



HIGHWAY TO WELL & SAFETY

UNDERSTANDING ASD



Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a broad term used to describe a group of neurodevelopmental conditions typically characterized by differences in communication and social interaction. One of the key missions of Autism Acceptance Month is to educate the new generation in fostering acceptance and kindness towards the autistic community.

Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disorder in the United States. 1 in 44 has this condition. It's usually diagnosed in early childhood and it's a lifelong condition. Early intervention can improve a child's ability to learn, engage and develop independence. Here are some more facts:

- Boys are nearly 5x more likely than girls to be diagnosed. Girls are often underdiagnosed with autism and misdiagnosed with other conditions.
- Autism affects all nationalities, creeds, religions, races and genders.
- One of the biggest difficulties with individuals with autism is communication.
- 10% of people with autism have another genetic, neurological or metabolic disorder.
- 85% of people with autism are unable to work or struggle in the workplace. This could be due to the loss of helpful services that they were using throughout school.
- Many of the 15% of people with autism who work are in a constant state of burn out.
- There is no federal requirement for providing supportive services to people with autism in adulthood.

Many people with autism are successfully living and working and contributing to society. Creating a neurodivergent friendly space can be beneficial to all.

Reference: [30 Facts about Autism](#)

ALLERGY SEASON IS HERE

Spring, summer and fall are the most common times for seasonal allergy symptoms to arise. Your trigger depends on what you are allergic to. Ways to help reduce these symptoms:

- Keep track of local allergen counts to know when to avoid excessive outside time.
- Wash bedding in hot water to help keep the spread of pollen under control.
- Utilize washable indoor rugs to easily remove allergens.
- Take shower after spending time outdoors since pollen can stick to hair, skin and clothing.
- Clean your floors regularly with a vacuum that has a HEPA filter.
- Change air conditioning and heating HEPA filters often.

Reference: M3 Insurance Newsletter



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Wellness Hobby: Stargazing2

5 Myths About Pregnancy2

Chicken Alfredo Roll-Ups.....3

Whole-Wheat Strawberry Muffin 3

Bleeding Gums4

BookMark4

How to Manage Money Better4

Brain Strain5

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- **March Newsletter Winners**
Lynda Seeger
Tracy Gibbs
Teresa Saugstad
Sherry Greco
Jackie Hammond
Dena Sedlmayr
- **March Small GA Giveaway**
Rich Zietko
- **Small GA for this Month**
Skiz Pro Mini Hoop
Email: employee-relations@countyofdane.com
by May 1st, 10 am.
Use "Small GA" as the subject and send this separately from Brain Strain.



WELLNESS HOBBY: STARGAZING

Research shows that when you're looking up and seeing the stars, you often feel inspired and find some sense of creativity or deeper understanding. Everything that exists within nature—humans, animals, and plants—need exposure to help regulate circadian rhythms.

Benefits of Stargazing

- Reconnects you with nature. 15 minutes in nature can help you feel refreshed.
- Perfect stress reliever. Prolonged exposure to artificial light decreases sleep quality and indirectly contributes to mental health concerns like anxiety and depression.
- Spark your creative mind. There is always a new natural wonder to explore. The best creative ideas come forth when we're at peace which can be obtained by observing the night sky.
- Become family-fun time. This is a social hobby and is a great way

to connect with family. Grab binoculars, throw blankets and have fun picking out different stars and planets.

Maps & Apps

- Skymaps.com is a great place to print out a map of the night sky above the area where you live for the current month.
- An app—Night Sky, Sky Guide, SkEye, Heavens-Above, Stellarium, Sky Map—can be helpful since they are GPS based and you can search by moving your phone.
- Polaris is north pole and the northern hemisphere rotates around Polaris. Good starting point for new stargazers.

REFERENCES:

[4 Amazing Health and Social Benefits of Stargazing](#)
Prevention Magazine. April Issue. Pages 20-21

“To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here.”

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO WEIGHTS

Strength training helps muscles, joints, and bones. If you've been thinking in incorporating weights, here are three things to keep in mind:

1. **Always warm up.** Loosen up with gentle moves like marching in place, lateral lunges, and standing torso twists.
2. **Use your core.** This makes stability the focus to prevent injury. Before you get started: Stand up straight, tighten your abs, pull your shoulders down and back.
3. **Choose the right weight.** You shouldn't be in pain. Strive to feel challenged but be able to complete your workout.

Ref: Prevention Magazine. Page 18.

5 MYTHS ABOUT PREGNANCY

Myth #1: You can tell the sex of your baby by how you're carrying. Baby-bump size, shape and position has nothing to do with the sex of the baby. How you carry is based on factors such as your height, weight and abdominal muscle tone as well as the baby's size and position. During a first pregnancy, abdominal muscles are tighter and often hold the belly more inward. Future pregnancies a woman may show sooner.

Myth #2: You're more likely to have a C-section if you get an epidural. Having an epidural does not mean a woman is more likely to have an operative delivery. Risk of C-section doesn't go up with epidural use. An epidural allows for a more restful labor that is not overwhelmed with pain. The important thing is to talk to your doctor about what your epidural preference.

Myth #3: If you eat certain foods while pregnant, that can cause your baby to develop food allergies or asthma. There is no evidence to back this up. Many foods like tree nuts, dairy or eggs can all be part of a well-balanced diet. In general focus on grains, fruit, vegetables, protein, fats and dairy to ensure that all macro and micronutrient needs are met. Research does show that eating foods high in omega-3 fatty acids like salmon, chia seeds and mackerel, while pregnant may help lower your child's allergy and asthma risk later in life.

Myth #4: You can't eat lunch meat or hot dogs when you're pregnant. Hot dogs and deli meat aren't automatically off the menu when you're pregnant. They must be steaming hot or heated to 165°. The main risk is listeria, a germ that can sometimes be found in lunch meats and produce and unpasteurized milk. Listeria isn't common, but pregnant women are 10 times more likely to get it as other healthy adults because of changes in their immune system.

Myth #5: If you've had a C-section with your first delivery, you must have C-sections with your future ones. C-section rates have been steadily ticking upward. There are factors that influence whether you will have a C-section or another surgical delivery or whether it's a vertical or horizontal incision the first time. Always talk to your doctor about the options throughout your pregnancy.

Reference: Prevention Magazine. April 2023 Issue. Pages 64-67.



CHICKEN ALFREDO ROLL-UPS

Prep: 20 Minutes

Cook: 20 Minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 tsp. butter (plus some for greasing)
- 3 tsp. flour
- 2 1/4 cups milk
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tsp. chopped parsley
- 2 garlic gloves, minced
- 2 tsp. cream cheese, softened
- 2 cup shredded rotisserie chicken
- 1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan
- 8 cooked lasagna noodles
- Kosher salt
- Black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Butter a large casserole dish and set aside. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat.

3. Add garlic and sauté until garlic is fragrant, about 30 seconds. Whisk the flour into the butter and garlic and cook until it is gold bubbly.
4. Gradually pour in milk, whisking constantly. Bring mixture to simmer then stir in cream cheese and parmesan. Let simmer until the sauce thickens, 1-2 minutes. Add lemon juice and about 1 tsp of parsley, season with salt and pepper.
5. Stir in shredded chicken. Spoon a thin layer of sauce onto the bottom of the baking dish.
6. Lay cooked noodles in a single layer on a cutting board or baking dish. Spread alfredo mixture on each noodle then roll up the lasagna.
7. Lay the roll-ups in the baking dish, seam side down. Cover roll-ups with remaining sauce. Bake for 15-20 minutes until is bubbly and beginning to brown. Garnish with parsley.

Recipe complements of Dane County Employee.



WHOLE-WHEAT STRAWBERRY MUFFINS



Prep: 15 Minutes

Cook: 30 Minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/2 cups unsweetened applesauce
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup canola oil
- 3 cups white whole-wheat flour
- 2 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 2 cups chopped strawberries

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 18 (1/2 cup) muffin cups with paper liners.
2. Whisk applesauce, sugar and oil in a large bowl. Add flour, baking soda and salt; whisk until combined. Gently fold in strawberries. Divide the batter among the prepared muffin cups.
3. Bake the muffins until the tops spring back when touched lightly and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 22-28 minutes. Let cool in the pan for 5 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

[Recipe](#)

RETHINK RED MEAT

Plant-based diet is good for your heart as well as for the health of the planet. It's also important to keep in mind that the livestock industry is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

Types of red meat: Beef, veal, pork, lamb, mutton and goat. Processed meat has been salted, cured, fermented, smoked and it can be hot dogs, ham, bacon, sausage, corned beef and beef jerky.

Benefits of cutting back: Lower levels of total cholesterol, blood glucose. Lower rates of heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

About eggs and seafood: There are different types of diets. Incorporating eggs, dairy and even some meat, poultry and seafood can still be good.

Need red meat protein? There are many other sources you can get protein and essential fatty acids.

Strategies to consider

Start swapping: there are many other protein sources. You can also begin to decrease the amount of red meat you're consuming until it's completely out.

Pump up the produce: The goal for you is to aim for 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

Make Mondays meatless: cook a plant-based meal at least once a week.

Choose wisely: If you choose to eat meat, limit to once or twice a week, stay away from processed varieties, grab grass-fed, wild game or bison as they are the best options.

Reference: Prevention Magazine. April issue. Pages 22-23.

BLEEDING GUMS

Why do gums bleed?

Some people have less resilient gums or thinner mouth tissue. But, the most common reason is gingivitis. This is a result of irritation caused by plaque buildup at the gumline. Gingivitis can turn into periodontitis. These can be a cause of poor oral hygiene and/or smoking.

What are other possible causes?

1. **Hormonal changes.** Fluctuations in estrogen and progesterone levels during puberty, pregnancy and menopause can cause inflammation.
2. **Medications.** Blood thinners and high blood pressure treatments can lead to inflamed gums.
3. **Diabetes.** This can cause you to produce less saliva which is necessary to help wash away the bacteria.
4. **Brushing too hard.** Scrubbing harder is not better.
5. **Vitamin deficiencies.** It could be a lack of vitamin C or a lack of vitamin K.

How to stop the bleeding?

It's important to maintain good oral health. Brush twice a day with a soft or extra-soft brush. Floss daily to remove plaque. And, schedule a professional cleaning twice a year.

If the bleeding hasn't stopped after two weeks of consistent care, talk to your dentist.

Reference: Prevention Magazine. April 2023 Issue. Pages 42-43.

HOW TO MANAGE MONEY BETTER

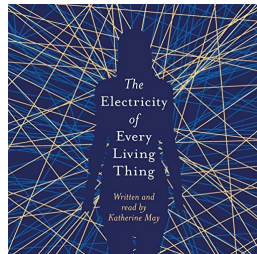
Here are seven practical financial tips and money management.

1. **Make a personal budget.** It's a great step developing healthy money habits. A budgeting worksheet with the following could be a good start: add up monthly income, add up monthly expenses, and subtract your expenses from your income.
2. **Track your spending.** Separate your expenses into categories that way you know where your money is going. This may be alarming when you see the full picture, but it's important to know where your money is going.
3. **Save for retirement.** Starting small is a great way to start. When you're able you can increase to an amount you're comfortable. Don't forget to take up plans that are available through your employer, Roth IRAs and 403(b) plans.
4. **Save for emergencies.** Anything can happen: home repairs, car repairs, and accidents where you can't work, to name a few.
5. **Plan to pay off debt.** There are two ways: Snowball method and the debt avalanche method. Snowball is where you pay off your smallest balances first. Avalanche is where you pay off your debt with highest interest rate to lowest.
6. **Establish good credit habits.** Pay your bills on time, don't get too close to the limits on your credit accounts, and work at establishing a long credit history.
7. **Improve your money mindset.** What is done with money is important. Being in a positive mindset can help keep your sign on your goals.

[Article](#)

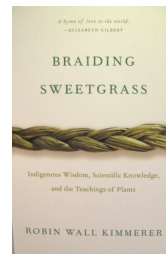


BOOKMARK



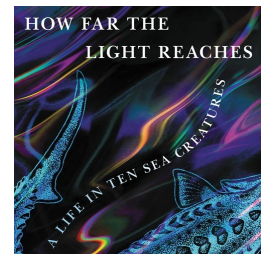
The Electricity of Everything
by: Katherine May

Memoir of one woman's walk in the wilds as she comes to terms with an Autism diagnosis.



Braiding Sweetgrass
by: Robin Wall Kimmerer

A woman's perspective on plant life and their relationship to humans.



How Far the Light Reaches
by: Sabrina Impler

Part memoir and part study of the intricacies of the ocean, this exploration invites readers to imagine alternative ways of living.

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

The Inflation Reduction act now provides a federal tax credit for 30% of the cost of new solar projects on your home. Project materials, installation costs, and fees are all eligible for the tax credit. An example of materials that qualify for these credits are: battery storage, balance-of-system equipment, onsite preparation, assembly, original installation, permitting fees, inspection costs, developer fees, sales tax and other clean energy systems.

For more information, please visit: [Link](#).

BRAIN STRAIN

NAME: _____

LOCATION: _____

Please complete at least one puzzle.

Submit your entry via email or via in-ter-net by May 1st, 10 am.

Please pick more than one prize as some prizes are limited.

- Balance disc
- Yoga mat
- Yoga block & strap set
- Exercise ball
- Ab roller jump rope
- 2lb. Wrist weights
- Exercise dice
- Muscle roller
- Resistance bands
- Golf balls +tees
- Foot roller massager
- Bike lock
- Book light
- Mini sound spa
- Water bottle
- Fruit infusion water bottle
- 2 coloring books + coloring pencils
- Color by #s + coloring pencils
- Brain games 3 in 1 book
- Cold cases puzzle book
- Set of 3 large print puzzle books
- Air fryer cookbook
- The ultimate book of grilling
- Delish Insane Sweets cookbook
- Easy sheet pan cookbook
- Meal prep for weight loss
- 5 ingredient cooking for 2
- Juicing for beginners cookbook

PUZZLE #1: SOLVE ALL

SYNONYM TRIOS

Change one letter in each trio of words to create synonyms. For example, THIEF, MAID, FOREMAST becomes CHIEF, MAIN, FOREMOST. Can you solve them all?

1. GHOSTLY, HIDEOUT, DISMAY
2. DREAMY, BOXING, FULL
3. ENTIRE, TEMPO, DEDUCE
4. UNCOIL, NEEDY, SQUIRE
5. CHANGE, LET, FAZE

PUZZLE #2: SOLVE ALL

FOUR-GONE CONCLUSIONS

Use the letters at the bottom of the page once each to fill the blanks to form common, uncapitalized four-letter words. Many of the three-letter chunks can end with more than one letter, but the solution using all 10 letters is unique.

COR____ GRI____ FOL____
BAL____ SAN____
ABE____ DRU____ HOS____
MIN____ OMI____

D E G I K L M N P T

PUZZLE #3: ANSWER ALL

1. How many languages are written from right to left? _____
2. Who was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize? _____
3. What is the hottest planet in the solar system? _____
4. Iceland diverted roads to avoid disturbing communities of what? _____