



# Vibrant

A Weekly Bulletin for "Choose a PATH to Wellness"

TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES  
HEALTH AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS POOL



Together. Better. Stronger.

## An Olympic Challenge

### Mission Nine SPORTSMANSHIP

Loosen up and express emotions in new, healthy ways this week. Plan ahead for how you'll deal with difficult emotions when you are tired and cranky

*"Hope is a waking dream. Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet."*  
— Aristotle

for how you are handling the situation, step back and tell yourself you are capable of calming down and being reasonable. Do you really think you are stupid? Then don't say to yourself that you are! Believe it or not, your brain remembers what you tell it and continues to send your body cues reinforcing your own disdain for yourself. Talk calmly to yourself and assure your heart that you can and will do the right thing.

☼ **Recall** Think of a great time you had recently. Recall a loving, special moment you had with friends or family, for example. If you carry a picture of a loved one, look at that for a moment to calm yourself and reverse the flow of negative, stress hormones in your body. Stress hormones such as cortisol make it hard for us to concentrate and problem solve.

☼ **Stretch** Take a deep breath and do a quick stretch to relieve tension in your shoulders, lower back or neck. Leave the situation and blow off steam with a couple of quick stretches, a march in place or some jumping jacks. In private, you can even try throwing a toddler-like hissy-fit with your body. Don't hit anything or anyone, but allow your body to rant with your arms and legs in a silent body tantrum. It will make you laugh too, thereby reversing some of the negative energy in your body. This time will also allow you a chance to cool down before you react.

**The key factors** to dealing with uncomfortable feelings are 1) give yourself time and space from the situation (virtual or real) to calm down; 2) remind yourself that "this too shall pass," and indeed it always does; and 3) every person feels uncomfortable at some point and every person is doing the best he or she can at any given time.

**Uncomfortable** feelings are a part of life. While we know it's important to always look on the bright side of situations, reality states that life is not always a bowl of cherries and sometimes we just feel sour. When times are tough and you feel like you want to scream at someone, here are some tips for keeping your emotions in check so you can express yourself clearly, and effectively:

☼ **Step-Up** Step up to the challenge rather than being an ostrich. Burying your head will only make you resent the situation and the person even more. Think of a time when you did rise to the occasion and remind yourself that you are more than capable.

☼ **Scan** Wait and scan your body before you react. Close your eyes and move your mind from your head to your toes making note of all the areas that are experiencing tension. Return to the biggest areas, squeeze those muscles hard and then release tension with a strong exhale. It's a fancy way to count to ten before you speak.

☼ **Cut-Through** Walk away from the situation to reflect and try to discern what matters most here. Cut through the junk, sift out the extraneous stuff and move forward with the key factor that's important in this instance. The time it takes to do this will give you time to cool off and then react reasonably.

☼ **Self-Talk** Instead of criticizing yourself



### Training Table Recipe

#### Green Enchiladas with Chicken and Cheese

- 2 TB olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/2 large onion, chopped
- 2 tsps ground cumin
- 2 (10-ounce) boxes frozen chopped spinach, defrosted and excess moisture squeezed out
- 2 (8-ounce) jars store-bought tomatillo salsa, or 1 (16-ounce) jar
- 1 1/2 pounds store-bought rotisserie chicken, skin removed, meat shredded (about 2 cups meat)
- Salt and pepper
- 3 (8-inch) flour tortillas
- 2 oz low-fat pepper Jack cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup sliced green onions, for garnish, optional
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves
- 1/4 cup light sour cream, for garnish, optional.

Preheat oven to 350° F. In a medium skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the garlic, onion, and cumin and cook until the vegetables are slightly softened, about 2 minutes. Add the drained spinach and half of the salsa and cook until warmed through. Remove from the heat and stir in the chicken. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Spread 1/2 of the remaining salsa in the bottom of a 10-inch square baking dish or oven-proof skillet. Lay 1 tortilla on the salsa and spread 1/2 the filling over it. Top with another tortilla and spread the remaining filling over it, and top with the last tortilla. Spread the remaining salsa over the tortilla and scatter the cheese over the top.

Bake for 20 minutes, or until heated through and cheese has melted. Remove from heat and let stand for 5 minutes. Top with green onions, if desired, and cilantro. Top each serving with no more than 1 tablespoon light sour cream, if desired, and serve.





## Training Tips

### This Week's Stretch & Strengthen Exercise:

#### Wrist & Forearm

##### Instructions:

- ♦ You are stretching the muscles of your lower arm, wrist and hand.



- ♦ In figure one you are stretching the front of your forearm that contracts when you make a fist with your palm facing the floor. In figure two you are stretching the underside of the forearm, the muscles you contract when you make a fist with your palm facing the ceiling.



## About the Olympics

### Finding a Groove

**1996 - Atlanta.** The world was ready for more of the peaceful games of 1992. Security was in high form and everyone was comfortable. However, situated beside the main competition venues was an open area known as Centennial Olympic Park. Though it appeared to be part of the games, it was not actually a part of the Olympic security system. One very early morning, a bomb exploded in the park, killing one person and injuring 110. The tragedy was terrible but the athletes were able to continue, once again proving that violence and terrorism would never dampen the Olympic Spirit.

For the first time, all of the 197 recognized world nations were represented at these games.

Beach Volleyball, Women's Soccer (called football), Mountain Biking and Softball, a "women-only" sport, arrived on the scene.

**1998 - Nagano.** With great respect for lifetime sports, the Japanese government gave a 50% ticket discount to all school age children.

The Ice Hockey federation opened up the Olympics to professional athletes and women's Ice Hockey made its first appearance. The U.S. women took the gold from long time rival Canada, in a Cinderella victory (shades of the men in 1980).

Snowboarding and Curling became official events.

Olympic staff uniforms were made from recycled material.



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## Safety Corner

### Colon Cancer

#### Prevention

Even though the exact cause of most colorectal cancers is not known, it is possible to prevent many colorectal cancers. Prevention and early detection are possible because most colorectal cancers develop from polyps (precancerous tissue growths). Early detection tests for colorectal cancer can help find polyps, which can be easily removed, thereby lowering a person's cancer risk. Risk may be further reduced by regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy body weight, limiting consumption of high-saturated-fat foods (especially red and processed meats), not smoking, limiting alcohol consumption, and eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods.

#### Detection

Colorectal cancers are more easily cured when detected early. Screening tests can detect colon polyps before they become cancerous, as well as early-stage colorectal cancers. Beginning at age 50, people of average risk with no symptoms should participate in one of the following screening options:

- ♦ Yearly fecal occult blood test (FOBT)
- ♦ Flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years
- ♦ Yearly FOBT plus flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years
- ♦ Double-contrast barium enema every five years
- ♦ Colonoscopy every 10 years.

Of all the screening options, the American Cancer Society prefers the combination of FOBT and flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years over either test alone. Screening tests offer the most powerful opportunity to prevent colorectal cancers or to detect the disease early, which increases the chances of successful treatment.

#### Colorectal Cancer in the US:

- ♦ New cases each year: 145,290  
colon: 104,950  
rectum: 40,340
- ♦ Deaths per year (combined): 56,290
- ♦ Five-year localized survival rate: 90%
- ♦ Five-year overall survival rate: 63%

Although people cannot change their genetic makeup or family health history, most people can reduce their risk of colorectal cancer by following the American Cancer Society's screening guidelines; eating a healthy, low-fat diet including reducing animal sources of fat, avoiding tobacco, limiting consumption of alcohol, and increasing their level of physical activity

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