

# HIGHWAY TO WELLNESS & SAFETY

Volume 5/Issue 1

Sponsored by: Wellness Committee

## A NEW YEAR

A new year is around the corner and while many make resolutions and plans, try to remember these few things as you're making them:

1. Cut yourself some slack.
2. Choose to be kind.
3. It's okay to have worries.
4. Take that adventure.
5. Nothing is permanent.

Take it day by day and enjoy the little things.

Happy New Year!

-Employee Relations

## POVERTY AWARENESS MONTH

Poverty is the state of being extremely poor by having a shortage of resources compared to needs. To give some perspective, in 2021, the national poverty rate was 12.8%, however, it's different between the oldest and youngest populations.

The child poverty rate was 16.9%. The poverty rate for those 65 and over was 10.3%. These numbers also vary among states anywhere from 8.1% to 27.7%.

So how can we help? Here are a few ways.

- 1. Challenge ideas and assumptions.** One common misconception is that people experiencing homelessness choose not work.
- 2. Create awareness and get informed.** Poverty exists in every community. Learn where the issues lie within the community in which you live. There are many groups out there who could use help.
- 3. Donate funds and time.** Donations add up and no amount is too small. There are organizations that can use your donations towards fixing housing inequalities, education gaps, food insecurities and more. Volunteering your time is also a great way to donate.
- 4. Make kits or fundraise for those experiencing homelessness.** Ask community experts on what is specifically needed and create kits or baskets of that. Create events where proceeds go to local shelters or other organizations.
- 5. Attend demonstrations or rallies to increase awareness.** Peaceful events can grab the community's attention.

Poverty affects more people than you may think and it's always possible that you may end up in that status at any time of your life. Do your part to help those in need.

**References:** [Census Stats](#) [How to Help Poverty Issues](#)

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*“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life.” –Nelson Mandela*

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## CHICKEN TACOS W/ CITRUS SALSA

### Taco Ingredients:



- 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken thighs
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- ½ cup salsa
- 12 yellow/white corn tortillas (for serving)
- Queso fresco cheese (crumbled, for serving)

### Citrus Salsa Ingredients:

- 1 cup cherry tomatoes (halved)
- 1 orange (segmented and chopped)
- 1 avocado (chopped)
- 3 tbsp. red onion (diced)
- 2 tbsp. cilantro
- Pinch salt
- Pinch pepper
- Lime juice (freshly squeezed)

### Instructions:

1. Place the chicken in your slow cooker and season it with salt and pepper.
2. Pour the salsa on top. Cover the slow cooker and cook on high for 3-4 hours or on low for 6-8 hours. Whichever setting, cook until the chicken easily shreds with a fork.
3. For the citrus salsa, combine everything together in a bowl and mix. Let it sit at room temperature for 15 minutes before serving.
4. To assemble tacos, warm the tortillas and fill them with a few tablespoons of the chicken.
5. Top with the citrus salsa and queso fresco cheese. Serve immediately.

[Chicken Tacos w/ Citrus Salsa Recipe Link](#)

## HEALTHY SNACKS THAT WON'T RUIN YOUR DIET

If you're busy and need some snackies that won't interfere with your diet or healthy eating. Here's some ideas:

1. **Trail mix.** Made with nuts, seeds and dried fruit, this nutritional munch can be good at lowering your blood sugar.
2. **Greek yogurt with fresh berries.** Helps keep you feeling fuller longer and helps boost metabolism.
3. **Nuts.** High in fiber, protein and healthy fats.
4. **Popcorn.** Air popped and easy on seasoning. It's high in fiber.
5. **Edamame.** High in protein, natural energy and keeps you staying full longer.
6. **Watermelon.** Refreshing during hot summer months and good for hydration.
7. **Hummus.** Packed with dietary fiber, nutritious and can help with inflammation.
8. **Granola bars.** Good for when you're craving something sweet and packed with fiber.
9. **Apple with peanut butter.** Apples are rich in fiber that helps with gut health and immune system. Peanut butter helps you stay full longer.
10. **String cheese.** Provide plenty of protein to help with hunger. Stick to mozzarella cheese.
11. **Hard boiled eggs.** Lean protein that fills you up. Packed with vitamins and minerals.

For more snack ideas, visit the link below.

[30 Healthy Snacks](#)

## PEAR-BRAISED CHICKEN

### Ingredients:



- 4 large chicken thighs (skin on and bone in)
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 2 pears (sliced)
- 2 medium carrots (peeled & chopped)
- ½ cup chicken stock
- 2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- Rice, grains, or greens (for serving)

### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Season chicken thighs with salt and pepper.
3. Cook on the skillet for 10 minutes. Don't touch the thighs at this point.
4. After 10 minutes, the chicken thighs should be lightly browned and the skin will be somewhat crispy.
5. Remove the thighs from the skillet and set aside.
6. Add sliced pears and carrots to the skillet and cook over medium heat for 3-4 minutes.
7. Add chicken stock and apple cider vinegar to the skillet and use the liquid to scrape up any bits stuck to the pan.
8. Return the chicken thighs to the skillet, skin-side up.
9. Place the skillet in the oven and roast for 15-20 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through. Use a thermometer for doneness. It should reach 165°F in the thickest part of the thigh and the juices should run clear.
10. Remove skillet from the oven and serve the chicken thighs, pears, and carrots over rice, another grain, or greens.
11. Spoon little pan sauce over the chicken before serving.

[Pear-Braised Chicken Recipe Link](#)

## MONEY SAVING CHALLENGES

So you want to save some money? The holidays are passed and we're now in a new year. If you're wanting or maybe needing to keep more money in your pocket, here are a few ideas.

1. **No-Spend Challenge.** You set a set amount and do not spend over it.
2. **52-Week Money Challenge.** Do this one right and you'll save \$1378 by the end of the year. For week one you'll \$1, \$2 for week two and so forth.
3. **Holiday Helper Fund.** Set aside \$20 each week. By the end of november, you'll have an extra \$960.
4. **26-Week Bi-Weekly Savings Plan.** By the end of the year you'll have \$1404. All you do is save \$4 the first week. Every other week after you add \$4.
5. **365-Day Nickel-Saving Challenge.** You start with \$0.05 the first day and then add \$0.05 each day after. By the end of the year, you'll save around \$3300.
6. **\$1 Bill Save.** Every time you get \$1 bill as change, put it in your savings envelope.
7. **Weather Savings Challenge.** Once a week, deposit money that matches the high temperature that day.

[21 Money Saving Challenges](#)



## REALISTIC EXERCISE ROUTINE

It's a new year and setting up a realistic exercise goal is key to maintaining the motivation. Here's some tips:

- **Be sensible.** Start off with short sessions and increase time and difficulty as the weeks go by. If you overdo it right away, you may injure yourself, get muscle soreness and quit.
- **Choose a fun workout.** If you enjoy it, you'll stick to it. Find an activity you enjoy and incorporate into your routine.
- **Move when energy is highest.** Whether it's working out in the morning or in the evening, you'll get better results when you work out during your peak hours.
- **Schedule your workouts.** If you put it on your calendar it will help you commit. If change needs to be done, reschedule immediately.

### **What are the types of exercise?**

- **Aerobic** – cardiovascular conditioning like running, jump roping and biking
- **Bootcamp** – high intensity combining aerobic and strength exercises
- **Flexibility** – stretching for muscle recovery, range of motion and injury prevention
- **High-intensity interval training** – the repetition of short bursts of high and low intensity exercises
- **Strength training** – weightlifting or resistance training to increase muscular strength and endurance

Reference: M3 January 2023 Newsletter

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*“A New Year’s resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.”*

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## THE IMPACT OF SLEEP ON MENTAL HEALTH

Not getting enough sleep can take a toll on your mental health. Generally, seven to eight hours is what one should get. However, Americans have much difficulty getting that. It's important to remember that the most common mental health issues linked to lack of sleep are depression and anxiety. Good sleep helps sharpen cognitive skills like attention, learning and memory. So, what can one do? Here some tips:

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule and bedtime.
- Establish a bedtime routine.
- Make your bedroom quiet and relaxing.
- Turn off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
- Don't eat a large meal before bedtime.
- Avoid consuming alcohol, caffeine or excessive fluids before bedtime.

In an effort to help you get a better night sleep, we're doing a mini giveaway of a Mini Sound Spa plus Face Mask. All you have to do is email: [employee-relations@countyofdane.com](mailto:employee-relations@countyofdane.com), use Small GA as the subject and put your name and job location in the body of the email.

Reference: M3 January Newsletter

## 2023 WELLNESS REIMBURSEMENT

Dane County Employees have three excellent wellness reimbursement options through our Wellness Program. Here's a brief overview.

**Gym Membership Reimbursement** – If you join a gym, fitness center, online fitness program or attend a fitness class, you can get reimbursed up \$30 per quarter and a max total of \$120 per year.

**Health & Wellness Reimbursement** – If you purchase a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), Wellness App, Seed/Seedling, fresh fruit/veggies, fitness event, weight loss program, fitness tracker, athletic shoes, hunting/fishing license or trail/state park pass. You will be reimbursed up to 50% of your paid amount with a max total of \$75.

**Fitness Equipment Reimbursement** – If you rent or purchase equipment like: kayak, bike, weights, home gym items, sports equipment, fishing poles, golf clubs, skis, etc., then you're able to be reimbursed up to 50% of your paid amount with a max total of \$50.

If interested, please review Wellness Committee Member's Katelyn Thurs' December 30<sup>th</sup> email breaking down into detail how the reimbursements should be submitted, what forms to use and if you have any questions, please email: [employee-relations@countyofdane.com](mailto:employee-relations@countyofdane.com).

## BRAIN STRAIN

To enter the Brain Strain puzzle GA, you must complete the puzzle and pick a prize of your choice. You can email your response to [employee-relations@countyofdane.com](mailto:employee-relations@countyofdane.com). In the subject area, please put Brain Strain and in the body of the email, put your puzzle response, name and job location. Please note, that prizes are limited and picking more than one can be helpful.

- Daily Brain Games 2023 Calendar
- Bike Lock
- Skipping Rope
- Black Lunch Box
- Water Bottle
- Fruit Infusion Water Bottle
- 500 Pieces Succulent Garden Puzzle
- Exercise Ball
- Meal Prep for Weight Loss
- 5 Ingredient Cooking for Two
- Easy Sheet Pan Cookbook
- Jumbo Puzzle Book
- Brain Games 3 in 1 Book
- Black Yoga Mat

### **Puzzle #1:**

During which Apollo mission did an astronaut learn he was allergic to the moon? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Puzzle #2:**

What is the only letter that does not appear in any U.S. state name? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Puzzle #3:**

What size of shoe does the Statue of Liberty wear? \_\_\_\_\_