

# The UConn Buzz

MARCH 2016



## Snooze Your Way to Better Health!

On March 13 we set our clocks ahead and say hello to the sunshine, and goodbye to a whole hour of sleep! If we already have healthy sleep schedules, losing one hour for one night shouldn't be a problem, but sometimes getting enough sleep can be challenging enough without setting the clocks back. March is National Sleep Awareness Month, so this is the perfect time to take a good look at the sleep we're getting and how it affects our overall well-being.



### Tips for Getting a Good Night's Sleep

#### Set the Environment

The bedroom can be used to promote healthy sleep. It should be cool (between 60 to 67°F), and free of any noise or light that could disrupt sleep. This includes light from electronic screens like phones, tablets, laptops, or televisions.



If you can't set these conditions, consider using a [white noise machine](#), fans, earplugs, blackout blinds, an eye mask, or other devices.

#### Follow a Ritual:

By doing the same ritual every night before bed, we train our brains to realize that it's time to sleep. Practicing a relaxing routine in a peaceful environment can also help to separate our sleep time from the stress, anxiety, and excitement of daytime activities. *Try one of these rituals!*

#### What to Avoid:

Alcohol, cigarettes, and caffeine (which can be found in some foods, such as chocolate) all can disrupt sleep. If you can, avoid big meals two to three hours before bedtime. If you're still hungry, try a [light snack](#) 45 minutes before bed.

#### Stick to a Schedule:

Going to bed at the same time every night, and getting up the same time every morning – even on the weekends – helps to regulate our bodies' clocks, and can help you fall and stay asleep for the whole night.



Sources for this issue of The Buzz include: WebMD, The National Sleep Foundation, The American Diabetes Association, and Mind Body Green.

*Think you know all about healthy sleep?*

Take this [Sleep IO Quiz](#) to test your sleep knowledge!

*How sleepy are you?*

See if you are more or less sleepy than the average population with the [National Sleep Foundation Sleepiness Test](#).

*Want to make your bedroom a haven for healthy sleep?*

Check out the National Sleep Foundation's [comprehensive guide](#) for creating the best environment for sleep.



## Hungry to make a change to become a healthier you?

March is *National Nutrition Month*, so let's shine the spotlight on what we eat!

NEW!

### ASK BE WELL



March  
22<sup>nd</sup>

*This month's question:*

"I am Type 2 diabetic and struggling with meal planning. Any suggestions?"

Dear Readers,

When it comes to Type 2 diabetes, prepping your food on a weekly basis can make meal planning simple:

- Prep your protein. Each meal should be about 1/4 protein, which helps to keep your blood sugar steady. Prepare grilled chicken, hardboiled eggs, cans of low-sodium tuna, and portions of nuts and nut butters for the week.
- Prep your veggies. Non-starchy vegetables won't spike your blood sugar and they will keep you full. 1/2 your plate at each meal should be veggies. Chopping, slicing, or roasting your veggies in advance makes it easy to have them at every meal!
- Have one "carb" at each meal, such as 1/2 a sweet potato or 1/2 cup whole grain pasta. Carbs should fill up about 1/4 of your plate. Be sure to always eat some protein with your carbs and help you maintain steady sugar levels.

If you're taking insulin or other meds, check with your doctor before making any major dietary changes. [Click here](#) for some more specific food prep guidelines, and email us at [be\\_well@ehhd.org](mailto:be_well@ehhd.org) if you have a question for next month's column!

### American Diabetes Association Alert Day

Maintaining a healthy weight, staying active, and having a balanced diet can reduce your chances of developing type 2 diabetes.

Take this test to see if you're at risk.

Diabetes is one of the leading causes of *preventable* death. One out of every eleven people have diabetes. Act now!



### Feeling "SAD"?

It's no question that during the winter our levels of *Vitamin D* have plummeted a little, leaving us feeling a bit more "down" & "gloomy" during the cold snowy months. This condition is better known as "SAD" (*Seasonal Affective Disorder*) which affects 20 percent of people.

If you think "SAD" may be something you have, try these healthy changes to get you back to your summer, vitamin D filled self!

At your next movie night, ditch the butter and try this sweet and nutty popcorn alternative!

### Choco-Nut Popcorn

Start by making some plain, air-popped popcorn. Melt 1 *tblsp.* of *peanut butter* and drizzle onto the popcorn. Lightly dust about 1/2 *tsp* of *cocoa powder* over the popcorn. Mix together or eat as is, and enjoy this nutty, chocolaty snack!

### Happening at Be Well and Around Town

- Starting to get Spring fever? Check out these local walks and hikes that will get you out into the great outdoors, reviving your mind and body.
- It's time to start thinking about spring and summer produce! Many farms are starting to take registration's for Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), a great way to save money and get nutritious food on your table!



Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from the CT Dept. of Public Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.