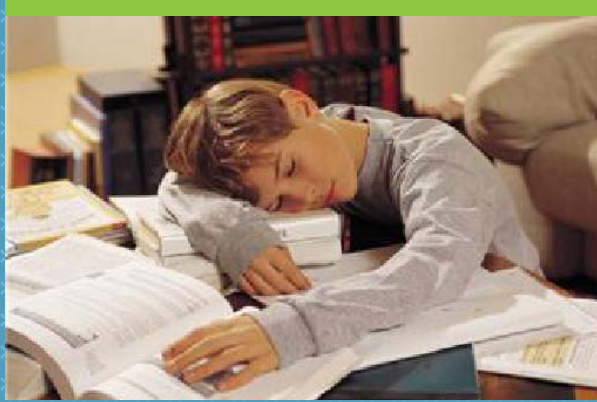


School Night Sleep Patterns

A recent study has shown that 66% of adolescents are not getting enough sleep on school nights. It is recommended that they get an average of 9 hours a night. Too little sleep is associated with increased caffeine use and decreased concentration in adolescents.



Lunchbox Snacks That Keep You Going!!!

- 1 serving of wheat crackers and a string cheese
- 20 almonds
- 6oz Greek yogurt any flavor
- 2 Clementine oranges
- 1 cup vegetables with hummus

This is a great lunch box snack!

Easy Granola Bars

Makes 24 servings

Ingredients:

- 3 cups quick-cooking oats
- 1 (14 oz) can reduced fat sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup flaked unsweetened coconut
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 1/2 cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/3 cup sweetened dried cranberries

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 F. Line a 9x13 inch pan with aluminum foil or parchment paper and lightly spray with cooking spray.

In a large bowl, mix together the oats, sweetened condensed milk, coconut, almonds, chocolate chips, and cranberries with your hands until well blended. Press flat into baking pan.

Bake for 20 - 25 minutes. Lightly browned just around the edges will give you a moist, chewy bar. Let cool for 15 minutes, cut into squares and cool completely before serving.

Cholesterol Awareness

September is cholesterol awareness month. High cholesterol is considered one of the "silent killers". Cholesterol is a naturally occurring substance in the body, but it is also something that is brought into the body by foods like animal products and meat. There are 3 components of cholesterol and all are necessary for the proper function of the body. When all are in the correct balance they work together to protect the body.

The 3 components include high density lipoproteins (HDL), low density lipoproteins (LDL), and triglycerides. When the balance of HDL to LDL to triglycerides is off and the total cholesterol number is too high the result can be plaque buildup in the arteries. As a result of this buildup risk for stroke, hypertension, blood clots, and heart disease increase. Getting your cholesterol level monitored through regular blood work by your physician can lead to early diagnosis and action to lower cholesterol levels.

Lowering your LDLs, also known as "bad cholesterol", is not always enough. It is important to also increase your HDL levels, the "good cholesterol". HDLs are the garbage men of the body and remove excess cholesterol from your blood that would eventually lead to plaque buildup and take it to your liver where it can be broken down. Some easy ways to do this is to quit smoking if you do, lose weight, become more physically active, increase fiber and whole grain, and choose the right fats like olive oil instead of butter.



In Season Fruits and Vegetables

September is also fruits and vegetables month. It celebrates all the tasty treats nature has to offer and what better way to do that than enjoy in season or local produce. Below is a list of some of the best fruits and veggies the fall has to offer as well as the locations of a few farmers markets!

- Acorn squash
- Butternut squash
- Pumpkin
- Turnips
- Sweet potato
- Brussels sprouts
- Apples
- Ginger
- Broccoli

Go to www.visitconnecticut.com for a list of farmers markets by town! You can also find walking, biking and hiking trails by town!

Schedules are getting busy now that summer is coming to an end! Here is a quick, easy, and budget friendly meal the whole family can enjoy.

Ravioli and Vegetable Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cups frozen bell pepper and onion mix, thawed and diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper, or to taste (optional)
- 1 can (28oz) crushed tomatoes, preferably fire-roasted
- 1 can (15oz) vegetable broth or reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 ½ cup hot water
- 1 teaspoon dried basil or marjoram
- 1 (9 oz) fresh or frozen cheese (or meat) ravioli, preferably whole-wheat
- 2 cups (about 2 medium) diced zucchini
- Freshly ground pepper to taste

Directions:

Heat oil in a large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add pepper-onion mix, garlic, and crushed red pepper (if using) and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add tomatoes, broth, water, and basil (or marjoram); bring to a rolling boil over high heat. Add ravioli and cook for 3 minutes less than the package directions. Add zucchini; return to a boil. Cook until the zucchini is crisp-tender, about 3 minutes. Season with pepper.

**Feel free to substitute or add any vegetable you like.



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