

June 2016 NWIA Members' Newsletter

News & Events

- 1 July International Joke Day
- 4 July USA Independence Day
- 11 July Cheer Up the Lonely Day
- 14 July France Bastille Day
- 20 July International Chess Day
- 25 July Thread the Needle Day

Upcoming Conferences

27-29 June Annual National Wellness Conference <http://www.nationalwellness.org>

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June Floral Emblem: Rose

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcoming you to the Winter season (finally in Queensland),

We all wish our businesses to be successful and wish to be personally successful - correct? Yet as a Wellness Practitioner do we also wish to be 'likeable'? Some would say that in the 'dog eat dog' world of big business that it is not possible to be a likeable successful business owner. I have written before about the current trend to 'Heart Centred Leadership' and the business successes of 'Firms of Endearment'. Continuing in a similar vein I present to you a synopsis of two articles, anchored in the emotional and occupational wellness domains, recently written by **Dr. Travis Bradberry**, the award-winning co-author of the #1 bestselling book, [*Emotional Intelligence 2.0*](#), and the cofounder of [TalentSmart](#), the world's leading provider of [emotional intelligence tests](#).

Critical Things Ridiculously Successful People Do Every Day (Apr 7, 2016)

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/critical-things-ridiculously-successful-people-do-every-bradberry>

"Having close access to ultra-successful people can yield some pretty incredible information about who they really are, what makes them tick, and, most importantly, what makes them so successful and productive. Kevin Kruse is one such person. He recently interviewed over 200 ultra-successful people, including 7 billionaires, 13 Olympians, and a host of accomplished entrepreneurs. One of his most revealing sources of information came from their answers to a simple open-ended question:

"What is your number one secret to productivity?"

In analyzing their responses, Kruse coded the answers to yield some fascinating suggestions. What follows are some of my favorites from Kevin's findings.

They focus on minutes, not hours - highly successful people know that there is nothing more valuable than time. Money can be lost and made again, but time spent can never be reclaimed. You must master your minutes to master your life.

They focus on only one thing - Ultra-productive people know what their "Most Important Task" is and work on it for one to two hours each morning, without interruptions. That's what you should dedicate your mornings to every day.

They don't use to-do lists - Highly productive people put everything on their calendar and then work and live by that calendar.

They beat procrastination with time travel - Successful people figure out what they can do now to make certain their future selves will do the right thing. Anticipate how you will self-sabotage in the future, and come up with a solution today to defeat your future self.

They make it home for dinner - Highly successful people know what they value in life. Yes, work, but also what else they value. For many, these other values include family time, exercise, and giving back.

They use a notebook - Ultra-productive people free their minds by writing everything down as the thoughts come to them.

They process e-mails only a few times a day - Ultra-productive people don't "check" their e-mail throughout the day. They schedule time to process their e-mails quickly and efficiently. For some, that's only once a day; for others, it's morning, noon, and night.

They avoid meetings at all costs - Meetings are notorious time killers. They start late, have the wrong people in them, meander around their topics, and run long. You should get out of meetings whenever you can and hold fewer of them yourself. If you do run a meeting, keep it short and to the point.

They say "no" to almost everything - Billionaire Warren Buffet once said, "The difference between successful people and very successful people is that very successful people say 'no' to almost everything." Remember, you only have 1,440 minutes in a day. Don't give them away easily.

They follow the 80/20 rule - Known as the Pareto Principle, in most cases, 80% of results come from only 20% of activities. Ultra-productive people know which activities drive the greatest results..

They delegate almost everything - Ultra-productive people ask, “How can this task get done?” They take the I out of it as much as possible. They don’t have control issues, and they are not micro-managers..

They touch things only once - Highly successful people try to “touch it once.” If it takes less than five or ten minutes—whatever it is—they deal with it right then and there. It reduces stress, since it won’t be in the back of their minds, and it is more efficient, since they won’t have to re-read or re-evaluate the item again in the future.

They practice a consistent morning routine - highly successful people nurture their bodies in the morning with water, a healthy breakfast, and light exercise, and they nurture their minds with meditation or prayer, inspirational reading, or journaling.

Energy is everything - Highly successful people don’t skip meals, sleep, or breaks in the pursuit of more, more, more. Instead, they view food as fuel, sleep as recovery, and breaks as opportunities to recharge in order to get even more done.”

Unique Habits of Ridiculously Likeable People (Jun 5, 2016)

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/unique-habits-ridiculously-likeable-people-dr-travis-bradberry>

“When I speak to smaller audiences, I often ask them to describe the most likeable people they have ever worked with. People inevitably ignore innate characteristics (intelligence, extraversion, attractiveness, and so on) and instead focus on qualities that are completely under people’s control, such as approachability, humility, and positivity.

Being likeable is under your control, and it’s a matter of emotional intelligence. Unlike innate, fixed characteristics, such as your intelligence (IQ), EQ is a flexible skill that you can improve with effort.

The key behaviors that emotionally intelligent people engage in that make them so likeable.

They are genuine - Being genuine and honest is essential to being likeable. People gravitate toward those who are genuine because they know they can trust them. By concentrating on what drives you and makes you happy as an individual, you become a much more interesting person than if you attempt to win people over by making choices that you think will make them like you.

They ask thoughtful questions - The biggest mistake people make when it comes to listening is they’re so focused on what they’re going to say next or how what the other person is saying is going to affect them that they fail to hear what’s being said. A simple way to avoid this is to ask a lot of questions. People like to know you’re listening. You’ll be surprised how much respect and appreciation you gain just by asking questions.

They don’t pass judgment - If you want to be likeable you must be open-minded. No one wants to have a conversation with someone who has already formed an opinion and is not willing to listen.

They don’t seek attention - You don’t need to develop a big, extroverted personality to be likeable. When you speak in a friendly, confident, and concise manner, you will notice that people are much more attentive and persuadable than if you try to show them you’re important. The fact that you pay attention to others and appreciate their help will show that you’re appreciative and humble—two adjectives that are closely tied to likeability.

They are consistent - To be consistent you must be reliable, and you must ensure that even when your mood goes up and down it doesn’t affect how you treat other people.

They use positive body language - Using an enthusiastic tone, uncrossing your arms, maintaining eye contact, and leaning towards the person who’s speaking are all forms of positive body language that high-EQ people use to draw others in. It’s true that how you say something can be more important than what you say.

They leave a strong first impression. First impressions are tied intimately to positive body language. Strong posture, a firm handshake, smiling, and opening your shoulders to the person you are talking to will help ensure that your first impression is a good one.

They greet people by name - Likeable people make certain they use others' names every time they see them. Research shows that people feel validated when the person they're speaking with refers to them by name during a conversation. If you're great with faces but have trouble with names, have some fun with it and make remembering people's names a brain exercise

They smile - People naturally (and unconsciously) mirror the body language of the person they're talking to. If you want people to like you, smile at them during a conversation and they will unconsciously return the favor and feel good as a result.

They know who to touch (and they touch them) - When you touch someone during a conversation, you release oxytocin in their brain, a neurotransmitter that makes their brain associate you with trust and a slew of other positive feelings. A simple touch on the shoulder, a hug, or a friendly handshake is all it takes to release oxytocin. Relationships are built not just from words, but also from general feelings about each other. Touching someone appropriately is a great way to show you care.

They balance passion and fun - People gravitate toward those who are passionate. Likeable people balance their passion with the ability to have fun. They remember what you said to them yesterday or last week, which shows that you're just as important to them as their work."

So are the skills and traits of these two lists mutually exclusive? Can one be a likeable successful business owner? Dr Bradberry has this to say about his listed qualities of 'likeable' people: "These qualities, and others like them, describe people who are skilled in emotional intelligence (EQ). [TalentSmart](#) research data from more than a million people shows that people who possess these skills aren't just highly likeable, they outperform those who don't by a large margin. Ninety percent of top performers have high EQs, people with high EQs make \$29,000 more annually than people with low EQs, and a single-point increase in your EQ adds \$1,300 to your salary."

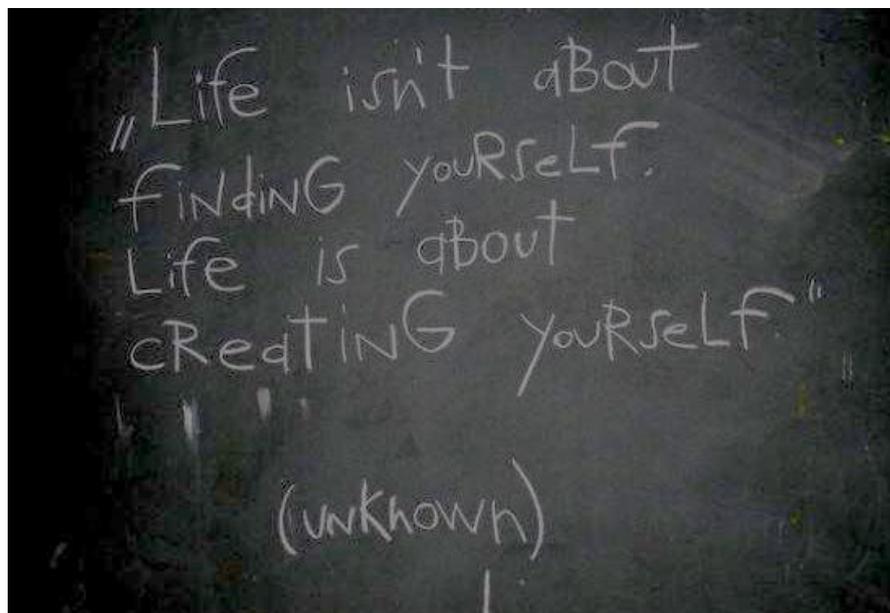
Send your comment on the articles and Dr Bradberry's summing up to admin@wellnessaustralia.org.

Maintain your Wellness endeavours to remain healthy this season.



Bob Boyd
NWIA President

Quote for the month



International Wellness Connections

This is the 39th article of a series featuring information from International Wellness Practitioners about the state of Wellness in their country of residence. This and any following International Connections monthly article has appeared in the National Wellness Institute (USA) monthly newsletter, at least 12 months previous to it appearing in this publication.

NWIA extends a sincere thank you to the authors for their contributions to the NWIA newsletter.

[Chile Risks Losing Ground In the Sustainability of Its Corporate Wellness Programs](#)

Posted By NWI, Tuesday, June 02, 2015

by Volney Vásquez
Founder and President, Promondo S.P.A., Chile

For years, many different Chilean companies have joined the global trend of taking over the wellness of employees in the workplace. However, what are the causes that have recently led some companies to progressively decrease or cut investment in these programs? What might be the formulas to change this course?

Chile has been one of the fastest growing countries in the world during the last 25 years. Its economy shows this, Corporate Wellness Programs prove it, and our experience of 25 years in the field confirms it. Overcoming the problems with the position of the brand, sales, administration, and the connection with the environment and cash flow, companies begin to focus on the importance of people. This was no different for companies in Chile. Once they had covered all basic needs of business support, they turned to the people and now various companies in our country have a wellness program for their workers, not only for them, but also for their families. They generally cover the well know area of: stress management, physical activity, sports, financial management, psychological support, financial control, health insurance, counseling and nutritional control, education assistance, entrepreneurship courses, crafts, food virtual platforms inducing health and wellbeing, wellness coaching, etc.

However, signs of disillusionment are appearing because of a perceived lack of Return on Investment (ROI). The most common claim at the companies is that people don't participate, don't compromise or take advantage of this "bundle of benefits." Let's talk about only one example of what is happening in the workplaces: fewer companies are planning to install corporate gyms at their facilities. Indeed, some of them are closing these projects as participation is low and it doesn't justify the administration costs and square meters use that these initiatives demand.

In Chile, surveys show that we have a physically active population bordering on 12% (people who perform physical activity three times a week for 30 minutes or more). Even with gyms in the workplace, company data shows that only 15% of workers are physically active. Five percent (5%) exercise at places that they choose and the remaining 80% do nothing, they are sedentary. On the issue of corporate restaurants something similar occurs. Even when the supply of healthy food is cheap (\$4 for a complete and healthy lunch, with funding from the company), people prefer to bring their own snacks or leave work to buy a cheaper (and usually less healthy) food, often leading to the cancellation of the initiative to have a better offer in the corporate setting. Sports and physical activity programs aimed at promoting weight loss don't meet their objectives. People lose and gain weight like a yo-yo. Companies implement courses for "stress management" as 60% of workers in Chile have a medical license for stress at work each year. Yet only 30% of those affected participate in these courses which provide tools to help them overcome the problem.

Extensive meta-evaluations by major specialists in the field of health promotion like Larry Chapman (2012), among others, show that the benefit that companies achieve by implementing programs of Health and Wellness is a good "business" and that the ROI is always positive.

Some employers in Chile don't see it that way.

A CEO of a major Chilean company told me last week, "In 2014 we invested \$300 per worker in wellness programs and we are not satisfied. We couldn't see improvements in productivity, health indicators or clients satisfaction, we are disappointed. We will shorten the 2015 budget for these items. But notice that we still think that the workplace is the best instance for people to change their behavior and generate learning, given the significant amount of time they dedicate to working life."

Reliable data shows that between 2010 and 2014 in Chile companies invested over 80 million dollars annually in health and wellness programs for their workers-significant amounts of money.

Why are people not motivated or not committed as expected by those designing such strategies? Do we need a better leadership in the strategy circle to permeate the collaborators? Should companies ask people what they would like to do to feel good and happier, enjoying what they do and what they get? Are people too tired or too busy with other activities? Do they expect more attractive offers from their employers? Has the economic well-being achieved changed our concerns to more mundane issues, or having more fun, more holidays and less willingness to keep us healthy? Is it enough to believe that the only important factor is personal motivation or that a fundamental role is played by the country's organizational culture to mobilize people?

I imagine these are the same questions that we who work in health promotion and wellness ask ourselves in each of our countries. We are facing a serious problem, which is to restore the credibility of the companies in the initial promise we have made them, "We are able to transform the habits and behaviors of your collaborators, moving them towards healthier ways of living and this will impact in their work performance ." But apparently we're failing. The reasons why wellness programs are not working at the companies can be different. The lack of knowledge and training of the people who lead and manage these programs within companies could be one of them; the urgent need to show instant results could be another; the lack of a corporate policy for Health, Wellness and Quality of Life too; continuing to cling to an outdated paradigm, failure to create a truly supportive workplace health and wellbeing culture, the need for companies to listen to specialists, could be another. Could it be that we should think about changing the way of being in the workplace, the way to relate to each other, how to behave, to lead, to live, with the purpose of making these solutions successful and people more open and willing to participate and compromise?

Our questions are: How do we stop this shift? What are we, the specialists of this field not doing well? How can we support the management of companies in the health and wellness solutions? The need to find answers and react is urgent because we know that the first thing companies cut in response to financial adversity, restructurings, recessionary cycles or changes in corporate governance, is our wellness programs or solutions. For now we, Promondo, leaders in Chile in wellness solutions in the workplace, are committed to this complex task.



Volney Vásquez is a physical education professor, Master in Sport Management, and diplomat in High Sport managing. He is the founder and president of Promondo S.P.A. (since 1990), a Chilean company for health, wellness, and quality of life. He is a member of Nutrirse Council and Quality of Life Council of Accion RSE (Responsibility Social Enterprises) in Santiago, Chile, assessor Health Promotion Department Minister of Public Health Republic of Chile. Vásquez co-authored a chapter in the book "Global Perspectives in Workplace Health Promotion." He was a professional soccer player until 1978 and professional cyclist until 1986, as well as a cycling coach of European professional teams until 1990. Presently, he is assessor of many Chilean companies in the health promotion area. Vásquez is president of the "International Forum of Corporative Health" and is a permanent assistant in the IHPM Annual Congress, American Journal of Health Promotion Congress, Brazilian Association of Quality of Life Annual Congress, Annual Congress CPH Sao Paulo Brazil and the Annual Congress of IIHP Washington, D.C.

Paleo Diet More Effective For Weight Loss Than Previously Thought, Research Finds



The popular diet, known as the Paleo diet, is more effective for weight loss than following the recommended Australian dietary guidelines, research has found.

Key points:

- Women on Paleo diet lost on average 2kg
 - Researchers remain cautious to recommend diets that cut out whole food groups
- People on Paleo diet lost weight because they ate fewer calories

But the long-term health effects of eating a Paleo diet remain unclear.

Experts from Edith Cowan University (ECU) put 39 healthy women on either a standard Australian diet or a Paleo diet for four weeks.

The Paleo diet encourages consumption of fruits, vegetables, lean meats, nuts and eggs. But grains, legumes and dairy are banned.

Lead researcher Angela Genoni said women on the Paleo diet lost an average of two kilograms more over the period than the standard diet group.

"While both groups lost weight over the period, the Paleo group lost an average of 4.3 per cent of their body weight over the testing period, compared to 1.6 per cent for the recommended dietary guidelines group," she said.

Those on the standard diet were asked to increase vegetable and fruit intake and whole grain products, reduce fat intake, and consume low fat dairy products.

"Advice was also given to reduce intake of discretionary food items, such as cakes, biscuits, sugary drinks and candy," the research noted.

Scientists from ECU's School of Medical and Health Science also compared the impact of the diets on cardiovascular health and found no significant difference between the two diets.

But researchers said despite the weight loss on a Paleo diet, they were cautious about advocating any diet that cuts out whole food groups.

"Significantly, the Paleo diet markedly reduces the calcium intake relative to the [standard healthy guidelines] diet because it excludes all dairy products, which could have a negative impact on bone strength, particularly in older people," Ms Genoni said.

Too soon to recommend Paleo diet: experts

Health experts said people on the Paleo diet lost weight because they ate fewer calories.

"Our results showed loss of weight was significantly associated with the reduction in energy intake, and percentage of daily energy from protein," Ms Genoni said.

But they conceded a higher intake of protein could cause health problems in the long term.

"The potential impact of high protein intakes over long-term periods require further investigation, as the association with elevated blood sugar and insulin resistance remains unclear," the research said.

ECU associate professor Amanda Devine said more research was needed to fully understand the health implications of the Paleo diet.

"There is much more to health than simply weight, so dietary patterns that exclude entire food groups are likely to impact overall health due to a reduction in food variety, therefore further research is required in healthy subjects to assess the long term health impacts," she said.

The study found cutting out food groups in the Paleo dieters led to significant reductions in vitamins such as thiamin, riboflavin and calcium.

"Larger studies are recommended to assess the impact of the diets over a longer term," the research said.

Future studies are planned to focus on the impact of the Paleo diet on gut health.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-05-27/paleo-diet-effective-for-weight-loss:-research/7449916>

Abstract:

(1) Background: The Paleolithic diet is popular in Australia, however, limited literature surrounds the dietary pattern. Our primary aim was to compare the Paleolithic diet with the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGHE) in terms of anthropometric, metabolic and cardiovascular risk factors, with a secondary aim to examine the macro and micronutrient composition of both dietary patterns; (2) Methods: 39 healthy women (mean \pm SD age 47 ± 13 years, BMI 27 ± 4 kg/m²) were randomised to either the Paleolithic (n = 22) or AGHE diet (n = 17) for four weeks. Three-day weighed food records, body composition and biochemistry data were collected pre and post intervention; (3) Results: Significantly greater weight loss occurred in the Paleolithic group (-1.99 kg, 95% CI $-2.9, -1.0$), $p < 0.001$). There were no differences in cardiovascular and metabolic markers between groups. The Paleolithic group had lower intakes of carbohydrate (-14.63% of energy (E), 95% CI $-19.5, -9.7$), sodium (-1055 mg/day, 95% CI $-1593, -518$), calcium (-292 mg/day 95% CI $-486.0, -99.0$) and iodine (-47.9 μ g/day, 95% CI $-79.2, -16.5$) and higher intakes of fat (9.39% of E, 95% CI $3.7, 15.1$) and β -carotene (6777 μ g/day 95% CI $2144, 11410$) (all $p < 0.01$); (4) Conclusions: The Paleolithic diet induced greater changes in body composition over the short-term intervention, however, larger studies are recommended to assess the impact of the Paleolithic vs. AGHE diets on metabolic and cardiovascular risk factors in healthy populations.

<http://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/8/5/314/html>



Lessons Today's Banks Should Take From Great Depression Chicago

New research highlights strong connection between bank health and real estate investments For the first time link between 1920s real estate boom and bank failures quantitatively tested

New research from the University of Warwick serves as a warning to banks not to over invest in mortgages. The study was conducted by Dr Natacha Postel-Vinay who examined the state of banks in 1920s Chicago, the city which had the highest urban bank failure rate in the Great Depression.

Dr Postel-Vinay who is based at the University's Department of Economics said: "Chicago had been known by historians as undergoing a severe real estate boom and bust in the 1920s - but no-one had actually undertaken to quantitatively test the link between this real estate boom and the bank failures. "A majority of banks failed in Chicago which makes it particularly important to study if one wants to find out about causes of bank failures generally."

Her research is released the same month that Britain's biggest building society, the Nationwide, announced it is increasing the maximum age of its mortgages to 85 and Barclays bank introduces a 100% mortgage - the first since the banking crisis.

For her study Dr Postel-Vinay analysed hand-collected bank balance sheet data from 1923 to 1933. Her paper, 'What caused Chicago bank failures in the great Depression? A look at the 1920s' has been published in the June edition of the *Journal of Economic History*. In it she shows that mortgages mattered for banks more from an illiquidity point of view than from a quality point of view. In the Great Depression banks did not make any significant losses on these loans as their sizes were small relative to property prices. Nevertheless their lack of liquidity (due to long maturities) posed a significant problem for banks when they came to face a liquidity crisis.

In the 1920s Chicago underwent a significant real estate boom and bust. Dr Postel-Vinay's paper highlights that banks that invested too much in mortgages in the 1920s were more likely to fail in the 1930s depression. Dr Postel-Vinay believes that this is of significance to today's banks. She states that because although we know that in the recent banking crisis real estate was an important cause of bank trouble, few people know this was already the case in the Great Depression. By suggesting some continuity between the 1930s events and the 2000s, her paper lends further support to the idea that there may be strong connections between bank health and real estate investments. Although in the recent crisis banks actually made losses on mortgages, their inherent lack of liquidity was also a source of weakness.

Dr Postel-Vinay added: "The general lesson I draw for banking supervision policy is that 'liquidity risk management matters:' although today real estate loans have gained in liquidity thanks to securitisation, they are still fundamentally less liquid than other types of investment - therefore banks should think twice before loading up on those in good times."

What caused Chicago bank failures in the great Depression? A look at the 1920s' has been published in the June edition of the *Journal of Economic History* doi: 10.1017/S002205071600053X <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/>



Why Everyone Wants To Help The Sick -- But Not The Unemployed

New research from Aarhus BSS at Aarhus University explains why healthcare costs are running out of control, while costs to unemployment protection are kept in line. The answer is found deep in our psychology, where powerful intuitions lead us to view illness as the result of bad luck and worthy of help.

Illness and unemployment are two types of ordinary risks to which we are all exposed. But from a historical perspective, unemployment and illness represent two very different types of risks. Unemployment came about as a result of the industrialisation, while illness is something the human species has faced for millions of years. This difference is reflected in current-day political attitudes.

"People across countries are very positive towards the healthcare sector, but are not necessarily that inclined to give money to the unemployed. Why do people generally prefer helping the ill and not the unemployed?" This is the question posed by two professors in political science, Carsten Jensen and Michael Bang Petersen, from Aarhus University.

Using techniques to uncover people's implicit intuitions, the researchers explored the fundamental differences behind our attitudes towards unemployment benefits and healthcare. According to the researchers, the differences may be found in the evolutionary history of our species.

"For millions of years, a need for health care reflected accidents such as broken legs or random infections. Evolution could therefore have built our psychology to think about illnesses in this way, as something we have no control over. People everywhere seem to have this deep-seated intuition that ill people are unfortunate and deserve to be helped," Michael Bang Petersen explains.

Agreement across countries and political ideologies

Even countries like the US, which you would normally not associate with the term welfare state, healthcare costs are enormous. The researchers did research in both Denmark, the US and Japan and found that everywhere people intuitively believed that people who fall ill are unlucky, while unemployed people have brought it on themselves.

"Because we have this psychological tendency to regard people who are ill as unlucky, people's attitude towards the sick are extremely difficult to change," Carsten Jensen explains.

In modern societies, more people die from lifestyle diseases than from broken legs and infections, and there are considerable socio-economic differences in who will suffer from these lifestyle diseases. But we continue to think of illness as random accidents. This even applies across the political spectrum, where conservatives who normally oppose government spending think of ill people as unfortunate and deserving of care.

"The traditional attitudinal factors such as self-interest, access to information and political ideology do not really matter in the healthcare area," says Michael Bang Petersen and continues:

"When it comes to healthcare, everyone seem united in the belief that people who are ill are unlucky and need help. This means that the policies in the areas of health care and unemployment are very different, as we all more or less agree on the goal in healthcare, while we deeply disagree on whether or not unemployed people deserve help."

Pressure on the politicians

Increased healthcare spending is often explained by the supply of health - i.e. the costs of new technology and medicine. But the researchers from Aarhus University argue that when it comes to the rising costs of healthcare, we are also dealing with demand. Politicians find it hard not to accommodate people's demand for better healthcare, and no one wants to be seen as responsible for a health scandal.

<http://www.au.dk/>



Are They Friends Or Not? Just A Second Of Laughter Can Reveal Relationship Status, Study Finds

Hearing other people laugh together, even for just one second, can be enough information to gauge whether or not those people are friends, according to a UCLA study.

The research, co-authored by Greg Bryant, a UCLA professor of communication studies, was [published](#) in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. It found that the phenomenon holds true in societies around the world — and that when people hear two females laughing together, they are highly likely to assume the women are

friends, even when they are not.

Bryant and 32 collaborators across the globe, including Daniel Fessler, a UCLA professor of anthropology, and Riccardo Fusaroli, an assistant professor at the Interacting Minds Center of Aarhus University in Denmark, were interested in better understanding the communicative functions of co-laughter.

They played 48 short audio clips of two people laughing together for 966 listeners from 24 different societies. The listeners included people from hunter-gatherer and other traditional small-scale populations, working-class urban groups, and college students.

The laughter was recorded during conversations between pairs of undergraduate students at UC Santa Cruz — some who were friends and some who were recently acquainted strangers. Recordings captured the simultaneous laughter of two women, two men, and a woman and man together. Overall, listeners from every society could correctly identify whether the people they were hearing were friends or strangers 61 percent of the time.

The scenario in which listeners were best able to judge the relationship correctly was when two women friends were laughing together — listeners were accurate more than 80 percent of the time.

In past research, Bryant has investigated the idea that listeners can tell the difference between involuntary, or spontaneous, laughter and volitional, or “fake,” laughter. His findings indicate that the different kinds of laughs are produced by different vocal systems and that they have different communicative functions.

The current study suggests that laughter between friends is generally more spontaneous, and that listeners across the globe can hear the difference.

Bryant said he was surprised at how consistently participants, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, presumed that co-laughter between women meant that those women were friends.

“Obviously there is an assumption about female relationships at work,” Bryant said. “People from around the world assume that when two females are laughing together that they are friends. This is consistent with other research showing that women take longer than men to develop friendships that result in genuine co-laughter.”

He added that the dynamics of co-laughter might also hint at important universal differences in friendship patterns between the sexes.

The authors write that the findings shed light on how the evolutionary development of laughter might have facilitated the evolution of cooperation.

“In a highly cooperative species such as ours, it is important for individuals to correctly identify the social alliances of others,” Bryant said. “If laughter helps people accomplish that, it has likely played a role in social communication leading to cooperative interactions.”

The researchers also examined the sound features of the laughs. They found that the clips judged as simultaneous laughter between friends were characterized by greater irregularities in the pitch and loudness of the laughs, as well as faster bursts of sound, all of which are usually associated with excitement and spontaneous, genuine emotion.

Can you tell the difference in the sounds between friends laughing versus strangers laughing?

<http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/friends-or-not-laughter-reveal-friendship-status-ucla-study>



How The Brain Makes -- And Breaks -- A Habit

Neuroscience study identifies brain chemicals and neural pathway involved in switching between habitual behavior and deliberate decision-making

Not all habits are bad. Some are even necessary. It's a good thing, for example, that we can find our way home on "autopilot" or wash our hands without having to ponder every step. But inability to switch from acting habitually to acting in a deliberate way can underlie addiction and obsessive compulsive disorders.

Working with a mouse model, an international team of researchers demonstrates what happens in the brain for habits to control behavior.

The study is published in *Neuron* and was led by Christina Gremel, assistant professor of psychology at the University of California San Diego, who began the work as a postdoctoral researcher at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism of the National Institutes of Health. Senior authors on the study are Rui Costa, of the Champalimaud Centre for the Unknown in Lisbon, and David Lovinger of the NIAAA/NIH.

The study provides the strongest evidence to date, Gremel said, that the brain's circuits for habitual and goal-directed action compete for control - in the orbitofrontal cortex, a decision-making area of the brain - and that neurochemicals called endocannabinoids allow for habit to take over, by acting as a sort of brake on the goal-directed circuit.

Endocannabinoids are a class of chemicals produced naturally by humans and other animals. Receptors for endocannabinoids are found throughout the body and brain, and the endocannabinoid system is implicated in a variety of physiological processes - including appetite, pain sensation, mood and memory. It is also the system that mediates the psychoactive effects of cannabis.

Earlier work by Gremel and Costa had shown that the orbitofrontal cortex, or OFC, is an important brain area for relaying information on goal-directed action. They found that by increasing the output of neurons in the OFC with a technique called optogenetics - precisely turning neurons on and off with flashes of light - they increased goal-directed actions. In contrast, when they decreased activity in the same area with a chemical approach, they disrupted goal-directed actions and the mice relied on habit instead.

"Habit takes over when the OFC is quieted," Gremel said.

In the current study, since endocannabinoids are known to reduce the activity of neurons in general, the researchers hypothesized that endocannabinoids may be quieting or reducing activity in the OFC and, with it, the ability to shift to goal-directed action. They focused particularly on neurons projecting from the OFC into the dorsomedial striatum.

They trained mice to perform the same lever-pressing action for the same food reward but in two different environments that differentially bias the development of goal-directed versus habitual actions. Like humans who don't suffer from neuropsychiatric disorders, healthy mice will readily shift between performing the same action using a goal-directed versus habitual action strategy. To stick with the earlier example of getting home, we can switch the homing autopilot off and shift to goal-directed behavior when we need to get to a new or different location.

To test their hypothesis on the role played by endocannabinoids, the researchers then deleted a particular endocannabinoid receptor, called cannabinoid type 1, or CB1, in the OFC-to-striatum pathway. Mice missing these

receptors did not form habits - showing the critical role played by the neurochemicals as well as that particular pathway.

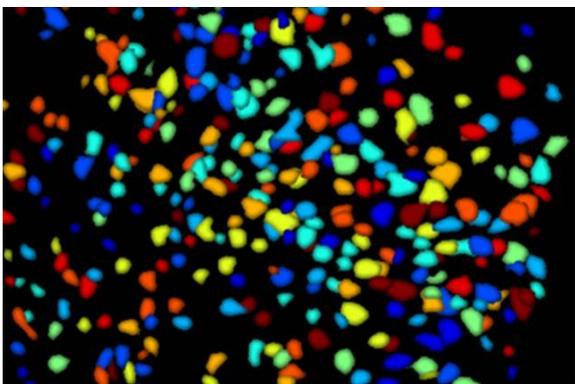
"We need a balance between habitual and goal-directed actions. For everyday function, we need to be able to make routine actions quickly and efficiently, and habits serve this purpose," Gremel said. "However, we also encounter changing circumstances, and need the capacity to 'break habits' and perform a goal-directed action based on updated information. When we can't, there can be devastating consequences."

The findings may suggest, the authors say, a new therapeutic target for people suffering from OCD or addictions: To stop overreliance on habit and restore the ability to shift from habit to goal-directed action, it may be helpful to treat the brain's endocannabinoid system and so reduce habitual control over behavior. Treatment could be pharmaceutical or might involve behavioral therapy. Further research is needed.

This research was supported by the NIAAA Division of Intramural Clinical and Biological Research, ERA-NET, European Research Council (COG 617142) and HHMI (IEC 55007415) grants to Costa and a Pathway to Independence Award (R00 AA021780) and NARSAD Young Investigator Grant from the Brain & Behavior Research Foundation to Gremel.

In addition to Gremel, Costa and Lovenger, the study's co-authors are Jessica Chancey, Brady Atwood and Guoxiang Luo of the NIAA; Rachael Neve of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Charu Ramakrishnan and Karl Deisseroth of Stanford University.

<http://www.ucsd.edu/>



Study Identifies How Brain Connects Memories Across Time

Neuroscientists Boost Ability Of Aging Brain To Recapture Links Between Related Memories

Using a miniature microscope that opens a window into the brain, UCLA neuroscientists have identified in mice how the brain links different memories over time. While aging weakens these connections, the team devised a way for the middle-aged brain to reconnect separate memories.

The findings, which were published today in the advance online edition of Nature, suggest a possible intervention for people suffering from age-related memory problems.

"Until now, neuroscientists have focused on how the brain creates and stores single memories," said principal investigator Alcino Silva, a professor of neurobiology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. "We wanted to explore how the brain links two memories and whether the passage of time affects the strength of the connection."

"In the real world, memories don't happen in isolation," said first author Denise Cai, a researcher in Silva's lab. "Our past experiences influence the creation of new memories and help us predict what to expect and make informed decisions in the future." In an intricate experiment, the UCLA team tested in young and middle-aged mice whether the brain linked memories of experiences separated by five hours versus seven days.

Watching neurons in real time

The lab used a miniature microscope, called a Miniscope, which was developed by UCLA neuroscientists Dr. Peyman Golshani, Baljit Khakh and Silva with funding from the presidential BRAIN Initiative and the Geffen School. The instrument's powerful camera allowed the scientists to peer into the brains of young mice and observe their cells in action. The tiny, head-mounted microscope illuminated the animals' neurons firing as the mice moved freely in their natural environments.

For 10 minutes at a time, each mouse was placed in three boxes, all unique in terms of fragrance, shape, lighting and flooring. A week's time separated placement in the first and second boxes. Only five hours separated time spent in the second and third boxes, where the mouse later received a small shock to the foot.

Two days later, the team returned each mouse to all three boxes. As expected, the mice froze with fear when it recognized the inside of the third box. What happened next, however, came as a surprise.

"The mouse also froze in the second box, where no shock occurred," Silva observed. "This suggests that the mouse transferred its memory of the shock in the third box to its experience in the second box five hours earlier."

When Silva and Cai examined the animals' brains, the neural activity confirmed their hypothesis. "The same brain cells that recorded the mouse's shock in the third box also encoded its memory of the second box a few hours earlier," Cai said.

"We saw 20 percent more overlap in the neural circuits that recorded the animal's experiences in the memories that unfolded closer in time."

In other words, says Silva, "The memories became interrelated in how they were encoded and stored by the brain, such that the recall of one memory triggered the recall of another memory related in time."

Exciting the brain

Based on an earlier Silva finding, the team knew that a cell is most likely to encode a memory when it's aroused and ready to fire. Neuroscientists refer to this condition as excitability.

"The excitable brain is already warmed up," Silva said. "It's like stretching your muscles before exercise or revving your car engine before you drive."

Suspecting that aging weakens neurons' ability to fully excite, the UCLA researchers conducted a similar experiment in middle-aged mice. They introduced each of the mice to two boxes, five hours apart, and administered a foot shock in the second box.

When they returned the animals to the boxes two days later, the results could not have been more clear-cut. "The older mice froze only in the box where they had received a shock," Cai explained. "They did not react in the first box."

A glimpse into the Miniscopes confirmed that the brains of the mice did not connect the two memories; each memory was encoded on its own neural circuit.

Rescuing lost connections

Next the team focused on boosting the older animals' ability to link memories. Cai used a biological tool to excite

neurons in a tiny part of the hippocampus — the memory center of the brain — before introducing the mice to the first box. She stimulated the same cells before placing the mice in the first box and the second box, where they received a foot shock two days later.

“The proof in the pudding arrived when we reintroduced the middle-aged mice to the first box,” Silva said. “The animals froze — they now linked the shock that happened in the second box to the first. This suggests that increased excitability had reversed their age-related inability to link memories.” Cai and Silva are currently testing an FDA-approved drug’s effect on the ability of middle-aged mice to connect memories.

The work was supported by the National Institute on Aging, the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke and the Dr. Miriam and Sheldon G. Adelson Medical Research Foundation. The National Institute of Mental Health and the dean’s fund at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA provided funding to Silva, Khakh and Golshani to develop the miniaturized microscopes.

<http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/ucla-study-identifies-how-brain-connects-memories-across-time>



To Reduce Pre-Alzheimer’s Cognitive Impairment, Get To The Yoga Mat

UCLA study finds yoga, meditation more effective than memory-boosting exercises

Inner peace and a flexible body may not be the most valuable benefits that yoga and meditation have to offer, suggests new research by a UCLA-led team of neuroscientists.

The team found that a three-month course of yoga and meditation practice helped minimize the cognitive and emotional problems that often precede Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia — and that it was even more effective than the memory enhancement exercises that have been considered the gold standard for managing mild cognitive impairment.

“Memory training was comparable to yoga with meditation in terms of improving memory, but yoga provided a broader benefit than memory training because it also helped with mood, anxiety and coping skills,” said Helen Lavretsky, the study’s senior author and a professor in residence in UCLA’s department of psychiatry.

People with mild cognitive impairment are two-and-a-half times more likely to develop Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia.

The study, which appears May 10 in the *Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease*, is the first to compare outcomes from yoga and meditation with those from memory training, which incorporates activities ranging from crossword puzzles to commercially available computer programs. The study of 25 participants, all over the age of 55, measured changes not just in behavior but also in brain activity.

“Historically and anecdotally, yoga has been thought to be beneficial in aging well, but this is the scientific demonstration of that benefit,” said Harris Eyre, the study’s lead author, a doctoral candidate at Australia’s University of Adelaide and a former Fulbright scholar at UCLA’s Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior. “We’re converting historical wisdom into the high level of evidence required for doctors to recommend therapy to their patients.”

Lavretsky and Eyre studied participants who had reported issues with their memory, such as tendencies to forget names, faces or appointments or to misplace things. Subjects underwent memory tests and brain scans at the beginning and end of the study.

Eleven participants received one hour a week of memory enhancement training and spent 20 minutes a day performing memory exercises — verbal and visual association and other practical strategies for improving memory, based on research-backed techniques.

The other 14 participants took a one-hour class once a week in Kundalini yoga and practiced Kirtan Kriya meditation at home for 20 minutes each day. Kirtan Kriya, which involves chanting, hand movements and visualization of light, has been practiced for hundreds of years in India as a way to prevent cognitive decline in older adults, Lavretsky said.

After 12 weeks, the researchers saw similar improvements among participants in both groups in verbal memory skills — which come into play for remembering names and lists of words. But those who had practiced yoga and meditation had better improvements than the other subjects in visual–spatial memory skills, which come into play for recalling locations and navigating while walking or driving.

The yoga–meditation group also had better results in terms of reducing depression and anxiety and improving coping skills and resilience to stress. That’s important because coming to terms with cognitive impairment can be emotionally difficult.

“When you have memory loss, you can get quite anxious about that and it can lead to depression,” said Lavretsky, who is also a researcher at the Semel Institute.

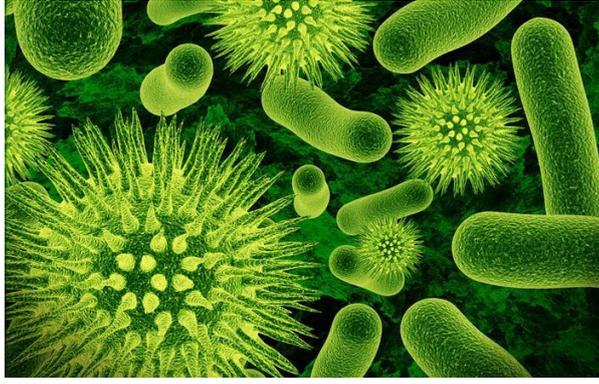
The researchers report that the participants’ outward improvements in memory corresponded with perceptible changes in their brain activity. Using functional magnetic resonance imaging, they showed that subjects in both groups had changes in their brain connectivity, but the changes among the yoga group were statistically significant, whereas the changes in the memory group were not.

The researchers attribute the positive “brain fitness” effects of mindful exercise to several factors, including its abilities to reduce stress and inflammation, improve mood and resilience, and enhance production of brain-derived neurotrophic growth factor, a protein that stimulates connections between neurons and kick-start telomerase activity, a process that replaces lost or damaged genetic material.

“If you or your relatives are trying to improve your memory or offset the risk for developing memory loss or dementia, a regular practice of yoga and meditation could be a simple, safe and low-cost solution to improving your brain fitness,” Lavretsky said.

The study was funded by the Alzheimer’s Research and Prevention Foundation.

<http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/reduce-risk-alzheimers-skip-lumosity-get-onto-yoga-mat>



Gut Bacteria May Contribute To Poor Health In Patients With Kidney Disease

Accumulation of a bacterial metabolite that's normally excreted may increase risk of heart disease and early death

Highlights

- In patients with chronic kidney disease, those with more advanced disease had higher blood levels of the bacterial metabolite phenylacetylglutamine.
- Patients with high phenylacetylglutamine had an elevated risk of developing cardiovascular disease as well as a heightened risk of dying prematurely.
- An estimated 10% of the population worldwide is affected by chronic kidney disease.

Washington, DC (May 26, 2016) -- In patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD), the accumulation of a gut bacterial metabolite that's normally excreted in urine may contribute to serious health problems. The findings come from a study appearing in an upcoming issue of the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology* (JASN).

Chronic kidney disease is associated with a heightened risk of premature death and cardiovascular disease. The accumulation of certain factors that are normally excreted by the healthy kidney likely play a role in this elevated risk. More specifically, metabolites generated by gut bacteria are prime candidates due to their toxic nature and the body's dependence on the kidney for their excretion.

A team led by Björn Meijers, MD PhD and Ruben Poesen, MD (University Hospitals Leuven, in Belgium) studied one such metabolite, called phenylacetylglutamine (PAG), in 488 patients with CKD. After following the patients for an average of 3.5 years, the researchers found that blood levels of PAG were higher in patients with more advanced CKD. In addition, patients with high PAG had an elevated risk of developing cardiovascular disease as well as a heightened risk of dying during follow-up.

"There has been increasing awareness that the gut microbiota is not only pivotal for human health but is also involved in various disease processes, including obesity and diabetes mellitus," said Dr. Meijers. "This study adds evidence that the gut microbiota may likewise be a contributor to the disease burden in patients with a diminished kidney function. Furthermore, this knowledge may pave the way for novel therapeutic interventions by both dietary measures and drugs, thereby hopefully improving the prognosis and quality of life of kidney disease patients." Additional studies are needed to uncover the mechanisms underlying the potential toxic nature of these microbial metabolites and to determine whether reducing them may improve patients' health.

Study co-authors include Kathleen Claes, MD, PhD, Pieter Evenepoel, MD, PhD, Henriette de Loor, MSc, Patrick Augustijns, PharmD PhD, Dirk Kuypers, MD, PhD.

Disclosures: Dr. Poesen is the recipient of a PhD fellowship of the Research Foundation - Flanders (FWO). Part of the research has also been funded by FWO. The article, entitled "Microbiota-Derived Phenylacetylglutamine Associates with Overall Mortality and Cardiovascular Disease in Patients with CKD," will appear online at <http://jasn.asnjournals.org/> on May 26, 2016, doi: 10.1681/ASN.2015121302.

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Founded in 1966, and with nearly 16,000 members, the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) leads the fight against kidney disease by educating health professionals, sharing new knowledge, advancing research, and advocating the highest quality care for patients.

<http://www.asn-online.org/>



Can We Extend Healthspan By Altering The Perception Of Food?

Tricking C. elegans into a state of caloric restriction extends lifespan by 50 percent and suggests new targets for human pharmacology

Researchers at the Buck Institute have shown a new effect on aging via a small drug-like molecule that alters the perception of food in the nematode *C. elegans*. Publishing in *Aging Cell*, researchers "tricked" the worm's metabolism into a state of caloric restriction, extending the animal's lifespan by 50 percent. The study provides a new avenue of inquiry for researchers around the world who are attempting to develop human drugs that mimic the positive effects of a Spartan diet. Caloric restriction has shown to extend life-and-healthspan in simple animals and mice.

"This small molecule blocks the detection of food in the worm's mouth," said Buck faculty and senior author Gordon Lithgow, PhD. "The worm senses that its mouth is empty even when it is full of food, tricking the animal into shifting its physiology into a caloric restricted-state even when it's eating normally," he said. "Our study suggests that primary sensory pathways represent new targets for human pharmacology."

Lead author Mark Lucanic, PhD, a postdoctoral research fellow in the Lithgow lab, screened 30,000 synthetic, drug-like compounds in nematodes and identified several structurally related compounds that acted on mechanisms tied to caloric restriction. He found that the small molecule, NP1, impinged upon a food perception pathway by promoting glutamate signaling in the pharynx of the animal. "The chemical activated a neurotransmitter-controlled food deprivation signal which altered the animal's normal metabolism into a caloric restriction state," Lucanic said.

Lithgow said exploring sensory pathways as potential drug targets should be of interest to age researchers interested in mimicking caloric restriction in order to extend healthspan.

"The mechanisms involved in sensory pathways may be more specific than secondary pathways that detect energy levels or absorbed nutrients at the cellular level," he said, noting the current interest in intracellular pathways such as mTOR and AMPK which are under study in many labs around the world.

"Targeting sensory pathways may lead to a more rapid response to changing diet," said Lithgow, "Altering these higher level, specific response mechanisms may also have fewer effects on other systems in the body."

Lucanic will work on identifying the specific molecule that NP1 activates in the sensory pathway in the worm. He also hopes to look at 59 other synthetic compounds that "hit" known aging pathways during his initial screening process.

Lithgow said this study highlights the need to bring more resources to the effort to test promising compounds, "Aging researchers have found scores of both natural and synthetic compounds that affect aging in simple animals - I tell people that we have at least 100 of those compounds in our freezer and that any one of them could hold the key to extending human healthspan," he said. "We want to look at all of them, but we can only do what our resources will allow."

Citation: Chemical Activation of a Food Deprivation Signal Extends Lifespan Doi: 10.1111/accel.12492

Other Buck researchers involved in the study include Theo Garrett, Ivan Yu, Azar Asadi Shahmirzadi, Aaron Miller and Robert E. Hughes. Other collaborators include Matthew S. Gill, Scripps Research Institute, Jupiter, FL; along with Fernando Calahorro and Lindy Holden-Dye, Center for Biological Sciences, Institute for Life Sciences, University of Southampton, United Kingdom;. G.J.L. is supported by National Institutes of Health grants T32 AG000266, UL1024917, RL1 GM084432 and 1RO1AG02963-01A1 as well as the Ellison Medical Foundation/American Federation of Aging Research and a Larry L. Hillblom Foundation grant. R.E.H. is supported by RL1 GM084432.

About the Buck Institute for Research on Aging

The Buck Institute is the U.S.'s first independent research organization devoted to Geroscience - focused on the connection between normal aging and chronic disease. Based in Novato, CA, The Buck is dedicated to extending "Healthspan", the healthy years of human life and does so utilizing a unique interdisciplinary approach involving laboratories studying the mechanisms of aging and those focused on specific diseases. Buck scientists strive to discover new ways of detecting, preventing and treating age-related diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, cancer, cardiovascular disease, macular degeneration, osteoporosis, diabetes and stroke. In their collaborative research, they are supported by the most recent developments in genomics, proteomics, bioinformatics and stem cell technologies. For more information: <http://www.thebuck.org>



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Recipe Of The Month: Veggie ^{Egg} Bake

By Mayo Clinic Staff

Dietitian's tip:

You can prepare this casserole and refrigerate overnight. The next morning, let the casserole stand at room temperature while oven heats and then bake as directed.

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 1 cup frozen chopped spinach, thawed
- 4 large eggs
- 4 large egg whites
- 1 cup skim milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary or 1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary
- 1/2 teaspoon salt-free herb-and-spice blend
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

- 6 slices whole-grain bread, crusts removed and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup diced red pepper
- 4 ounces thinly sliced reduced-fat Swiss cheese

Directions

Heat oven to 375 F. Coat a 7-by-11-inch glass baking dish or a 2-quart casserole with cooking spray.

Place the spinach in a strainer and press with the back of a spatula to remove excess liquid. Set aside.

In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, egg whites and milk. Add dry mustard, rosemary, spice blend and pepper; whisk to combine.

Toss spinach, bread, onion and red pepper in a large bowl. Add egg mixture and toss to coat.

Transfer to prepared baking dish and push down to compact. Cover with foil.

Bake for 30 minutes or until the eggs have set. Uncover and top with cheese. Continue baking for an additional 15 minutes or until the top is lightly browned.

Transfer to a wire rack and cool for 10 minutes before serving.

Nutritional analysis per serving

Serving size :One piece (3 by 3.5 inches)

Calories 258

Total fat 10 g

Saturated fat 4 g

Trans fat Trace

Monounsaturated fat 2 g

Cholesterol 137 mg

Sodium 465 mg

Total carbohydrate 25 g

Dietary fiber 3 g

Added sugars 0 g

Protein 17 g

[Mayo Clinic Healthy Weight Pyramid Servings](#)

[Diabetes Meal Plan Choices](#)

[DASH Eating Plan Servings](#)

Source: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/recipes/veggie-egg-bake/rcp-20125130>