



## North Syracuse Central School District

“The greatest wealth is health.”

-Virgil

### Wellness Newsletter

When life gets busy, it can become hard to prioritize your wellness. But how do you prioritize wellness in the first place? Striving for overall wellness or well-being can look different for everyone. Here are just a few things that can help or hinder achieving your wellness goals:



physical activity, nutrition, sleep, social life, and self-care. If these are neglected, you may be left feeling burnt out, uninspired, or

physically and mentally drained. Even though ‘wellness’ encompasses many aspects of one’s life, improving it does not have to be a burdensome task. Giving yourself attention and practicing self-care does not have to include a fancy day at the spa, or an expensive massage. It can be as simple as taking a 10-minute walk, eating meals regularly, talking to a friend, or getting enough sleep.

### Move Your Body

Getting adequate physical activity can improve your mood, help strengthen your bones and muscles, and keep your heart healthy. Aim to get your body moving for at least 30 minutes per day. If you do not enjoy going to the gym, get creative in the way you exercise! Partake in a winter activity like skiing, sledding, or ice-skating. Or turn on some music and dance in the living room. If finding the time to exercise for 30 minutes is unrealistic for your lifestyle, break it up and take three 10-minute stretch/movement breaks throughout the day. Exercise does not have to feel like a chore, and it can be a great way to improve overall wellness.

### Fuel Your Body

Nutrition can be hard to prioritize, but it is a key component to achieving optimal health and wellness. As mentioned previously, improving your nutrition does not have to be an extravagant, expensive activity. Making small changes in your diet can have a major impact on your health.

A wonderful way to improve your nutrition is to make sure you are eating balanced meals regularly throughout the day. Our bodies need carbohydrates, protein, and fats



*every day* to function properly. By including these macronutrients at each meal, you can avoid grumbling stomachs, feeling lightheaded, and having cravings later in the day.

There is also a correlation between food and mood. We all know that serotonin is the “happy hormone” that helps regulate your mood. However, did you know that most of the serotonin in your body is produced and found in your gut? The food you eat can affect how much serotonin your body creates. Foods that support your mood include bananas, beans, eggs, leafy greens, nuts, seeds, omega-3’s (salmon, tuna fish, avocado, walnuts), fermented foods (yogurt, kimchi, kombucha, kefir), and turkey. It is also important to include foods that are high in fiber to support your gut so it can continue producing serotonin!

## Emotional Eating

Another area that many people struggle with is emotional eating. There are different reasons why we eat, not all of them being triggered by hunger. It is common to turn to eating when we experience increased stress, sadness, anxiety, etc. By becoming more in tune with your hunger and fullness cues, and recognizing when you are triggered to eat due to emotions, you can overcome this habit. Understanding your triggers is most important, and these may be different for everyone. If you find yourself turning to food to cope with your emotions and you want to break that cycle, try and find other activities to do when those circumstances appear. If you have had a stressful day find yourself and reaching for the snack cupboard but are not



hungry at all, try taking a walk, reading a book, or talking to someone about your day

instead. This is not to say that you should only eat when you are hungry and for no other reason, but if you no longer want to turn to eating to cope with emotions, it may be beneficial to find other hobbies that can help improve your mood. Continuing to eat balanced meals regularly throughout the day will also help make this change!

## Social Wellness

Social wellness also can look very different for different people. For some, this may mean focusing more on connecting with friends and family. Sending a postcard, giving someone a call, or going for a walk together are easy ways to stay connected to loved ones. For others, improving social wellness may mean taking a step back from their social life for a few days to re-charge. Either way, keeping a balance between your social life and your personal life can help improve your overall wellness.

## Sleep

Getting an adequate amount of sleep is a crucial component of overall wellness. If you are sleep deprived, you may feel irritable and at a loss for energy on a day-to-day basis. However, inadequate sleep can also contribute to your long-term health and increase your risk of developing certain diseases. It can also contribute to overall decreased mental health.

It is recommended that adults get between 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Creating a night time routine can help ensure that you get enough sleep to feel rested and refreshed the next day. You may also want to avoid coffee and other stimulants later in the day/evening, and turn off your electronics at least 30 minutes before you go to bed. Taking a little extra time to plan for sleep can have a major impact on your wellbeing and health by improving your mood and energy, and helping prevent the onset of disease.



There is no one-way to achieve wellness - there are many! Improving your exercise, nutrition, social wellness, and sleep are just a few ways that can help you become as happy and healthy as you can be.