



Wellbeing Insights

Living a Better, More Vibrant Life



In This Issue

May: Mental Health Month

Food Allergy Awareness..... 1

On the Menu:
Matcha Green Tea 3

A Venture to the Mediterranean:
Cornerstones of the "World's
Healthiest Diet" 4

Mindful Minute..... 4

Fast Stats for Mental
Health Awareness 5

Power Posture 5

Parenting Corner:
Teaching Your Kids to Cope..... 6

Food Allergy Awareness

What is a food allergy? A food allergy occurs when the immune system recognizes a normally harmless food protein as an invader and initiates an immune response whereby the antibody Immunoglobulin E (IgE) is released to attack the enemy protein. This attack releases histamine and other chemicals, which result in various symptoms of allergic reaction. Allergic reactions can be extremely unpredictable and can vary from mild to severe with each exposure. Even someone with

a history of mild reactions can suffer a severe reaction, even anaphylaxis, with exposure. Anaphylaxis is a severe, life-threatening response in which blood pressure drops and loss of consciousness and even death can occur. Even slight exposure to a food allergen can result in anaphylaxis.

According to the group Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE), an estimated 15 million Americans have food allergies,

Food Allergy Awareness

Continued from page 1

including 5.9 million children – about two in every classroom. The most common allergens are eggs and milk. Other common food allergens include peanuts, tree nuts, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish. These eight allergens are required by law to be listed on food labels. While reactions can vary, all food allergies share the potential to be life-threatening. Many food allergies are diagnosed in childhood but may develop at any age. Some children may outgrow an allergy, but many times they are lifelong.

Milk, eggs and peanuts result in the majority of severe reactions in children, while peanuts, shellfish and tree nuts cause the majority of severe reactions in teenagers and adults. FARE estimates that a food allergy reaction sends someone to the emergency room every three minutes in the U.S. Prevention of allergic reactions requires vigilance and awareness. Always read food labels and check for cross-contamination. Children and adults with food allergies should have allergy action plans in place. Emergency bracelets can help caretakers and responders identify an allergic reaction. People with food allergies should always carry an epinephrine auto-injector pen (i.e., Epi-Pen®).

If you think food allergies are becoming more common, you're right. Between 1999 and 2008, the prevalence of food allergy in the U.S. increased by 50%. At the same time, food intolerances have become more prevalent, and food marketers are taking notice. It's important to understand the difference between

food allergies and intolerances. Intolerances, such as lactose and gluten (non-celiac), can cause uncomfortable reactions, but unlike food allergies these reactions do not involve the immune system. A true food allergy always involves the immune system and always has the potential to be life-threatening.

May 13 - 19 is Food Allergy Awareness Week. Awareness is key to helping prevent severe, even fatal allergic reactions.

How allergy-aware are you?

- All food allergies have the potential to be life-threatening.
- While peanut allergies garner a lot of media attention, the most common food allergens are eggs and milk.
- Even a miniscule amount of an allergen can cause a life-threatening reaction.
- There is no such thing as a mild food allergy.

- Food allergies can develop at any time – from childhood to adulthood.
- 5.9 million children suffer from food allergies.
- Awareness is key to helping prevent allergic reactions.
- People with food allergies are more likely to suffer from eczema, sinus-type allergies and asthma.
- The most common allergens are eggs, milk, peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, fish, soy and wheat. These eight foods/ingredients must be listed on packaged-food labels.
- Food allergies always involve the immune system. Food intolerances, though uncomfortable, do not.

For more information about food allergies and prevention of allergic reaction, please visit www.foodallergy.org.

"I haven't always been allergic to almonds. Several years ago, I started getting small patches of hives on my arms and neck. After eliminating all the easy suspects (e.g., shampoo, soap, etc.) my allergist did a skin prick test to help identify the culprit.

An oral challenge confirmed that I had developed an allergy to the superfood. My body produces antibodies in response to proteins in almonds. These antibodies set off a chain of events, which can cause reactions that vary in severity with each exposure, making vigilant avoidance of almonds a necessity for me. I now read labels, avoid cross-contamination and carry an emergency epinephrine pen to be safe."

– Michelle Kruse, RD, CBIZ Wellbeing Coordinator

On the Menu

Matcha Green Tea

Matcha green tea is very on trend with the health conscious and foodies alike. Matcha green tea powder is unique to Japan and contains a different nutrient, color and flavor profile than other green tea varieties. Although the earthy beverage has been gaining popularity in the states for several years now (Starbucks uses matcha powder in their green tea lattes), the origin of this powdered tea leaf goes back many centuries. In fact, it is said that the origins of matcha green tea have been traced back to a Buddhist monk from Japan in the 12th century who was the first to grind the green tea leaves into a matcha powder. Fast forward many centuries and you will find that parts of Japan still hold matcha green tea in high regard and use it in ceremonial tea rituals. When you are purchasing matcha powder, make sure it is derived from Japan and is either “culinary” or “ceremonial” grade.

Fortunately, you don’t have to be a Zen Buddhist master to enjoy the benefits of matcha green tea. In addition to drinking matcha as a warm beverage, you can also add the powder to a variety of other foods, including smoothies, lattes, oatmeal or even cakes and ice cream! Here are some of the benefits that this powdered tea leaf has to offer:

- It contains some of the highest amounts of antioxidants per serving compared to any other food on the market.
- It has high levels of the amino acid L-Theanine, which promotes the release of dopamine and serotonin – two chemicals that serve to boost mood, improve memory and enhance concentration.
- Its moderate caffeine level can increase energy and endurance.
- It contains catechins – an antioxidant that boosts immunity with its antibiotic properties.

Keep It Fresh

The best way to keep matcha powder is in a sealed container or bag in the refrigerator for up to two months.

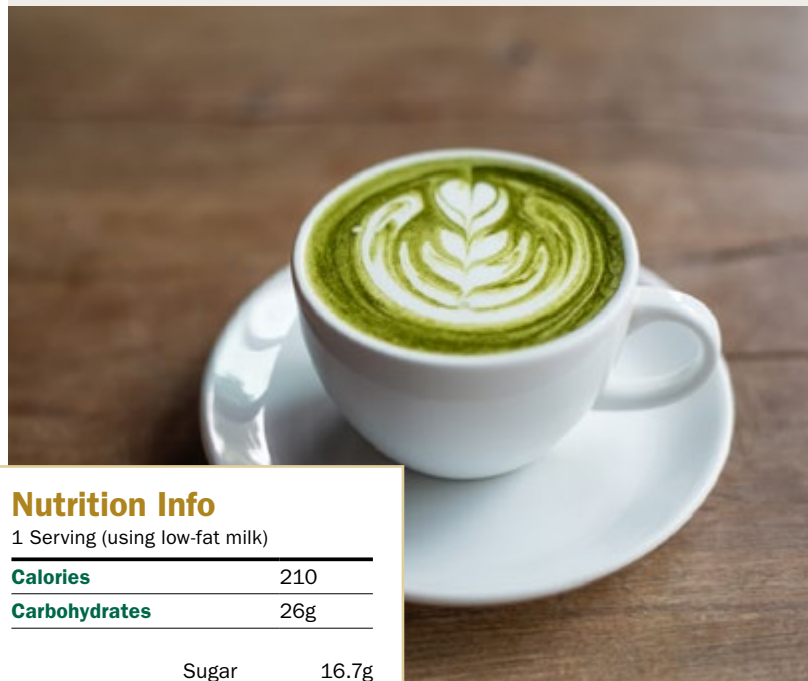
Creamy Matcha Latte

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups warm or cold milk of choice
- 3 Tbsp. warm water
- 1 tsp matcha green tea powder
- 1 tsp sugar or raw honey (optional)

Directions:

Spoon the matcha tea powder with sweetener (if using) into a mug or cup. Add warm water and whisk until it forms a smooth, dark-green paste with no lumps. Warm the milk in a saucepan and pour into the mug. Or, use cold milk for an iced latte. Whisk the green tea paste and milk together until it forms a bright, green color with no lumps.



Nutrition Info

1 Serving (using low-fat milk)

Calories	210
Carbohydrates	26g
	Sugar 16.7g
	Fiber 0g
Protein	18.2g
Sodium	107mg

A Venture to the Mediterranean

Cornerstones of the “World’s Healthiest Diet”



As opposed to many fad diets that require restrictive eating habits and have minimal, short-term benefits, the Mediterranean diet is based on the long-standing dietary staples and eating patterns of countries in the Mediterranean region, including Spain, Italy, Greece and France. These countries tend to have some of the lowest rates of obesity and other lifestyle diseases and longest-living populations. The shared characteristics of the diets in this region have been consistently recognized among the healthiest diets by scientist for many years. Many studies attribute the health and longevity of Mediterranean people to their personal wellbeing habits, which includes maintaining a diet full of heart-healthy fats.

Other benefits that may come from following a Mediterranean-style diet include:

- Lower risk of heart disease and heart attack
- Reduced risk of Type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome
- Prevention of stroke, Alzheimer’s disease, depression and Parkinson’s disease

Foods to incorporate in a Mediterranean diet include fish, fruits, vegetables, beans, high-fiber whole grains, nuts and olive oil. There is still room for indulgent foods in the diet like meat, cheese, sweets and wine, but they are limited and enjoyed in modest portion sizes.

If you’re looking to move toward more of a Mediterranean style of eating, here are some tips:

1. Incorporate at least one serving of fruits and veggies into every meal, such as fresh berries, tomatoes, broccoli, leafy greens, eggplants or beans.
2. Opt for whole-grain foods like oats, brown rice and whole-wheat bread, which contain higher levels of heart-healthy fiber, as opposed to refined grains like white rice, white bread or pasta.
3. Add a serving of healthy fats from nuts, olive oil and seeds to each meal.
4. Limit processed foods like chips, crackers and candies.
5. Limit your intake of sweet foods and desserts to only a few times a week. This also includes sugary drinks like concentrated juice or soda. Red wine can be incorporated with one meal a day – 1 glass for women, up to 2 glasses for men.

Mindful Minute

We often aim to take care of ourselves physically but not always mentally. In light of Mental Health Awareness Month, consider practicing some **mental hygiene with these emotional tune-up tips.**

- **Schedule regular mindful pauses throughout your day to push the reset button.** Sit quietly, tune into the present moment, notice your emotions without judgement, focus on the breath for several cycles and then tune back in.
- **Make time for positive relationships.** Negativity can spread like wildfire but so can positivity. Invest your social time with those who are positive and make you feel good when you are around them. Try to stay away from those who have a negative presence.
- **Show yourself some compassion as you would a friend or loved one.** We are our harshest critics, but it is truly difficult to be happy when your internal dialogue is consistently self-critical. When you notice self-criticism, instead ask yourself “how can I use this experience to grow?”
- **Reflect regularly.** It’s difficult to recognize negative or self-destructive patterns without periods of self-reflection. Consider a journaling practice or look into finding workbooks or apps that cater to self-reflection.
- **Treat yourself as a whole being.** The mind and the body must work together for one to thrive as a whole being. Continue physical self-care with proper nutrition, exercise and sleep. How’s your mindset around these things? Is exercise a chore? Is eating a healthy meal a serious feat of willpower? Try to change your thoughts around these behaviors to be acts of self-love, practicing them because you know they make you feel more energized and able to show up for life each day.

Fast Stats for Mental Health Awareness

- 1 in 6 American adults is living with mental illness.
- Half of all lifetime mental health conditions begin by age 14 and 75% by age 24, but early intervention programs can help.
- 90% of those who die by suicide have an underlying mental illness.
- Treatment can be highly effective: 70 to 90% of individuals have significant reduction of symptoms with the right treatments and support.
- African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans used mental health services at about half the rate of Caucasians in the past year, and Asian-Americans one third the rate.

If you believe that you or a loved one may be struggling with mental illness, please reach out for help. Speak with your healthcare provider, counselor or someone with whom you have an existing relationship. Or, you may call an anonymous hotline.

National Helpline: 800-662-4357

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255

Sources: nimh.nih.gov, nami.org, samhsa.gov



Love all of the hurt, traumatized and abandoned parts of **yourself**. Honoring all of you **gives your wholeness** a voice.

- HEALTHYPLACE.COM



Power Posture

Snap judgments – people make them in an instant, and they are primarily based on non-verbal signals, namely our body language. Your body language shapes people's perceptions of how smart, trustworthy, powerful, strong and confident you are (or are not) before you ever say a word. In fact, a simple observation of body language can be a powerful predictor of election outcomes, who gets the job/promotion and who gets asked out on a date. Imagine the body language of a highly confident person; they stand tall and freely use their arms, hands, eye contact, etc. to convey their message.

We know that having power leads to powerful posture. But is the opposite true? Can we actually 'fake it until we make it' by practicing powerful posture in order to create and communicate power? The answer is YES! Simple changes in your physical posture don't just change the way people perceive your level of power and confidence, it actually causes physiological changes in your body that make you truly feel more powerful/confident. In other words, **changing your posture can actually create and communicate power.**

So what is power posture? You probably already know; it's anything that makes you larger – outstretched arms, open chest, a wide stance. Humans aren't the only ones who display power with posture. Think of an ape puffing up its chest or a peacock spreading its feathers; both are displays of power within that species. The next time you find yourself in a position where you need to be strong and confident (think networking events, presenting at a meeting, etc.) spend just two minutes in a power pose before taking the stage or entering the room. Research has shown that just two minutes in a power pose actually increases levels of testosterone (the dominance hormone) and decreases cortisol levels (the stress hormone).

Now that is powerful stuff!



Teaching Your Kids to Cope

One of the greatest, lifelong teaching opportunities we have with our children is the development of coping skills to help them overcome life's stressors and challenges. Early childhood is an especially good time to shape reactions and other behaviors as they manifest for the first time, though it's never too late to promote good habits with your child. Consider integrating the following practices into your interactions with your child and educate your child's caregivers and teachers about what you find works well in terms of helping your child cope with his or her emotions.

1. Help your child name the emotion he or she is feeling and why, based on your observations. "It sounds like you are feeling sad that we can't play outside right now" or "I know you may feel angry when another child takes your toy away." When a child can understand what is happening to their physical body and mind, they are able to exhibit control over it to some extent.

2. Help your child understand that it is okay to feel an emotion they are experiencing and empower them to find positive ways to react to it. "It's okay to feel upset. It's a good choice to stop and take a deep breath if you are feeling upset instead of hitting people." "I know you are sad. It's okay to cry and ask for comfort." With your guidance in this practice, eventually your child will be able to self-regulate by choosing positive reactions to their emotions.

3. Help your child process their emotions by being present and modeling the desired behavior. By remaining calm and attentive in response to your child's reactions to their emotions, you are helping defuse the situation by keeping your own reaction under control.

When children are misbehaving or seem out of control, these are times when they most need your guidance, support and positive modeling.

4. Consider if hunger or sleep are compounding the issue. Children and adults alike find it challenging, if not impossible, to keep emotions in check when their blood sugar plummets due to hunger and/or too much sugar and starch in their diets (and not enough protein, fat and fiber) or they aren't getting enough sleep.

While incorporating practices like these in to your parenting can be beneficial for children, there are times when professional support is needed. Contact your child's pediatrician or a mental health professional if your child's behavior concerns you.



The *Wellbeing Insights* Newsletter is prepared for you by CBIZ ESO. The contributions included in this newsletter do not specifically reflect your employer's opinions. Consult your health care provider before making any lifestyle changes.

Contributing Writers

- Abby Stevenson Senior Wellbeing Account Manager
- Michelle Kruse, RD..... Wellbeing Coordinator
- Joe Oberoi Wellbeing Coordinator/Account Manager
- Anna Panzarella Wellbeing Consultant
- Bridgette O'Connor..... Senior Wellbeing Consultant

Visit the **CBIZ Wellbeing website** at www.cbiz.com/wellbeing