Dakota Wellness Program
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Bacteria is more than the last illness that you had. There are millions of bacteria in your digestive tract that help you lead a healthy life, every day. The study of the gut microbiota is new, but experts suspect that this enormous system of 1,000 different species may play a role in the development of autoimmune conditions and protection against some cancers and heart disease. The healthy bacteria in your gut are also linked to overall well-being, including mental health.

How do I improve the bacteria in my gut?
Age, environment, genes and antibiotic usage influence microbiota. Your diet also influences the type of bacteria living in your digestive tract.

1. **Eat foods that contain prebiotics**
   A prebiotic is a natural fiber component that stimulates the growth of the good bacteria in your gut.

2. **Consume probiotics or foods containing bacteria**
   A probiotic food has “good” bacteria or live cultures. These active cultures can help to repopulate the bacteria in your digestive tract.

The duo of prebiotics and probiotics work together to promote a healthy digestive tract. You can think of a prebiotic as breakfast, lunch and dinner for a probiotic. Supplements of live bacteria are available, but their effectiveness in research is mixed. Instead of choosing a supplement to make up for poor diet choices, choose foods rich in compounds that support good bacteria and consume live bacteria in your diet.

Foods and beverages to improve the bacteria in your gut

**PREBIOTICS**
- All fruits and vegetables especially bananas, grapefruit, beets, garlic, leeks, asparagus and artichokes
- Whole grains like spelt and barley
- Foods with added inulin
- Apple cider vinegar

**PROBIOTICS**
- Cultured dairy foods like plain yogurt, kefir and goat cheese
- Naturally fermented vegetables like kimchi
- Kombucha drinks
- Soy products like tempeh and miso

References:
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, eatright.org
Harvard Medical School, health.harvard.edu

Book Club

**Eat Move Sleep: How Small Choices Lead to Big Changes**
by Tom Rath

While managing a serious illness for more than 20 years, Tom has assembled a wide range of research on nutrition, exercise and sleep. This conversational book features his most practical lifestyle interventions to help you improve your health. *Eat Move Sleep* will help make good decisions automatic.

Featuring nutrition tips like judging food by the color of its skin or how to be less refined, the practical tips related to nutrition will help you eat better with every bite you take. Each chapter includes the three components of food, movement and rest, set around various themes. Simply read all three areas at once or come back again and again and read about your topic that you want to work on whether it is food, exercise or sleep.

**Discussion questions**

1. Which area of your lifestyle—food, exercise or sleep—do you want to improve the most?
2. How do you view these three areas as being interconnected after reading this book?
3. What strategies from the book have you tried or were already doing?
4. Which strategies do you plan to implement in the next month?
Give it a try...

**Connect to your community**

A high level of community well-being can mean the difference between an ordinary life and a great one. The foundation of this area is a healthy environment where you feel safe and comfortable. The top level of community well-being, or when you are thriving, is achieved when you feel connected and start to contribute to your community in different ways through volunteering, helping out a neighbor and ensuring it is an inviting environment for all.

To discover where you are on your path to a higher community well-being, take the community assessment from the University of Minnesota.

- Learn your strengths and how you are contributing to your community
- Discover recommendations to improve your well-being and community connection

To take your community assessment visit takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/community-assessment

**Let your mind wander**

Aren’t “aha” moments satisfying? Those moments of sudden discovery or realization. They normally occur when you least expect it – getting ready in the morning, after exercising, or trying to fall asleep at night – all times when your mind has a chance to wander.

Mind wandering is when the brain continues to solve problems out of focus, or day dream. The brain is relaxed and free from distractions. Typically, one minute of free time might equate to a one-minute cell phone check. This isn’t abnormal. According to Wellcoaches, the dopamine system loves technology because it’s small and not quite satisfying, which keeps us coming back for more and more, but the benefits of mind wandering outweigh the temporary entertainment.

To optimize mind wandering:

- **Find stillness:** Exercise or drive without listening to music
- **Disconnect:** Instead of impulsively checking your phone while in a waiting room or watching your kids play, keep it tucked away
- **Take breaks for brain energy:** Take it before your tank runs empty and it will be easier to rejuvenate
- **Rest up:** Sleep 6 to 8 hours at night

Doing these things will help limit the steady stream of distractions and you’ll be able reap the benefits of a clearer, more resourceful mind.

**Time management**

No matter what, we are always only going to have 24 hours in each day. We all have the same amount of time to complete tasks, so our efficiency in managing the hours we have each day is what matters most. Generally, there are enough hours in the day to squeeze everything in, but it may take some rearranging and reimagining to figure out what works best for you.

Here are a few ideas to help you get started:

- Learn to say no
- Prioritize tasks from most important to least important
- Set goals and deadlines for tasks

Keeping a positive attitude can help contribute to more effective time management skills and less procrastination at work. Lastly, if you are feeling overwhelmed, take note of your hours in the day to really gage where you might be spending your time and energy.
Activate!
PRESERVE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
With the end of summer near, many seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables are ready to be picked. While enjoying them fresh is great, you may want to preserve the extra produce when it is at its peak so you can enjoy it throughout the rest of the year. Freezing, canning and fermentation to create probiotics are all great ways to enjoy the summer bounty.

The National Center for Home Food Preservation is your source for research-based recommendations for home food preservation. Visit nchfp.uga.edu and click the “How do I” section to learn about:
• Canning
• Drying
• Freezing
• Fermenting

With specific recommendations on how to can 40+ fruits and vegetables as well as freezing instructions for 65+ fruits and vegetables, you will be able to preserve your summer harvest to enjoy in soups, sauces and other dishes all winter long.

Banana ice cream
Serves: 1
Total Time: 10 min  | Prep: 5 min  | Freeze: 8 hours

Ingredients:
1 medium banana, sliced and frozen for 8 hours or longer
1 tablespoon natural peanut butter
1 tablespoon cocoa powder

Directions:
Slice and freeze bananas for 8 hours or up to one month in an air tight container. Add frozen bananas to a small food processor or blender. Blend until small bead like pieces form. Add peanut butter. Blend until a smooth, thick paste, like ice cream. Add cocoa powder and blend until powder is mixed in.

Nutrition Facts:
Calories: 211  Total Fat: 9g  Sodium: 76mg  Total Carbohydrates: 33g
Dietary Fiber: 6g  Total Protein: 6g

Nutrition information compiled using nutritiondata.com

Monthly Observances
Breastfeeding
Children’s eye health
Gastroparesis
Immunization
Psoriasis

Find a complete list of observances at healthfinder.gov/NHO

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