

# Wellness Bulletin

July 2020



## July is Social Wellness Month

During times of social distancing maintaining connections with family, friends, co-workers, etc can be incredibly difficult. Which is why social wellness is unbelievably important. Below is information from the University of Minnesota on social wellness and how we can utilize various social supports to enhance our quality of life.

Social wellness means nurturing yourself and your relationships.

It means giving and receiving social support - ensuring that you have friends and other people, including family, to turn to in times of need or crisis to give you a broader focus and positive self-image.

Social support enhances quality of life and provides a buffer against adverse life events. Social support can take different forms:

- **Emotional** (sometimes called non-tangible) support refers to the actions people take to make someone else feel cared for.
- **Instrumental** support refers to the physical, such as money and housekeeping.
- **Informational** support means providing information to help someone.

One of the earliest studies on the physical and psychological health benefits of social support was in 1905.

Dr. Joseph Pratt, an internist from Boston, gathered a group of tuberculosis patients together to educate them about hygiene in relation to their illness. This "support group" provided early evidence of the power of psychological support in physical health and healing.

## Why is Social Wellness Important?

Healthy relationships are a vital component of health. The health risks from being alone or isolated in one's life are comparable to the risks associated with cigarette smoking, blood pressure, and obesity.

Research shows that:

- People who have a strong social network tend to live longer.
- The heart and blood pressure of people with healthy relationships respond better to stress.
- Strong social networks are associated with a healthier endocrine system and healthier cardiovascular functioning.
- Healthy social networks enhance the immune system's ability to fight off infectious diseases.



## Nurture Your Relationships

According to Drs. Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks, in their book *Lasting Love: The 5 Secrets of Growing a Vital, Conscious Relationship*, the following concepts are instrumental in attaining a healthy and lasting relationship.

1. **Become a master of commitment.** It's important to be aware of precisely what you are committing to, so that you can realistically judge whether or not you have the capacity to follow through on the commitment.
2. **Make commitments you can stand by.** In a relationship, it is important to be honest and empathetic to each other's feelings, hopes, and dreams.
3. **Break the cycle of blame and criticism.** It is important to own your part in the relationship dynamics.
4. **It can be helpful to shift your attention away from "fixing the other person" and onto more creative expressions for resolving conflict.** Shifting the focus in this way will help to inject more positive energy into the relationship.
5. **Become a master of verbal and nonverbal appreciation.** Showing appreciation of others is critical to healthy relationships.

## How Can I Grow My Social Network?

- Work out. Joining a gym or an exercise group allows you to meet new people while exercising.
- Take a walk with your pet. Starting a walking routine after dinner would not only give you another opportunity to be physically active, but it would also create more opportunities for you to meet your neighbors.
- Volunteer. Donate some of your time and hard work to a charity. You'll feel good about the cause, and you'll meet others with similar passions.
- Find others who share a hobby, such as hiking, painting, scrapbooking, running, etc.

There are countless ways to grow your social network. Consider your interests and hobbies, and then pursue them. You're bound to find others with similar passions.

## Helpful Social Wellness Resources

### Books

Lewis, T., et. al. (2001). *A General Theory of Love*. New York: Vintage Books.

Pennebaker, J. (1990). *Opening Up: The Healing Power of Confiding in Others*. New York: Morrow.

Salovey, P., Rothman, A., Detweiler, J., & Steward, W. (2000). Emotional States and Physical Health. *American Psychologist*, 55(1).

*Why Love Matters*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.

### Websites

American Psychological Association's Help Center <http://www.apahelpcenter.org/>

Leaving Abuse <http://www.leavingabuse.com/>

Healthyplace.com <http://healthyplace.com/>

WholeFamily.com <http://wholefamily.com/>

Mayo Clinic - Social Support: A Buffer Against Life's Ills [http://www.riversideonline.com/health\\_reference/Behavior-Mental-Health/...](http://www.riversideonline.com/health_reference/Behavior-Mental-Health/...)

Depression and Anxiety Support Alliance [http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=training\\_home](http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=training_home)

Conflict Resolution Network <http://www.crnhq.org/>

McGill University - interactive games on self-esteem <http://selfesteemgames.mcgill.ca/games/index.htm>

LeadersDirect.com - self-esteem quiz <http://www.leadersdirect.com/howareyou.html#>

Source: <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/july-social-wellness-month>



## Sweet Potato, Avocado and Black Bean Tacos

By The Good Housekeeping Test Kitchen

Yields: 4 Servings

Prep Time: 15 mins

Total Time: 40 mins

### Ingredients

1 3/4 lb. sweet potatoes, scrubbed and cut into 1/2" chunks

1 tbsp. olive oil

1 tsp. chili powder

1 can (15 oz.) no-salt-added black beans, rinsed and drained

1/2 c. salsa verde

1 avocado, thinly sliced

8 corn tortillas

1/4 c. crumbled cotija or feta cheese

Cilantro, for garnish

### Directions

1. Toss sweet potatoes with olive oil, chili powder and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Arrange on large rimmed baking sheet; roast 30 minutes in 450F oven.
2. In saucepan, combine black beans with salsa verde; cook on medium until warm, stirring.
3. Serve sweet potatoes and beans with avocado, corn tortillas, cotija or feta cheese and cilantro.

**Nutritional information (per serving):** About 465 cal, 13 g protein, 70 g carbs, 16 g fat (3 g sat), 16 g fiber, 715 mg sodium.



