



Dakota Wellness Program

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Join Sanford Health Plan Wellness team member for our monthly 15-minute wellness webinar.

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Nurturing Social Well-being in the Digital Age

It's easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of technology and overlook the importance of our social well-being. Nurturing social connections is paramount for a fulfilling and happy existence.

In an era dominated by screens and social media, it's essential to strike a balance between online and offline interactions. While technology has undeniably enriched our lives by connecting us with friends and family across the globe, it's crucial to remember that true social well-being thrives on genuine, face-to-face connections.

Quality over quantity should be the mantra when it comes to social relationships. Instead of focusing on accumulating virtual friends or followers, invest time and energy in building deep, meaningful connections with a select few. Engaging in real conversations, expressing empathy, and actively listening can transform digital interactions into meaningful relationships that contribute positively to your social well-being.

Embracing diversity in your social circle is another key aspect of fostering social wellbeing. Surround yourself with people who challenge and inspire you, offering different perspectives and experiences. This diversity not only enriches your own life but also contributes to a more inclusive and vibrant community.

Lastly, don't underestimate the power of self-care in enhancing social well-being. Taking time for yourself, whether through meditation, hobbies, or simply enjoying moments of solitude, can recharge your social batteries and enable you to bring your best self to your relationships.



Book Club

Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other **by Sherry Turkle**

"Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other" is a book written by Sherry Turkle, a psychologist and professor at MIT. The book explores the impact of technology on human relationships and how our increasing reliance on digital communication may lead to a sense of disconnection.

Turkle argues that while technology offers the promise of connection, it often results in people feeling more isolated and lonely. The book is divided into two parts: the first part examines our relationships with robots and artificial intelligence, while the second part delves into the impact of digital communication on human relationships.

Turkle suggests that the constant presence of smartphones, social media, and other digital platforms has changed the way we relate to one another. She discusses the paradox of being "alone together," where individuals may be physically present but emotionally and socially distant due to their engagement with technology.

The book also explores how the use of technology affects various aspects of our lives, from family dynamics to the way we form and maintain friendships. Turkle raises concerns about the potential consequences of prioritizing digital interactions over face-to-face communication and the impact on empathy and genuine human connection.

"Alone Together" critiques the role of technology in shaping our social lives and prompts readers to reflect on the balance between digital and face-to-face interactions and the potential consequences of an increasingly technologically mediated society.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How do you think the concept of being "alone together" applies to your own experiences with technology and social interactions?**
- 2. In what ways have you observed technology influencing the dynamics of your family or social circles, as discussed by Sherry Turkle in "Alone Together"?**
- 3. Considering Turkle's concerns about the impact of technology on empathy, what measures can individuals take to foster genuine human connections in an increasingly digital world?**

Ask the Expert

Is it safe to donate blood?

Donating blood is generally safe for healthy individuals. The process is highly regulated to ensure donor and recipient safety.

How often can I donate blood?

In the United States, whole blood donation is allowed every 56 days.

What are the eligibility criteria for blood donation?

Eligibility criteria typically include age, weight, health status, recent travel, and lifestyle factors. These criteria help ensure the safety and effectiveness of blood donations.

What happens to the donated blood?

Donated blood is carefully tested, processed, and stored before being distributed to hospitals and clinics to help patients in need.

Why is donating blood important?

Blood transfusions are essential for various medical treatments, including surgeries, cancer treatments, trauma care, and organ transplants. Adequate and diverse blood supplies are necessary to meet the demands of patients undergoing these procedures.

A Practical Guide to Balanced Wellness

National Healthy Weight Week, observed from January 21 to 27, invites us to embrace sustainable health practices rather than succumb to the allure of crash diets. In this no-nonsense guide, we outline key principles to foster a balanced and lasting approach to well-being.

Mindful Eating: Begin by savoring each bite. Tune into your body's hunger cues and stop when satisfied. This mindful approach to eating promotes a healthier relationship with food.

Nutrient-Rich Choices: Opt for whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins. These choices not only fill you up but also provide the essential nutrients your body needs to function optimally.

Move Smart: Incorporate activities you genuinely enjoy into your routine. Whether it's a brisk walk, dancing, or weightlifting, making movement a regular part of your day contributes to overall fitness and well-being.

Hydrate: Water is your ally on the journey to a healthy weight. Beyond quenching your thirst, adequate hydration aids digestion, supports metabolism, and keeps you energized throughout the day.

Sleep Well: Prioritize quality sleep as a cornerstone of your well-being. Sufficient and restful sleep is crucial for recovery and maintaining a healthy weight.

Stress Management: Integrate stress-reducing practices into your daily life, such as mindfulness, yoga, or deep breathing exercises. Managing stress positively impacts not only your mental health but also your overall well-being.

Celebrate Progress, Not Perfection: Embrace the concept that small, consistent changes lead to lasting results. Celebrate both big and small victories along your wellness journey, fostering a positive and sustainable mindset.

As we observe National Healthy Weight Week, let's use this opportunity as a launchpad for realistic and achievable wellness goals. By incorporating these practices into our lives, we can move away from the fleeting promises of crash diets and embrace a holistic approach to health that stands the test of time.



Preventive Health

Preventive Health: Cervical Cancer

Risk Factors

- HPV infection
- Sexual history: multiple sexual partners, early sexual activity, other sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy history: three or more full-term pregnancies, young age at first full-term pregnancy
- Weakened immune system
- Smoking

Prevention

- HPV vaccine: may reduce the risk of cervical and other HPV-related cancers
- Routine screenings: to identify precancerous conditions and/or infections that may increase the risk of cervical cancer; beginning at age 21
- Safe sex: take precautions to prevent sexually transmitted infections and limiting the number of sexual partners
- Don't Smoke

Screening: discuss screening options with primary care provider

- Pap test: can detect abnormal, cancerous and precancerous cells in the cervix
- HPV DNA test: can detect infection of the types of HPV that are most likely to lead to cervical cancer

Monthly Observances

Jan 15: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Jan 16: National Day of Racial Healing

January 21 to 27: National Healthy Weight Week

Cervical health awareness

Glaucoma awareness

National birth defects prevention

National blood donor

Thyroid awareness

Butternut Squash Soup with Tahini and Crispy Chickpeas

Servings per recipe: 4
Serving Size: 2 cups

Ingredients:

| | |
|---|---|
| 2 tablespoons olive oil | 1/8 teaspoons ground turmeric |
| 1 large onion, chopped | Pinch cayenne pepper |
| 3 cloves garlic, chopped | 5 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth |
| 2 pounds cubed (1-inch) butternut squash (about 7 1/2 cups) | 1 tablespoon honey |
| 1 cup drained and rinsed; no-salt added chickpeas | 2 tablespoons tahini |
| 3/4 teaspoon salt | 1/2 cup packaged crispy chickpea snacks (plain or lightly salted) |
| 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin | 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley |
| 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper | |

Instructions:

1. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until softened, about 4 minutes, add the garlic and cook 30 seconds more. Stir in the squash, chickpeas, salt, cumin, black pepper, turmeric, and cayenne pepper. Add the broth and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, until the squash is very tender, about 20 minutes. Use a hand blender to puree until smooth. Stir in the honey.
2. Place the tahini in a bowl and stir in 2 tablespoons of cold water. Add more water by the teaspoon until the tahini is loose enough to be drizzled. Serve the soup drizzled with the tahini, garnished with the crispy chickpeas and parsley.

Nutrition Facts: Calories: 390 | Total fat: 12g | Carbohydrate: 58g
Fiber: 16g | Protein: 13g | Saturated Fat: 1.5g | Mono Fat: 6g | Poly Fat 3g
Cholesterol 0mg | Sodium 550mg | Total Sugar 12g | Added Sugar: 4g



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