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HEALTH OBSERVANCE

Multiple Sclerosis Education Month

Kim Farrell – Wellworks For You

Every year, Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Education Month serves as a beacon of hope, shedding light on a condition that affects millions worldwide. This month-long observance is not just about spreading awareness; it's about empowering individuals, fostering community support, and advancing research in the fight against MS.

What is Multiple Sclerosis?

Multiple Sclerosis is a chronic neurological disorder where the immune system mistakenly attacks the protective sheath (myelin) that covers nerve fibers, causing communication problems between the brain and the rest of the body. Symptoms vary widely and can include fatigue, mobility issues, vision problems, and cognitive challenges. The cause of MS is not fully understood, and there is currently no cure, making education and research crucial.

The Goals of MS Education Month

The primary goal of MS Education Month is to educate the public about the realities of living with MS. It's a time to dispel myths, share accurate information, and highlight the latest advancements in treatment and management. This observance also aims to amplify the voices of those affected by MS, allowing them to share their stories and experiences.

MS Education Month is critical in supporting ongoing research. It encourages fundraising for new studies and treatments, which could lead to breakthroughs in managing the disease. Advocacy is another key aspect, as it pushes for policy changes to improve the quality of life for those with MS, such as access to healthcare and disability services.

Building a Community of Support

One of the most profound impacts of this month is the sense of community it fosters. By bringing together patients, families, healthcare professionals, and advocates, MS Education Month creates a support network. This community not only shares in the challenges but also in the triumphs and advancements in MS care.

Multiple Sclerosis Education Month is a vital time for increasing awareness, supporting research, and building a supportive community. Its significance extends far beyond the month itself, as it continues to impact the lives of those with MS and the broader society. Through education and advocacy, we can all play a part in making a positive difference in the lives of individuals affected by this complex condition.

Source: <https://mymsaa.org/ms-information/overview/>



Physical Wellness: Training for Longevity

While many factors affect one's life expectancy and quality of life, exercise is something that you can control.

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What is Anti-Aging? And Why This Message Can Be Harmful

Shifting the conversation from anti-aging to aging well or embracing "pro-aging" can foster a healthier, more inclusive approach.

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WelBalance

HEALTH TIP CORNER

Wellness Pillar: Physical

Training for Longevity

Kellie O'Keefe – Wellworks For You

Who doesn't want to live longer and enjoy a great quality of life along the way?

While many factors affect one's life expectancy and quality of life, exercise is something that you can control. Research shows that physical activity can increase life expectancy by reducing disease risks and improving overall health.

According to the NIH, the optimal amount of exercise remains unknown and probably differs among individuals. Current studies suggest that 2.5 to 5 hours/week of moderate or vigorous physical activity will confer maximal benefits.

The recommended amount is 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise each week, which can add about seven years to your life. Harvard University researchers recently noted that as little as 15 minutes of physical activity daily can boost your life span by three years.

While all types of exercise are important, including cardio, muscle conditioning, stretching, and balance exercise, Dr. Robert Schreiber, physician-in-chief at Hebrew Senior Life and an instructor in medicine at Harvard Medical School, states that "Unless you are doing strength training, you will become weaker and less functional." Research suggests that about 30-60 minutes of resistance training per week is associated with the most significant risk reduction for all-cause mortality.

Flexibility and mobility are also both important in ensuring proper movement and balance later in life. Both are important to prevent falls as we get older, which helps maintain independence and quality of life. So be sure to include stretching and balance exercises in your regular routine.

The good news is that it is never too late to begin. Start reducing sitting time and moving more throughout the day. Then add intentional exercise starting with 30 minutes and building slowly to 45 minutes, then to an hour. Before beginning any exercise program, it is important to discuss it with your doctor.

Source: <https://www.thenationshealth.org/content/48/7/16>



What is Anti-Aging?

...And Why This Message Can Be Harmful



Lisa Kyler – Wellworks For You

The term "anti-aging" has become ubiquitous in the beauty and wellness industries, referring to the myriad of products, treatments, and regimens designed to delay or diminish the signs of aging. However, the language and ideology surrounding "anti-aging" are not merely about maintaining a youthful appearance but are deeply entrenched in societal standards that often value youth over experience and wisdom.

Critics argue that the relentless focus on anti-aging can perpetuate ageism, setting unrealistic expectations about what it means to age gracefully. It suggests a need to "combat" or "fight" aging, as if it's a condition to be cured rather than a natural, inevitable process. This not only affects self-esteem and body image but also overlooks the beauty and dignity of growing older.

Moreover, the anti-aging narrative predominantly targets women, reinforcing gendered notions of beauty and worth. It pressures individuals to spend significant amounts of money and time on products and procedures, many of which offer questionable results.

Shifting the conversation from anti-aging to aging well or embracing "pro-aging" can foster a healthier, more inclusive approach. This perspective encourages taking care of oneself at any age, focusing on overall wellbeing, vitality, and embracing the natural physical changes that come with time.

Educational resources, like Well+Good's discussion on the changing tides of anti-aging language, are instrumental in understanding and redefining personal perceptions of aging. They advocate for a language shift that celebrates aging as a privilege and an opportunity for continued growth and self-discovery.

In embracing a positive aging mindset, society can move towards a more supportive and empowering view of growing older, recognizing the beauty in every stage of life. This shift not only benefits individual wellbeing but also challenges the deep-seated cultural narratives that equate aging with decline.

Source: <https://www.wellandgood.com/anti-aging-language/>

FEATURED RECIPE

One-Pan Chicken & Asparagus Bake

4 Servings | Total Time: 35 Minutes

Dairy-Free, High-Protein, Heart-Healthy



INGREDIENTS:

- 2 8-ounce boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 12 ounces baby Yukon Gold potatoes
- 8 ounces carrots, sliced into 1-inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander, divided
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt, divided
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons chopped shallot
- 1 tablespoon whole-grain Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1 pound fresh asparagus, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill
- Lemon wedges

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375 °F. Place chicken on a clean work surface and cover with plastic wrap. Add stock to Dutch oven; increase heat to high and bring stock to boil. Add orzo and cook, uncovered, until al dente (about 6 min.)
2. Pound chicken pieces to an even 1/2-inch thickness, then arrange on half of a large rimmed baking sheet.
3. Arrange potatoes & carrots in single layer on half of pan.
4. Drizzle chicken and vegetables with 1 tablespoon oil; 1 teaspoon coriander, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Bake for 15 minutes.
5. Whisk lemon juice, shallot, mustard, honey with the remaining oil, coriander, salt and pepper in a small bowl.
6. Remove the pan from the oven; switch the oven to broil.
7. Stir the potato-carrot mixture; arrange asparagus in the center of the pan; spoon the lemon juice-shallot mixture evenly over the chicken and vegetables.
8. Broil about 10 minutes until chicken and vegetables are lightly browned, asparagus is tender-crisp and chicken registers 165 °F
9. Remove from oven; sprinkle evenly with parsley and dill. Serve with lemon wedges.

NUTRITION

Per Serving:

Calories: 352	Protein: 28g
Carbohydrates: 31g	Dietary Fiber: 6g
Fat: 14g	Saturated Fat: 2g
Sugar: 8g	Sodium: 599mg

Source: [One-Pan Chicken & Asparagus Bake \(eatingwell.com\)](https://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/one-pan-chicken-asparagus-bake)