

# Wellbeing Insights

*Living a Better, More Vibrant Life*



## National Blood Donor Month

Blood banks and hospitals are plagued by short supply in the winter months year after year. Holidays, travel schedules, inclement weather and illness all contribute to this yearly dip in donations. January in particular is the most challenging month to recruit donors, threatening our nation's blood inventory. For this reason, since 1970, January has been dubbed National Blood Donor Month.

The demand for blood to meet the needs of patients for cancer care, surgery and major trauma is approximately 44,000 donations

per day, regardless of the time of year.

If you are in good health and volunteering or giving back is on your list of resolutions for 2017, pledging regular blood donations beginning in January is an easy way to offer a lifesaving gift to patients in need. If you are interested in giving blood, look up your local Red Cross at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org), ask your local hospital or keep an eye out for employer-sponsored blood drives.

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# Cervical Health Awareness Month

## Fast Facts on Cervical Cancer

Each year in the U.S., 12,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer; 4,000 of which result in death. It is the second most common type of cancer in women, but it is also one of the most preventable.

### What causes cervical cancer?

The human papillomavirus (HPV) causes 99% of cervical cancer cases. It is the most common sexually transmitted disease, contracted by about 80% of the entire reproductive-age population. Most infections are cleared by the body's immune system within two years. There are over 100 different strands of HPV; however, two specific strains are responsible for over 70% of all cervical cancer.

### Who is at risk?

About half of cervical cancer cases occur in women between 35 and 55 years of age. However, all women are at risk. With 20% of diagnoses made in women over 65, it's important to



continue regular screenings until at least age 70.

### What are the recommended screenings?

- **Pap Test:** The Pap test is one of the most reliable and effective cancer screening tests available, easily detecting the precancerous cells that slowly grow and lead to cancer. Women should begin regular Pap tests at age 21.
- **HPV Test:** The HPV test detects the virus responsible for cervical cancer, providing further information on a woman's risk for developing the disease.

### What can I do for prevention?

Abstinence is, of course, the best form of prevention. Practicing safe sex (utilizing a condom) is also a good option. Additionally, there is now a highly effective vaccine available. The HPV vaccine is given in three doses and protects against the two most common cancer-causing strains along with the two most common low-risk strains. The CDC recommends inoculation between the ages of 11 and 26, ideally before an individual becomes sexually active. The vaccine is recommended for both females and males, as males can spread the virus to women.

## Safeguard against Sickness

It's that time of year; sniffing can be heard throughout the office and tissues fill the trashcans. We can use all the help we can get to ward off sickness. Check out these tips for keeping your immune system functioning at its best:

1. **Avoid hot spots.** Copy machines, coffee pots, doorknobs and light switches are cozy homes for bacteria. Wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your face when navigating these shared spaces. If you want to be extra cautious, use a tissue when touching these surfaces.
2. **Get out of denial.** If you are feeling sick, use your sick leave; take time to rest and recover. As much as possible, destress, eat healthy foods and avoid alcohol. Giving your body the attention it needs when you are feeling under the weather will ultimately help you heal faster.
3. **Wash your hands.** Hand washing – the most widely known but least adhered-to practice for staying healthy – remains the single best way to avoid the spread of germs that cause sickness.
4. **Get both activity and rest.** Keep your body functioning at its highest capacity with regular exercise and a good night's sleep. Exercise will help build resilience while sleep allows time for the body to process and rejuvenate.
5. **Eat for immunity.** Certain foods are particularly good for the immune system. See our list on page 4.



## On the Menu

# Turmeric

You may know turmeric as the main ingredient in curry dishes or the spice that gives American mustard its yellow color. This bright yellow-orange relative of ginger is used not only as seasoning but is also popular as a fabric dye and has been used in Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years, treating an array of medical conditions. In recent years it has gained recognition with the scientific community in modern western medicine, with thousands of well-documented studies demonstrating the health benefits of turmeric. The compound in turmeric called curcumin is responsible for the majority of these benefits; however, there are several other compounds that contribute to its health-promoting qualities. Here are a few of the conditions turmeric has been shown to prevent or help alleviate:

**Cognitive Decline/Disease:** There are a number of compounds in turmeric that are protective to the brain. These compounds aid in memory, repair stem cells to help in recovery of stroke, protect against cognitive decline and help to block the formation of plaques in the brain that lead to Alzheimer's disease.

**Joint Pain:** Turmeric contains more than two dozen potent anti-inflammatory compounds that help alleviate joint and arthritis pain. Several studies have shown turmeric to be even more effective than ibuprofen for arthritis.

**Cancer:** Curcumin interferes with several biological pathways that lead to cancer development, growth and spread. In animal models, it was effective in treating colon, mammary, prostate, oral and liver cancer, shrinking the size of some cancer cells. Its protective effect against the development of cancer is currently being studied in humans.

There is also promising evidence of turmeric's effectiveness at treating heartburn and indigestion, regulating blood sugar, balancing mood, and promoting heart health. Beyond eating more curry dishes or adding turmeric to dishes, many health professionals are now advocating turmeric supplements which are available in capsule form. Turmeric tea has also gained a lot of popularity as a tasty way to consume more of the powerful spice.



## Turmeric Tea

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup milk (almond, coconut or dairy)
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp. turmeric
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. ground ginger or small piece of fresh ginger root
- Pinch of black pepper (this helps with absorption)
- Optional: drizzle of honey or maple syrup for a sweeter tea or a pinch of cayenne pepper for a spicier tea

### Directions:

1. Add all ingredients to a blender and pulse until smooth.
2. Pour into a saucepan over medium heat and simmer until hot but not boiling.

Nutrition Info	
Per serving	
Calories	134
Carbohydrates	14.7g
Fiber	1.1 g
Protein	8.3g
Sodium	116mg



## Mindful Minute

How often do you start your day on autopilot? You hit snooze on the alarm clock, leaving yourself just enough time to get dressed and run out the door already in a state of chaos. Or, you wake up and lazily do your morning routine before aimlessly greeting the day. Before you know it, you find yourself reacting to all that day has to offer – you were stuck in traffic, a coworker rubbed you the wrong way, your kid got in trouble at school.

The new year is a perfect time to start adding purpose and intention to each day. This exercise will help you **greet your day with a sense of purpose**. This, in turn, will help you keep your emotional reactions in check throughout the day and even help you make progress toward those new year's resolutions by introducing some mindfulness to your daily routine.

- 1. Within the first hour of waking up, find a calm place to sit and relax.** Close your eyes and tune in to the present moment.

- 2. Take three deep, full breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth.** Focus on the breath coming to a place of stillness.

- 3. Set your intention for the day.** Ask yourself:

- How do I want to feel today?
- How can I approach the people and circumstances that I will face today that would result in this feeling?
- During difficult moments, how will I respond?
- What might I do to feel more fulfilled and connected?

You may use all or just a select few of these questions to set your intention. For example, "Today I will be kind to myself and patient with others" or "I will feel nourished by the food I eat, the interactions I have with others and the information I consume."

- 4. Follow up with yourself throughout the day.** While you work to make a habit of this practice, it may help to set an alarm as a reminder to check in and ask yourself if you are pursuing your intention.

You may notice as you begin to live with more intention day to day that your relationships, interactions and mood begin to improve.

*Adapted from [mindful.org](http://mindful.org)*

## DIY: Congestion-Fighting Shower Disks



### What you need:

- 1 cup baking soda
- 1/3 cup water
- 1 Tbsp. corn starch
- Eucalyptus essential oil
- Optional essential oils for added relief: peppermint, lavender, rosemary

### Directions:

1. Mix baking soda and cornstarch and slowly add water until you form a thick paste.
2. Spoon about 2 Tbsp. of the mixture into each cup of a lined muffin tin.
3. Bake at 300 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes and then allow disks to cool completely.
4. Add 3 to 5 drops of eucalyptus oil to each disk and 2 to 3 drops of each optional oil of your choosing. (Use at least one of the recommended oils.)
5. Allow them to sit for one hour, remove from muffin liners and then they are ready for use.

Pop one of these into the shower floor and let the hot water do the work. You will get all the relief of Vicks vapor rub right in the shower.

## Safeguard against Sickness Continued from page 2

### Top immune-boosting foods

- Mushrooms
- Garlic
- Broccoli
- Sweet potatoes
- Carrots
- Kale, spinach
- Fish, beef
- Hazelnuts, cashews, Brazil nuts

### Immune-boosting essential oils

- Rosemary
- Lavender
- Bay laurel
- Lemon
- Tea tree
- Ravensara
- Eucalyptus



# Getting Your Carbs Straight

There has been a ton of buzz about carbs for the past several years, which has led to widespread misconceptions about what carbs are and how they affect our health. While some have sworn allegiance to one of the many popular low-carb diets, others have written off this craze as another silly trend in dieting. In order to make a more informed decision, let's get the basics straight on what a carbohydrate actually is.

## The Facts:

- 1. Carbs are not a food group.** They are a type of molecule composed of sugar and can be divided into three main categories:
  - Simple carbohydrates or “sugars”
  - Complex carbohydrates or “starches”
  - Dietary fiber
- 2. Carbohydrates can be found naturally in many foods, including fruits, vegetables, beans, grains and dairy.** They are also found in virtually all processed foods, sugary beverages and sweets.
- 3. Carbohydrates are not naturally found in meat.** However, many meat products do contain carbohydrates in the form of additives, flavoring or preservatives. Examples are ham, bacon, deli meat and sausage.
- 4. Fiber (which is a type of carbohydrate) is found exclusively in plants.** It is neither broken down nor absorbed by the body and can actually help counteract the effects of other carbs (i.e., sugars and starches) on your body, slowing down the rate at which your body absorbs them.
- 5. Refined and simple carbohydrates are problematic because our body quickly breaks them down, causing blood sugar spikes.** If we are inactive and don't use this energy, the effect is even more severe; it's stored as fat and increases our risk of heart disease and diabetes.

## Best Carbs

**Digest slowly,  
prolong energy,  
keep you full,  
high in fiber,  
no added sugar:**



- Asparagus
- Beets
- Broccoli
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Cucumbers
- Peppers
- Salad greens
- Spinach
- Tomatoes
- Zucchini

## Good Carbs

- Beans
- Brown rice
- Fresh fruit
- Oats
- Milk
- Peas
- Potatoes
- Quinoa
- Yogurt

## Bad Carbs

**Cause blood sugar  
spikes and energy  
crashes,  
low in fiber,  
high in added  
sugar:**



- Candy & cookies
- Chips & white crackers
- Fruit juice & soda
- Ice cream & cake
- Jam, jelly, syrup
- Muffins & pastries
- Sugary cereal
- Sweet tea & lemonade
- White bread & bagels

# Plugging Budget Leaks



One of the best ways to gain control over spending is to identify and eliminate impulse buying. It is estimated that 10 to 40% of our spending is impulse purchases; all of this money is crucial to ramp up your savings plan and meet your financial goals.

To understand impulse buying from a psychological perspective, we should ask the question “What motivates me to impulsively buy products?” There are a number of answers to this question, and knowing them will help you make smarter, more rational decisions the next time you’re shopping.

If you find that you often spend money without really thinking about what you’re buying or why, you may have an impulse buying tendency. If you get a lot of enjoyment from shopping or are a comfort shopper, you may be buying as a way to experience pleasure and are probably buying some products on impulse. If you get a sudden urge to buy something after you play around with it or after thinking of a friend who owns

it, you’re probably experiencing an impulse buying urge that came from a connection between you and the product.

Ultimately, an easy way to tell if a purchase is impulsive is to ask **“Did I plan to buy this, or did I get the urge to buy it just now?”** If you didn’t plan to buy it, you’re probably experiencing an impulse buying urge. By putting that product back on the shelf and refusing to purchase it, you’re doing something to help yourself. You’re rejecting the idea that by purchasing that product you’ll be happier, have a higher status or be envied by friends. You’ll not only get to keep more of your money but also become a smarter consumer and possibly a happier person in the end.

A good place to start is determining your “latte factor” – the small unplanned purchases you make over time. To do this, keep track of your spending for one month. Track anything that wasn’t planned or necessary. The list should contain the item, the cost and whether it was a need or a want.

At the end of the month add up all of the unnecessary items to determine the approximate amount of money you will be wasting on unnecessary spending if you continue this spending behavior. The result may seem small, but even \$10 per day turns into over \$3,600 per year!

Small numbers do add up. By taking control over impulsive spending, you will have more money to put aside for savings and build yourself a nice nest egg in the process.

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**“YOU HAVE EXACTLY ONE LIFE IN WHICH TO DO EVERYTHING YOU WILL EVER DO. ACT ACCORDINGLY.”**  
**– COLIN WRIGHT**

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