



# HEALTH

## Wise

### SPECIAL EVENTS 2008

Mark your calendars for these upcoming Wellness Annual Events

➤ **Random Acts of Kindness**  
February, 14

“Random Acts of Kindness are those little sweet or grand lovely things we do for no reason except that, momentarily, the best of our humanity has sprung, exquisitely, into full bloom.”

*Random Acts of Kindness*

This year our anonymous gifts will take on a *delicious new twist*. Bestow a random act of kindness with organic fair trade chocolate! Watch your mailboxes for more details!

➤ **Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo April 11 & 12,**  
go to: [www.islwe.org](http://www.islwe.org)

➤ **Wellness Golf Outing — coming in August**

A resolution isn't what you "should" do; it's a chance to move your life forward.

Terri Trespicio, *body & soul*,  
Jan./Feb. 2008

## Resolve to Quit

Eighteen years ago, when the Wellness program first rolled out on campus, the University had just gone smoke-free. Many people, in anticipation of this, decided it was time to quit. Others were not ready and just moved outdoors. As of the first of January, Smoke Free Illinois went into effect, prohibiting smoking inside public spaces and within 15 feet of entrances to buildings. This new law makes it more challenging to keep up the habit and perhaps inspires new motivation to quit.

Many ex-smokers say quitting was the hardest thing they have ever done. If you feel hooked, you're probably addicted to nicotine. Nicotine is in all tobacco products. It can leave you feeling calm and satisfied. At the same time, you may feel more alert and focused. The more you smoke, the more nicotine you need to feel good. Soon, you don't feel "normal" without nicotine. It takes time to break free from nicotine addiction. It may take more than one try to quit for good. So don't give up too soon.

Quitting is hard because smoking becomes a big part of life for those addicted. Smoking is a way to deal with life's ups and downs, providing relief from feeling stressed, angry, bored and a host of other emotions. You may even feel uncomfortable not smoking at times or in certain places where you usually have a cigarette. These times and places are called "triggers." That's because they trigger, or turn on, cigarette cravings. After months and years of lighting up, smoking becomes part of a daily routine. Many people light up without even thinking about it.

The best smoking cessation aid on the planet begins with your motivation and commitment to kicking the habit. Without your determination, no quit aid will work. If you are truly ready there are a variety of products, programs and resources designed to help you quit smoking. It's always a good idea to check

with your physician about your options and discuss what might work best for you before making a decision.

### What are the Options?

#### Cold Turkey

For the majority of those wanting to quit, that determination translates into going cold turkey. Cold turkey is generally defined as "quitting abruptly, without help." The advantage of this method is that the majority of nicotine is out of a person's body within a few days. The discomforts can be intense, but physical withdrawal is short. WhyQuit.com is one resource available online to assist with quitting cold turkey. If this method sounds too extreme for your comfort, other options are available to help you withdraw from nicotine more comfortably.

#### Pharmacotherapy

##### Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs) provide a measured dose of nicotine to help ease the physical symptoms of nicotine withdrawal. Unlike cigarettes, which consist of thousands of poisonous and/or carcinogenic chemicals, NRTs contain only nicotine. When used according to the manufacturer's directions, NRTs allow one to withdraw from nicotine by gradually reducing the amount of it in each dose. Various aids are available such as a nicotine patch, gum, inhaler, lozenges and nasal spray.

The downside to this approach is that nicotine is the addictive component in tobacco and a certain risk of re-addiction is involved when using these products.

##### Nicotine-Free Quit Aids

*Bupropion hydrochloride*, marketed under the names Zyban, Wellbutrin SR, and Wellbutrin XL by GlaxoSmithKline, are anti-depressant drugs that also works as smoking cessation aids.

## WELLNESS WORKSHOP

### Feeding the Aging Brain

Laurine Brown, PhD

Tuesday, February 12, Noon-1:00 p.m.,

Faculty Lounge, Memorial Center

Does forgetfulness seem to sprout with each gray hair? Before you empty your pocketbook on potentially questionable supplements, come to this workshop to learn new research about powerful memory boosters that may be no more expensive than a bag of groceries.

## RESOLVE TO QUIT —

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*Varenicline Tartrate* marketed under the trademark name of Chantix by Pfizer, Inc, has the unique ability to partially activate nicotine receptors in the brain, reducing a person's craving for nicotine when they quit smoking. Additionally, if a person smokes while using this product, the drug impedes smoking satisfaction by blocking nicotine from binding with these same receptors.

There can be contraindications to all of the pharmacotherapies and *all of them should be given under the care of a doctor.*

### Other Smoking Cessation Methods

*Hypnosis* puts people into an altered state of mind where they become more susceptible to suggestion. It can be used to quit smoking, and while it seems to work well for some, it isn't for everyone.

*Acupuncture* is an ancient Chinese medical practice, which uses needles placed at specific locations on the skin to treat pain or disease. It can also be used to treat nicotine addiction.

### Looking at the Whole Picture

Withdrawal from nicotine is just one part of the healing process one goes through while recovering from nicotine addiction. The rest of the story involves how one lets go of the many mental associations that have built up over the years between smoking and their lives. There is a lot of support available to help round out a quit program and ensure long-term success.

Illinois Wesleyan's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) program offers a 55 day quit program online, and for additional support the program offers unlimited phone consultation sessions. Go to [www.theEAP.com](http://www.theEAP.com). Other helpful resources can be found at [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org) (Freedom from Smoking program), [Smokefree.gov](http://Smokefree.gov) and [Quitnet.com](http://Quitnet.com).

It doesn't matter how old you are or how long you've smoked, you become healthier and stronger each day you are tobacco-free.

For more information on resources or to express interest in an on-site Freedom From Smoking program, please contact Missy Smock at 556-3334 or [m-smock@iwu.edu](mailto:m-smock@iwu.edu).

Resources:

*Clearing the Air Quit Smoking Today*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<<http://www.WhyQuit.com>>, <<http://quitsmoking.about.com>>

## NUTRITION BITES

### Recipe of the Month

Nothing like a hot bowl of soup on a cold winter day. Vegetables can be prepared a day ahead if you're in a bind for time.

## Winter Minestrone

2 teaspoons olive oil	sodium chicken broth
½ cup chopped onion	5 tablespoons no-salt-added tomato paste
½ teaspoon dried basil	¼ cup uncooked ditalini (very short tube-shaped pasta)
½ teaspoon dried oregano	2 1.2 cups chopped Swiss chard
2 garlic cloves, minced	½ cup rinsed and drained canned Great Northern Beans
1 ¼ cups cubed peeled acorn or butternut squash (about 1 medium)	½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¾ cup diced zucchini	2 tablespoons grated Asiago cheese
½ cup chopped carrot	
½ cup diced fennel	
1 cup water	
1 (14-ounce) can fat-free, less-	

Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add onion, basil, oregano, and garlic to pan; sauté 5 minutes or until onion is tender. Add squash and next 3 ingredients (through fennel); sauté 5 minutes. Stir in 1 cup water, broth, and tomato paste; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer 10 minutes or until vegetables are crisp-tender. Stir in pasta; cook 8 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add chard; cook 3 minutes. Add beans; cook 2 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Stir in pepper. Serve with cheese. Yield: 6 servings (serving size: about 1 cup minestrone and 1 teaspoon cheese.)

Source: *Cooking Light*, Jan./Feb. 2008

## Take The Wellness Walking Challenge — February 2008

***In February of 2007, more than 90 of you participated in the first Walking Challenge... How many of you kept walking?***

***Time to get moving again!***

The challenge is to simply walk a little further each day. Enjoy yourself! Challenge yourself! Empower yourself! You can walk at work, to work, at home, to home, or wherever your feet take you. We'll give you your own pedometer (if you need one) to keep track of your steps and enhance your awareness.

As an added incentive this year, Wellness will provide an extra challenge each week to inspire you to go the extra distance.

When you register for the program, your name will be entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift certificate to Dick's Sporting Goods. If you are interested in taking this challenge, contact Wellness at x3334 or [wellness@iwu.edu](mailto:wellness@iwu.edu). You'll receive your pedometer, walking log sheet, and info packet about how to get started.

# Take Heart: Foods for the Aging Brain

By Laurine Brown PhD

An Alzheimer's treatment center opened around the corner from my home. An elderly neighbor became one of its first residents. Along with ailing hearts, is Alzheimer's, dementia, or just plain forgetfulness an inevitable price of aging? Many of us wonder.

Instead of worrying, try stocking your kitchen with heart-healthy foods. "What's my heart got to do with my brain," you say? Plenty, according to the Alzheimer's Association. In the best review to date of scientific evidence they found that things that are good for the heart (food, exercise) may also keep your brain sharp. Dr. James Joseph, director of the Neuroscience Lab at the Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University, Boston adds that your eyes and other organs will benefit as well. That certainly helps simplify anti-aging menu planning.

## Inside the Aging Process

First, what dulls memory or causes Alzheimers in aging brains? Much is unknown, but amyloid plaque (a goopy substance) likely builds up, causes oxidation and inflammation and kills brain cells. Also, brain cells stop chatting with each other, slowing thought-processing, short-term memory retention, and new cell growth. The good news is that heart-healthy "Brain Foods" may improve brain cell chit-chat, and lessen sensitivity to oxidation and inflammation.

## Brain Food #1: The Beautiful B's

Foods rich in B vitamins lower artery-damaging "homocysteine" (an amino acid in the blood) associated with heart disease. They also may ward off dementia. Tufts researchers found that high levels of homocysteine were associated with poor recall, and nearly double the risk of Alzheimers. Luckily, eating foods rich in B-vitamins (like green leafy vegetables and citrus fruits) lowers homocysteine by breaking it down. One study that followed men 50-85 years old found that high "B-eaters" scored much better on mental tests than low "B-eaters." Especially helpful were foods high in folate, B6, and B12. Their effects likely go beyond neutralizing homocysteine. For example, folate assists with brain cell division and mental processing and B12 helps make DNA, the cells genetic code. **Good sources? Folate:** *Natural sources include leafy green vegetables (like spinach, kale, turnip greens; also asparagus, broccoli), fruits (like citrus fruits and juices), and dried beans and peas (like lentils, navy beans). Fortified cereals and grains are also good source. B6:* *Many kinds of foods like fortified cereals, beans, meat, poultry, fish, and some fruits and vegetables. B12:* *Naturally found only in animal foods like fish, meat, poultry, eggs, milk products. Fortified breakfast cereals are a valuable source for vegetarians.* Note: Up to 30 percent of people over age 50 may have problems absorbing B12 from food-bound sources, due to low stomach acids (acid helps release B12 from food proteins rendering it free to be absorbed). Thus, a multivitamin supplement which usually includes "unbound" synthetic B12 may be warranted, in addition to B-rich food.

(B12 injections are recommended by physicians in some cases).

## Brain Food #2: Fish for Thought

We've heard about the heart-healthy benefits of fatty fish. "Fish-is-brain-food" folklore may also be true. One kind of omega 3 fatty acid, docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) seems especially important. We know that DHA aids infant brain development. Modeling human breast milk, baby formulas are now being fortified with DHA. At the other end of the age range, elderly people with dementia measure less DHA in their brain and blood. A study of nearly 900 people found that people with higher levels of DHA in blood were 47 percent less likely to develop dementia compared with those with less. Another study of 3700 people in Chicago found that several fish meals a week slowed memory loss. Omega 3 fats make cell membranes less tightly packed and more "fluid" which is good for the heart, and neurotransmitters. One to three fatty fish meals a week are recommended. **Good sources?** *Fatty fish of cold water varieties like salmon, tuna, mackerel, herring and sardines.* Note: Due to concerns with heavy metal contamination (e.g., mercury) scientists caution about more frequent consumption. Fish oil capsules (screened for heavy metals) are also an option.

## Brain Food #3: Berry Good

Inflammation and oxidative stress are really at the heart of every major disease you can think of regarding aging (brain, heart, eye, etc.), Dr. Joseph tells us. A bowl of berries can help. How? First, berries contain antioxidants which give them (and other fruits and veggies) those bright colors. Antioxidants "mop up" damage from reactive molecules that cause oxidative stress. Second, receptors on the brain's surface grow less sensitive to chemical messengers as we age, and berries enhance networking between neurons for better memory and learning. In studies at Tufts on aging rats, berries boost brain performance and lessen oxidative damage. But you don't have a rat brain? Try the berries anyway. They taste so berry good, and scientists think they may well help. **Good choices?** *Blueberries top the list, with Concord grapes, cranberries, and strawberries showing promise. Certainly there lots more we haven't yet studied. Why not throw in a few more servings of any colorful fruit or veggie to boost your antioxidant octane even more.* Note: Can you get your antioxidants from bottled pills? Most researchers caution that food sources are more effective than supplements for reasons that are not entirely clear.

## Brain Food #4: Move it!

Interestingly, many studies demonstrate movement-brain benefits. Exercise during the middle years may help protect the brain later in life. For example, a Swedish study followed exercise practices of nearly 1,500 people in their 30s, 40s, and 50s. When they reached ages 65-79, those who had exercised at least twice a week were 60 percent less likely to develop Alzheimer's than low exercisers. Even daily short brisk walks may help,

## HEALTH STUFF AND MORE

### Flax for Hot Flashes

Just a few spoonfuls of flaxseed daily could cool hot flashes in menopausal women, suggest a small study from the *Journal of the Society for Integrative Oncology*. After eating about 4 tablespoons of crushed flaxseed each day for six weeks, the study's 21 members had a 50 percent drop in hot-flash frequency and showed improvements in mood and muscle pain. A source of plant-based estrogens, flaxseed shows promise as an alternative to hormone replacement therapy for hot-flash relief, notes lead study author Sandhya Pruthi, M.D.

Source: *body & soul*, Jan./Feb. 2008

**Two for the price of one:** When one spouse makes healthy changes, the other is likely to do the same, Yale researchers concluded after studying more than 3,000 married couples. People were about five times more likely to quit smoking or get a flu shot, and 50 percent more likely to start exercising if their spouses did. Though some previous research suggested that men are more often the beneficiaries of the “spillover effect,” in this study husbands and wives influenced each other equally.

Source: *University of California, Berkeley Wellness Letter*, January 2008

## TAKE HEART — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

according to a study of 1700 people 65+ years. Seniors who exercised moderately for 15 minutes daily were 30 percent less likely to show mental decline. So move it instead of losing it. And throw in a bit of “grey-matter” flexing (puzzles, reading) along with muscle flexing, B's, fish and berries to round out the Brain Food menu.

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