



Dakota Wellness Program

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Inside this issue...

Be kind to your mind

Monthly book club

Do I need sports drinks?

Avoid the post-vacation blues

**Cancer prevention: small
steps matter**

**National Cholesterol
Education Month**

Monthly recipe



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Wellness team members for
our monthly 15-minute
wellness webinar.

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SANFORD
HEALTH PLAN

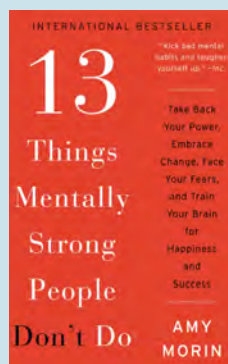


Be kind to your mind

Mental health is an important part of your overall health. It affects how you think, feel and act each day. Good mental health does not mean you are happy all the time or never face problems. Instead, it means you can cope with life's challenges, build healthy relationships, make thoughtful decisions and ask for help when you need it.

Taking care of your mental health is a lifelong journey. Some days may feel easier than others, and that's okay. Small, healthy habits can make a big difference over time. Getting enough sleep, eating nutritious foods, staying physically active, spending time with people you care about, practicing gratitude and taking breaks to recharge all help support a healthy mind. Even a short walk, a few deep breaths or a conversation with a friend can improve your mood.

Everyone experiences stress, sadness or worry from time to time and everyone's journey is unique. If those feelings become overwhelming or don't go away, reaching out to a trusted friend, family member or healthcare professional is an important step. Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. By making small, positive choices each day, you can build resilience, improve your well-being and enjoy a happier, healthier life.



Monthly book club

13 Things Mentally Strong People Don't Do

by Amy Morin

13 Things Mentally Strong People Don't Do by Amy Morin explores the habits that help people build resilience and handle life's challenges with confidence. Drawing from her experience as a psychotherapist, Morin explains that mental strength isn't about ignoring emotions or pretending to be tough. Instead, it's about developing healthy ways of thinking, feeling and acting. The book identifies 13 common habits that mentally strong people avoid, such as dwelling on the past, fearing change, seeking constant approval, giving away their power and giving up after failure. Through practical strategies and real-life examples, readers learn how to overcome setbacks, manage stress and build emotional resilience. The book encourages readers to focus on what they can control, embrace personal growth and make choices that support a healthier, happier and more fulfilling life.

Discussion questions

- **Which of the 13 habits did you find most relatable, and what is one small change you could make to become more mentally strong?**
- **Amy Morin emphasizes focusing on what you can control instead of what you can't. How can applying this mindset help reduce stress and improve resilience at work or in your personal life?**
- **The book suggests that setbacks and failures can become opportunities for growth. Can you share a time when a challenge taught you an important lesson or helped you become stronger? What did you learn from that experience?**



Ask the expert

Do I need sports drinks?

For most people, sports drinks are not necessary. Eating regular, balanced meals and drinking enough water throughout the day are usually all you need to stay hydrated and maintain a healthy balance of electrolytes. If you are exercising or sweating heavily for several hours, a sports drink with electrolytes may help replace the sodium and minerals lost through sweat. However, sports drinks also contain added sugar, which means extra calories. Drinking them when you don't need them can make it harder to maintain a healthy weight. Water is the best choice for everyday hydration and for most workouts lasting less than an hour. Save sports drinks for long, intense exercise or endurance events when your body needs extra fluids, electrolytes and energy.

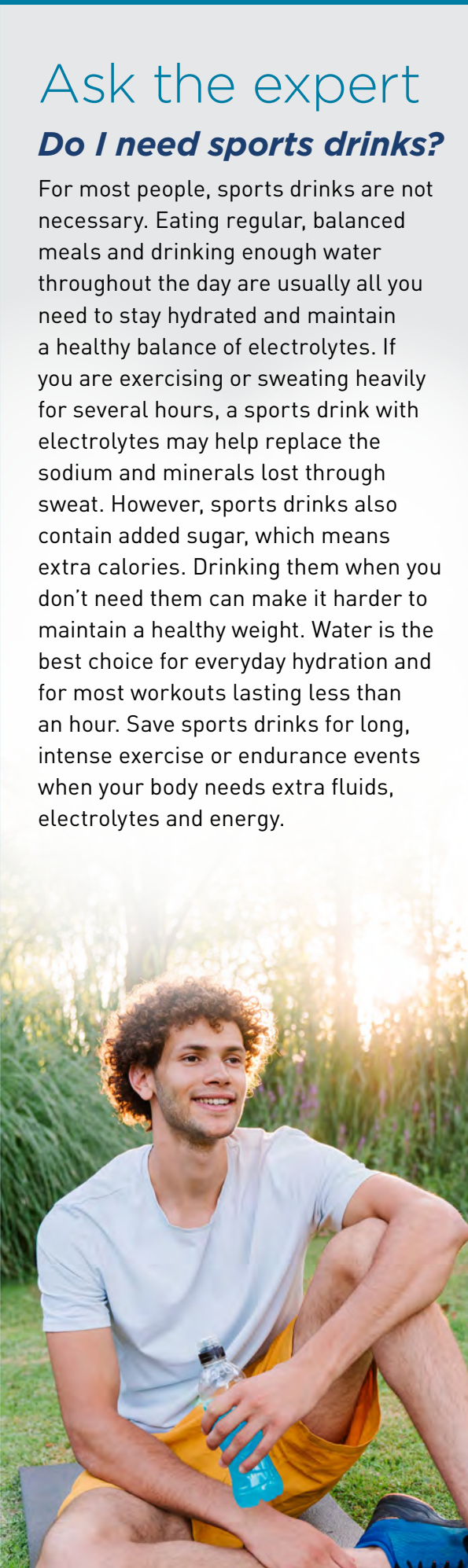


Avoid the post-vacation blues

A great vacation starts long before you leave home. Planning ahead helps you enjoy more experiences while reducing stress and disappointment. Research your destination, create a flexible itinerary and finish important work before you leave so you can truly relax. Avoid packing every minute with activities, leaving time to rest and enjoy unexpected moments. Before returning home, schedule a day to unpack, catch up and ease back into your routine. After your trip, look through photos, write in a travel journal or share memories with family and friends to keep the experience alive. Most importantly, remember that one vacation doesn't have to be perfect. Every trip offers new memories and lessons. Start dreaming about your next adventure and you'll return home feeling refreshed instead of disappointed.

Cancer prevention: small steps matter

Cancer prevention means taking action to lower your chance of developing cancer. While not all cancers can be prevented, healthy lifestyle choices can reduce your risk. Scientists study risk factors which increase the chance of cancer and protective factors which help lower that risk. Some risks, such as inherited genes, cannot be changed. Others, like smoking, excessive sun exposure, poor diet and physical inactivity can often be avoided. Eating a balanced diet, staying physically active, maintaining a healthy weight, protecting your skin from the sun and avoiding tobacco are important ways to reduce cancer risk. Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States, making sunscreen, protective clothing and avoiding tanning beds especially important. Regular health screenings and early detection also improve the chances of successful treatment.



Preventive health

September is National Cholesterol Education Month. It's a great opportunity to become familiar with what cholesterol is and how to keep it at a healthy level to prevent heart attack and stroke. Cholesterol is needed for the body to complete essential functions like building cells and making hormones. There are two types of cholesterol that are transported through blood on proteins called lipoproteins. High-density lipoprotein (HDL), often referred to as "good" cholesterol, transports cholesterol to the liver so the liver can remove it from the body. HDL cholesterol can lower your risk of stroke and heart disease. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL), often referred to as "bad" cholesterol, can build up inside your blood vessels and develop plaque. Over time this build up can cause narrowing that can reduce blood flow which contributes to heart disease.

We can take steps to improve our cholesterol levels and make sure they stay in a healthy range:

- Know your family history
- Don't smoke
- Be active every day
- Make healthy food choices
- Get tested every five years

BBQ chicken burrito bowls

Forget sad desk lunches, these BBQ chicken burrito bowls are the meal prep hero you didn't know you needed.

Why you'll love it

These bowls are loaded with smoky, saucy chicken, creamy avocado, hearty black beans and melty pepper jack cheese all over a fluffy rice base. They taste just as good cold as they do hot, making them perfect for work lunches without a microwave. At under two dollars a serving, they're proof that eating well doesn't have to cost much.

Ingredients:

4 cups cooked rice
1/2 cup BBQ sauce
1-15 oz. can black beans
1 cup frozen corn (thawed)
4 oz. pepper jack cheese

1 chicken breast (grilled)
1 small zucchini
2 green onions
1 small avocado

Instructions:

Cook the Rice: Prepare your rice ahead of time and let it cool slightly so it's ready to layer into each bowl.

Coat the Chicken: Chop or shred the cooked chicken breast and toss it with BBQ sauce until every piece is well coated and glossy.

Prep the Toppings: Drain and rinse the black beans, cube the zucchini into small tender pieces, slice the green onions, shred the pepper jack and pit and slice the avocado.

Build Your Bowls: Place a generous scoop of rice in the bottom of each bowl, then divide the chicken, beans, corn, zucchini, cheese, green onions and avocado equally among all four.

Finish and Serve: Drizzle a little more BBQ sauce over the top, then serve immediately or seal into containers and refrigerate for easy grab-and-go lunches all week.

Quick Details: Serves 4



Monthly Observances

Healthy aging month

Cholesterol education month

National recovery month

World Alzheimer's month

Food safety education month

Sep. 29: World Heart Day

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