



Monthly Health Zone

April is National Stress Awareness Month

Stress Awareness Month occurs in April and was initiated in 1992. Last year, and so far this year, it seems to be particularly important to observe due to the levels of stress being triggered by the coronavirus. Learning to cope with stress and finding healthy ways to deal with situations can go a long way in living a healthy and positive life. There are several types of stress and many distinct ways to combat and manage the different types. No single person experiences stress in the same way, therefore making it hard to find a single definition. The American Institute of Stress states that the most common explanation is a "physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension." Stress can be debilitating and it can cause and/or aggravate health problems, so it is vital that we take care of ourselves through: healthy eating, exercise, relaxation, and visiting your doctor. Although doing any or all of those things doesn't eliminate stress, they may help.

Managing stress levels through diet can help your body recover from stressful situations more rapidly. Adding more vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains and lean proteins can be helpful. Some foods that have proven to help reduce anxiety in some people are:

- **Brazil nuts** - They are high in selenium, which may improve mood by reducing inflammation, which is often at heightened levels when someone has a mood disorder, such as anxiety.
- **Fatty fish** - They are high in omega-3 fatty acids, which have a strong relationship with cognitive function as well as mental health. Salmon and sardines contain vitamin D, which if deficient in, has been linked to mood disorders, such as depression and anxiety.
- **Eggs** - Egg yolks are a good source of vitamin D as well as protein. Eggs also contain tryptophan, which is an amino acid that helps create serotonin. Serotonin is a chemical neurotransmitter that helps to regulate mood, sleep, memory and behavior
- **Pumpkin seeds** - Are a great source of potassium, which helps regulate electrolyte balance and manage blood pressure. Potassium-rich foods may help reduce symptoms of stress and anxiety.
- **Dark Chocolate** - (70% or more, 1-3 grams). can help reduce stress and anxiety. Chocolate has a high tryptophan content, which the body uses to turn into mood-enhancing neurotransmitters, such as serotonin in the brain.
- **Tumeric** - It's active ingredient is curcumin, which may help lower anxiety by reducing inflammation and oxidative stress that often increases in people experiencing disorders, like anxiety and depression.
- **Chamomile** - Has anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antioxidant and relaxant properties
- **Yogurt** - Contains helpful bacteria, which has shown to have positive effects on brain health. May also produce anti-inflammatory effect in the body.
- **Green Tea** - Contains amino acid called theanine, which has anti-anxiety and calming effects and may increase the production of serotonin and dopamine.

These are just some of the nutrient rich foods studies have shown that may help in anxiety and stress reduction.

Exercising 20-30 minutes a day, as well as relaxation techniques, such as yoga and meditation are also activities you can do yourself to help minimize anxiety levels. Stress is not necessarily a 'bad' thing, for it is often what pushes us all to succeed, however, if it dominates your life, it can become incapacitating. It is important to know when to talk about it to others and when to seek medical advice and attention versus working through it on your own.

Smile, breathe and let go.....

"Don't believe every worried thought you have. Worried thoughts are notoriously inaccurate."

-RENEE JAIN

"Worrying is carrying tomorrow's load with today's strength—carrying two days at once. Worrying doesn't empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength."

CORRIE TEN BOOM

THE Healthy

30 ENCOURAGING ANXIETY QUOTES

"Go easy on yourself. Whatever you do today, let it be enough."
 - Unknown

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"Every moment is a fresh beginning."

T.S. Eliot

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Eat Better

Brazil-Nut Pesto

A pesto filled with mood improving , inflammation reducing and nutrient rich tree nuts

INGREDIENTS:

1/2 cup coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley
 1/4 cup Brazil nuts, coarsely chopped
 2 Tbsp water
 1 Tbsp chopped tarragon
 1 large garlic clove, chopped
 1/2 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
 5 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
 3 Tbsp freshly grated Parmesan cheese
 Salt and freshly ground pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a mini food processor, combine the parsley with the Brazil nuts, water, tarragon, garlic & lemon zest
2. Pulse to a paste & add 3 Tbsp of olive oil & the Parmesan cheese & process to a slightly smooth paste.
3. Season with salt and pepper

Blueberry Coconut Chia Pudding

Chia seeds are high in magnesium, potassium, B vitamins, calcium, iron and fiber - all proven to reduce stress

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups coconut milk (Silk brand)
 1/2 cup chia seeds
 1 cup fresh blueberries
 2 cups blueberries fresh or frozen (optional blueberry puree)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pour coconut milk into large bowl. Stir in chia seeds. Add honey if you prefer. Refrigerate for several hours until thickened or overnight.
2. Spoon into bowls to serve. Top with fresh blueberries. You can garnish with coconut flakes.
3. To make blueberry puree: simmer blueberries in a small saucepan over the stove until they begin to soften and burst. Crush them with a potato masher for a thicker puree or pour in the blender for a thinner consistency. Spoon puree on finished chia pudding.

- If you have a healthy recipe that you would like to submit, please send it to: jkylchak@thiel.edu