

TAKE CHARGE!



March 2023

Unplug and Unwind

How would you feel about spending 24 hours away from your electronic devices?

The National Day of Unplugging (NDU), observed every first weekend in March, has a message for us: Consider living an entire day, from sundown to sundown on March 3 to 4, without the static of technology. It's a chance



for you and your family and friends to fully disconnect from your phones, computers, streaming — and kick back and enjoy some relaxation together.

Computers, smartphones, smart TVs and video games are integral to our lives.

A typical American family maintains five devices connecting them to people, media, education, work, shopping and more, all at their fingertips. Our kids are growing up quickly in our high-tech world — a survey of 5,000 kids found that in 2021, 37% of 11-year-olds and 91% of 14-year-olds had a smartphone.

Fortunately, for more than a decade, NDU and its related resources have inspired schools, businesses and individuals to adopt and promote a positive life-tech balance.

Hopefully, you are taking regular respites from your smart devices to get up and move about. On your breaks, head outdoors for some fresh air and exercise. By routinely unplugging, you can find time to do some of your other favorite things.



To maintain safe, appropriate online use, teach kids from a young age about technology and positive online behavior. You may find it hard to stay on top of all the apps and sites your children may use. To keep up with the changing tech landscape, visit saferinternetday.org.

Learn more about going device-free at unplugcollaborative.org.

city events

Emotional Eating

Thursday, March 2

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Register [here](#)

Filling Nutritional Gaps: Nourish Self-Care

Tuesday, March 7

10:00 am – 11:00 am

Register [here](#)

Health at Your Desk

Wednesday, March 15

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Register [here](#)

Nutrition Navigator

Thursday, March 16

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Register [here](#)

Don't Feed Your Feelings: A Guide to Emotional Eating

Tuesday, March 28

10:00 am – 11:00 am

Register [here](#)

Deferred Compensation Webinars

Introduction to Deferred Compensation

Friday, March 3

12:00 pm – 12:45 pm

Register [here](#)

Friday, March 24

12:00 pm – 12:45 pm

Register [here](#)

Funds and Fees: What You Need to Know

Wednesday, March 15

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Register [here](#)

Friday, March 17

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Register [here](#)

Eating Disorders

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

One side effect of the COVID-19 pandemic was a rise in the number of people diagnosed with eating disorders.

While food-related, eating disorders are considered mental health conditions.

Common eating disorders include:

- **Anorexia nervosa**, a mental illness that includes an intense fear of gaining weight and often an abnormally low body weight. It involves restriction of food and calories, over-exercising to burn calories, or both.
- **Bulimia nervosa**, a mental illness resulting in food restriction, binge eating (consuming a lot of food), and purging by vomiting or laxative use.
- **Binge eating disorder**, a mental illness characterized by eating large amounts of food and then feeling guilty or distressed afterward, but repeating that behavior on other occasions.

While not officially a diagnosable eating disorder, orthorexia nervosa is increasingly common as well. It's defined as an obsession with healthy eating, leading to unhealthy dietary restrictions. With orthorexia, food restriction, such as cutting out all carbs, all fat or all sugar, can become so extreme that it negatively affects health by causing obsessive thinking and malnutrition. It can lead to eating disorders, such as anorexia.

Causes, signs and symptoms

Some signs and symptoms of eating disorders include a preoccupation with food, nutrients, calorie counting, weight loss, continual dieting, a refusal to eat certain foods, fear of food, skipping meals, extreme mood swings and withdrawing from friends or family.

Eating disorders are caused by a combination of things, including genetics, biological vulnerability, environmental and social factors. Family and twin studies suggest that eating disorders run in families, and genetic studies are being conducted to determine which genes may contribute to eating disorder risk. For some people, a precipitating factor, such as illness, trauma or loss, can trigger the onset of an eating disorder.

Treatment

Eating disorders are one of the deadliest mental illnesses, second only to opioid addiction. While serious, eating disorders are treatable with a team approach that includes psychologists, physicians and dietitians. To be successful, treatment must address the eating disorder symptoms, medical consequences, psychological factors and the social and cultural environments that contribute to or maintain the eating disorder.

People with eating disorders tend to have personality traits that include perfectionism, the desire to please others, sensitivity to criticism and self-doubt. As a part of treatment, therapy helps the patient manage the preoccupation with weight and other challenging emotions.

If you or a family member seems to be overly preoccupied with food, eating, counting calories, exercising to burn calories, taking laxatives to shed calories, or vomiting to lose weight, talk with your health care provider for guidance.



While eating disorders disproportionately affect tween (ages eight to 12) and teenage females, approximately one in four people with anorexia or bulimia nervosa are male. Adults can also have eating disorders — mental health does not discriminate based on age. In fact, in a study of adults seeking eating disorder treatment, 17% of the participants were age 40 or older. Anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa affect about 2% to 3% of women. The most common age of onset is between 12 to 25.

Decompression 101

Do you often get home from work and feel tense? Whether it's a long commute, constantly facing deadlines or feeling revved up all day at a job you love, it can sometimes be hard to truly decompress and relax after work — which you need to do.

Whether it's bad stress from work-related tension or good stress from exciting projects, your mind and body need time to cultivate calm. It can benefit your overall mental and physical health with lower blood pressure and better sleep.

Ways to decompress:

- **Catch your breath.** Take a few minutes to breathe deeply and slowly. Inhale through your nose, and then breathe out, counting to ten. Repeat for at least three minutes and feel the stress leaving your body.
- **Calm down in water.** Research shows soaking in a not-too-hot but relaxingly warm bath improves blood flow and reduces muscle tension. And that can help your mind take a breather, too.
- **Go outside.** Exercise is a great way to relieve mental tension, and even if you don't feel like hitting the gym, a walk outdoors in nature alone or with your dog, friend or family member is pleasurable decompression therapy.
- **Disconnect from technology after work.** Consciously stop being glued to your phone and computer. Listen to music, read and indulge in hobbies and talents you've ignored for a while. Spend quality time talking and listening to friends and family.
- **Take a staycation.** If you know you need downtime, take a vacation day or two and relax at home.
- **Get a massage.** Studies show a therapeutic massage lowers the stress hormone cortisol.



Coffee — Healthful or Not?

Coffee: Some studies show that two to five cups a day reduce your risk of getting heart attacks, type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's disease, uterine cancer — and help treat depression. However, other studies have not shown any effect. So is coffee harmful?

Not necessarily. Coffee got a bad name years ago because of faulty research that linked coffee to asthma, lung cancer and heart disease. Those early studies never took smoking into consideration when they analyzed the data.

Bottom line: Don't start drinking coffee to prevent health problems — the evidence is not strong enough to suggest that. But if you do like your coffee, drink no more than three 12-ounce servings a day. If you get the jitters, or can't sleep at night, you might be caffeine sensitive. Cut back on your java and don't drink any after 12 p.m. Or switch to decaffeinated coffee and herbal teas.



TIP of the MONTH

Tuna

There are many options when buying tuna. It comes in cans, pouches and glass jars, and these can be used interchangeably. Tuna can be packed in water or oil. The oil-packed version has more calories and is useful when you want a moister tuna to add atop salad or in pasta. Water-packed tuna is drier and flakier and works well when mixed with mayo for tuna sandwiches. Albacore or white tuna is lighter in color, and contains more mercury than skipjack tuna, which is slightly browner. All are a source of heart-healthy omega-3 fats.

Personalized Nutrition

eating smart

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Nutrition advice is often standard for healthy adults — eat more vegetables, choose whole grains and consume less sugar. But what if you could get advice unique to your health needs?

Personalized nutrition (also known as precision nutrition or nutrigenomics) offers nutrition advice tailored to your genetics or microbiome (the bacteria in your digestive tract) — based on the assumption that we all respond differently to what we eat. For example, not everyone with type 2 diabetes reacts the same way to different foods, and there may be a personal reason behind it. Instead of a routine blood test, one day you may be offered a DNA and microbiome test (measures bacteria in the digestive tract) to help advance your health.

Some genetic tests can reveal how well you metabolize caffeine, vitamins and minerals.

While it's too soon to use personalized nutrition to treat chronic diseases, ongoing research may identify and help treat metabolic syndrome (a cluster of conditions occurring together that raise risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes), certain cancers and type 2 diabetes.

This growing field is the future of nutrition counseling, but personalized nutrition is in its early stages. The technology is expensive, not widely accessible and requires a health professional to interpret the results and help implement meaningful changes. You can't get that with a test bought online.

The good news? Research suggests these tests will be beneficial. One meta-analysis of 11 studies of personalized nutrition advice revealed that people were more likely to succeed with dietary changes through personalized, rather than general, advice. More to come.



March is
Nutrition
Month.



Linguini with Tuna

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil | 1 cup diced button mushrooms |
| 1 medium onion, peeled and chopped | 1 cup diced broccoli florets |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced | 1 jar (24 oz) tomato sauce |
| 2 cans (12.5 oz) light tuna packed in water, drained and broken into pieces | 1 lb dry whole-grain linguini |
| | ¼ cup freshly chopped basil |

Heat oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, sauté 2-3 minutes. Add tuna, mushrooms and broccoli. Stir in tomato sauce and mix well. Cook on medium for 15 minutes, adding water if sauce is too thick. Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain pasta, reserving some pasta cooking water. Add tuna-tomato sauce to pasta, stir well, and thin with pasta cooking water if needed. Garnish with basil and serve.

Makes 6 servings. Per serving: 501 calories | 42g protein | 7g total fat | 1g saturated fat | 3g mono fat | 2g poly fat | 73g carbohydrate | 9g sugar (0 added sugar) | 14g fiber | 734mg sodium



EASY recipe

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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News & Notes

- **It's Time to Schedule Your Eye Exam.** Eye conditions and vision changes can occur at any age—it's important to get your eyes examined every year. You'll get the most out of your vision benefits when you visit an eye doctor in the VSP Premier Program. Find a doctor [here](#). Use code Member10 for 10% off contacts with VSP's partner [Eyeconic](#).
- **Getting Mixed Messages About Vaping?** You are not alone. The FDA classifies vapes as tobacco because they contain nicotine from tobacco leaves. Although vapes have fewer chemicals than regular cigarettes, this doesn't mean they are harmless. E-cigs have many known toxic or cancer-causing chemicals. Regular employees and their adult dependents are eligible for the free quit tobacco benefit with Quit for Life. Get started at quitnow.net or call **1-866-QUIT-4-LIFE TTY 711**.
- **Looking for Child Care?** Kinside can help City of Seattle parents find daycares, preschools, camps, after school programs, and more. At no cost to you, Kinside will match parents with the care that aligns with their needs. Contact concierge@kinside.com or visit join.kinside.com/city-of-seattle to create an account.
- **Watch for Medical Benefits Listening Sessions.** Non-represented employees will be invited to virtual Listening Sessions to provide feedback about the City's medical plans this spring. Look for more information in the April Take Charge! Newsletter and broadcast email.

EXPERT advice — Elizabeth Smoots, MD

Q: Concussion symptoms?



A: Violent shaking or a blow to the head can result in a concussion, also known as a traumatic brain injury. The most common causes are falls and contact sports. The injury can temporarily affect brain function, causing symptoms that may begin slowly and last for days or weeks.

Symptoms of concussion. Headache, memory loss and confusion are the most common symptoms. An inability to remember the event causing the concussion frequently occurs. Fatigue, drowsiness, foggy thinking, forgetfulness and a temporary loss of consciousness are not unusual. Other signs of a concussion are ringing in the ears, nausea, vomiting, blurry vision and trouble with balance and coordination.

Seek medical care for an evaluation within one to two days if you, or someone under your care, has suffered a head injury. Get emergency care immediately for repeated nausea or vomiting, loss of consciousness lasting more than 30 seconds, behavior changes, progressive headache, pupils of unequal sizes or if other worrisome signs develop.

Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date pandemic information visit coronavirus.gov.

March is Red Cross Month.



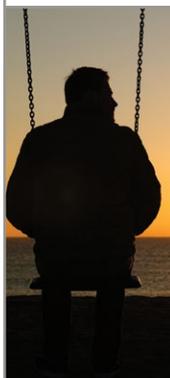
First Aid Basics

According to OSHA, first aid refers to medical attention that is usually administered immediately after the injury occurs and at the location where it occurred. It's often a one-time, short-term treatment. Here are first aid basic steps to take from the Red Cross:



1. Check the scene, obtain consent and use personal protective equipment.
2. Check for responsiveness, breathing, bleeding or other life-threatening conditions. **Note:** Check for no more than ten seconds.
3. Unresponsive and life-threatening: Call 911 if the person is not responding, responds but is not fully awake, has life-threatening bleeding, is not breathing or has an obvious life-threatening condition. Then give care based on your training. For example, if the person isn't responsive or not breathing, give CPR and use an AED.
4. Responsive and not life-threatening: Ask the person about what happened, symptoms, allergies, medications and medical conditions. **Note:** Do not move the person.
5. Call 911 if needed and provide care based on your level of training.

You can get first aid training certification through the Red Cross. Learn more at redcross.org/take-a-class/first-aid.



Are you stuck with chronic negative emotions? Anger, sadness, grief and fear are normal parts of life. However, persistent negative emotions can cause avoidance of situations or people, spark angry outbursts, and lead to overeating or substance abuse. What can you do? Try to minimize negative feelings. First, acknowledge them. Second, find a safety valve to relieve those emotions: Exercise, try meditation techniques to calm racing thoughts, talk to a trusted friend, focus on a hobby or volunteer to help others. If negative feelings persist, contact your health care provider. Treatment can include medication and therapy. A mental health professional can help you find ways to relieve emotions and thoughts that feel like they're stuck in your mind and give you the means to build a healthier life.