



Diabetes Wellness Newsletter

JAN 2023, VOLUME 2, NO. 1

MIND YOUR MIND: MEDITATING YOUR WAY TO A HEALTHY YEAR AND LIFE

Welcome to a new year, and a new series of Diabetes Wellness newsletters!

My name is **Sarah Fulkerson**, Mason Health's new Diabetes Wellness Coordinator, taking over the position from long-time coordinator **Debbie McGinnis**. Debbie will be working with patients in Mason Health's new Medicare Wellness program, and I could not be more excited to step into this role.



Many of you know me from my previous position as a clinical dietitian for the past 16 years at Mason Health, where I worked closely with patients in the Diabetes Wellness program. Now as coordinator, I will work with providers and Diabetes Education Nurse **Carmen Eucker** in developing and implementing programs and services that assist patients with health issues related to diabetes. I look forward to serving you and getting to know the community as we look at ways to grow and improve the Diabetes Wellness program!

In this issue, we will talk about habits to develop in the New Year to improve health, such as staying well during the illness season and using meditation to help manage diabetes. Research shows a link between chronic stress and worsened health outcomes, cognitive decline, and mental health issues.

Stress, however, as we know, is an integral part of life and living. Learning to cope with uncertainty and regulating our wandering minds are useful tools to prevent stress and anxiety from taking over our lives.



I will share some tips for mindfulness and meditation here. One size does not fit all, and I encourage everyone to modify them to your needs. Happy Meditating!

Some additional resources for meditation:

- Plum Village app
- Headspace Radio podcast
- Headspace app
- Ten Percent Happier podcast
- Calm app

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HOW TO BEGIN A MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

The most traditional way to begin meditation is to focus on the body by means of focusing on the breath. This could include sitting in a comfortable position and focusing on the counts and quality of inhalations and exhalations. Once this is achieved, one can then do a body scan from head to toe, focusing on the quality and physical sensations of each body part.

As you start any meditation or mindfulness practice, self-compassion is the key to success. It is natural for the mind to wander. If thoughts or positive and negative emotions pop in, recognize that they will always be there and re-focus on the breath or the body scan process.



BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

Studies show meditation and mindfulness help in reducing work-related stress, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, and pain. Moreover, these mind-body practices show benefits in controlling diabetes, high blood pressure, and improved quality of life.

There are studies looking at small groups of patients with diabetes assigned to regular walking on a treadmill or doing walking meditation on a treadmill. Although both groups had better fasting blood glucoses, those doing walking meditation had lower hemoglobin A1c, less arterial stiffness (i.e. better vascular function), and lower blood cortisol (stress hormone) levels.

In addition, those who practice mindfulness often apply these techniques to assess and reframe difficult emotions and conversations, which allows for more patience, less anger, more openness, inclusivity, and ability to have clarity and control amidst chaos.

Article source: [Mind Your Mind: Meditating Your Way to a Healthy Year and a Healthier Life - Taking Control Of Your Diabetes.](#)

MANAGING SICK DAYS



These tips can help people with diabetes prepare for getting sick and take care of themselves if they do become ill.

Like everyone, people with diabetes can get sick even when trying their best to prevent it. So being prepared and knowing what to do if you get sick is very important.

There are several things you can do now, but also talk to your doctor about the best way to handle being sick if it happens.

Prepare now before getting sick by making sure you always have your insulin, other diabetes medications and easy-to-fix meals in your home, such as canned soups, instant cereals and unsweetened applesauce.

If you do get sick, your blood sugar can be hard to manage. You may not be able to eat or drink as much as usual, which can affect blood sugar levels. Your doctor may ask you to test your blood sugar more often when you're sick. That's because when your body releases hormones to fight the illness, those hormones can also raise your blood sugar levels and increase how much insulin you need. This is especially important for people with type 1 diabetes since they depend on insulin to live.

When your body doesn't have enough insulin, it starts breaking down fat as fuel, which produces ketones. When too many ketones are produced too fast, they can cause diabetic ketoacidosis, or DKA. DKA is very serious and can cause a coma or even death. If you think you may have DKA, use an over-the-counter kit to test your urine for ketones. If present, call your doctor right away. You may need to go to the hospital.

Follow these additional steps when you're sick even if your blood sugar is within your target range:

- Continue taking your insulin and diabetes pills as usual.
- Test your blood sugar every 4-6 hours and keep track of the results.
- Drink extra calorie-free liquids*, and try to eat as you normally would.
- Weigh yourself every day. Losing weight without trying is a sign of high blood glucose.
- Check your temperature every morning and evening. A fever may be a sign of infection.

*Drink plenty of fluids – 4 to 6 ounces every half-hour – to prevent dehydration. You may also need to drink beverages with sugar if you cannot eat normally. Drink small portions of these sweet beverages to keep your blood sugar from getting too high.

Article Source: [Managing Sick Days | Diabetes | CDC](#)

HAVING TROUBLE MEETING YOUR GOALS? IT MAY NOT BE YOU.

Raise your hand if you ...

- Do a great job with setting exciting goals, but you fall off track with them after a month or two
- Know what you want to change, but you struggle with actually doing it
- Have trouble staying motivated to keep working on your goal

What's the secret to breaking free from unrealistic expectations and goals, you ask? Set **smarter** ones.

SMART goals = specific, measurable, attainable, realistic or relevant, and time-bound. Keep in mind that what's attainable, realistic, and relevant may be different for you. That's okay!



Here are some examples of SMART nutrition goals:

- Fill 50% of each lunch and dinner plate with colorful vegetables this week.
- '1 for 1' – Try one new fruit or vegetable each week for one month.
- '5 for 5' - Aim for five fruits and/or vegetables per day on at least five days per week.
- Eat one meatless meal per week this month
- Drink a cup of water before you drink coffee or tea on weekdays this month.
- Plan at least one home-cooked meal per week for the rest of the month (**check out our recipe below!**)
- Pack your lunch the night before on at least 4 nights this week.
- Eat at least 1 meal each day sitting down and without distractions (like phone, TV) this week.
- Take 3 deep belly breaths before and after lunches this week.
- Start a food journal and write in it for as many days as possible this month.

RECIPE SPOTLIGHT: TENDER AND FLAVORFUL INSTANT POT LENTILS



Lentils are little nutrition powerhouses. They're full of fiber, protein, iron, folate, potassium, and calcium. They're a great option for vegans and vegetarians, but you don't have to be either to enjoy lentils and reap their benefits.

These are not your basic boiled lentils. It's shocking how much more flavorful lentils are when they're simmered with a bit of pepper and Italian seasoning. They give the dish a deeper, more herbaceous and savory flavor. Plus, you can add them to so many recipes: tacos, soup, shepherd's pie, beef stroganoff and more!

Ingredients

- 1 cup lentils
- 3 cups water or broth
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1 tsp black pepper
- salt to taste

Equipment

- pressure cooker

Instructions

- Add all ingredients to your pressure cooker or Instant Pot and stir. Put the lid on, seal it, and set to 'manual' (high pressure) for 9 minutes. Your pressure cooker will take about 5 minutes to come up to temperature before it begins counting down.
- Once the timer goes off, let the pressure cooker "natural release" (i.e. leave it alone) for 15 minutes. Do a quick release to release any remaining pressure.
- Strain and serve! These lentils can be a yummy side dish or an addition to a recipe. (Toss them into a salad, mix them into recipes with ground meat, or add them to soup for some extra protein and fiber.)

To reach Diabetes Wellness, contact 360-427-7332.



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