

Healthy U @ Work

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 **Franciscan**
WORKING Well

Donate Blood: Save Lives

January is National Blood Donor Month. Blood transfusions take place every day and save lives of people all over the world. There are about 5 million people in need of a blood transfusion in America alone. Blood donations are the only way to help patients with cancer, bleeding disorders, chronic anemia, and other blood abnormalities that are in need of blood transfusions.

Donating blood is an easy way to help save lives, but did you know that donating blood can also benefit you? Donating blood:

- can help prevent hemochromatosis caused by too much iron stored in the body.
- may improve cardiovascular health and reduce the risk of heart attack and strokes by normalizing iron levels in the blood.
- reduces your risk of developing cancer associated with excess iron in the blood.
- stimulates blood cell production to help your body maintain good health.
- will provide you with a free blood analysis and could uncover potential health problems.
- can burn up to 650 calories. Though blood donation is not safe and effective way to lose weight.



Perhaps most importantly, donating blood is something you do for others. Helping others is known to improve heart health and improve your mood. Go to www.redcrossblood.org to find a donation center or blood drive near you!



Thyroid Health

The thyroid is a gland in the neck that produces hormones that regulate metabolism. Thyroid disease, a relatively common phenomena, can create a variety of symptoms: fatigue, weight gain, cold, depression, dry skin, constipation and muscle cramps or irritability, night sweats, nervousness, weight loss and increased heart rate. If the thyroid doesn't produce enough hormones, the body's functions slow down, possibly causing fatigue, constipation, weight gain and muscle cramps. If the thyroid produces too much hormone, the body's metabolism increases, often resulting in nervousness, a rapid heart rate, excessive sweating, and weight loss. In both cases, the thyroid is not functioning normally and will need medical attention.

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms of thyroid disease, discuss these with your doctor. Make sure that he or she knows of any family history of the disease as well. Thyroid disease is diagnosed through a physical examination and blood tests. The blood test will measure TSH, a hormone produced by the pituitary gland designed to stimulate the thyroid's production of hormones. Blood tests measuring the thyroid's hormones (T3 and T4) may also be ordered. Sometimes a doctor will want a thyroid scan (picture of your thyroid). If a screening shows thyroid imbalance, talk to your doctor about diet or lifestyle changes that could support thyroid function before discussing other options. Treatment for hypothyroidism is usually through prescription replacement hormones. Treatment for hyperthyroidism includes medication and surgery. *Continued on page 4.*

Produce of the Month Kale

Kale is a vegetable superstar. High in vitamins and fiber, kale is shown to enhance nutrition and is linked to cancer prevention. Low in calories and delicious, kale is worth adding to your diet.

The Basics: Kale is a cruciferous vegetable, meaning that its a member of the cabbage family. Kale can be curly or flat and while it is known for its deep green color it also comes in purple. Kale should be free of browning or bruising when purchased and can be stored in the refrigerator for 4-5 days in a plastic bag or air tight container. When ready to prepare, rinse the leaves and remove the inside stems if desired. Kale can be eaten raw in smoothies or in salad – try a kale Caesar salad for a yummy spin on an old classic. Massaging kale in olive oil and a little lemon juice can help enhance the texture and flavor. You can also steam, braise, or sauté kale and is a great addition to pasta sauces and soups.

Try This: Sauté garlic and chopped onion until soft. Add chopped kale and ½ cup of stock (vegetable, beef or chicken). Cover and cook until the kale has softened (though it won't be as soft as a cooked spinach) and the liquid has absorbed. Season with salt and pepper. Drizzle with lemon juice or red wine vinegar before serving.

The Facts: Kale is very low in calories and high in fiber with 3 grams of protein per cup. It is an excellent source of folate, vitamins K, A and C and minerals phosphorous, potassium, calcium and zinc.

The Truth About Supplements

Like many Americans, you may have used supplements in the form of pills, bars, shakes, and powders to aid in your daily nutrition or weight loss efforts. Dietary supplements include vitamins, minerals, herbs, enzymes, and in some cases protein, fats and carbohydrates. You may take a vitamin D or calcium supplement, herbs such as garlic and echinacea, or a probiotic for gut health. If you frequent the gym you may use protein shakes or bars. These products are designed to make up for nutrients lacking in your diet but are they a nutritionally sound alternative? Here are some things to consider:



Should I be taking a dietary supplement?

Supplements and fortified foods may be appropriate if you have dietary deficiencies, food intolerances, are pregnant, or have a condition that affects how your body absorbs nutrients. Your healthcare provider may also recommend a supplement based on your current diet, gender, age, or health-risk status.

How do I know if I am taking a quality supplement?

- Supplements and meal replacement products are not fully regulated by the Food and Drug Administration meaning there is no guarantee your product is proven to deliver the health claims marketed on the label.
- To find a product that is safe, you can look for one of three seals on the label (shown right). This label means the product has been tested by a third party for safety. This label tells you that the ingredients list has been verified and that the product contains no dangerous substances such as lead, arsenic, or bacteria.
- Just because a product is labeled safe, doesn't mean that the nutrients can be absorbed and used by your body efficiently. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about supplements that offer high bioavailability to make sure you are using a quality product that will make a difference for your health.
- Supplemental foods, like protein bars and shakes, must include a nutrition label that complies with current labeling guidelines. This would include all ingredients, the various nutrients and the daily recommended value. If you select a meal substitute, choose one that is low in sugar and is a good source of protein. Like any processed food, look for a short ingredients list that you can pronounce to make sure you are making a healthier choice.



Clearly, it can be hard to decide what is a healthy supplement and what isn't. It is agreed that the healthiest meal is one that includes a variety of vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and fruit. This kind of diet provides all the needed nutrients and the fiber needed for digestive health. An occasional shake or bar as a substitute for a meal is fine. But it won't change bad eating habits or provide the best nutrition in the long run. Stock up on easy to pack vegetables and healthy proteins, like hard boiled eggs, string cheese, nuts, turkey or chicken breast. Prepack a few small meals to grab on the go, and add a sliced apple or clementine for a more complete meal. Healthy eating can be easy, convenient, and taste great!

The Side Effects of Sitting

Did you know that sitting can be a health risk? Sitting too much can put stress on your lower back and weaken support muscles found in your abdomen and legs. In fact, a 2015 study of 1,300 people found that half of sedentary workers dealt with lower back pain. In addition, one in four workers who had a desk job had more than one spine-related problem, like neck and back pain or shoulder pain and numbness in their hands and fingers. Being sedentary has also been linked to an increased risk of dementia. Sitting raises your risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol which are all factors in dementia.



Regular movement during the day can help reduce the risks associated with working a desk job or driving long hours in a motor vehicle. Walking whenever possible and standing up regularly seems to help. Research out of the federal National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found that “small changes can have a big impact” (NPR). The American Society of Nephrology reported on a study published in the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*: those who moved for 2 minutes every hour of sitting decreased their risk of death by 33%. If your job requires you to be sedentary for long periods of time, set a timer so you can get up and move continuously for 2 minutes every hour.

If you are stuck at your desk, choose a seat with good lower back support, armrests and a swivel base. Place a small pillow or rolled towel in the small of your back to help support good posture and keep your knees parallel to your hips. If you have a habit of crossing your legs, try to break that habit to avoid added stress on your joints. Hosting walking meetings and standing up during a phone call are great ways to move your body and stay productive. If you don't have access to a standing desk, place your computer on top of a box for half the day to give your back a break. If you are on the road, be intentional about stretching and walking when you stop for gas and food. Having a bolster or rolled up towel to support your back while you drive can also help.

If the thought of being active seems overwhelming, remember it is okay to start small and slowly increase how long and how often you are physically active. Moving more throughout the day can make a big difference in your health and help you feel better by reducing back and joint pain and reducing stress and anxiety.

Thyroid Health

Continued from page 2

Thyroid disease can be caused by nutrition and lifestyle factors and can be linked to family history. More recent studies have shown a link between poor thyroid health and vitamin D, iodine, selenium, smoking, certain medications and stress. No matter the cause, thyroid disease can and should be treated by a medical professional. Left untreated, hypothyroidism will normally get worse with increased fatigue, lack of concentration and weight gain. Rarely, untreated hypothyroidism can lead to coma. Untreated hyperthyroidism can cause what's called a “thyroid storm,” a condition in which an individual experiences an irregular heartbeat, high fever, and heart failure. A thyroid storm is a serious condition and requires immediate emergency medical treatment.

Thyroid function is important to how you feel and your general health. Fortunately, treating thyroid disease is an effective way to avoid the unpleasant symptoms of the condition. Discuss with your doctor whether screening for thyroid function is right for you.



Ask the Trainer

By Erin M. Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT

Q: Hello Erin! What do you recommend for strength training, do you recommend isolating body parts throughout the week or doing full body workouts? Does one work better than the other? Any help would be appreciated.
Jennifer K.

A: Hi Jennifer, thank you for reaching out with a great question. When you talk about full body workouts that means you will try to hit every muscle during your workout. This can be beneficial as it's a great way to balance the body and make sure you are engaging all muscles groups. It's also nice to know that if you are trying to strength train at least 2-3x a week and you miss a workout you've already hit those muscles once or twice that week. If you are isolating muscle groups and miss your leg workout then you are skipping legs that week. Doing full body workouts also are a way to maximize calorie and fat burn as you can do some higher intensity movements during these workouts. On the other hand, doing full body workouts throughout the week could possibly lead to overtraining if you try to do it every day. Like I said, each of these types of workouts have their pros and cons.

Let's talk about isolating workouts now as they too have some benefits that full body workouts cannot give you. By doing isolating workouts you can target certain muscles to sculpt your body. They can be easier workouts to manage because isolated workouts usually concentrate on just 2 or 3 specific muscle groups. Isolated workouts do not offer the same initial calorie burn during your workout compared to when you are engaging your full body, but you might find you burn more calories after your workout as your body works hard to repair the muscles you isolated. That does not mean you won't be sore after a full body workout though.

I have clients whose bodies respond great to full body workouts and get them the results they want and I have those who respond to isolated workouts. It really just depends on what your goals are for strength training. If you are looking for general fitness and strength, I would recommend full body workouts and if you want to concentrate on developing certain muscle areas isolating may be the way to go. I like to combine the two types of workouts in my programming for clients. I try to incorporate full body workouts 2 times a week and once a week try isolating 1-2 muscle groups to sculpt certain areas. Each week I pick another muscle group for my client to focus on during their isolated workout. I hope this helps give you some different ideas and a different perspective that what you may have read before. If you have any questions please let me know. I'm always here to help.



Dealing with Difficult Co-Workers



We all encounter a co-worker or boss who can be somewhat difficult.

Not to worry!

Here are a few things to keep in mind when dealing with these individuals:

- Set a few ground rules on how you expect to be treated to lessen the strain.
- Try to understand their point of view, sometimes people just want to be validated.
- Stay calm; take a moment, breathe deeply, and take time alone, if needed.
- Don't engage in conversation when you are upset.
- Change your body language which can enable a positive tone.
- Look at the whole picture by creating a 2-way dialogue.
- Acknowledge positive change, everyone likes to be validated about their positive changes.

One Thing to Always Remember:

***You cannot control other people's behaviors and reactions,
but you can try to control your reactions.***

Need help with a difficult co-worker?

Call your EAP at

219-662-3730 or 800-747-7262

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WORKING Well

4111 S. Franklin St.
Michigan City, IN 46360
1-866-552-WELL (9355)
www.workingwell.org