

# Food for Mood

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# Outline

- Food & Stress
- Foods to Boost Mood & Health
- Mindful Eating
- Cooking Tips and Meal Planning
- Wellness Culture
- Demo: 10 Minute Salad



# Food & Stress



- How does the food you eat affect your mood? Your health?
- How does stress affect your mood? Your health?

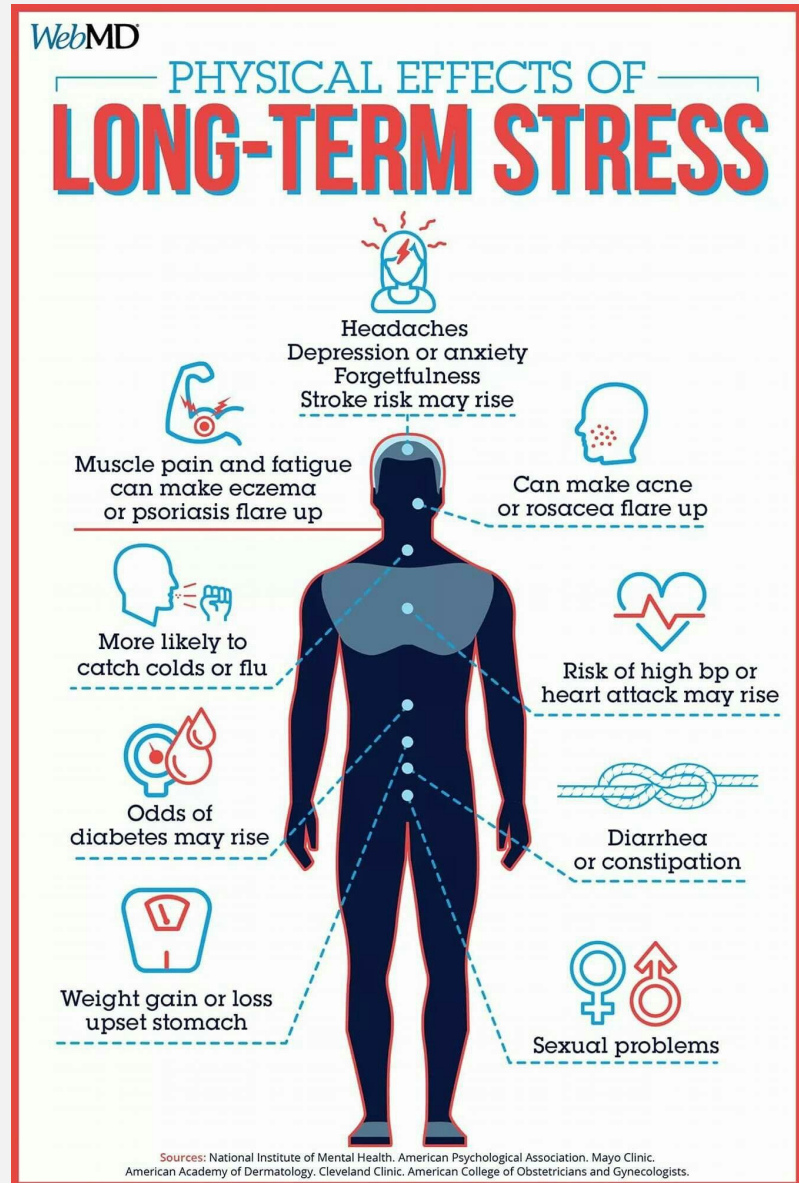


# Food: S.A.D.





# Stress: Symptoms



# Nutrient Deficiencies: Increase Depression & Anxiety

- Vitamin B12
- Vitamin B6
- Folate
- Omega 3 fatty acids
- Vitamin D
- Magnesium
- Protein
- Tryptophan (essential amino acid that converts to serotonin)





# To Improve Mood & Health: The Anti-Inflammatory Diet

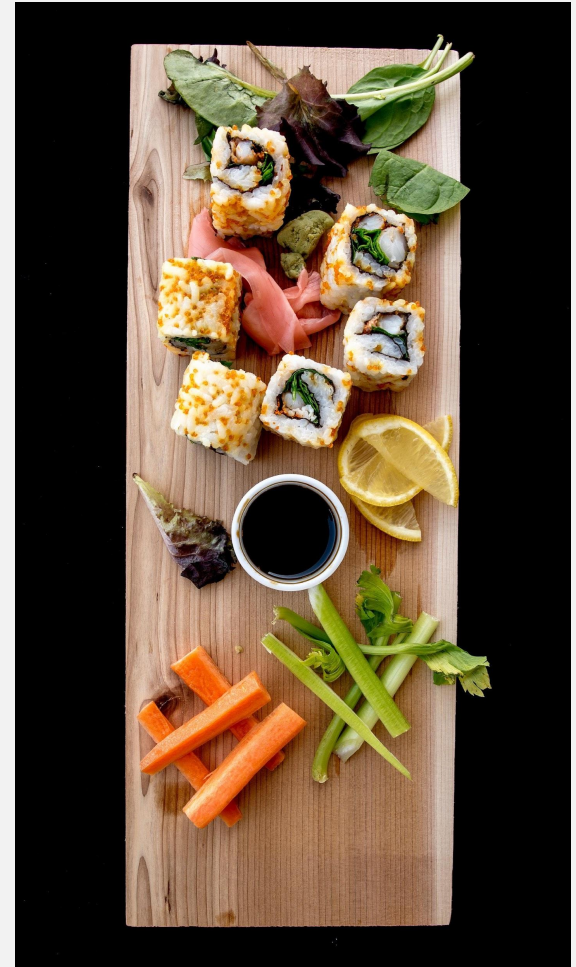
## Eat More...

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Whole Grains
- Nuts & Seeds
- Eggs & Beans
- Lean protein:  
chicken, turkey,  
fish
- Dark Chocolate
- Olive Oil
- Herbs & Spices



# Specific Foods that Support Mood

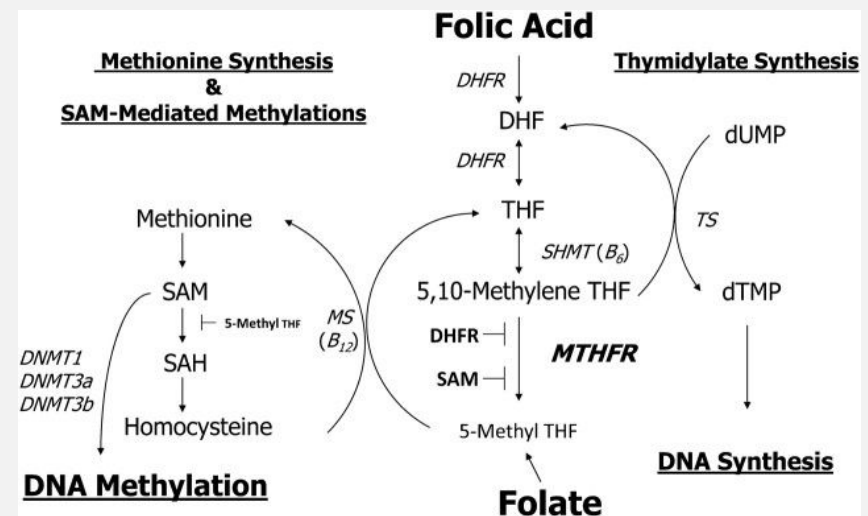
- Nutrient Dense Foods: during stress you need more!
  - Foods rich in B vitamins, Calcium, Magnesium, Biotin, Fiber, Folic Acid, Vitamin C, and Zinc.
- Omega 3's
  - Chia seed, salmon, flax seed, avocados, walnuts
- Lean protein
  - Chicken, turkey, beans
- Complex carbohydrates
  - Beans, whole grains, winter squash, potatoes, fruit and vegetables
- Probiotics
  - Yogurt, kefir, kombucha, miso, kimchi
- Take care of your gut!
  - 90% of your serotonin is produced in your GI tract
  - Low serotonin is associated with depression





# Side Note: Methylation

- Methylation is an important process in the body that regulates our DNA and we need folate for this process.
- Some people with an MTHFR genetic variant struggle to convert these needed vitamins to their active forms (aka folic acid (food or supplement based into active methylfolate).
- Methyl folate supplementation has been shown to reduce depression in clinical trials.
- Could an active B vitamin help?
  - Key words to look at on your multivitamin or B complex: Methylfolate or methylcobalamin (B12)



Source: Folate and DNA Methylation: A Review of Molecular Mechanisms and the Evidence for Folate's Role [Adv Nutrition](#)

# Let's Discuss Mindfulness





# The Definition of Mindfulness

- Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment while acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations.
- Helpful for stress & creating a positive relationship with food.



# How Mindful Are You?



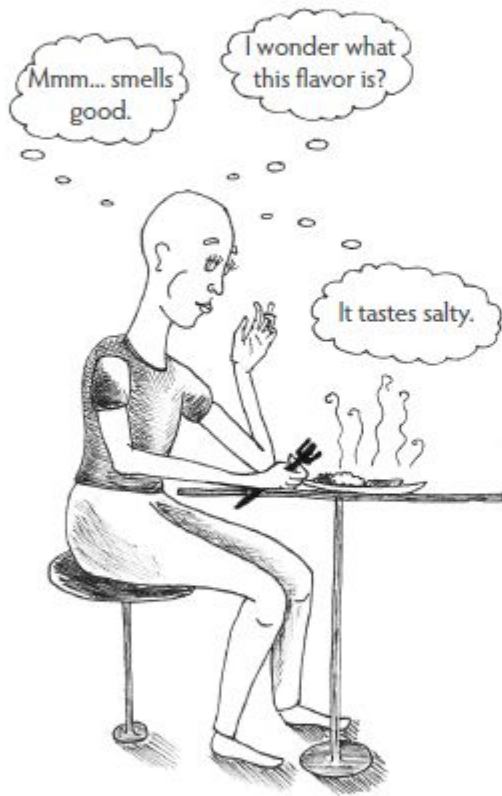


# Have you ever...

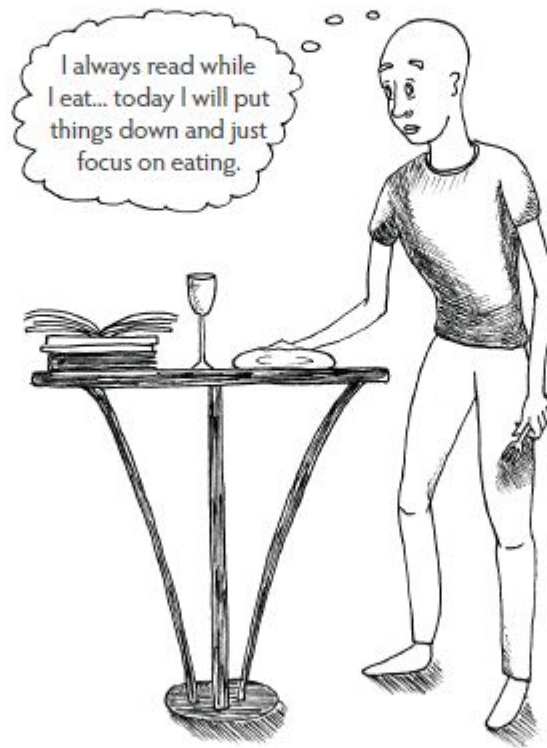
1. Eaten until you were too full and then felt guilty?
2. Found yourself emotional eating – eating when you are bored, stressed or anxious?
3. Grazed on or wolfed down food without really tasting it?
4. Mindlessly munched on snacks while zoned out in front of the TV?
5. Skipped meals, not paying attention to your hunger signals?



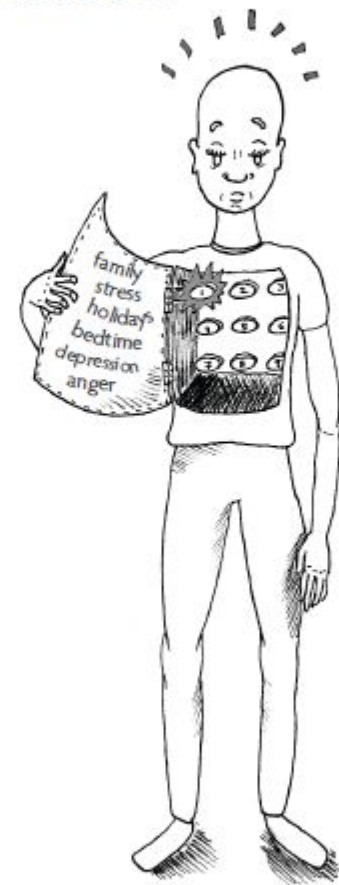
# THREE STEPS TO MINDFUL EATING



STEP 1:  
TASTING FOOD



STEP 2:  
IDENTIFYING  
MINDLESS HABITS



STEP 3:  
KNOWING  
YOUR TRIGGERS

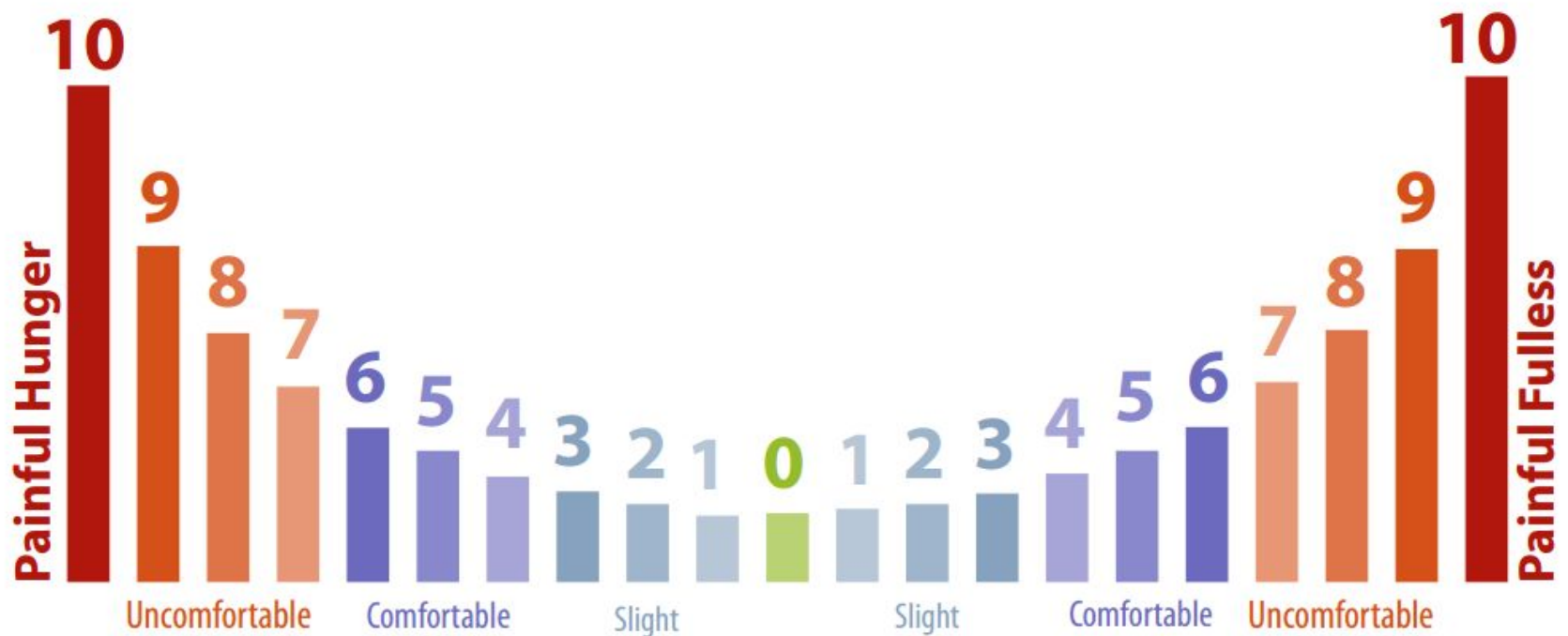
# Awareness Checklist

- ☐ Am I sitting?
- ☐ Am I eating fast or slow?
- ☐ Am I mindlessly munching or aware each bite?
- ☐ Am I multitasking or truly focused on my meal?
- ☐ Is my stomach rumbling? Am I hangry? Or am I bored, stressed, tired, anxious....?
- ☐ Ask “How hungry am I?” on a scale from one to ten.





# Hunger and Fullness Scale



# Hunger and Fullness

Ouchie Hungry

Ouchie Full



**Discover Mindful  
Eating for Kids**

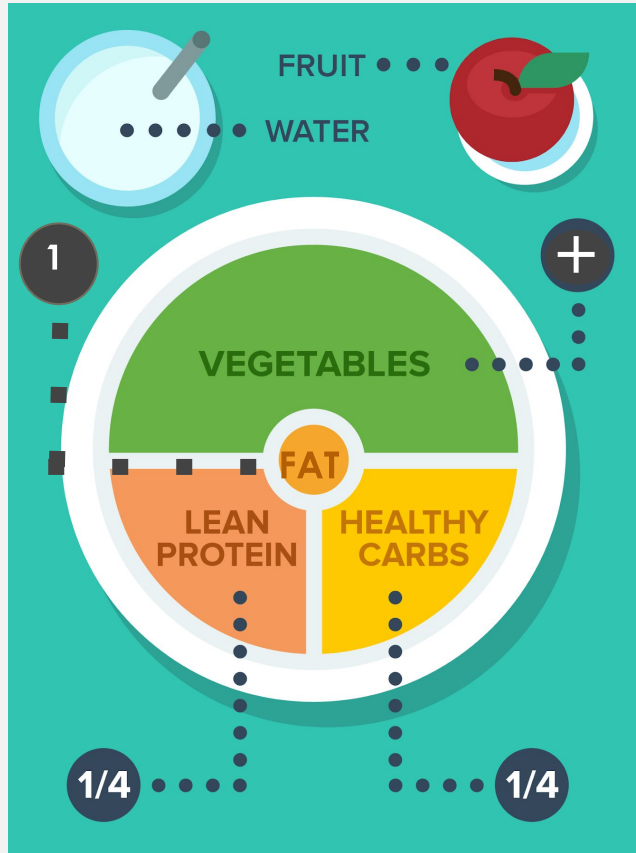
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# Meal Planning & Cooking Tips



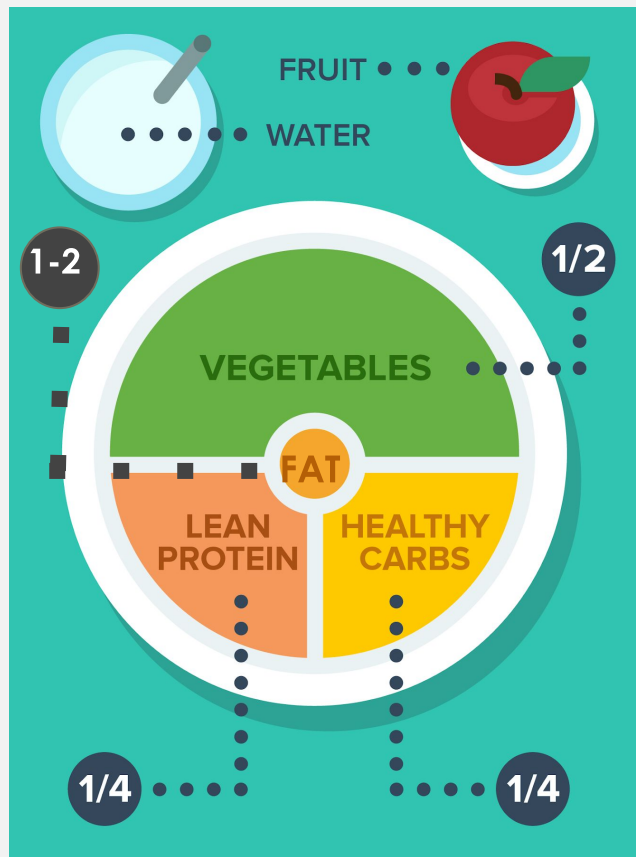


# Breakfast



- Protein (3 oz)
- Fruit (1 serving)
- Starchy carb (1 serving)
- Fat (1 serving)
- Eat as many non-starchy carbs as you'd like (put veggies in eggs)

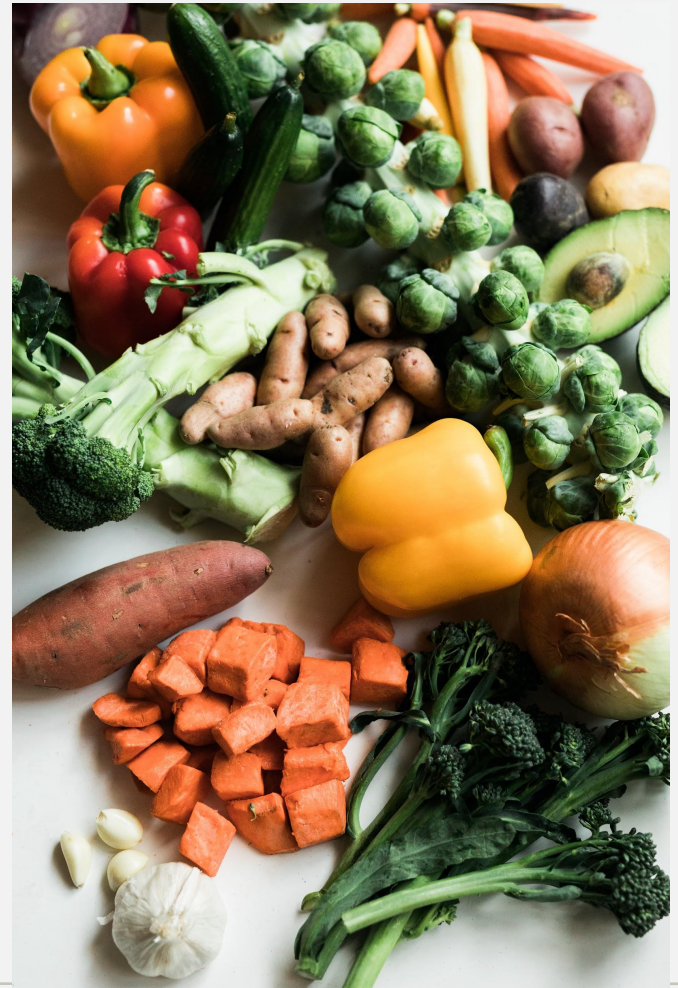
# Lunch & Dinner



- Protein (3-6 oz)
- Starchy carb/fruit (1-2 servings)
- Non-starchy veggies ( $\frac{1}{2}$  of plate)
- Fat (1-2 servings)

# Incorporate Those Veggies!

- Make a veggie omelet or scramble
- Add to a smoothie
- Use as pizza toppings
- Veggies + dip
- Turn veggies into fries
- Veggie kabobs
- Add as a side to any lunch
  - Add beets to hummus





# More Ways to Add Veggies

- Add grated, pureed or shredded veggies to casseroles, lasagna, mac and cheese, mashed potatoes, rice dishes, meatloaf, meatballs and sauces.
- Bake with veggies: zucchini or carrot muffins
- Add greens to wraps, sandwiches and quesadillas
- Use zucchini noodles or rice cauliflower instead of pasta or rice



# Meal Planning: Dinner Tips

- Cook once and eat twice - use dinner leftovers for lunch/dinner the next day
- Focus mostly on protein and non-starchy veggies
- Stop eating 2-3 hours before bedtime
- Practice mindful eating - no electronics or other distractions during dinner
- Dinner time is family time!



# Challenge: plan at least 3 meals for the week

- Go shopping only 1-2X per week  
- saves time at the store and saves money
- Stock up on “quick meals” to prepare for busy unplanned nights - salad night, breakfast for dinner...
- Use the crock pot or instant pot for a helping hand.
- Freeze extra batches of turkey burgers, meat sauce, rice and quinoa, soups/stews
- Go meatless at least 1X per week





# Easy Meals for Home: Stock Up

## **Veggies/Fruit:**

- Try fresh coleslaw mixes
- Frozen vegetables and fruits
- Ready prepared salads

## **Grains/legumes:**

- 90 second brown rice or frozen
- 10 minute brown rice/quinoa mixes
- Black bean/chickpea noodles
- Whole grain pasta

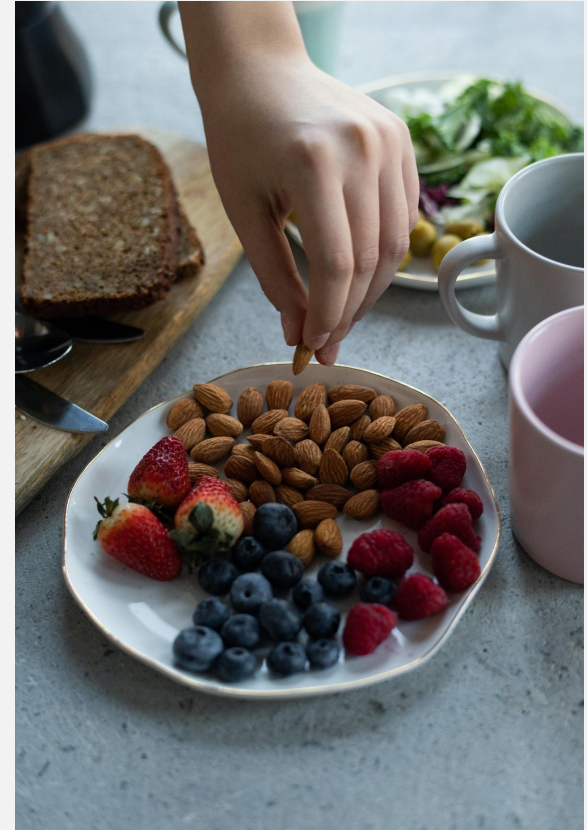
## **Lean protein choices:**

- Fish, shrimp
- Thin cut chicken, chicken sausage
- Beans/bean burgers
- Eggs
- Tofu



# Smart Snacks For Busy People

- Celery + peanut butter
- Apple + 1/4 cup nuts
- Homemade trail mix/granola
- Greek yogurt + fruit + seeds
- Hard boiled egg + canned peaches
- Cottage cheese + fruit
- Cheese + sliced cucumbers
- Roasted chickpeas + chopped carrots
- Hummus or other bean dip + bell peppers/whole grain crackers



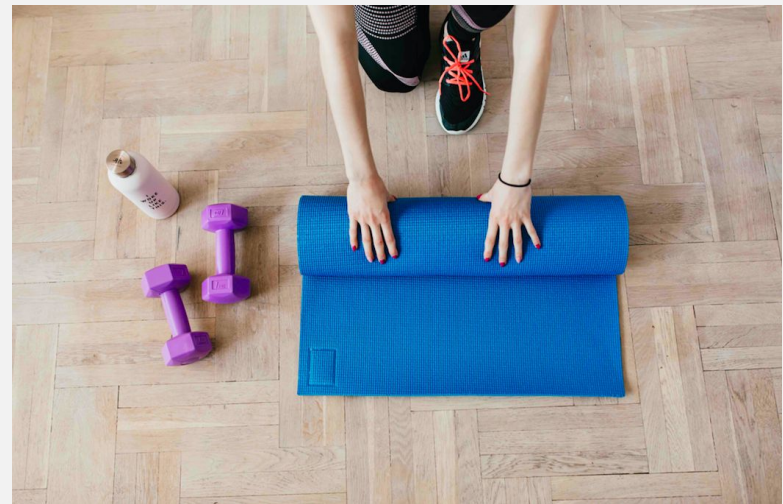
# Creating a Wellness Culture





# Incorporating Wellness into your Work Day

- Rethink meeting snacks and break room items
  - Fruit
  - Trail mix, sweet potato chips with hummus
  - Seltzers, coffee & tea
  - Dark chocolate squares
- Provide adequate time for a “break” in the day for lunch, movement or a mental break
  - Improves digestion and health
  - Improves productivity
  - Improves mood
- Provide mental & physical break spaces
  - Walking paths/encouragement for lunchtime walks (this increases bloodflow to the brain)
  - Yoga corner/yoga classes/meditation space/gym



# Schedule in Breaks at Work

- Schedule in a 15 minute break in the middle of the morning and another 15 minute break in the afternoon.
- Plan 30-60 minutes for lunch & walking time if possible mid-day.
- Why? Breaks for self-care:
  - improve productivity
  - help with critical thinking
  - keep bodies healthier



# Make Movement Fun

## *It Boosts Mood!*

- Break up exercise into 10-15 minute increments.
- Find something you like: yoga, walking, running, zumba, dancing, lifting, snowshoeing, skiing, etc.
- Find a workout friend for accountability
- Aim for 150-300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes intense aerobic activity per week.
- Aim for muscle building 2X per week for 15-30 minutes.





# Find the Nutrition Plan that Works for your Health Needs

- Nutrition visits for BCBS of Vermont members are covered! Most plans cover **at least 3 visits per year.**
- Email us to verify your coverage and see how we can help you improve your health with diet.
- We specialize in eating disorders, GI disorders, weight loss, heart health, pediatrics & picky eating, diabetes and autoimmune disorders.
- We also offer virtual cooking classes and presentations tailored to your needs

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# Demo: 10 Minute Salad

## Ingredients

Avocado Caesar Dressing:

- 1 avocado
- 1/4C olive oil
- 1 lemon juiced
- 1 clove garlic
- salt and pepper

Pre-washed greens or baby kale

Seeds of choice

Parmesan cheese

## Directions

1. Blend all dressing ingredients in a food processor.
2. Toss greens to coat.
3. Top with seeds and parmesan.
4. Enjoy!



# Questions?



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