

October 2023

Neuroscience Wellness Newsletter

Edited by Denise Smith, Mary Voss, and Jessica Stroh



Pumpkin Carving Contest

Health Plus

Register your department by Friday, October 13!

Each department may enter one pumpkin display Pumpkins can be carved, painted, or decorated Use of candles is prohibited Pumpkins will be displayed for public voting at the Farmers' Market Winners will be announced Friday, October 20. [Register here](#).

HEALTHIER YOU PRESENTS

Health Plus [interviews](#) Infectious Disease expert, Dr. Keipp Talbot, who shares 3 compelling reasons why adult vaccines make a difference. In under 8 minutes, you'll know more about how vaccines work in adults and get access to the latest recommendations. Completing Two Healthier You Presents will count towards completion of 1 of the 5 actions needed in this year's Go for the Gold Step 2: Wellness Actions Log.

Nutrition Corner

By Health Plus

TASTE now exists as part of Nutrition Corner!

We've taken the best of TASTE and Nutrition Corner and combined them into a new and improved nutrition program.

Participants will continue to receive up-to-date nutrition information and a variety of recipes straight to your inbox all year long!

Completing two Nutrition Corner modules will count towards completion of 1 of the 5 actions needed in this year's Go for the Gold Step 2: Wellness Actions Log!



Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Health.gov



Finding [breast cancer](#) early is key to successful treatment. That's why every October, we come together to raise awareness about the disease and to encourage people to get tested. Check out these resources to learn about [getting tested for breast cancer](#) and [starting the conversation with a doctor](#) – and link your audiences to [this FAQ on mammograms](#) from the Office on Women's Health (OWH).

Breast cancer is the second most common type of cancer in American women. Regular breast check-ups are the best ways to detect breast cancer early. Early detection provides you with an increased chance of recovery and a wider range of treatment options.

Eat the Rainbow with Orange Foods

By Health Plus

"Eating the rainbow" involves eating different colored fruits and vegetables throughout the week. Fruits and vegetables contain phytonutrients that give produce unique colors and provide health benefits. Each color has slightly different nutrition. As we move into Fall, there is orange produce everywhere, including pumpkins, sweet potatoes, squash, orange bell peppers, and carrots.

Orange produce is high in vitamin A. Vitamin A is important for vision, the immune system, reproduction, growth, and development. Without enough vitamin

A, our organs do not function well. Vitamin A deficiency is rare in the United States, but premature infants, young children, pregnant women, and people with cystic fibrosis, Crohn's, ulcerative colitis, and celiac disease may have a harder time hitting the recommended daily intake. To meet your vitamin A needs, try eating more orange produce this fall! Check out our monthly challenge and recipes below for ideas!

GOOD SOURCES OF VITAMIN A

**START
HERE**



Salmon



Egg Yolk



Apricots



Pumpkin



Squash



Sweet Potato



Carrots



Keep going with Go for the Gold! Three weeks remaining until deadline (10/31/2023).

[Log in to the Health & Wellness Information Portal \(HWIP\)](#) to get started.

Once you login, click Go for the Gold in left navigation menu. See your status bar at top of Go for the Gold page to see which steps you still need to complete.

Faculty and staff paying for VUMC Health Plan benefits on 1/1/2024 can earn up to \$240 Wellness Credit for completing all 3 steps of Go for the Gold.

Completing the Health Risk Assessment (between 11/01/2022 and 10/31/2023) enters you into a drawing for \$100 e-gift card! Drawing will take place in November and winners will be notified by email.

Need help? Call Health *Plus* at 615-343-8943.

Sheet Pan Fajitas

Serves 4

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon chili powder
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
12 baby bell peppers, halved, stemmed, and seeded
1 large yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1.5 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast
Juice of 1 lime, plus lime wedges for serving
8 fajita-size flour tortillas, warmed
Shredded Monterey Jack cheese, guacamole, hot sauce, salsa, and sour cream for serving



Directions:

1. Preheat the broiler to high. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil.
 2. Combine the chili powder, 2 tsp salt, and 1 tsp pepper in a small bowl. Put the peppers and onions on the prepared baking sheet, drizzle with 1 tbsp of the oil and season with half the chili powder mixture. Broil under softened and starting to char, about 10 minutes.
 3. Meanwhile, cut the chicken into ¼ inch-thick slices and toss in a large bowl with the remaining chili powder mixture and 1 tbsp oil.
 4. After the peppers are softened and starting to char, about 10 minutes, scatter the chicken on top of the peppers and onions and return the baking sheet to the broiler until the chicken is cooked through and starting to brown, about 5 minutes more. Drizzle with the lime juice.
 5. Serve with the warmed tortillas, Monterey Jack cheese, guacamole, hot sauce, salsa, sour cream, and lime wedges.
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Whole Wheat Pumpkin Bread

Serves 12

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups whole wheat flour
1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon nutmeg
1/8 teaspoon cloves
1 teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
2 eggs
½ cup oil
½ cup honey
½ teaspoon vanilla
1 cup canned pumpkin puree



Optional ingredients: chocolate chips, nuts

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9x5 loaf pan or line a muffin tin with paper liners and spray with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. In a mixing bowl, combine dry ingredients. Make a well in the center and add eggs, oil, honey, and vanilla. Stir until just combined. Fold in pumpkin puree.
3. Distribute batter evenly in prepared pan.
4. Bake loaf for 30-40 minutes or muffins for 18-22 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean and top bounces back when pressed.

Simple Spaghetti Squash

Serves 2-4

Ingredients:

1 spaghetti squash

Extra-virgin olive oil

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Sauce of choice (try marinara or pesto!)

Optional toppings: meat or white beans, olives, sundried tomatoes, asparagus, artichoke hearts, parmesan cheese



Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Slice the spaghetti squash in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds and ribbing. Drizzle the inside of the squash with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
3. Place the spaghetti squash cut side down on a baking sheet and use a fork to poke holes. Roast for 30 to 40 minutes or until lightly browned on the outside, fork tender, but still a little bit firm. The time will vary depending on the size of your squash.
4. Remove from the oven and flip the squash so that it's cut side up. When cool to the touch, use a fork to scrape and fluff the strands from the sides of the squash.
5. Top with your favorite pasta sauce and toppings and serve!

Butternut Squash Soup

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 (3-pound) butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cubed
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage
- ½ tablespoon minced fresh rosemary
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- 3 to 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 tsp black pepper
- Heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion, salt, and several grinds of fresh pepper and sauté until soft, 5 to 8 minutes. Add the squash and cook until it begins to soften, stirring occasionally, for 8 to 10 minutes.
- Add the garlic, sage, rosemary, and ginger. Stir and cook 30 seconds to 1 minute, until fragrant, then add 3 cups of the broth. Bring to a boil, cover, and reduce heat to a simmer. Cook until the squash is tender, 20 to 30 minutes.
- Let cool slightly and pour the soup into a blender, working in batches if necessary, and blend until smooth. If your soup is too thick, add up to 1 cup more broth and blend. Season to taste and serve with parsley, and crusty bread.

Classic Pot Roast

- 1 (4-pound) beef chuck roast, fat trimmed
 - 1½ tablespoons kosher salt
 - 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 - 1 large onion, cut into ½ -inch-thick slices
 - 6 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
 - 1 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
 - 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
 - 2 tablespoons tomato paste
 - 1 tablespoon brown sugar
 - 2 cups beef stock, plus more as needed
 - 1 cup light red wine, such as cabernet sauvignon or pinot noir
 - 4 sprigs fresh thyme
 - 3 large carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
 - ¾ pound new or baby potatoes, halved
 - Chopped fresh parsley for serving
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1. **Directions:**

2. **Preheat the oven to 350°F with a rack in the lower third of the oven.**

Pat the beef dry and season all over with the salt.

Heat the olive oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Once the oil is glistening, add the meat and cook until browned all over, about 10 minutes total. Transfer the meat to a plate.

Add the onions to the pot and cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly softened, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 more minute. If the bottom of the pot begins to brown too quickly, add beef stock ¼ cup and scrape the browned bits.

Add the pepper, Italian seasoning, tomato paste and brown sugar and stir to incorporate. Stir in the stock, wine, and thyme. Return the meat to the pot along with any collected juices. Cook on medium until the liquid reduces slightly, about 5 minutes. Cover the pot and transfer it to the oven.

Cook the roast for 90 minutes. Remove the pot from the oven, add the carrots and potatoes, and continue roasting until the meat is very tender and shreds easily with a fork, about 60 minutes longer.

Discard thyme leaves and serve topped with fresh parsley.