas trees bad at knitting?**
- 5. Who delivers Christmas presents to cats?**

Answers

- 1. Rude-olf**
- 2. Dasher**
- 3. In the dictionary**
- 4. They always drop their needles**
- 5. Santa Claws**



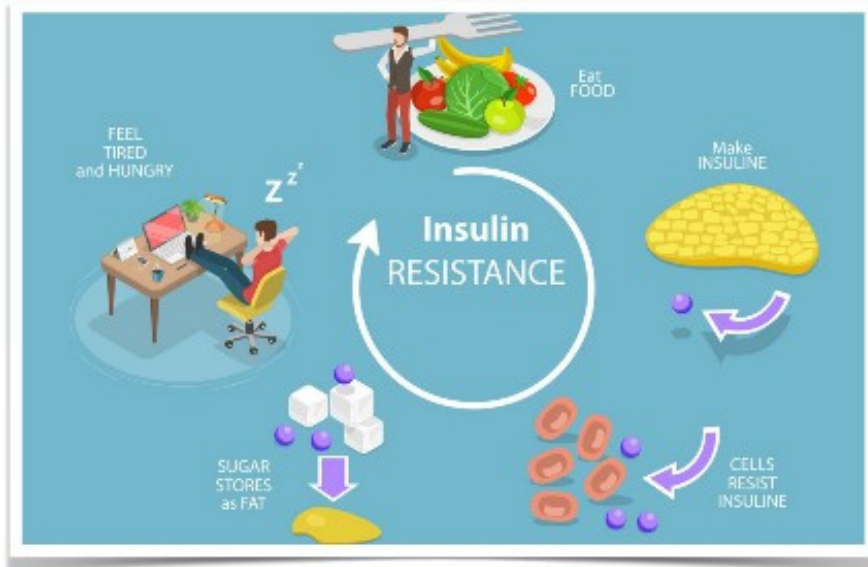
INSULIN RESISTANCE IN A NUTSHELL

How are carbs & insulin related?

When we eat food, glucose (sugar), our preferred source of energy, enters the bloodstream and signals the pancreas to release insulin. Insulin is released to help the glucose in your blood enter your muscle, fat, liver, and other cells to be used for energy or stored for future use.

Holiday Tips

- Consuming fiber around 30min before a holiday meal will help reduce the blood glucose insulin spike.
- Try to avoid simple, processed carbs during your 1st meal of the day; try to "break-the-fast" (breakfast) with complex, 'healthy' carbs to avoid spikes.
- Physical activity, preferably after the largest meal, helps reduce insulin levels too! Try to stand up every 50 minutes, or go for a walk during the day.



What is Insulin Resistance?

Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas that is essential for regulating blood sugar levels. Insulin resistance is when our cells no longer respond properly to the hormone, which makes the pancreas secrete excessive amounts to try and make the cells respond. So now, the bloodstream has a high sugar content and a high insulin level, which puts the brakes on fat burning and encourages storage of the sugars/incoming food as fat. This causes weight gain and the potential progression to type 2 diabetes.

The key to controlling this, is keeping blood sugars low and avoiding insulin/ blood sugar spikes. This can be alleviated by consuming a well balanced diet high in fiber, and low in sugars and simple carbs (see below).

Complex Carbs vs Simple Carbs

Complex carbs, such as fruits & vegetables, are the ones we want to eat because they release glucose into the blood stream gradually. Simple carbs usually have a high sugar content (usually added) and are processed foods; these are digested quickly and spike blood sugar/insulin quicker and higher.



Eat these



Limit these



Patel, P., & Abate, N. (2013). Body Fat Distribution and Insulin Resistance. *Nutrients*, 5(6), 2019–2027. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu5062019>

Klimes, Iwar. "Lipids and Insulin Resistance: the Role of Fatty Acid Metabolism and Fuel Partitioning." New York, N.Y.: New York Academy of Sciences, 2002. Print.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). Insulin Resistance & Prediabetes. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/what-is-diabetes/prediabetes-insulin-resistance#>

What is insulin resistance weight gain?. Scripps Health. (2022, June 7). https://www.scripps.org/news_items/4621-can-insulin-resistance-cause-weight-gain#

Cherney, K. (2023, May 10). Simple Carbohydrates vs. Complex Carbohydrates. Healthline. <https://www.healthline.com/health/food-nutrition/simple-carbohydrates-complex-carbohydrates#what-are-carbs>

UPCOMING EVENTS FROM FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

EATING SMART BEING ACTIVE - Deussen Park —
Thursdays, January 18th- February 21st 9:30 A.M.-10 :30 A.M.

EATING SMART BEING ACTIVE - Calvacade Community Center —
Thursdays , January 4th - February 29th 12P.M.-1P.M.

EATING SMART BEING ACTIVE - Finnigan Park Community Center
Mondays, January 22nd - March 18th 10A.M.-11A.M.



Do Well, Be Well with Hypertension - Fontenot Senior Center, Mondays
January 8,22,29, and February 5th from 10:00 a.m. — 11:00 a.m.

Do Well, Be Well with Hypertension - Julia C. Hester House, Mondays
January 8,22,29, and February 5th from 1:00 p.m. — 2:00 p.m.

Do Well, Be Well with Hypertension - Spring Branch Community Health
Center, 1615 Hillendahl Blvd., Houston, TX 77055, January 18th, 25th,
February 1st, and 8th

Cooking Well for Healthy Blood Pressure - Finnigan Park Community
Center, January 17th, 24th, and 31st from 10:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

WALK ACROSS TEXAS - March 3rd - April 27th -(Kick-Off March 2nd)

A Matter of Balance - Weekley Community Center, 8440 Greenhouse Rd,
Cypress, TX 77433, January 16th — March 5th,10:30 -12:30 p.m.

Strong People Strong Bodies - New strength training program, coming
soon. The objective of the program is to improve the health and well-being of
middle-aged and older adults by increasing access to structured, safe, and
effective strength training programs. The program is implemented over 12
weeks, with classes meeting twice a week for one hour. The class is limited to
a maximum of 12 participants.

UPCOMING EVENTS FROM BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

A Fresh Start to a Healthier You! 4- week adult nutrition program starts January 11th! - North Channel Library 15741 Wallisville Rd., Houston

Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities 6-week adult gardening series starts January 9th! - Glazier Senior Education Center, 16600 Pine Forest Lane, Houston

A Fresh Start to a Healthier You 4-week adult nutrition series, starts January 9th! - Mangum-Howell Community Center, Doss Park Rd., Houston

Get the Facts 4-week adult nutrition series starts January 9th! - Parker Williams Library, 10851 Scarsdale Blvd Suite 510, Houston

Healthy Carbohydrates 4-week adult nutrition series starts January 10th! - Alexandar Deussen Senior Center, 12303 Sonnier St., Houston

Healthy Carbohydrates 4-week adult nutrition series starts January 10th! - Baker Ripley, Ripley House, 4414 Navigation Blvd., Houston

Healthy Carbohydrates 4-week adult nutrition series starts January 10th! - Tracy Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter Dr., Houston

A Fresh Start to a Healthier You 4-week adult nutrition series starts January 11th! - Weekley Community Center, 8440 Greenhouse Rd., Cypress

Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities 6-week adult gardening series starts January 11th! - Trini Mendenhall Community Center, 1414 Wirt Rd., Houston

Healthy Carbohydrates 4-week adult nutrition series starts January 30th! - Rev. Joe E. Dancy Memorial Center, 3407 Bellfort Ave., Houston

Healthy Carbohydrates 4-week adult nutrition series starts January 30th! - Katy Fussell Senior Citizen Center, 5370 East 5th St., Katy



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