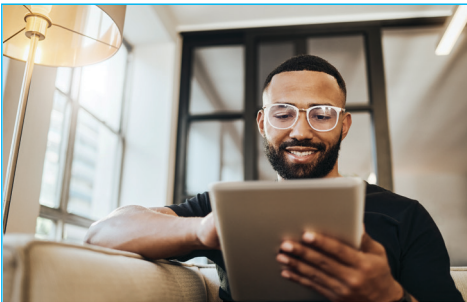


BETTER HEALTH



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'Better Health' now digital

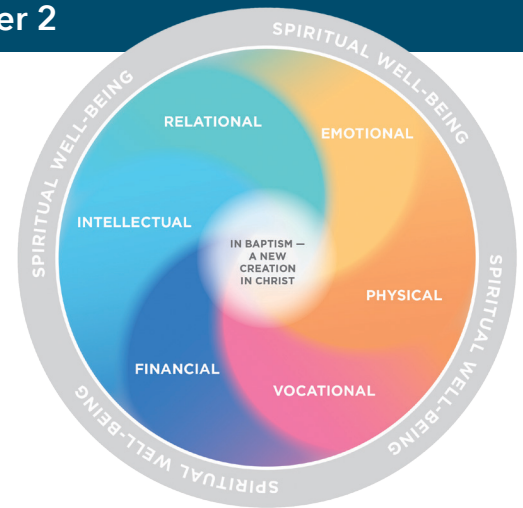
Being good stewards of God's resources is important to Concordia Plan Services. Starting now, "Better Health" is online, making it easier to access while reducing printing and mailing costs. You'll still receive the same valuable health and financial wellness information – now available anytime from your inbox and the Concordia Plan Services website.

If you prefer a printed copy, contact us at 888-927-7526 or info@concordiaplans.org.

This newsletter is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice from your health care provider. While we strive to provide accurate and safe information, individual needs and circumstances vary. The articles are intended to encourage reflection and personal consideration, not to serve as strict guidelines. Always consult a trusted medical professional before beginning any new wellness routine.

LCMS Wellness Wheel

The Wellness Wheel illustrates our multifaceted well-being, with Baptism in Christ at the center and spiritual wellness encompassing every dimension. Each facet reflects God's design and His promise to bear fruit in our lives.



Spring recipe



QUINOA PANCAKES (Gluten free, dairy free)

Yield: 2 servings
Active time: 10 minutes
Total time: 15 minutes

Nutrition (per serving):
Calories: 220 | **Protein:** 6g
Carbs: 38g | **Fat:** 5g

INGREDIENTS

1/2 c. quinoa flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1/2 tsp. sea salt
1 egg
1/4 c. water
2 Tbsp. applesauce
2 Tbsp. maple syrup
1 Tbsp. coconut oil, for cooking
1 c. blueberries



INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large bowl, whisk together quinoa flour, baking powder, nutmeg and salt.
2. In a small bowl, whisk egg, water, applesauce and maple syrup.
3. Fold wet ingredients into dry ingredients and stir until just combined. Let the batter rest 3 to 5 minutes, until slightly expanded.
4. Heat coconut oil in a skillet over medium heat, coating the pan evenly. When the oil shimmers, add 1/4 cup batter and gently flatten. Cook until golden, about 3 to 4 minutes. Flip and cook an additional 1 to 2 minutes. Repeat with remaining batter.
5. In the same skillet, add blueberries and cook until blistered, about 2 minutes. Serve pancakes topped with blueberries and additional maple syrup, if desired.

Spirit Song

SCRIPTURE:

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." - Galatians 6:9

HYMN:

"Christ My Victory"
(The Songwriter Initiative at Concordia University Irvine)
- available on Spotify



Better sleep with seven simple stretches



Relieving stress can improve sleep quality. A brief stretching routine before bed can help relax muscles and calm the mind.

Aim for five to 10 minutes, holding each stretch 20 to 60 seconds at a gentle intensity, around three to five on a 10-point discomfort scale.

- **Single knee rotation:** Lie on your back, pull one knee toward your chest and guide it across your body.
- **Neck rolls:** Lower your chin to your chest and gently roll your head to release tension.
- **Figure-four stretch:** Cross one ankle over the opposite knee and draw the leg toward your chest.
- **Side-lying quad stretch:** Bend your top knee and gently pull your foot toward your glutes.
- **Ankle pumps and circles:** Move your foot up and down, then rotate slowly.
- **Side-lying hip flexor stretch:** Extend your bottom leg while bending the top knee toward your chest.
- **Pelvic tilt:** With knees bent, tighten your core and press your lower back into the bed.

Sources: Sleep Foundation & Real Simple

Find good health through 'FITT'ness



Regular physical activity plays a vital role in preventing and managing chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity. Exercise also offers significant mental health benefits. However, beginning a fitness routine without direction can lead to inconsistent results.

One effective framework is the **FITT Principle:**

- **Frequency:** How often you exercise, including cardiovascular and resistance training. Rest days are essential.
- **Intensity:** The level of effort, such as weight lifted or heart rate achieved.
- **Time:** The duration of each session. Increases should be gradual.
- **Type:** The mode of exercise, such as aerobic or strength-based activities.

Benefits of FITT

- Helps overcome fitness plateaus
- Reduces boredom through variety
- Adapts to all experience levels

Example application (weight loss goal)

- **Frequency:** Cardio three to six times per week
- **Intensity:** Up to 70-80% of maximum heart rate, depending on fitness level
- **Time:** 20 to 30 minutes, increasing gradually
- **Type:** Walking, running, swimming, cycling, dancing or hiking

cont'd. on next page



'FITness' cont'd.

Establish clear goals

Before starting a new exercise program, ask yourself:

- What is my current fitness level?
- What do I hope to achieve in one, three or six months?
- Which activities do I enjoy?

Consult a healthcare provider before beginning any new fitness routine, especially if you have preexisting medical conditions.

Sources: *Cleveland Clinic & Healthline*

Signs you're not eating enough protein



Increasing protein intake supports appetite control, muscle recovery and sustained energy.

Common signs of inadequate protein include persistent hunger, slow recovery after illness or exercise and ongoing fatigue. Adequate protein intake typically promotes satisfaction between meals and improved recovery.

For balanced meals, aim for:

- ¼ plate lean protein
- ¼ plate whole grains
- ½ plate fruits and vegetables

Start your day with at least 20 grams of protein, such as oatmeal with Greek yogurt, a cottage cheese parfait with fruit and nuts, overnight oats or scrambled eggs with cottage cheese.

Consult a registered dietitian for personalized guidance.

Source: *Prevention*

Make a fresh start with spring produce

Eating seasonally expands your variety of fruits and vegetables and increases nutrient diversity.

Seasonal produce is often more affordable due to supply and demand.



Spring favorites include spinach, beets, strawberries and asparagus.

Explore the GRACE Communications Foundation "Seasonal Food Guide" at seasonalfoodguide.org for state-by-state availability.

Sources: *American Heart Association & Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*

Spring clean your mindset

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
- Romans 12:2

When stress builds, your mental workspace can feel cluttered. Clearing that clutter improves focus and decision-making.



Try these strategies:

- **Be mindful:** Focus on one task at a time.
- **Write it down:** Journal or practice free writing.
- **Play music:** Use songs to reset between tasks.
- **Sleep on it:** A rested mind thinks more clearly.
- **Take a walk:** Change your environment to refresh perspective.
- **Tidy up:** A clean workspace supports clearer thinking.
- **Unfocus:** Step away temporarily.
- **Talk it out:** Share your thoughts with someone you trust.

Source: *Healthline*

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Editor's Pulse: You're gonna miss this ... someday.

Have you ever felt like you're in survival mode? At the end of the day, you wonder how it all happened.

For most of our 17 years as an active-duty Marine family, that was my reality: raising three children through every stage of childhood, living far from family and often parenting solo while balancing health, work and college degrees. Much of it feels like a blur.

The memories that remain are not simply the highs or lows, but the moments that tested and strengthened me. Those seasons forced honesty about my vulnerability and deepened my reliance on God's provision and the village He placed around us.

Now, with my youngest at 15, I sometimes miss those early, chaotic years. They were not easy, but they were simpler. Today's challenges feel more complex – academics, relationships, new-driver concerns, caring for aging parents and raising teens all at once. The list grows, and so does the weight.

We are not meant to have all the answers. And we are not meant to walk through any season alone. I am grateful for the chaos that shaped us and the support systems God provided.

As we navigate whatever survival mode looks like next, I pray I will not need hindsight to recognize His steady presence or the beauty in the ordinary moments – knowing someday, I'm going to miss this.

Thank you for your encouragement and thoughtful feedback during my first year as editor of "Better Health." It has truly meant so much.

Thank you!

Blessings,



Published by Concordia Plan Services of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. Articles are available in text format for use in your ministry newsletter. Please inquire. Scan the QR code or visit our website at ConcordiaPlans.org/BetterHealth to see more issues of "Better Health". Please contact Kelly Menke with your comments.

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