



# Saline County Employee Newsletter

## THREE SIMPLE FOODS THAT BUILD BRAIN HEALTH

by Jenna Braddock



### BRAIN FOOD

Heart health, strong bones and cancer prevention are health goals most people strive to achieve. We could probably name at least one strategy in each of these categories that can help reduce our risk of disease, which is great. But there's another body system that is equally important for adapting prevention strategies and is only just beginning to gain attention — your brain.

Most people in their young-adult to mid-life years aren't necessarily thinking about how to take care of their brain. It's probably working just fine. However, investing

in brain health as early as possible is becoming more and more important for building a lifetime of wellness. Currently in the U.S., someone is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease every 65 seconds; that statistic is expected to intensify to every 33 seconds by 2050.

Fortunately, science is identifying more ways to build brain longevity for a long, healthy life. Just like investing wisely for retirement, investing in your brain health now is a vital game-changer for your future. *(continued on page #2...)*



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Begin with these three simple ways to build brain health:

### **EAT MOSTLY FRUIT AND VEGETABLES**

You know you need to eat more produce for physical health reasons, but fruits and vegetables could also protect your brain. Research has begun to confirm a higher intake of fruits and vegetables is correlated to brain health including a lower risk for Alzheimer's and a protective effect against depression. One of the specific reasons this connection is believed to exist is due to the polyphenols abundant in many types of produce. Polyphenols have anti-inflammatory properties that may help protect the brain from cognitive decline.

In addition, B-vitamins, particularly folate and B6, commonly found in fruits and vegetables seem to have a connection to mental health. Research has found a higher intake of these vitamins produced improved cognitive performance and reduced loss of brain tissue associated with aging. Conversely, low folate levels have been associated with a risk of depression.

Knowing you need to eat more fruits and vegetables for brain health is one thing, but actually doing it is another issue. As long as you're moving toward a higher intake, know that you can make improvements over time.

Make it simple for yourself by reaching for a handful of blueberries every day. Blueberries are a good source of vitamin C, providing 15% of the daily recommended value in one serving (a handful or a cup). Vitamin C is an antioxidant that protects cells from damage caused by oxidative free radicals. Recent research published in the *European Journal of Nutrition* found that daily consumption of the equivalent of one cup of fresh blueberries, given as 24g of freeze-dried powder, showed positive changes in cognitive function over a placebo. "While more evidence is needed, results of this study add to the body of research on blueberry-supplemented diets and positive outcomes in cell and animal research on age-related cognitive decline," said Barbara Shukitt-Hale, Ph.D., one of the study's lead investigators.

### **TRY EGGS, CHICKEN AND LIMA BEANS**

One of the newest players on the brain scene is choline, an essential nutrient with a strong connection to mental health. Choline is required for neurotransmitters found in the brain to work at their peak, aiding memory retention and cogni-

tive development. It could be so crucial to brain performance that it could potentially help restore age-related cognitive function in healthy individuals.

Here's the problem, though: National data show 90% of Americans are not getting enough choline through their diet. This could have a significant impact on brain health population-wide and it's rather easy to fix. First, look to food sources including whole eggs, lima beans, chicken, wheat germ and Brussels sprouts. Eating these foods daily can help tick you toward the recommended daily intake (RDI) of 550mg a day, although it is difficult to meet choline needs through food alone. It's worthy to note the new Nutrition Facts label calls for voluntarily labeling choline because the FDA has recognized its many health benefits.

In addition to including food sources of choline as part of a healthy eating pattern, it may also be important to supplement with choline to ensure intake needs are met.

### **KNOW YOUR VITAMIN D STATUS**

Vitamin D is a nutrient that has gained much attention in the past decade as its connection to overall health is uncovered. Brain health is no exception and observational research has discovered low blood levels of vitamin D were found in Alzheimer's patients. In addition, a correlation of low risk for Alzheimer's disease was associated with a higher dietary intake of vitamin D. One possible explanation for this connection is vitamin D plays a role in nerve health in the brain.

While this research is not rock solid yet, it does suggest a powerful connection to brain longevity. Interestingly, most people do not have their vitamin D levels checked in their annual blood work.

At your next annual exam, talk to your physician about getting your vitamin D levels checked. Blood levels less than 50 nmol/L are considered inadequate and 30 nmol/L or less deemed deficient.

Vitamin D is created by unprotected sun exposure on your skin, but that should be limited to no more than 2-3, 15 minute sessions a week. Depending on where you live, you might not ever receive adequate sun exposure to synthesize enough vitamin D. There are food sources of vitamin D that you can incorporate into your daily eating routine. Choosing "fatty" fish like salmon, tuna and mackerel, egg yolks and mushrooms. Beyond that you may need to take a vitamin D supplement, but talk to your health care provider first as it requires monitoring and retesting. —end

## ONLINE LEGAL RESOURCES

Continuum EAP's online resources includes a library of 100+ free fillable legal forms, including:

- **Wills/Living Trusts**
- **Bill of Sale**
- **Rental Agreements**
- **Promissory Note**

To get started, visit [4continuum.com](http://4continuum.com) and click "**MEMBER LOGIN**" at the top of the page. Use Saline County username and password. Contact HR or give Continuum a call if experiencing difficulty.

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

*"Unscramble the puzzle tiles found on page #7 to reveal the hidden message, and thus receive 25 points.*

*Use the empty boxes to help arrange the letter blocks in the correct order to decipher the message. As always, the answer is found in the newsletter. Good luck!*

CORRECT ANSWER: 25 Wellness Points

*\*Answer to the August Question: "C. 25"*

Email your answer to: [salinewellness@gmail.com](mailto:salinewellness@gmail.com)

## 4 SIGNS YOU'RE EATING TOO LITTLE — — — WHEN TRYING TO LOSE WEIGHT — — —

[MYFITNESSPAL.COM](http://MYFITNESSPAL.COM)

If you're trying to lose weight, it's pretty cut and dry, right? Cut as many calories from your diet as possible. Unfortunately, it's possible to eat too little, which not only makes it harder for you to achieve a healthy weight, but can also cause other health problems.

The first thing you should ask yourself is, "Why do I want to lose weight?" This seems simple. It's usually to fit into smaller clothes or to look better. But these reasons can cause you to make decisions that aren't necessarily in your best health interest. Eating below your needs is just one example of that and, unfortunately, it can backfire big time.

Everyone has a set amount of calories, or energy, they need to simply be alive. Consistently eating less than this can cause your metabolism to slow down and your body to begin preserving what it can to survive. Hunger and feeling full aren't the only indicators of whether you're fueling your body appropriately. In fact, if you aren't eating enough consistently, you may notice some of these other signs as well.

**1. YOU'RE TIRED**—Our bodies are fueled by the foods we eat, so if we don't eat enough, our energy levels can also wane. Whether you're skipping meals or limiting the types of food you eat, eating too few calories also means you're taking in too few nutrients. Research shows you need all the macronutrients – carbohydrates, protein and fat – for sustained energy. That said, vitamins and minerals are also essential in regulating the production of energy. When you skimp on calories, it becomes much more difficult to get all these important elements your body needs to function properly.

**2. YOU'RE CRANKY**—Feeling more irritable than normal can be another key indicator you aren't supplying your body with enough fuel to get through the day. Skimping on carbohydrates can be particularly problematic when it comes to mood stabilization. Without enough carbs, your blood-sugar levels may dip too low because the body doesn't have enough sugar, or glucose, to use as fuel.

**3. YOU'RE CONSTIPATED**—To help preserve energy, your digestive tract may move food through your system more slowly when you restrict your intake below what your body needs for an extended period of time. This can cause constipation. In addition, not getting enough fiber regularly — which is challenging to do even when you do eat enough to meet your needs — can also increase the likelihood of constipation.

**4. YOU CAN'T LOSE THOSE LAST FIVE POUNDS**—More isn't necessarily better. You usually lose weight when you run a calorie deficit, but if you're finding you just can't lose those last few pounds, it's possible you're either training too hard, eating too little or some combination of the two. Smaller deficits (think 250–500 calories) are often all you need to see longer-term weight loss. Plus, this won't trigger your body to go into self-preservation mode the same way, drastically restricting your intake often does. Although dropping your calories to significantly low levels may provide you with quick weight loss in the beginning, it can be detrimental to your health and set the stage for weight regain in the future. —end

# COMMON OBSTACLES PREVENTING FLU SHOT PARTICIPATION

BY ROBYN WHALEN



When it comes to staying healthy during flu season, many people seem to be complacent. They don't always take action – and many of our own employees don't think the flu is “that big of a deal.”

But why is that? Why are some employees willing to take their chances against the flu, rather than taking one simple step to help prevent it? Well, there isn't just one clear answer. In fact, the flu season comes with many obstacles that can lead to complacency and inaction.

It's important for employers to be aware of these obstacles so that they can address them in

the workplace. If employers ignore these factors, they won't see ideal participation rates for corporate flu shots – meaning their workforce is at a much higher risk of a flu outbreak.

Let's take a look at some of the most common obstacles when it comes to corporate flu shot clinics:

① **Misinformation:** Many employees have their doubts about corporate flu shots simply because they are misinformed. There have been many false accusations about influenza and the flu vaccine throughout the years. Anyone can hop online and find a “resource” to support a specific argument. Unfortunately, those resources aren't always credible – which lends to the mass amount of misinformation about the flu shot.

The popular myth that “the flu shot gives you the flu” might be holding some of your employees back from receiving their vaccine. It's important to let your employees know that this simply isn't true. The vaccine is made from either an inactivated flu virus (meaning the viruses are no longer infectious) or from proteins that don't contain the virus at all. While the flu shot can sometimes cause minor side effects such as a low-grade fever, nausea, and muscle aches, there is no way that the components of the flu shot can infect someone who receives it.

Your employees might also be misinformed about the safety and effectiveness of the flu shot. For example, one common myth links the flu shot to disorders such as autism. Science has repeatedly shown that this is not true. Others might believe that the flu shot simply doesn't work. However, healthcare experts recommend the flu shot time and time again as the single best way to protect yourself from influenza.

Unfortunately, no matter how much correct information is spread about the importance of the flu shot, there will always be false accusations just a click away. That misinformation can have people confused and complacent throughout flu season – which is why employers should be aware of these common myths and misconceptions about the flu shot. It's essential to properly educate employees about getting vaccinated over flu season!

② **Denial:** There are many different types of bugs and illnesses that spread during the fall and winter seasons and make you feel sick. But not all of those are the flu. Many people use the word “flu” as a generic term for a general illness when, in reality, it's a serious and specific illness.

The influenza virus causes the flu. While influenza is a specific virus, there are many different types (or strains) of the flu. What makes influenza stand out from other illnesses is its high attack rates and the severity of the illness. *(Continued on page #5...)*

## *DON'T NEGLECT YOUR FLU SHOT*—CONT. FROM PAGE #4

The flu spreads like wildfire every fall and winter. It's easily passed from one person to the next. People tend to feel sick very suddenly because it hits much more quickly than the common cold. The flu will also likely put you out of commission for several days – maybe even up to a couple of weeks!

When employees assume any cold or 24-hour bug is the flu, they start to believe it's really not that bad and that they'll be fine without a flu shot. They deny and underestimate just how serious the flu can be. If employees don't understand the serious risks of the flu, they'll think they're better off just taking their chances. Employers need to address the severity of the flu and the negative consequences it can have on employee health and productivity.

③ **Unpredictability:** When it comes to the influenza virus itself, the only thing scientists can predict is that it's unpredictable. Influenza can change and mutate each year, which makes it difficult to predict the severity and timeline of each flu season.

Naturally, that has contributed to a skeptical public. Looking back on previous flu seasons, we've witnessed sudden, unforeseen flu outbreaks. We've also heard serious warnings from healthcare professionals about severe flu seasons that never panned out.

It's natural that these things happen because the virus is so unpredictable. However, some people might incorrectly view these inaccurate flu season predictions as scientific mistakes – which can make it difficult for your employees to trust the experts when it comes to flu prevention.

So, what do all of these common obstacles of flu season have in common? Misunderstanding. The good news is that all of these common obstacles can be overcome by proper communication and education. We can't stress enough how important communication and education are to your workforce during flu season!

Start communicating with your employees before flu season hits and keep educating employees throughout the season. Without an effective communication plan in place, many of your employees will go unvaccinated this flu season. –end

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## **PROTECTING YOUR REPUTATION AT WORK**

Your workplace reputation is a valuable asset, but it is not a “renewable resource.” Once tarnished, it can take years to recoup. How you handle yourself emotionally at work is a key facet of your reputation that can overshadow your skills, abilities and accomplishments.

How do you handle anger, disappointments, conflicts or even frustrations with management? Do you remain cool in the face of challenges? Most of us can't display the same emotions to co-workers and managers that we display at home with family members. If you blow up at co-workers, it's unlikely that they'll simply think, “Oh, that's just Mike being Mike.”

To stay cool, consider whether you are sitting on anger or stuffing conflict. Plan a sit-down meeting with whomever you need to clear the air with. An employee assistance professional or good friend can help you plan for it.

Not sure how you may be perceived? Ask yourself:

- 1) Are my relationships at work uplifting or am I surrounded by others who are negative?
- 2) Am I getting too negative in my communications?
- 3) Am I getting careless about what I say or whom I say it to?
- 4) Are my emails lacking common courtesies or am I sounding snappy?

Your reputation is a resource for both you and your employer. Protect its value and it will serve you well. –end

# COMPASSION FATIGUE

—DON'T WAIT TO FEEL IT—FRONTLINE CONTINUUM EAP NEWS

Compassion fatigue is a syndrome similar to burnout that includes physical, emotional and spiritual depletion. In work settings, it is usually associated with direct care of those suffering with medical, emotional and emergency health situations.

Few professionals believe from the outset that they will ever fall victim to compassion fatigue, because it's counterintuitive — a profession helping others is supposed to bring joy, not pain. As with most health and wellness issues, we tend to wait for symptoms to appear before taking action.

Reduce your vulnerability to compassion fatigue by taking proactive measures. Realize that prevention is not a mind-over-matter exercise. Your enthusiasm and commitment to your profession can help, but that will not sustain and insulate you from the effects of repeated exposure to acute-care trauma and suffering. Find compassion fatigue assessments, exercises, and loads of insight by searching “compassion fatigue” online. Or, better yet, contact Continuum EAP for help creating coping strategies specific to you.

## Making positive feedback REALLY COUNT

When you give positive feedback to a co-worker, be sure to include the “ABC’s” of doing it effectively.

- “A” stands for “Affirmation”
- “B” stands for “Be specific.”
- “C” stands for “Contribution”



Start with a positive statement that (“A”) affirms your co-worker’s accomplishment — **“Great job!”**

Then, (“B”) be specific to let your co-worker know you are sincere and not simply “being nice.” **“Wow, Laura! I really liked your presentation. The three examples you gave of how we can better serve our customers were new and refreshing.”**

This type of positive feedback is even more affirming. But you can go still further. Acknowledge Laura’s “C” contribution so she knows she is valued. For example, add, **“I could see everyone perk up when they heard the new insights. I am glad you**

**were the one we picked as our trainer.”**

By putting yourself in Laura’s shoes, you can see how she will feel positive about her presentation, you, her job and the organization. This example of positive feedback shows how it can be a force for good. It also underscores how adverse a lack of positive feedback can be if it is ignored or, worse, withheld, when it is obviously deserved. —end

## 2019 MEDICARE PART D PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN OPEN ENROLLMENT COMING SOON!

—LORI MOLDENHAUER—AGING SERVICES DIRECTOR

A reminder to any eligible County Employee, or a reminder for your 'loved ones' enrolled in Medicare D's PDP (prescription drug plan) to make sure you get your PDP comparison done yearly, during open enrollment period, October 15th through December 7th.

This is a good opportunity to have your PDP compared to other plans for 2019—to see if there is a plan that would work better (be more cost effective) for you in the new year.

Drug insurance companies are allowed to change their plans annually, either by changing the cost of the premiums, the drugs, or both, so you, too, are allowed to find and change to a plan that will work better for you in 2019.

Volunteers from Lincoln's SHIIP (Senior Health Insurance Information Program) will be available in Wilber at the Dvoracek Memorial Library all day on Thursday, November 1, 2018, to do Medicare D Prescription Drug comparisons. This event is free of charge.

The staff at Saline County Aging Services (SCAS) are also SHIIP volunteers and will be doing Medicare D comparisons during open enrollment. The comparisons done by the SCAS staff will be on a first come, first served basis, for a suggested contribution. A worksheet will need to be filled out stating which drugs you are currently taking. As in the past, the staff will do the comparison based on your worksheet and send you the results. Then if you wish to have questions answered or want to change plans, an appointment will be made.

Please call SCAS at 402-821-3330 for more information and/or to set up an appointment to attend the SHIIP event at the library on November 1, 2018. —end

# FLU FIGHTERS

Join the Team on Friday, October 12th

## "Spreads like Wildfire"

QUESTION of the MONTH: Unscramble the tiles below to reveal the secret message, and thus receive 25 points?  
Use the empty boxes to arrange the letter blocks in the correct order. Good luck!

l	f	.		l	t	h	y	G	e	t		o	t	e	c	u		s	h	S	t	a	y	.		P	r	
t		y	o	o	t	.		u	r	s	e		h	e	a	a		f	l									

Write your solution here:


**NIRMA Online University**  
“Cyber-security Threats to Public Entities”

Cyber-security is important for public entities and the individuals who make up the organization. Not only is cyber-security an important measure for protecting personal information, but utilizing it also considers confidential information of clients.

Successful completion of this course, through the end of December, provides 75 Wellness Points.

\*Next Wellness Committee Meeting: Wednesday, October 10, 2018 in the Courthouse Conference Room, 8:30 a.m.

\*Next Safety Committee Meeting: Wednesday, November 28, 2018 in the Courthouse Conference Room, 8:30 a.m.

**WELLNESS COMMITTEE**

204 S High, Wilber, NE 68465  
Phone: 402-821-3900  
Fax: 402-821-3319 E-mail:  
salinewellness@gmail.com

co.saline.ne.us/webpages/  
committees/wellness.html

Log onto the Wellness webpage online to review meeting minutes, Wellness newsletters, annual Program document and Fitness Center information.



## 2018 Flu Shot Clinic

Saline County will be offering our Annual Flu Shot Clinic to employees, and any of their BCBS dependents, on Friday, October 12, 2018. Public Health Solutions will be providing the immunizations. Locations and times are as follows:

- Courthouse: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- LEC: 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Those wishing to take advantage of this important immunization are instructed to complete a PHS Client Information Form. (*One is emailed along with this newsletter electronically.*) These forms are to be completed by each person requesting immunization and returned to the Wellness Committee/HR by Thursday, October 4th. Beyond this, no reservations needed.

There will also be the availability of a “high dose” formula for those requiring it and a “Tdap” (*Tetanus, diphtheria, and Pertussis*) to those due to receive it. Please call 821.3900 for additional information.

PHS will also need a copy of each participant’s Insurance Card. Please ensure this is brought to the clinic with you. *-end*

## “100 Miles/100 Days” Challenge

*Return Result Sheets by Friday, September 28th*

This challenge will conclude on Saturday, September 15th. Please remember to return your tally sheets by Friday, September 28th in order to qualify for points earned. *-end*

## Upcoming October Challenge

*“Financial Fitness”*

The upcoming month long, Continuum HelpNet-based, online financial training program will kick off October 1st. Those wanting to participate may wish to visit the Continuum website at [www.4continuum.com](http://www.4continuum.com) using Saline County’s login and password. Please contact HR for those credentials if you don’t already have them. More information to follow. *-end*

*NOTE: Articles found in this newsletter are for informational purposes only and are not intended as medical advice. For further information, please consult a medical or legal professional.*



**CLIENT INFORMATION**

LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

GENDER:     MALE    \_\_\_\_\_ FEMALE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

MOTHERS MAIDEN NAME: LAST \_\_\_\_\_, FIRST: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR STREET ADDRESS AND/OR P.O. BOX: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE: \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

PRIMARY LANGUAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

HISTORY OF CHICKEN POX DISEASE?   YES: \_\_\_\_\_   NO: \_\_\_\_\_

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN: \_\_\_\_\_

FACILITIES PROVIDING PREVIOUS IMMUNIZATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

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**PLEASE CHECK WHICH IMMUNIZATIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE**

FLU IMMUNIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_   --or--   HIGH DOSE FLU IMMUNIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

Tdap: \_\_\_\_\_ (Tetanus, diphtheria, and Pertussis)

**CHECK ONE BELOW:**

\_\_\_\_\_ PRIVATE INSURANCE (PLEASE PROVIDE PHOTOCOPY, FRONT AND BACK, OF INSURANCE CARD)

\_\_\_\_\_ MEDICAID (PLEASE PROVIDE PHOTOCOPY, FRONT AND BACK, OF INSURANCE CARD) \*EXAMPLE = NEBRASKA TOTAL CARE, UNITED HEALTH CARE **COMMUNITY PLAN**, WELL CARE HEALTH PLAN.

\_\_\_\_\_ MEDICARE    \_\_\_\_\_ PLUS PART "D" SUPPLEMENT TO MEDICARE (PLEASE PROVIDE PHOTOCOPY, FRONT AND BACK OF BOTH INSURANCE CARDS WHERE APPLICABLE)

\_\_\_\_\_ NO INSURANCE

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**\*\*\*IF YOU ARE INSURED, YOU NEED TO PROVIDE A PHOTOCOPY OF THE FRONT AND BACK OF YOUR PRIVATE, MEDICARE PLUS PART D SUPPLEMENT, OR MEDICAID INSURANCE CARD AT THE TIME OF YOUR IMMUNIZATION TO RECEIVE AN IMMUNIZATION.** IF YOU HAVE NO INSURANCE, PLEASE NOTE THAT BY SELECTING "NO INSURANCE" AND YOU WILL RECEIVE AN IMMUNIZATION. THE MEDICAID CARD SHOULD SAY UNITED HEALTH CARE **COMMUNITY PLAN**, **WELLCARE**, OR NEBRASKA TOTAL CARE TO QUALIFY FOR AN IMMUNIZATION.