



January 2022

Greetings for the New Year!

The holiday celebrations have passed and now we welcome all the new possibilities for 2022! This edition of the quarterly *Healthy State of Iowa Employees* newsletter contains great information and recipes to help you start off the new year right!

Try Habit Stacking Instead of Resolutions

Have you ever been frustrated when a New Year's resolution doesn't stick? It's common to want to achieve big goals, but research shows only a small percentage of people actually achieve them. Instead of setting a resolution this year, maybe try "Habit Stacking," or taking your small healthy habits you already have and building upon them!

Read more about [habit stacking](#) from Wellmark today!

Staff Spotlight



Name: Alexandra Bauman, RD

Current Position: Nutrition & Wellness Division Director - Iowa Department on Aging

Years with the State: 3 years

My Healthy Choice: Cooking healthy meals

"I've always thought of food as a necessity, medicine, and art. As a teenager, cooking became a hobby of mine, and I enjoyed trying new recipes and experimenting with new ingredients. As I grew up, my love for cooking evolved into a love for nutrition. My healthy cooking choice is to increase the number of plant foods each day to get more nutrients, fiber, and antioxidants."

Here are some of Alexandra's favorite hacks:

- Add cooked mushrooms and onions to pasta sauce
- Add a handful of spinach or kale in a smoothie
- Add minced carrots and a handful of oats to meatballs or meatloaf
- Substitute avocado for half of the mayonnaise in tuna salad, chicken salad, and deviled eggs
- Add lentils to curry and soups to thicken
- Add a scoop of mashed, baked sweet potato or canned pumpkin to smoothies, casseroles, and soups

Are you Familiar with 5-2-1-0?

In 2017, Governor Kim Reynolds and Lieutenant Governor Adam Gregg announced a statewide initiative to promote healthier choices based on these daily recommendations:

- 5 servings of fruit
- 2 hours or less of screen time
- 1 or more hours of physical activity
- 0 sugary drinks - drinking more water

The Iowa Department of Public Health may also provide funding and technical assistance to communities to help make sustainable and equitable environmental and policy changes around 5-2-1-0 evidence based strategies. Learn more about these initiatives by visiting the [Iowa Department of Public Health](#) and the [Iowa Healthiest State Initiative](#) websites.



Healthy Recipe Ideas

Try [Spend Smart Eat Smart's Energy Bites](#). They are easy to customize with your favorite dried fruit, nuts, or seeds! Did you know that oats contain soluble fiber - the type linked to lower blood cholesterol and a decreased risk of diabetes?



Increase your Healthy-Choice Successes With an “Accountabilibuddy”

When you commit to becoming fit, it is a great strategy to have an “**accountabilibuddy**” committed to a partnership where you hold each other accountable for your respective goals. The premise with this tactic is that humans tend to be more concerned about letting someone else down than we are about letting ourselves down. Having an accountabilibuddy has shown to increase the chances of success by up to 95 percent! Offer to be an accountabilibuddy and make it easy for someone else to commit to being fit!

There are different ways to find an accountabilibuddy who is best suited for your expectations. It is helpful to determine beforehand whether you tend to make excuses, prefer friendly competition, or perhaps need a coach instead. If this idea interests you, there are various websites offering tips and questions to ask when seeking an accountability partnership.

Exercises for Restoring Proper Posture

Sitting for the majority of the day can lead to developing a posture where the head and neck protrude forward, the mid-back and shoulders rounded forward, and the lower back arches excessively with forward tilting of the pelvis, according to fitness professional Jeremy Ethier. These postures can lead to tightness and aches and pains in the body.

To reverse the adverse effects of sitting too much, Jeremy offers a video of two easy five-minute corrective routines with eight exercises designed to mobilize tightened areas (fix rounded shoulders), strengthen the

weakened muscles (fix hunchback posture), and work on correcting any asymmetries.

If you find yourself sitting for a majority of your workday, consider viewing his [video with exercises](#) to see if they help you maintain better posture and good health.

Did You Know?

- [SEHARC](#) (State of Iowa Health and Recreation Committee) connects you with offers for discounted tickets to area events and hosts fun activities throughout the year. If you are interested in receiving information on these opportunities, complete this [form](#) to be added to SEHARC's mailing list or follow us on Facebook!
 - [DAS Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP) provides resources, monthly seminars, counseling services, and more.
 - [5 Things You Need to Know If You Are Judging Yourself for Your Holiday Mental Health](#)
 - [Six Tips to Help You Be Your Mental Best](#)
 - For more great information, be sure to check out these Wellmark publications - [Wellmark Blue Magazine](#) and [Blue at Work](#).
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To learn more about how Healthy EmployeesSM Powered by Wellmark is working with the State of Iowa to make the healthy choices easier for you, visit the [Healthy Employees website](#).