

Healthy U @ Work

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 **Franciscan**
WORKING Well

The Power of Positive Thinking

Having a positive outlook can definitely make you feel happier. It can help reduce stress and even improve your social life. What you may not know is that being positive is also healthier for you! Having a sunny disposition, one that focuses on what's going right and not what's going wrong, can strengthen your immune system, lower blood pressure, and promote a significant improvement in wellness behaviors.

A 2016 study out of the Yale School of Public Health found that a positive attitude toward aging reduced C-reactive protein, a marker for stress-related inflammation. This, in turn, was linked to a longer life. A 2013 study in Denmark concluded that hospital patients who reported a positive outlook were 58% more likely to live an additional five years. Having an optimistic outlook helps to control stress hormones that are linked to high blood pressure and heart disease. A positive outlook also makes it easier to eat right and get exercise, which then leads to a happier disposition! This positive cycle works to reduce the chronic disease symptoms and improves quality of life.



We are not all born with a positive outlook, but we can all learn to be more positive. Spend time with people who share your values and interests, and avoid people who are complainers or who are negative. Keep a gratitude journal or at least end each day thinking of one thing you can be grateful for. Notice your thinking and reframe it if necessary. Rather than “of course, something went wrong,” try looking for something going right! A little positivity can go a long way!

“What we hold in our mind, we bring to life.”

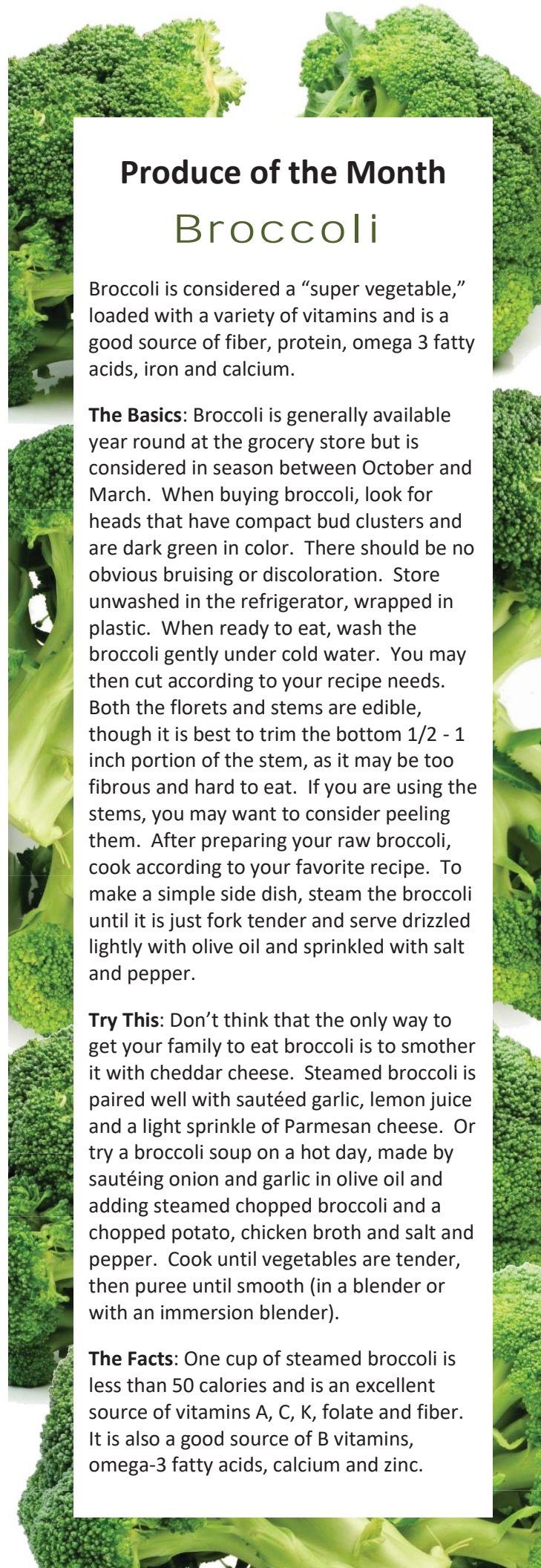


Food Safety

Though fall is near, it is still a good time for barbecues and picnics. Keep the fun going by keeping food safe and avoiding food contamination and spoilage.

- Remember to thaw meats in the refrigerator, not the kitchen counter. You should also marinate meats in the refrigerator and save a separate amount of the marinade if you are planning to use it as a sauce for the cooked meat.
- Transport raw meat to the grill in one container, bringing a second container for the cooked meat. This eliminates the possibility of cross contaminations. If you are traveling to grill or barbecue, package your meat in a cooler with ice.
- Cook meats to the correct internal temperature. Use a meat thermometer to check meat you have taken off the grill. Guidelines for your specific piece of meat can often be found on the package itself, online, in many cookbooks, and even on some grill utensils.
- For salads and side dishes, wash all produce thoroughly before using. Use a separate cutting board for produce to eliminate cross contamination from any meat. Transport your vegetables and side dishes in a cooler with ice.

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Produce of the Month Broccoli

Broccoli is considered a “super vegetable,” loaded with a variety of vitamins and is a good source of fiber, protein, omega 3 fatty acids, iron and calcium.

The Basics: Broccoli is generally available year round at the grocery store but is considered in season between October and March. When buying broccoli, look for heads that have compact bud clusters and are dark green in color. There should be no obvious bruising or discoloration. Store unwashed in the refrigerator, wrapped in plastic. When ready to eat, wash the broccoli gently under cold water. You may then cut according to your recipe needs. Both the florets and stems are edible, though it is best to trim the bottom 1/2 - 1 inch portion of the stem, as it may be too fibrous and hard to eat. If you are using the stems, you may want to consider peeling them. After preparing your raw broccoli, cook according to your favorite recipe. To make a simple side dish, steam the broccoli until it is just fork tender and serve drizzled lightly with olive oil and sprinkled with salt and pepper.

Try This: Don't think that the only way to get your family to eat broccoli is to smother it with cheddar cheese. Steamed broccoli is paired well with sautéed garlic, lemon juice and a light sprinkle of Parmesan cheese. Or try a broccoli soup on a hot day, made by sautéing onion and garlic in olive oil and adding steamed chopped broccoli and a chopped potato, chicken broth and salt and pepper. Cook until vegetables are tender, then puree until smooth (in a blender or with an immersion blender).

The Facts: One cup of steamed broccoli is less than 50 calories and is an excellent source of vitamins A, C, K, folate and fiber. It is also a good source of B vitamins, omega-3 fatty acids, calcium and zinc.

Nutrition During Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a special time that requires special attention to nutrition. And while the stereotype of pregnancy includes “eating for two,” the reality is that mothers-to-be do not require a lot more food, but each food choice needs to provide important nutrients for the health of mom and baby. Here is what you should consider if you are pregnant:

- ❑ Additional calories are not needed until the second trimester, and then it is only an additional 300 calories a day.
- ❑ The basic diet of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains is still the best diet you can choose for your health and the health of the baby.
- ❑ For some women, an increase in daily protein is needed. Protein is found in animal products but is also in nuts, tofu, and vegetables. The average pregnant woman needs 71 grams of protein a day.
- ❑ Iron is important, and with the increased blood supply that occurs during pregnancy, anemia is more likely. Fortified cereal and whole grain foods, meat, spinach, poultry, and beans all provide iron. (Example: 2-3 servings of leafy green vegetables will provide enough iron for the day.)
- ❑ Folic acid reduces the risk of spina bifida and other neural tube defects. Folate can be found in legumes, green leafy vegetables and fruits, such as oranges, kiwi, melons, strawberries, and tomatoes. Many doctors will recommend a folic acid supplement to women who are trying to become pregnant.
- ❑ Calcium is used to build the baby’s teeth and bones and helps to regulate fluids. Common sources of calcium include organic dairy, almonds, dark leafy greens, fortified juices, and white beans.

Always discuss your specific nutritional needs with your doctor, especially if you are thinking about getting pregnant or are pregnant.



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- Keep food in the cooler until ready to serve and serve hot foods immediately. Do not leave foods out for more than 2 hours. For outside temperatures above 90 degrees, don’t leave food out for more than 1 hour. Any food left out for longer than these guidelines should be thrown away.
- If you are having a picnic at the beach, bury your cooler in a couple inches of sand and cover with a beach towel to help keep it cool.
- Picnics should be prepared carefully as certain foods spoil more easily than others. Mayonnaise, eggs, luncheon meats, potato salads and pasta salads spoil easily and should be kept in a cooler with plenty of ice. If you are not bringing a cooler to your picnic, consider fruit, peanut butter, crackers, hard cheeses and vegetables.

Many of the tips for keeping food safe outdoors apply to food safety indoors, so remember the main ideas:

- Avoid cross contamination between raw meat and cooked meats and vegetables. This includes washing your hands after touching raw meat!
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold, and do not leave out for more than 2 hours.
- Wash all produce before using.

Find Your Fit

By LeeAnn Wilcox

Want to get into a fitness routine but don't know where you fit in?

Read the descriptions below to find out which one best describes your activity preferences.

I like to workout alone indoors: If you enjoy the gym, hop on a machine or circuit and get working. Are you a beginner? Hire a personal trainer or expert to show you the ropes and give you the confidence to go solo. If the gym isn't your style, create a space at home and press play on your favorite workout video or app.

I like to workout alone outdoors: Opt for some outdoor Yoga in a shady spot or find a pool where you can swim or walk some laps. There are many park workouts available online that utilize playground equipment for a sweat session. You can also hula hoop or jump rope for some great cardio.

I like to workout in a group outdoors: It is still a good time to utilize outdoor special Bootcamp classes, Yoga classes, water classes and more. You can also include friends or family to try that park workout together, shoot some hoops, or go for a bike ride.

I like to workout in a group indoors: Small group personal training, instructional classes, and group fitness classes may be a great fit for you! Many facilities have daytime and evening schedules full of a variety of class types to fit diverse tastes and fitness levels.

I like to workout but I have an injury or chronic condition: The pool is a fantastic alternative for individuals who have difficulty in traditional fitness situations. Whether it is an injury, condition, age, or weight consideration, the pool can offer a lower impact workout while helping you maintain the intensity of your workout. There are many aquatic classes to choose from, or you can opt to do walking laps in the shallow end or swim laps in the deep end.

If the pool isn't your thing, most group fitness schedules also include classes that are labeled "beginner" or "low impact" for individuals looking for more suitable classes. Regardless of what class you're in, your instructor should know modifications for even the most intense exercises. Make sure to inform the instructor of any injuries or limitations prior to the start of class so they can help you have a safe and enjoyable workout experience.

Still not quite sure? Take a leap of faith and try something you never thought you would do. Sometimes the workout we think we will like the least ends up surprising us as our new favorite! As always talk to your doctor before starting a new fitness regimen.



How to Keep Your Nervous System from Breaking Down



A message from your Healthy U @ Work Wellness Champion:
Pamela Johnson, BS, HHP-AADP, CFMP, RYT

Many of us are well aware that to feel our best, we need adequate sleep, exercise, nutrition and ways to manage our stress. But, did you know that all of these functions are connected by our nervous system? **The nervous system controls and coordinates every function of your body.** That means it controls blood pressure, the immune system, hormone production and even digestion.

From a functional medicine perspective, this is important because it tells us that high blood pressure, insomnia, poor digestion and impaired immune function may have their root cause in the nervous system. Because the body is designed for self-regulation and self-healing, dysfunctions of the regulatory systems can be addressed by learning how to support the nervous system.

The two main branches of the nervous system are the brain and spinal cord (central nervous system) and everything outside of that (the peripheral nervous system).

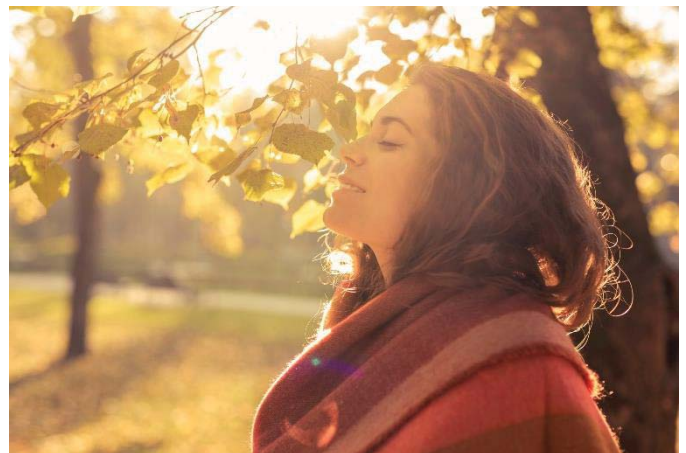
The peripheral nervous system is composed of the somatic (controls muscles) and autonomic or automatic (controls glands or organs). The autonomic nervous system has two components: One controls the functions of rest and digest (parasympathetic) and the other controls the function of fight or flight (sympathetic). Both of these systems must be balanced in order to survive.

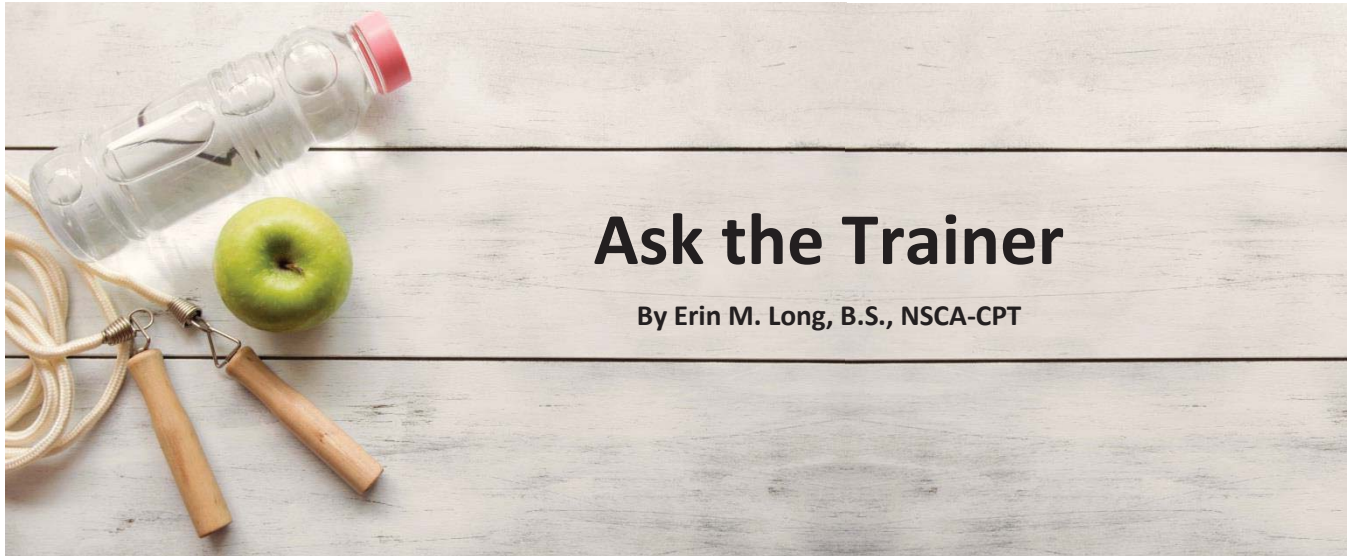
Because we spend much of our days in a constant state of fight or flight (sympathetic dominant), we begin to see dysregulation in the form of high cholesterol, blood glucose and high blood pressure. This creates a hormone imbalance which then affects our rest and digest functions in the form of impaired digestion, reduced immune function and insomnia. By explaining this process, we are essentially describing how stress breaks down the nervous system.

How else does the nervous system affect our organ systems? A network of nerves originates directly from the spine and connects to different areas of the body. This is where improper body mechanics and alignment, muscle imbalance and lack of flexibility can create impaired nerve messages and a host of symptoms. There are different pain patterns and symptoms depending upon where an injury or imbalance originates. For example, aggravated nerves in the low back may influence digestion or reproductive health. These problems can often be relieved once the origin of the symptoms is identified.

Pain and stress often impair sleep, which is essential for proper functioning of the nervous system. The nervous system works with the endocrine system to enable the 4 stages of sleep necessary for rest and repair. Many things disrupt these stages including medications, alcohol, light and electromagnetic fields.

The root cause of many chronic conditions can be corrected with simple routines to support the nervous system. To support the nervous system, it is important to 1) manage stress with simple breathing techniques, to 2) correct physical imbalances with somatics, yoga, or physical therapy, and 3) prioritize restful sleep by putting away your electronic devices and avoiding food or alcohol 3 hours before turning in for the night.





Ask the Trainer

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

Q: Hi Erin! I was wondering what your thoughts are on the not eating after 7pm theory for weight loss. I've read of lot of information supporting this theory as well as information saying it's not true. What is your take on this subject?

-Tessa

Hi Tessa! Thank you for reaching out and asking a great question. I get asked this specific question all the time. Like you said there is a lot of information out there that supports the theory and information that doesn't. I will give you my take on it.

A: The reason we hear about the benefits of fasting after 7 pm is because it is believed to improve our sleep quality and our metabolism. During sleep, our body works to heal and restore itself. Many health professionals believe eating too close to your bedtime keeps your digestive system busy and takes away from your body's ability to restore the liver, adrenal glands, etc. While all of this is true, the time of day you should stop eating really depends on your daily schedule.

I recommend my clients never go more than 2-4 hours without eating to help maintain a healthy metabolism, keep blood sugars stable, and elevate mood and energy levels. Through my education and training, this is what I believe is best for most people.

To help you determine if not eating after 7 pm is right for you, first answer the question, "what time do I go to bed?" Avoiding eating 3 hours before bed may be a good rule of thumb to follow. If you eat dinner at 6pm but go to bed at 9pm then I probably wouldn't recommend eating after 7pm. However, if you eat dinner at 6pm but do not go to bed until 11pm or 12am, then, yes, you may actually need to eat something after 7pm so that you do not go more than that 4 hours without eating. That does not mean eating a big bowl of ice cream at 9pm. It means finding a healthy snack to fuel and nourish your body for the next few hours. A small bowl of fruit, a handful of nuts, some veggies with a little hummus, or a small bowl of organic popcorn are just a few suggestions.

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Ask the Trainer *Continued from page 5.*

Here is an example of how I schedule my eating around the hours I work. I always eat within the first 30 minutes of getting up. [I highly recommend eating within the first hour of rising to get your body out of starvation mode and jumpstart your metabolism. If you aren't a breakfast person, find something light and healthy you can enjoy.] Then I schedule my food every 2-4 hours throughout the day following my first meal. I do not get off work until late so I often eat dinner at 7 pm or 8 pm. Since I aim to go to bed between 10 and 11 pm, I will most likely not eat after this meal.

I hope this answers your question and gives you a little more perspective on the subject.

Dedicated to your success,

Erin M Long

Want to Know More? Contact Working Well for more information on wellness programs and how they can help you reduce healthcare costs and improve employee wellness.



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