April is Stress Awareness Month

April is Stress Awareness Month and it’s more important than ever to focus on your well-being. Did you know that 83 percent of people report that stress has a strong or very strong impact on their health?¹

Stress can also affect your attitude, relationships and even your job. Next time you’re feeling stressed out, try doing things a little differently. Make self-care a priority. Over time, this will help you to feel refreshed and renewed. In fact, it may help you complete the “must-do’s” in less time and with less stress. Consider scheduling time for:

- **Exercise.** It not only keeps you healthy, it will give you energy. Can’t find the time? Try getting up 30 minutes earlier and going for a walk or doing gentle stretches.
- **Healthy meals.** Have you been skipping lunch? Take some time instead to enjoy a light, healthy lunch. Adding protein can provide you with the energy and nutrients needed to get you through the day. Drink plenty of water to help with hydration — this can decrease the feeling of tiredness.
- **Indulge yourself.** Treat yourself to a massage or facial, take a relaxing bath, or spend a few hours reading a book that has been on your “must read” list.
- **Relaxation.** Consider meditation, visual imagery or gentle yoga postures for 20 minutes each day. Each of these helps you to feel more grounded as well as taking the edge off stressful feelings.

Aetna Resources for Living (the University EAP program) has more stress-busting tips, tools and resources right here at your fingertips. It’s time to stress less and live more! Visit www.mylifevalues.com, using username: Bucknell, password: eap.

¹American Psychological Association “Stress in America 2011 Study”

Questions?

If you have questions about, or suggestions for, the University wellness initiative, visit the Be Smart, Be Well, Be YOU! FAQ section, email wellness-planning@bucknell.edu, or contact Kelley Adams-Verge.
The way you breathe affects your whole body. Full, deep breathing is a good way to reduce tension, feel relaxed, and reduce stress. When you are relaxed, your breathing tends to be slow and gentle. It can be shallow or deep. Breathing exercises may help you relax and feel better. When you are stressed, breathing exercises have health benefits such as lowering blood pressure, slowing a fast heart rate, making you sweat less, and helping with digestion. Breathing exercises are easy to do, and you can do them on your own whenever you want. They don't take long to do, don't cost money, and you don't need any special tools or equipment. Try this one next time you feel stressed:

1. Sit in a comfortable position.
2. Put one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.
3. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move.
4. Breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in, and use it to push all the air out.
5. Do this breathing 3 to 10 times. Take your time with each breath.

~Excerpt from the WebMD Stress Management Health Center

Did You Know?

Have you seen this symbol in the Dining locations around campus?

Are you trying to incorporate healthier choices into your diet? This symbol was designed to identify healthy options throughout the dining venues.

The Dean of Students Susan Lantz, University Dietitian Tanya Williams, and the General Manager of Resident Dining John Cummins have implemented the Bucknell Nutrition Initiative Program.

Using Technology to Reduce Stress

Technology is an amazing thing. We can stay connected with everyone and everything that is important to us, anywhere we are. But in some ways, that very “connectedness” has also increased the level of stress we experience on a daily basis. Many people rarely allow their smartphones to be out of earshot and compulsively check both personal and work email, even when not expecting anything important. It is just so easy. So, this is not to suggest that we put aside our gadgets as a stress reliever, since this may actually cause more stress for many of us!

We can, however, put those gadgets that we love to work, helping us take time out of our day to reduce stress and tension. Try downloading a mindfulness or deep breathing app, which will remind you every hour or so to stop, stretch, and breathe deeply, all of which will help release built-up tension.

Sometimes, just stepping away from a problem for a few minutes will provide a new perspective. Try downloading a jigsaw puzzle app, a word game or a relaxing mind puzzle game.

You may find that the gadget that can inadvertently cause you stress can also be the key to reminding you to take a few moments to “decompress.”
The Stress and Diet Connection

When coping with stress, it is imperative not to overlook the important link between stress and nutrition. When you are stressed, your body doesn't digest food or absorb nutrients properly, and your metabolism will suffer. When people are stressed, they tend to gravitate toward comfort foods, junk foods, and highly processed foods. These “quick fixes” are usually packed with processed sugar, salt, fats and other substances that please your taste buds, but wreak havoc on your body. Certain foods, such as those with refined sugar, processed flour, salt, and caffeine can actually trigger the body's stress response, which only adds to the problem.

There is not a "one size fits all" diet, because everyone’s physiology is different. There are some tips, however, for helping your immune system function appropriately when you are dealing with stress.

1. Eat a variety of food colors ~ Fresh fruits and vegetables have naturally occurring bioflavonoids, which contain antioxidant properties. Red peppers, green apples, blueberries and green, leafy vegetables are some examples of a healthy range.

2. Reduce caffeine consumption ~ Caffeine tends to trigger the stress response. If you are stressed, caffeine consumption can actually make this worse. While you don’t need to give it up completely, be aware if this is one of the things you reach for when you are stressed.

3. Consume an adequate amount of fiber ~ The World Health Organization recommends that individuals consume between 30 to 40 grams of fiber per day. The typical American tends to consume less than 8 grams of fiber a day. Fruits and vegetables are some of the best sources of fiber, while very little fiber is available in a diet high in processed and prepackaged foods.

4. Prepare vegetables properly ~ Boiling vegetables leaches out most water-soluble vitamins and minerals. Steam vegetables to maximize their nutritional benefits.

Start by eating one meal a day that is nutritionally designed to boost your immune system. By and large, most people today are not eating any meals for their immune system.

~Excerpt from The Low Stress Diet, Dr. Brian Luke Seaward, via WELCOA. Dr. Seaward is among the most notable experts on stress management in the U.S.

What You Are Saying

The biometric screening was a real eye opener for me. I have always been very active but in the past 10 years have put on weight, but I was still confident that I was healthy. Well, that was not true. I joined Weight Watchers and have lost over 11 pounds thus far and am well on my way to losing more. Since I did not gain the weight overnight, I feel patient and happy with a one-pound weight loss per week. I have thoroughly enjoyed all of the staff additional classes that have been offered, as well as the many other classes. I am excited for this wellness initiative for Bucknell. I think it can produce positive changes on many levels. Thank you President Bravman and staff for allowing this to take place. It proves to me that you care about our overall wellness.

~ Anonymous

Would you like to share your story, and maybe motivate someone else? Send it to wellness-planning@bucknell.edu and it may be included in a future publication.
Kale & Brussels Sprout Salad

1 bunch fresh leafy kale
½ lb fresh Brussels sprouts
1 medium lemon
¼ cup slivered almonds
¼ cup pecorino cheese, finely shredded
extra virgin olive oil (dressing quality)

Toast the almonds at 350 for 15 minutes.

While they are toasting, cut the kale leaves into thin strips, discarding the stems, and shred the Brussels sprouts. (Use a food processor, or just cut them finely with a sharp knife.) Toss greens together.

In a small dish, combine the juice of one lemon with an equal amount of olive oil. (about one ounce of each)

Right before serving, toss the greens, the pecorino cheese and dressing. Serve immediately with the toasted almonds on the side. (They will sink to the bottom if tossed with the salad.)

6 servings, about 1 cup each
Total Time: 15 minutes
Per serving: 132 Calories; 8 g Fat; 1.6 g Sat; 3 mg Cholesterol; 11.9 g Carbohydrates; 6 g Protein; 3.5 g Fiber; 136 mg Sodium.

This may turn out to be your new favorite side dish!

Upcoming Events

EAP Webinars – Register at www.mylifevalues.com
Log in with username: Bucknell, password: eap

- The Many Faces of Loss ~ Attend this webinar to learn about the grieving process, its purposes and its challenges. April 4, 3 p.m.
- Good Humor = Good Health & More ~ Does it help to have a sense of humor? The overwhelming answer is yes! Learn some of the benefits of seeing the lighter side. April 11, 3 p.m.
- Stress: Do This, Not That ~ How many of your everyday activities increase your stress? Join this Webinar to find out - and learn ways to change those stress inducing behaviors. April 17, 2 p.m.
- Stop to Smell The Roses: Finding Joy in Life ~ If you’re like most people, you spend most of your time rushing around and feeling stressed out. You might find that you’re missing opportunities to enjoy everything you have. There’s new research about the science of being happy and how to get happier. April 24, 3 p.m.

Emotional Eating Seminar ~ This seminar will help you to learn the difference between hunger of the body and hunger of emotions, and techniques for dealing with emotional hunger. April 17 at noon in ELC256.

Celebrate Earth Day, April 22, with a Hike at R.B. Winter state park. We will start from Halfway Lake and hike 2 – 2.5 miles (approx.1 hour). Plan to leave the University at 4:30, and meet at the lake.

Stay tuned to the Message Center for registration information....

Kick off warmer weather (hopefully!) and longer days with the first group walk of the season, a three-mile, round-trip walk on the Buffalo Valley Rail Trail, April 18, 5:15 p.m. We will meet at the 12th St. parking area in Lewisburg.

Bison Bruiser ’13 ~ Relay adventure race around campus and downtown Lewisburg. Come prepared to run, jump, bike, paddle and race to find clues leading your team to a mystery final celebration location! Wear clothes you don’t mind getting messy. April 14, 10 a.m. Register your team at the CAP Center, through April 10.

Daily Steps to Less Stress ~ Weekly, four-part life improvement program teaching practical relaxation techniques and stress management strategies. April 4 – 25, 6 – 7:30 p.m. The cost of the program is $65. Register at www.evanhospital.com, in the Event Calendar, under Health and Wellness.