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WINTER WELLNESS

Get Your Vitamin D Boost From the Sun



This time of year, it's easy to find ourselves cooped up indoors! However, despite the winter chill, there's an important reason to venture outdoors and soak in the limited sunlight. The sun plays a vital role in maintaining our health, particularly in boosting our levels of vitamin D.

Vitamin D, often referred to as the "sunshine vitamin," is a nutrient that our bodies produce in response to sunlight exposure. While our skin synthesizes vitamin D when exposed to ultraviolet B (UVB) rays from the sun, the winter months bring a decrease in sunlight hours and intensity, putting our vitamin D levels at risk. And living in Chicagoland, where sun on a daily basis is hit or miss, makes it even harder to get our daily dose.

Insufficient vitamin D has been linked to several health issues, including weakened immune function, bone health concerns, and mood imbalances. So, it's important to make sure your body gets enough vitamin D. Here are a few tips for embracing the winter sun.

PRIORITIZE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.

Whether it's taking a brisk walk, participating in winter sports, or sipping a hot beverage on the porch, these moments in the sun can significantly boost your vitamin D levels.

OPTIMIZE SUNLIGHT EXPOSURE.

Aim for sunlight exposure during peak hours when the UVB rays are more potent. Even short periods of exposure, such as 10-30 minutes, can be beneficial. Ensure your face, arms, and legs are exposed without sunscreen for optimal vitamin D synthesis.

SUPPLEMENT WISELY.

If sunlight exposure is challenging due to weather conditions or other constraints, consider vitamin D supplements. Consult with a health care professional to determine the appropriate dosage for your individual needs.

INCORPORATE VITAMIN D-RICH FOODS.

Fatty fish, fortified dairy products, and egg yolks are the best foods to consume when you need more vitamin D. Combined with the natural sunlight, these foods can give you the vitamins you need to feel good all winter long.

It's time to bundle up, step outside, and let the winter sun guide you to a healthier, happier season!

EMBRACING SERENDIPITY

Finding Joy in Life's Unexpected Moments

I find joy in the serendipitous moments of life. It's those instances when I'm cruising in my car, tuned into an audiobook or music, and suddenly, the very word I'm hearing is plastered on a billboard as I drive by. Or when someone crosses my mind, and within moments, I receive a call or text from them. It makes me feel certain that I'm on the right path in life, wherever I'm headed.

As many of you know, I am an avid resolution/goal-setter. One of my resolutions last year was to have a more consistent meditation practice. I fully understand its importance, but carving out consistent time in my day just seemed to get derailed by other things that I have to juggle on a regular basis. So this 2023 goal has naturally become one of my 2024 goals!

This year, as I wrote my desire to meditate more, I knew I needed a plan, since it was unfulfilled last year. *When* will I find the time daily or even weekly? A few weeks into the new year and having zero meditation sessions under my belt, I got a text from my friend asking if I would like to join her on a 21-day meditation challenge. She would send me and a small group of friends a daily meditation, and I would have to commit to doing it daily. Talk about serendipity!

There was really no way I could say "no" to that request. It would force me to make time for it on a daily basis. Brilliant. After several days into the challenge, I began to see the calmness and the love of being with my higher self. I forgot how much I loved sitting alone in silence. I began to crave more. To me, it has been the self-reassurance and solace that I needed in my busy, high-achieving, on-the-go life. It has allowed me to sit back and enjoy the small moments of joy in life that we are meant to experience, but tend to rush past.

So this little meditation challenge came at a time of changes personally and within the office. And as changes occur in life, they penetrate into our practice. Eizen, our hygienist of 10 years, has decided to move to the next chapter in his life. We have been so grateful that he's been part of our team. For a decade, his passion for

education and helping others was one that our office and our patients really cherished and we will all miss him here.

Some of you have already met our new hygienist, Abby. She has been in the dental field for 18 years. She started out as a dental assistant, and a decade later, decided to pursue a dental hygiene degree. We love that she is understanding, patient, and kind, and she loves to teach her patients. We are excited to have her join our team.

You will also be seeing a new face in the front office and a new voice over the phone. Sonia joined our team in January. She is an experienced front office administrator and can help with your insurance (or any admin) needs.

We also have exciting news about Dr. Kolencherry! She is pregnant with her first baby — a girl. We are very excited about this new addition to her family. She is planning on taking maternity leave starting in early to mid-April. If you want to see Dr. K before her days are filled with diaper changes and feeding an infant, you better get on her schedule soon!

Even though there have been quite a few changes already this year and I bet there's more to come for all of us, I find respite in the calmness and the ability to process thoughts better after meditation. And usually, it leads to more clarity and focus. If you have never tried meditation or want to get into a more consistent practice, check out YouTube's "Deepak Chopra's 21-Day Meditation Challenge." You can also try apps such as Headspace, Waking Up, and Ten Percent Happier to get you started with guided meditation. It's always nice to have someone "force" you to do it — an accountability partner does wonders.

Whatever your New Year's resolutions are, don't forget to revisit them, now that we're a few months in. I hope you will find many serendipitous moments this year in your life that let you know that you're on the right path! Wishing you peace and love in this coming year.

—Dr. Bernice Teplitzky

Don't Get Scammed: A Guide to Safe Concert Ticket Purchases

Are you ecstatic to purchase concert tickets? While you may be ready to hand over your savings to get front-row seats to Olivia Rodrigo or Ariana Grande, you should be well-informed on how to safely purchase tickets. With digital tickets now being the primary format for stadium events, selling counterfeit tickets is easier than ever. According to the Better Business Bureau, reports of ticket scams have spiked from 13,168 to 16,762 from 2020 to 2022 alone.

With top-selling music artists going on tour recently, including Beyoncé and Taylor Swift, scammers have taken advantage of inexperienced ticket buyers. These online swindlers use social media like X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram to offer ticket deals that are too good to be true.

SAFETY TIPS EVERY BUYER NEEDS TO FOLLOW

While you may know some of the tried-and-true signs of an illegitimate listing or scammer, you may not know them all. Meanwhile, even the most seasoned concertgoers receive impressively realistic (yet fake) tickets and show up at the venue just to be turned away. For everyone

to stay safe, there are some essential rules you should follow when purchasing tickets online.

- Always buy tickets from official websites and double-check that the URL is correct. Some scammers create look-alike sites to fool buyers.
- If buying tickets from a resale site, ensure they are part of the National Association of Ticket Brokers (NATB), which confirms they are legitimate.
- Never purchase tickets through an individual on social media or Craigslist.
- If buying from a person, only do so from someone you know, like a friend, coworker, or relative.
- Don't buy tickets with peer-to-peer payment services such as Zelle, Venmo, or CashApp. If the purchase is a scam, these platforms don't have buyer protection like credit cards.
- Make sure the section and seat number really exist at the venue.

If you follow these tips, you can be assured you are safely spending your money and will actually see the show of your dreams!



5 Proven Strategies for Cost-Effective Travel

Traveling can be an enriching and fulfilling experience, but it can also be costly. Many people dream of exploring new destinations, but financial constraints can be limiting. Fortunately, we're here to share five practical tips to help you save money while enjoying your trip.

PLAN AND BUDGET AHEAD.

One of the most effective ways to save money is by planning and budgeting your trip in advance. Create a comprehensive budget that includes airfare, accommodation, food, transportation, and activities. Having a budget lets you track your expenses and helps you avoid overspending. You can also take advantage of early bird rates for flights and hotels.

CANCEL UNNECESSARY SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Before you travel, review your monthly subscriptions like gym memberships, streaming services, or magazines you won't use while you're away. Temporarily canceling these subscriptions can free up extra cash for your travel fund.

LOOK FOR DISCOUNTS AND OFFERS.

Keep an eye out for discounts, offers, and coupons that can help you save money on activities, dining, and shopping. Websites like Groupon and LivingSocial offer various deals that could be useful

during your trip. These websites often provide discounted tickets to attractions, cheaper dining options, and even reduced rates for experiences like spa treatments or outdoor activities. Try using a site like GoldStar for discount tickets on shows.

TRAVEL DURING OFF-PEAK SEASONS.

Traveling during off-peak seasons will save you money on flights, hotels, and activities. You also benefit from less crowded destinations and shorter lines for popular tourist attractions. This is a win-win for travelers seeking a budget-friendly and less-crowded travel experience.

USE LOCAL GROCERY STORES AND PACK SNACKS.

Another way to save money while you travel is by shopping at local grocery stores for snacks and meals rather than eating out for every meal. This gives you a taste of local businesses and culture. Packing snacks can also help you avoid buying overpriced food at airports or touristy areas. Don't forget to bring some zip lock bags!

By implementing these tips into your travel planning and experience, you can stretch your dollar further without compromising the quality of your trip. Happy traveling!

MAGNESIUM MAGIC

THE CRUCIAL ROLE THIS MINERAL PLAYS IN YOUR HEALTH



Among the many essential minerals that contribute to our health and well-being, magnesium stands out as a powerhouse. This often-overlooked mineral plays a vital role in many bodily functions. Let's take a look!

MUSCLE FUNCTION AND RELAXATION

Magnesium aids in the regulation of muscle contractions and prevents excessive calcium influx, which can lead to muscle spasms and cramps. For athletes and individuals engaged in regular physical activity, maintaining optimal magnesium levels is crucial for muscle performance and recovery.

BONE HEALTH

Magnesium is a major component of our bones; in fact, 60% of our bone structure is magnesium! Studies have found that along with calcium, magnesium helps build and maintain strong bones, avoiding or reducing the impacts of conditions like osteoporosis.

CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

Magnesium is closely linked to heart health, influencing various cardiovascular functions. It helps regulate blood pressure by relaxing blood vessels, reducing resistance, and improving blood flow.

MOOD AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

Adequate magnesium levels are associated with improved mood, reduced anxiety, and enhanced stress resilience. It acts as a natural relaxant, promoting a sense of calm and well-being.

BLOOD SUGAR REGULATION

Magnesium plays a crucial role in insulin function, contributing to the regulation of blood sugar levels. It enhances insulin sensitivity, facilitating the uptake of glucose into cells. Maintaining optimal magnesium levels may help reduce the risk of insulin resistance and Type 2 diabetes.

MIGRAINE PREVENTION

For individuals prone to migraines, magnesium supplementation has shown promise in reducing the frequency and intensity of these debilitating headaches. Magnesium's role in relaxing blood vessels and modulating neurotransmitter activity may contribute to its effectiveness in migraine prevention.

While magnesium can be obtained through dietary sources such as leafy green vegetables, nuts, seeds, and whole grains, some individuals may benefit from supplementation, especially if dietary intake is insufficient or if they have specific health concerns. However, it's important to discuss magnesium supplementation with your health care provider first, as there are many different types of magnesium on the market and you want to pick the right one for your needs.



Inspired by DinnerThenDessert.com

SLOW COOKER LEG OF LAMB

An easy lamb recipe perfect for Easter dinner, this juicy, tender boneless leg of lamb is seasoned with garlic, rosemary, and lemon.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 4 lbs leg of lamb, boneless
- 2 lbs red potatoes, quartered
- 2 tsp Kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp coarse ground black pepper
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp fresh rosemary, chopped
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 cup white wine

DIRECTIONS

1. Juice the lemon and keep the lemon zest in a small pouch to keep it fresh in the refrigerator while your lamb cooks.
2. Add olive oil to a large pot or in a slow cooker with an aluminum insert.
3. On high heat, sear the lamb on all sides, 4-5 minutes per side, until browned.
4. Add the potatoes to the slow cooker (season with half the salt and pepper), top with the lamb (and season with the remaining salt and pepper).
5. Season the lamb with garlic, rosemary, and lemon juice, then pour in the chicken broth and wine on the side of the slow cooker (be careful not to wash the seasoning off the lamb).
6. Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours.
7. Garnish with fresh lemon zest.

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