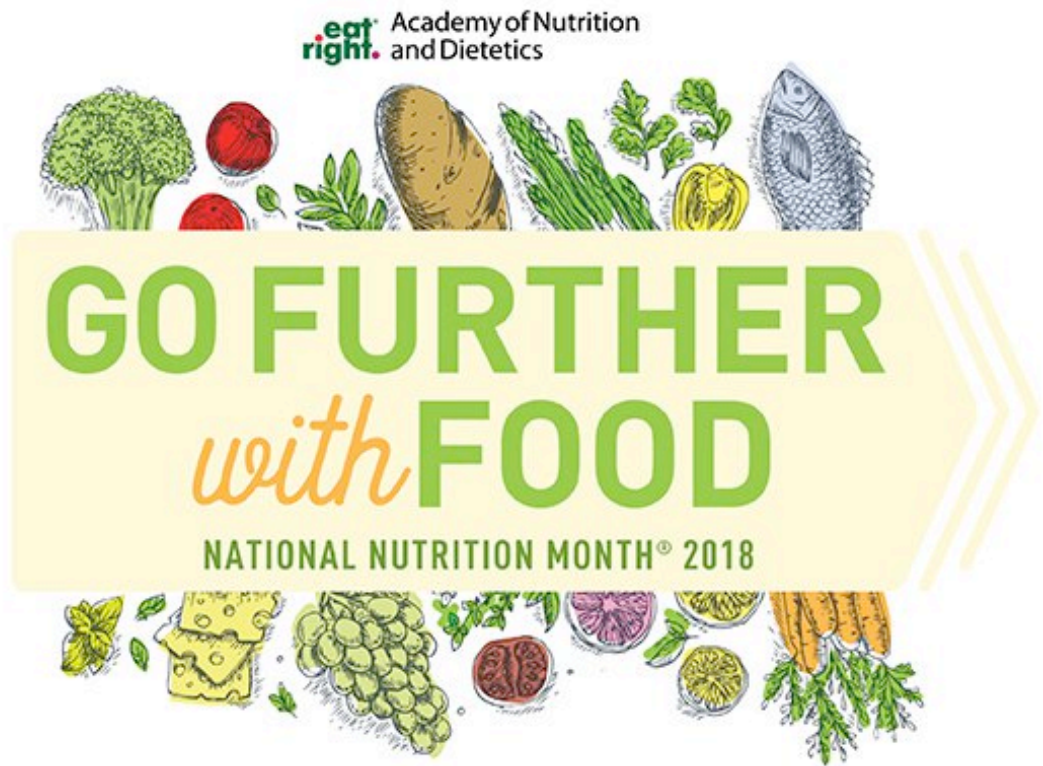


# EATRIGHTBOSTON

HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018



## National Nutrition Month 2018

Remember the catchphrase, “a car can’t run without gas in the tank?” I know you know where I am going with this! *“Go Further With Food”* is the theme for National Nutrition Month 2018. Like the gas that goes in your car, there are different types of foods to fuel your body. Carbohydrates, protein and fats are the macronutrients that provide calories to foods. By fueling your body with a combination of high quality, complex carbohydrates, protein-rich foods, and healthy fats, you will notice an improvement in how you feel. Unlike your car, your body needs constant fueling throughout the day. To maintain your energy level, strive to fuel your body consistently throughout the day. Don’t skip ANY meals!

Vitamins and minerals have no bearing on fueling your body, but some can assist your cells at a mitochondrial level for energy. There are a lot of supplements on the market promising you quick weight loss and oodles of energy. Remember, don’t be fooled; be fueled!

Sleep also plays a significant role in your physical health. Sleep deficiency increases the risk of gaining weight and high blood pressure, and is instrumental in supporting healthy brain function. Most importantly, our immune system relies on sleep to stay healthy. Put down the electronics an hour before bedtime and pick up a good book, instead!

# Bye Bye, Trans Fats 2018!

In June 2015, the Food and Drug Administration mandated that partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs) needed to be removed from processed foods by 2018. PHOs are the primary dietary source of artificial *trans* fatty acids (TFAs) in processed foods like cake frostings, non-dairy liquid creamers, baked goods, and fried foods to name a few. Well, that June 18, 2018 deadline is fast approaching!

I've written about TFAs for over a decade now; all the way back to 2006 when companies were mandated to disclose the amount of trans fats on the Nutrition Facts label. For many of you that have been in to see me, you know there's always been a bit of a loophole with this declaration. If there is <0.5 gram of TFA in a food, the manufacturer can label it as "0" on the food package.

I've always instructed my patients to look at the actual ingredient listing and scrutinize what's being *added* to the food product. Be aware, that trans fat will not be completely gone from foods because it occurs



naturally in small amounts in meat and dairy products, and in small levels of some edible oils.

Why so bad, you ask? Ready for some science? Taking a liquid vegetable oil and adding hydrogen to it creates a solid fat at room temperature (i.e.

a stick of margarine). Hydrogenation = Hardening. Margarine is a prime example of a man-made trans fat that's now been proven to raise the level of LDL ("bad") cholesterol in the blood. And, an elevated LDL cholesterol level in the blood increases your risk of developing heart disease.

Sad news is that it took over 30 years for studies to show that some of the diet advice in the 80's was not the best. I remember teaching people to switch from butter to margarine in the weekly cardiac classes we provided at the hospital.

Keep your eyes peeled to all aspects of a food wrapper! Not just what the marketing department wants you to see in bold print.

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## BPA Update

It's been a while since we've heard about Bisphenol A, also known as BPA. It's used to make polycarbonate, a hard plastic that's found in food containers. Years ago, it was in the news regarding its content in beverage containers and baby bottles. It's still found in the linings of cans, bottle caps, and jar lids, but here's the kicker-- BPA is found in the everyday (thermal paper) receipts you get from the grocery store, ATM machine and the gas pump! While the Food and Drug Administration has ruled that BPA is safe, researchers are not so convinced. Studies are looking at the long-term effects of BPA on weight gain, diabetes, heart disease, behavior and mood changes, and estrogen-driven cancers. Until more research is definitive, it's suggested to minimize exposure to BPA's, which means handling the receipts, minimally. As a reminder, if you use plastics, you're better off with #'s 1,2,4,5.

**Avoid #'s 3, 6, 7** (i.e. look at the numbers in the triangles on plastic containers).

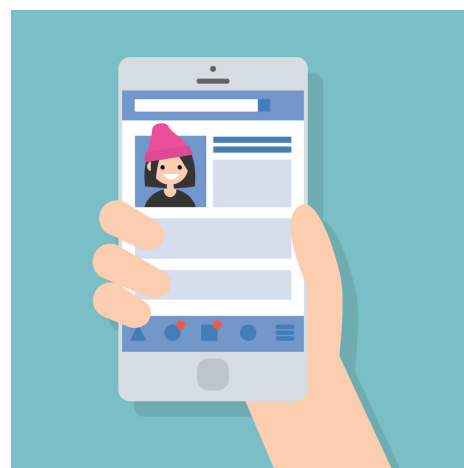


Other advice: Microwave in glass or ceramic; avoid putting hot liquids in plastic containers; throw away scratched plastic containers; use fewer canned foods; avoid prolonged contact with thermal paper; and wash plastic by hand.

# How Social Media Impacts How We See Ourselves

In 1954, a psychologist by the name of Leon Festinger proposed a series of nine hypotheses that outlined the process (and hierarchy) of how we evaluate ourselves. After trudging through them all, I now know how I ended up in the sciences, and not psychology! The information was quite interesting, and I do see a huge application for it today. In fact, Hypothesis #2 resonated the most with me: *If objective, nonsocial means are not available, then people evaluate their opinions and abilities by **comparison to other people**.*

A lot of things have changed since 1954, but the basic premise of comparing ourselves to others still persists. Growing up in the 60's, I was familiar with the saying, "Keeping Up with the Joneses." Back then, one would have to physically drive down the street to show off a brand new car. Nowadays, all you have to do is open an app. In fact, since the advent of social media outlets (Instagram and Facebook mostly), there's really no escaping comparisons, 24/7. And not only do we get to compare our lives against the lives of friends and family, but globally to strangers, as well!



But, it's just not kids that are left susceptible; adults are feeling the tug, too.

For some people, comparisons inspire them, while for others it can depress them by second-guessing life choices and weighing their self-worth against others. They aren't able to see beyond the "life is rosy" posts on the tablet screen; leaving them with a sense of inadequacy. It's so important to understand that these frolicking photos and idyllic "living the dream" posts are only capturing small moments of someone's life.

Teenagers are especially vulnerable to comparing their valuation via social media. A lot of it has to do with brain function and dopamine levels, a neurotransmitter that helps control the brain's reward and pleasure centers. Unfortunately, this age group develops a sense of who they are from how others view them.

Research shows that most of us tend to compare ourselves to people our own age. It can be about how we look, about the relationships we are in, how much money we have, or our professional achievements. Some people get inspired to try harder when they compare themselves to others. This is often referred to as "self-improvement." But relying on others to make you feel good is risky. Being too reliant on what others have to say can put some people at risk for depression.

On a happy note, a 2015 study by researchers at the University's of Essex in Cambridge showed that as we age, we tend to not compare ourselves to others and that we are more likely to use our own lives as comparatives. We reflect more on our own (actual) past rather than compare ourselves to others. Applying wisdom and experience to our self-improvement goals is a much healthier process as we age. Certainly, something to look forward to!

My best advice is to use social media to stay connected with friends. Don't use it as a means to evaluate your own life by comparing it to others. Focus on the good things in your life and maintain a healthy level of self-esteem. Concentrate more on personal growth and a lot less on envy.

## Keep the Brain Active!

A	W	E	L	L	N	E	S	S	Z	I	K	H	O	P	L
P	O	N	F	M	I	L	K	Q	A	R	C	E	L	Y	E
P	E	P	P	E	R	H	M	U	R	G	R	A	I	N	T
L	D	Z	A	Q	B	J	S	E	E	D	H	L	V	O	T
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C	C	O	C	O	N	U	T	P	M	L	S	H	F	W	C
Q	U	I	N	O	A	T	X	I	E	O	B	Y	Q	U	E
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E	W	C	T	I	A	L	J	S	P	L	A	T	E	O	I
M	I	O	R	A	N	G	E	B	W	K	S	W	Q	N	N
T	U	L	E	M	O	N	P	E	X	E	R	C	I	S	E
V	D	I	E	T	I	T	I	A	N	S	R	O	C	K	!

**Can you locate the following words in the puzzle??**

Nut, apple, wellness, eggplant, banana, breakfast, kale, broccoli,  
orange, rice, soup, kiwi, flax, zucchini, pepper, plate, tuna,  
oatmeal, spinach, grain, lettuce, health, portion, yogurt, quinoa,  
milk, water, olive, coconut, fruit, chia, exercise, seed, lemon...  
and there's one more surprise!



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**Happy Spring!**