

# — LIVING WELL —

## Raising Kids, Eating Right Spend Smart, Live Well

### Exercise for Better Sleep

Exercise is great for your body and mind – and it can also help you get a good night's sleep. But, for some people, exercising too late in the day can interfere with how well they rest at night.

Based on available studies, exercise does help you fall asleep more quickly and improves sleep quality. But there's still some debate as to what time of day you should exercise. People should listen to their bodies to see how well they sleep in response to when they work out.

#### How Exercise May Help You Sleep

While it is completely unsure. It is a fact that moderate aerobic exercise increases the amount of slow wave sleep you get. Slow wave sleep refers to deep sleep, where the brain and body have a chance to rejuvenate. Exercise can also help to stabilize your mood and decompress the mind, "a cognitive process that is important for naturally transitioning to sleep.

#### The Timing of Exercise May Matter

Some people may find that exercising close to bedtime seems to keep them up at night. How does working out affect the mind?

- **Aerobic exercise causes the body to release endorphins.** These chemicals can create a level of activity in the brain that keeps some people awake. These individuals should exercise at least 1 to 2 hours before going to bed, giving endorphin levels time to wash out and "the brain time to wind down," she says.
- **Exercise also raises your core body temperature.** "The effect of exercise in some people is like taking a hot shower that wakes you up in the morning," says Gamaldo. Elevation in core body temperature signals the body clock that it's time to be awake. After about 30 to 90 minutes, the core body temperature starts to fall. The decline helps to facilitate sleepiness.

Despite these biological responses to exercise, other people find that the time of day they exercise doesn't make a difference. "Whether it's in the early morning or close to bedtime, they'll see a benefit to their sleep," says Gamaldo.

"Know your body and know yourself," she says. "Doctors definitely want you to exercise, but when you do it is not scripted."



#### Inside this issue

Better Sleep cont.....	2
Eat the Rainbow.....	2
AFib .....	3-4
Valentines.....	5
Upcoming Events .....	6-7
Recipe.....	8

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

## Exercise for Better Sleep *Continued*

### How Much Exercise You Need for Better Sleep

How much exercise they need for better sleep, and how many weeks, months, or years it will take to experience this benefit.

The good news: People who engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise may see a difference in sleep quality that same night. People don't need to feel like they must train for the Boston Marathon to become a better sleeper.



Moreover, while many studies focus on aerobic activity and sleep, picking an exercise you like will help you stick with it. For example, power lifting or an active yoga class can elevate your heart rate, helping to create the biological processes in the brain and body that contribute to better quality sleep.

Everyone is encouraged to exercise, just be mindful of timing and whether it seems to affect your ability to get optimal sleep quality.

## Eat the Colors of the Rainbow, All the Time

One of the easiest ways to eat healthy is to include fruits and vegetables at every meal and snack. Fresh, frozen, canned and dried, all fruits and vegetables count, so go ahead and add a color to your plate and your life. Making a Heart Healthy Salad:

When we hear salad, some people think plain ole lettuce. But a salad can be so much more. It can be easy and inexpensive to include salad as the main meal with just a few extra ingredients. Here are some tips to help make your salad delicious and filling.

- **Greens** – Look for dark, leafy lettuces such as romaine, spinach, or arugula. If you have access to fresh herbs such as basil, oregano or mint, they can add zest, flavor and extra nutrients.
- **Proteins** – Make your meal more satisfying to your salad with skinless poultry or fish that is packed with omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout and herring. Mix in a chopped hard-boiled egg or a small amount of cheese such as lower-fat, lower-sodium cheeses such as Swiss or mozzarella. Toss in some chickpeas, kidney, navy, or black beans. Add some unsalted nuts such as walnuts, pecans, and almonds. All these proteins will keep you feeling fuller longer.
- **Fruits** – Add fruits that are on sale and in season. Choose a rainbow of colors. You can use fruit canned in juice or frozen, thoroughly drain and pat dry so your greens don't get soggy. Dried fruit with out sugar are also great tasty treats to add.
- **More Veggies** – Add some raw vegetables such as carrots, cucumbers, broccoli and cauliflower. These add crunch and color. Roasted vegetables such as potatoes, squash and beets can add flavor as well.
- **Grains** – Warm or cold grains such as couscous, barley, quinoa, and rice can add flavor. Save money buy purchasing whole grains in the bulk aisle of the grocery store. Whole wheat pastas are also inexpensive ways to add to a salad.
- **Dressings** – With oil, vinegar and spices on hand, you can make some simple homemade vinaigrette dressing. Chopped herbs, diced vegetables add flavor such as onions, garlic and scallions. Also squeezing some citrus juice such as orange and lime. Experiment to find a vinaigrette that suits your taste.



Source: American Heart Association

## Atrial Fibrillation—AFib or AF

Atrial fibrillation also called AFib is a quivering or irregular heartbeat that can lead to blood clots, stroke, heart failure and other heart-related complications. At least 2.7 million Americans are living with AFib. A feeling that your heart flip flops or skips a beat and feeling like it is banging against your chest wall especially if you are carrying things upstairs or bending down.

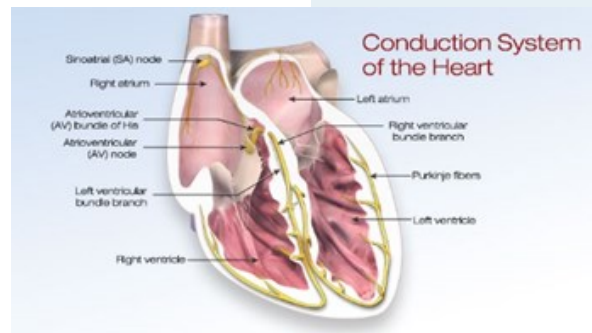
You may feel nauseated, light-headed and weak. You may feel your heart beat real fast, then you feel like you were gasping for air.

You may have had no feeling at all and at a regular check up with your doctor they found it. Normally your heart contracts and relaxes to a regular beat. In atrial fibrillation, the upper chambers of the heart beat irregularly instead of beating effectively to move blood into the ventricles. If a clot breaks off, enters the bloodstream and lodges in an artery leading to the brain, a stroke can result.

About 15 to 20 percent of people who have strokes have this heart arrhythmia. Many people with this clot risk are put on blood thinners.

Even though untreated atrial fibrillation doubles the risk of heart-related deaths and is associated with a 5-fold increased risk for stroke, many people are unaware that AFib is a serious condition. AFib symptoms and conditions can only be detected with a physical examination. However, others may experience other conditions that include:

- General fatigue
- Rapid and irregular heartbeat
- Fluttering or thumping in the chest
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath and anxiety
- Weakness
- Faintness and confusion
- Fatigue when exercising
- Sweating
- Chest pain or pressure

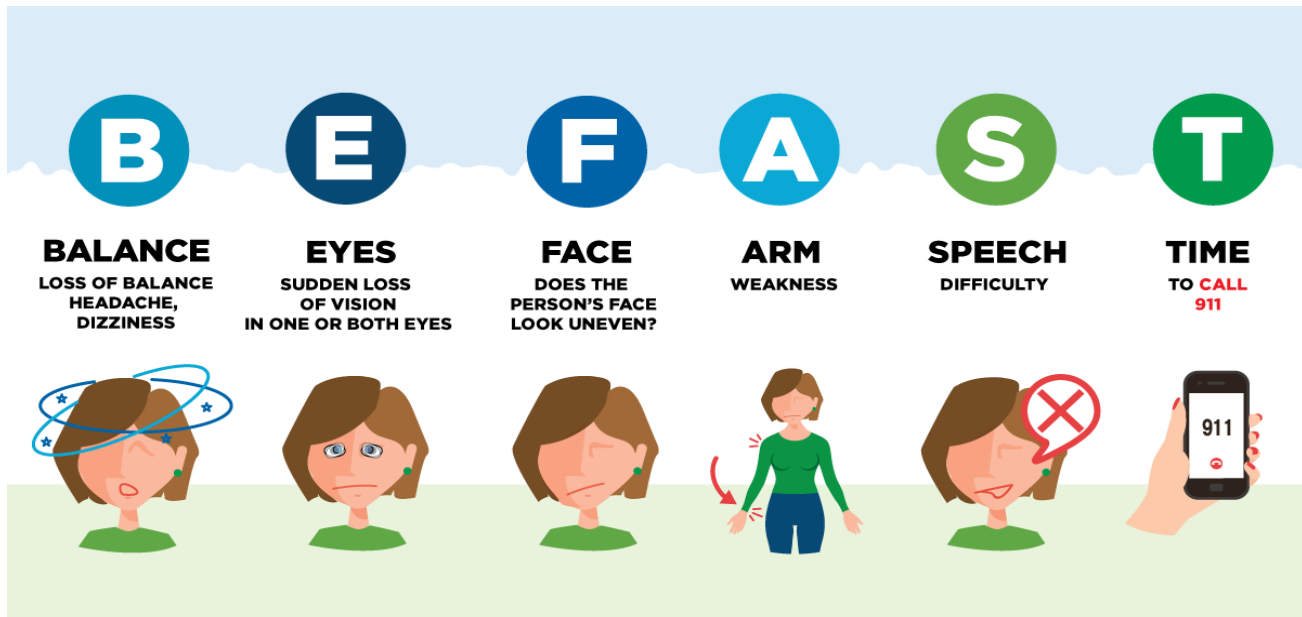


Chest pain or pressure is considered a medical emergency. You may be having a heart attack. Call 911 immediately.

People who live with AFib should know the symptoms of a stroke. A person living with AFib is at an increased risk. Here are some warning signs of a heart attack and stroke.

### Heart Attack Warning

- Chest discomfort in the center that lasts more than a few minutes or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the body including one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath. With or without chest discomfort.
- Signs may also include breaking into a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.



### Stroke Warning Signs

**Face drooping.** One sign of the face drooping or going numb. Ask the person to smile.

**Arm weakness is one arm weak or numb.** Ask the person to raise both arms. One usually drifts downward.

**Speech difficulty** Speech may be slurred, they may not be able to speak or they are hard to understand. Ask a person to repeat a simple sentence, like “the sky is blue.” Is it repeated correctly?

Time to call 911 if the person shows any of these symptoms, even if they go away, call 911 and get them to the hospital.

### Treating AFib

To treat AFib, you need to be examined by your health care provider. You may be given medication to help. The goal will be to get your heart back to its normal heart rhythm, reducing the overall heart rate, preventing blood clots, reducing risk factors for stroke, prevent more heart rhythm problems and prevent heart failure.

### Reducing Your Risks for AFib and Strokes

- Get regularly physical activity.
- Eat a heart-healthy diet, low in salt, saturated fats, trans fats and cholesterol.
- Manage high blood pressure.
- Avoid excessive amounts of alcohol and caffeine.
- Don't smoke.
- Control cholesterol.
- Maintain a healthy weight.

All of these goals aide in preventing and reducing the risk for heart disease and will help keep your circulatory system in good condition.

Source: American Heart Association <https://heart.org/health-topics/atrial-fibrillation>



## Valentines and February

Valentine's Day is February 14. The stores have been stocked with decorations, candy, and cards since the day after Christmas. This is a good time to think of ways to be more loving and caring with family and friends. There are many ways that you can celebrate. Here are some ideas:



- ◇ Make note cards or use post-it-notes to leave messages on mirrors, in the car, in lunches and other special places.
- ◇ Make candy bar wrappers for candy and give with a special thought or message. Consider using miniature bars as well.
- ◇ Plan a special time with each family member or special friend during the week or month of Valentine's Day. It may include preparing a special meal, playing, or going to a sports event, making crafts, going to a movie or any special treat that the person likes.
- ◇ Make special treats such as cookies in the shape of hearts and kisses, wrap them in foil and add a special message. This would be a nice idea for teachers, family members or co-workers.
- ◇ Make special foods on Valentine's Day or when you celebrate. Foods in the shape of hearts and cupids can include pancakes, cookies, cake, sandwiches, pizza, pudding, and Jell-O.
- ◇ Make valentines to share with school friends, neighbors, and family. Handmade items are always special.

Valentines is also a time to support healthy habits with your family and friends. Our hearts need different activities to stay healthy.

- ◇ Hearts need physical activity. We need to aim for one hour of exercise each day. Begin with 20 to 30 minutes. Take time to love your heart and help your family by walking, doing jumping jacks, participating in a heart relay and other fun activities.
- ◇ Hearts need friends. Make time to spend time with your friends. Call them up or visit them. Don't just text them. Talk with them and listen to them.
- ◇ Hearts need hobbies. Spend time with others enjoying things you love to do whether it is painting, doing crafts, playing golf, or any fun activities. Hobbies keep your heart active and your mind alert.
- ◇ Hearts need service. Take time often to do something for someone. Donate your time to helping an elderly neighbor. Spend time helping at a food pantry or walking someone's dog.
- ◇ Hearts need laughter and fun. Take time several times during the day to have fun. Find laughter in your work, with your family and friends. Read the comics, watch a funny television show, and listen to jokes.
- ◇ Hearts need healthy food. Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables every day. Choose whole grain foods. Limit the sodium and sugar. Choose healthy fats. Eat a variety of foods and drink plenty of water.

## Upcoming Events

### **Love Your Heart – February 6 – March 4**

Heart disease is the number one cause of death for people in the United States. This fact does not come without hope. There are many things we can do each day to improve heart health. Join Texas A&M AgriLife Extension for this challenge to learn how to limit stress, increase activity and eat for a healthy heart.

This challenge connects you with 4 weeks of tips, research, and resources to help lead a heart-healthy lifestyle.

In addition to the Challenge there are programs you can participate in including Love Your Heart Lunch and Learn program on Wednesday, February 22 from 11:30 to 1:00 p.m. and the Love Your Heart Dash and Mediterranean Cooking Class on February 23.

There will be challenges each week with prizes. There is no charge to participate. You can sign up for the emails by calling our office or emailing me at 817-598-6168 or [kl-smith@tamu.edu](mailto:kl-smith@tamu.edu). You can also access the information on our Facebook page: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Parker County.

### **Love Your Heart Lunch and Learn Program**

Love Your Heart Lunch and Learn Program will take place Wednesday, February 22. The program will be from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The program will take place the Parker County Extension Office located at 604 North Main Street in Weatherford. be a program that will include tips for a healthy heart including reducing high blood pressure, reducing stress and health cooking tips. The program will include speakers, cooking demonstrations, food to taste and recipes. A light heart health lunch will be provided. The cost to attend is \$10.00. You can register by calling 817-598-6168 or emailing Kathy Smith at [kl-smith@tamu.edu](mailto:kl-smith@tamu.edu).

### **DASH and Mediterranean Diet Cooking Class**

Join us for a cooking class that will teach you about the DASH and Mediterranean Eating Patterns on Thursday, February 23, 2023. The DASH and Mediterranean eating patterns are ways to eat healthy that focuses on plant-rich foods. They are both ways to eat that can help reduce blood pressure and benefit your heart. You will enjoy preparing and enjoy generous tastes of the delicious recipes that participants will prepare. The cooking class will include hands on cooking, learning about both eating patterns, tasting, and recipes. The cost to attend the class is \$20.00. You can find out more information or register by calling 817-598-6168 or emailing Kathy Smith at [kl-smith@tamu.edu](mailto:kl-smith@tamu.edu)

### **A Matter of Balance” to Help Older Adults Reduce their Risk of Falls**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging “A Matter of Balance” fall prevention classes. The series of eight classes will be held on Mondays from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., February 27 through April 17 at the Parker County Extension Office, located at 604 North Main Street in Weatherford.

“A Matter of Balance” is an evidence-based program that teaches participants how to overcome their fear of falling, increase their strength and balance and improve their environment.

For more information or to register for the free classes in Parker County, contact Kathy Smith at (817) 598-6168 or [kl-smith@tamu.edu](mailto:kl-smith@tamu.edu)

## Master of Memory Classes

Texas AgriLife Extension of Parker County along with the will conduct a series of workshops called Master of Memory. The workshops will be held on Fridays, March 3 through 24, 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. at the Parker County Senior Citizens Center. Located at 1225 Holland Lake Drive in Weatherford. The classes are free of charge.

Many people believe that memory loss and aging go hand-in-hand: as a person gets older his or her memory begins to fail. Not true! Texas AgriLife Extension Service of Parker County the six-lessons covered will help you understand how your memory works and what may affect your memory. Medical conditions, medications, diet and exercise, among other things, may all play a role in how your memory works. "Master of Memory" will also help you identify and use strategies to improve your memory function.

Sign up by calling the Parker County Senior Citizens Center at 817-596-4640. Master of Memory classes will also be offered in April in Azle at the Azle Memorial Library. Check our Facebook page or the Azle Library for more information.

## Do Well Be Well with Diabetes II Classes

Do Well Be Well with Type 2 Diabetes classes will be offered by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Parker County. The classes will be held on Tuesdays, March 21 through April 11. The classes will be held from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Parker County Extension Office located at 604 North Main Street in Weatherford. The classes will cover the research and evidence information for helping a person or loved one manage diabetes and help someone with pre-diabetes as well. The cost to attend the series is \$10.00.

The class topics will include the following: Getting Started: How Food Affects you Blood Glucose. Are you Eating the Right Number of Carbohydrates? Improving your Blood Glucose with Physical Activity. Improving Blood Glucose with Medication. Avoiding Complications. Celebrating Diabetes Control.

You can register for the diabetes education class by calling the Parker County Extension Office at 817-598-6168 or emailing: Kathy Smith at [kl-smith@tamu.edu](mailto:kl-smith@tamu.edu)

## Mark Your Calendars for these future events.

**More information will be provided in the next newsletter.**

March 1 - Certified Food Managers Class at the Parker County Extension Office,  
8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

March 25 - Food Preservation presentation at Clark Gardens

March – May - Walk Across Texas

April 18- Spring Fling Hosted by Parker County Extension Education Association and Clubs at Courts United Methodist Church in Weatherford

April 26- Healthy Meals for Busy People – Parker County Extension Office 11:30 – 1:00 p.m.

## Slow-Cooker Minestrone Soup

6 cups vegetable broth  
28-ounce can diced tomatoes  
15-ounce can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed  
15-ounce can kidney beans, drained and rinsed  
2 cups frozen green beans  
4 medium carrots, chopped  
1 medium zucchini, chopped  
1 stalk celery, chopped  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 tablespoons dried Italian seasoning  
1 bay leaf  
4 garlic cloves, minced  
1 teaspoon salt  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon pepper  
1 cup cooked whole-grain elbow pasta  
2 cups fresh baby spinach  
Garnish: 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Combine the ingredients, except pasta and baby spinach in a 6 to 7 ounce quart slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 7 to 8 hours. Increase to high. Stir in pasta and spinach. Cover and cook 15 minutes or until done. Remove bay-leaf before serving. Sprinkle each serving with 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, if desired. Serves: 10.

Nutrition Information: 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup serving size: Calories: 134; Fat: .5 g.; Sodium: 860 mg.; Carbohydrate: 26 g. Dietary Fiber: 7 g.; Protein 6 g.

## Chocolate Mug Cake

2 Tablespoons strawberries  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon slivered almonds  
2 teaspoons semi-sweet chocolate chips  
1 tablespoon + 2 teaspoons unsweetened cocoa powder  
3 Tablespoons all-purpose flour  
 $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoon splenda/sugar substitute  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon baking powder  
3 teaspoon mashed banana  
3 Tablespoons Unsweetened Vanilla Almond Milk  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla extract

Mix all dry ingredients into an 8 oz. Coffee mug. Add in wet ingredients (mashed banana, almond milk, vanilla extract) to dry mixture and mix well. Fold in chocolate chips gently.

Bake in microwave on high for 1 minute and 20 seconds  
After baking, top with strawberries and slivered almonds. Enjoy!