

A MONTHLY HEALTHLETTER FROM THE WELLNESS COUNCIL OF AMERICA

## SHOULD YOU SEE YOUR DOC?

If you're constantly fatigued and it's affecting your ability to perform your normal, daily tasks, you should call or see your doctor. Occasional fatigue is certainly a normal part of life, but it shouldn't be something you continually live with (especially if you're taking steps to address it, like getting adequate sleep, exercising and eating right).

### What's **Not** Normal?

Talk to your doctor if you experience any of the following symptoms—they may be tied to an underlying issue like type 2 diabetes or chronic fatigue syndrome:

- Severe fatigue (the kind that causes you to limit your usual activities) that lasts for several weeks and does not improve with rest.
- Chronic sleep problems (lasting several weeks) like being unable to fall asleep, stay asleep or still feeling tired or not rested after waking up.
- Any swelling in the glands in your neck or armpits that lasts for two weeks or longer.
- Chronic fatigue accompanied with frequent urination, extreme thirst or blurred vision.



## What Might be Zapping Your Energy

Everyone occasionally feels a little tired or sluggish, but if you're constantly feeling drained it could be tied to some of your daily habits.

### CHECK OUT THESE CULPRITS:

**You're eating too much sugar.** Sure, a candy bar or cookie can provide a quick "pick me up", but it can just as quickly make you crash. Candy, soda and other processed foods are usually packed with sugar, which causes a very fast spike, and then drop in your blood sugar. It's a vicious cycle—you're bound to keep seeking that sugar rush only to be let down, feeling tired and cranky minutes later.

**Get energized:** Having healthy snacks on hand is key, as they can help keep your energy and blood sugar stable for several hours. Seek snacks that provide a healthy dose of protein and carbs. Lean turkey or chicken on a slice of whole wheat bread or plain, nonfat yogurt with fruit are a few excellent options.

**You're not drinking enough water.**

According to a study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* even mild dehydration can cause fatigue, tiredness and low energy.

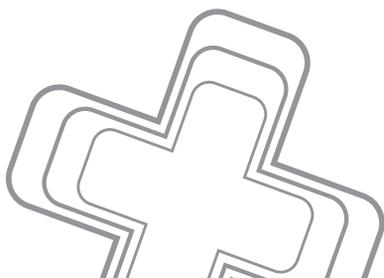
**Get energized:** Drinking an extra glass or two of water could make a difference in your energy levels. Try drinking a glass as soon as you wake up and make water your beverage of choice at meals.

**You're not getting enough iron.** Iron helps ensure that your cells can carry oxygen to your body's tissues. If you don't have enough iron, this process becomes more taxing on your body, and as a result, you may feel weak, tired and irritable.

**Get energized:** Eat some iron-rich foods every day—cooked beef, chicken and turkey, sardines, spinach, and lentils and beans are all good sources. You may also consider a supplement if you don't eat a lot of iron-rich foods.

**You're skipping meals.** Food is your body's fuel—so skipping meals can literally force your body to run on empty. Moreover, if you skip a meal you're more likely to overeat later in the day, which can make you feel even more tired and sluggish.

**Get energized.** All meals are important when it comes to energy. It's common for many people to skip breakfast because they feel rushed in the morning. Plan and prepare your breakfast the night before to ensure you eat this critical meal.



The contrast of the bright green from the peas and parsley with the black rice creates a visually stunning dish that is sure to please everyone.

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup black rice cooked in chicken broth according to package instructions

3 cloves fresh garlic, minced

1 tbs extra virgin olive oil

1 cup frozen baby peas

¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

Salt and pepper to taste

### DIRECTIONS:

Lightly toast the black rice in the olive oil and then add the fresh garlic. Stir continuously over medium heat until the garlic gets fragrant (about 1 minute). Add 2 cups of chicken broth and cook rice according to the package instructions. When done, add the frozen peas and parsley to the rice and cover the pot until the peas are thawed and heated through. Mix gently and serve.

SERVES: 4-5



**Dr. Ann**  
Ann Kulze, M.D.

With formal training in nutrition and medicine, plus hands-on experience as a mother of four and family physician, Dr. Ann is a unique nutrition expert for the real world.

The whole food ingredients found in Dr. Ann's recipes are the right foods for health and vitality. Nutritional excellence naturally follows.

For more, visit [DrAnnWellness.com](http://DrAnnWellness.com).



# Black Rice with Peas & Parsley

*Superstar Food of the Month*  
**PEAS**

This diminutive legume is surprisingly powerful on the nutrition front. It is home to a full package of minerals, a big dose of hunger-fighting fiber and protein, and scores of vitamins. Scientists have just recently learned that green

peas also contain a unique assortment of powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds that show great promise for general health protection. Frozen peas are super convenient and cook in three minutes. Add them to soups, stews, rice dishes and salads!



# Dynamic Duos!

## Foods that Are Even Better Together

The following foods are superfoods in their own right, but when you eat them together they provide an even more powerful punch:

**Greek yogurt and blueberries.** The good bacteria (probiotics) in Greek yogurt break down the fiber in blueberries producing compounds that improve intestinal health.

**Salsa and avocado.** Salsa is filled with the potent antioxidant lycopene, and the healthy fats in avocados can boost the absorption of lycopene by 200-400 percent.

**Red bell peppers and leafy greens.** The big hit of vitamin C in red bell peppers aids in the absorption of dark leafy green's iron.

**Turmeric and ground pepper.** Turmeric is abundant in curcumin, one of the most potent naturally-occurring anti-inflammatory agents known, and pepper enhances its bio-availability up to 1,000-fold.

**Citrus fruits and tea.** The vitamin C in fresh citrus boosts the absorption of tea's powerful polyphenol antioxidants.

**Olive oil and leafy greens.** The "healthy fats" in olive oil dramatically enhance the up-take of lettuce green's and vegetable's carotenoids from the intestinal tract into the blood stream.

**Tomatoes and broccoli.** Both of these vegetables are loaded with cancer-protective plant chemicals and when eaten together their anti-cancer power is compounded.

**Salmon and yogurt.** The rich supply of vitamin D in salmon augments the gastrointestinal (GI) absorption of plain yogurt's calcium.

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### LOOKING FOR A GREAT WAY TO SERVE SALMON?

A creamy yogurt sauce is a fantastic pairing. Whip up a delicious sauce by mixing one 6 ounce container of plain Greek yogurt, 1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill weed or 1 teaspoon dried dill, 1/2 teaspoon grated lemon peel, 1 tablespoon lemon juice and a little pepper to taste.



# ENERGY TH



A study published in the *International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition* found a meal of complex carbs made subjects feel more energized.



**1 Yawn.** Don't suppress that yawn! According to psychologists, it boosts blood flow to the brain, essentially waking it up.

**2 Cross off an item on your to-do list.** Force yourself to tackle one task that's nagging you—calling to make that doctor's appointment, paying your bills, calling a friend—you will feel a sense of accomplishment as well as a big rush of energy.

**3 Place a plant on your desk or in your workspace.** Plants can help filter out energy-draining pollutants and irritants. Moreover, they can make you just plain feel better. Some studies have shown that patients who face a garden view in their hospital rooms often recover more quickly than those facing a wall.

**4 Make drinking water fun—experiment.** Staying hydrated is essential to maintaining your energy levels. You can make drinking water more enjoyable by adding fun and healthy flavor—try adding fresh mint, cucumber or lemon—just to name a few.

**5 Tidy up.** You may not realize it, but dirty and/or unorganized rooms can bring you down. Whether it's the kitchen or your workspace, taking a few minutes to clean your surroundings will perk you up.

**6 Go outside.** If possible, hit a scenic trail or park. Surrounding yourself with nature's beauty is an instant pick me up. But if that's not possible, just breathing in fresh, outdoor air will do the trick.

**7 Take a 10-minute walk.** It will help you feel revved up for as long as two hours according to a study in *Personality and Social Psychology*.

**8 Eat carbs!** Whole grain carbohydrates (i.e., oatmeal, whole wheat bread, brown rice, etc.) are your energy-boosting friend. They provide a steady dose of glucose (fuel) into your bloodstream.

# ays to Boost Your THIS MINUTE!

**REMEMBER**  
TO TALK WITH  
**YOUR DOCTOR**  
IF YOU HAVE ANY  
CONCERNS ABOUT  
**YOUR HEALTH.**

**9 Take 60 seconds to stretch ever hour.** Simply raising your arms up over your head as high as you can could increase blood flow and help you feel more alert.

**10 Open your curtains or blinds at home during the day.** Bright light cues your body to wake up and be alert. If it's a cloudy day, turn on the lights—remember that your mood is likely to follow your physical surroundings.

**11 Turn your shower water to cold for a few minutes.** It will immediately get you alert and energized, and some science suggests that a few minutes of cold water can help combat feelings of fatigue.

**12 Trade in your energy drink for some chia seeds.** Sprinkle these tiny seeds into your yogurt, soup or on top of toast for a healthy boost. Chia seeds are rich in B vitamins, fiber and protein, so you'll feel revitalized, not antsy.

**13 Sit up straight.** Slouching is not only bad for your spine, but it can decrease blood flow and circulation in your body, causing you to feel more fatigued. Sit with your shoulders back and a slight arch in your lower back so your rear end is sticking out.

**14 Identify a pleasant distraction.** Maybe it's listening to music, watching a quick humorous clip or doing a crossword puzzle. Identify something you find engaging and/or challenging—research has found that being interested in a task helps you stay awake and alert.

**15 Look at or wear something red.** According to University of Rochester research, looking at something red cues your muscles to work harder, which can give you a burst of energy.

**16 Leverage your work breaks.** Avoid skipping breaks or eating lunch at your desk. It will only drag out your day. Use your breaks wisely and to their fullest so you can feel re-energized and focused.



# The Health Document You Need Now

What kind of healthcare would you want to receive if you were too ill or incapacitated to express your wishes? It's not a topic many like to think about, but if you take the time to do it now, you could save yourself and your loved ones from enormous frustration, grief and confusion later.

## What is an Advance Healthcare Directive?

An advance healthcare directive (also referred to as a living will, personal directive and advance decision) is a legal document that allows you to specify the type of medical treatment you would like to receive if you are no longer able to make decisions for yourself (due to illness or injury). In times of grave illness emotions usually run high, and your family and loved ones may not know or may disagree

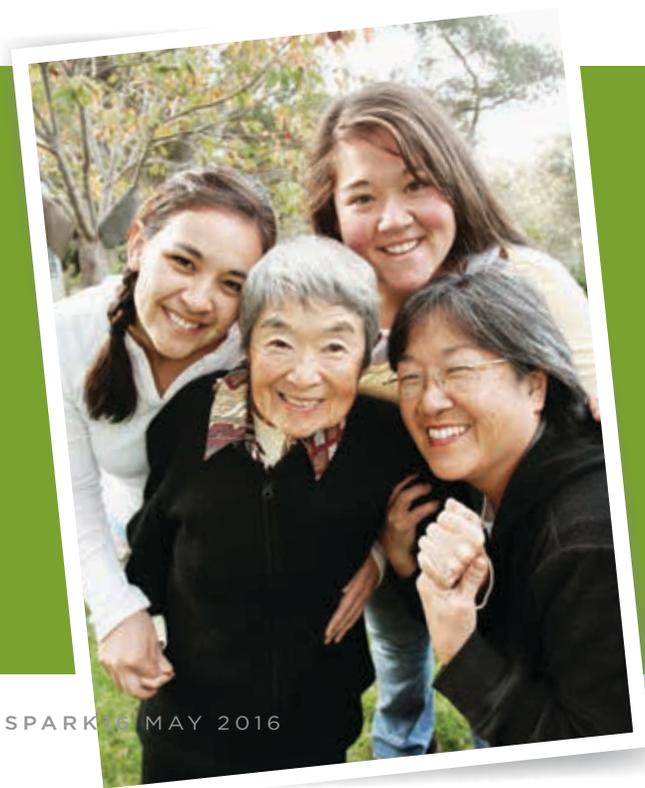
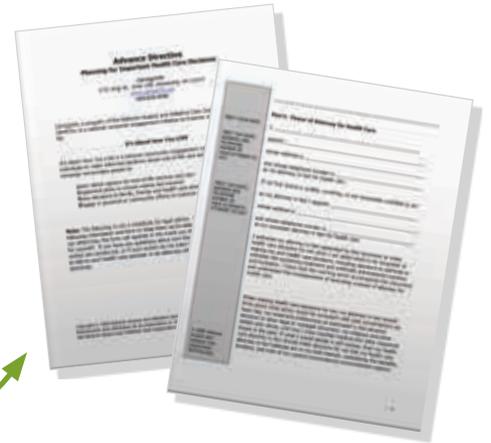
with what your wishes may be—with an advance healthcare directive, you can help eliminate such disagreements.

## How and Where do I Start?

To carry legal weight, advance healthcare directives need to be in writing and follow your state's requirements (in most cases this means completing your state's healthcare directive form and having the document signed by a witness and notarized). You can retain an attorney to help you with the process, but it's not required to create the directive or to make it legal.

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization has created Caring Connections—a website dedicated to end of life care. You can visit them at [www.caringinfo.org](http://www.caringinfo.org) to find advance healthcare directive forms for every individual state.

In addition, it's a good idea to talk with your doctor, family and friends about your directive. Tell them you have created (or are planning to create) one and share your personal wishes with them. Although the healthcare directive ensures your wishes will be carried out as you have specified, it's a good idea that you make your family and friends aware, so they are not shocked if/when the unforeseen happens.



## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

When it comes to an advance healthcare directive (also referred to as a living will), you want to make sure you address a few critical areas, as the forms vary by state, and do not include an exhaustive list of topics. It's up to you to ensure your wishes are detailed. Here are a few key items to consider:

- If and how long you want to use treatments like dialysis and breathing machines
- Resuscitation—if you would like healthcare professionals to try and revive you if your breathing or heartbeat stops
- If you would like to be tube-fed if you're unable to chew and swallow
- If you would like to donate your organs and tissues

# Make Your Walk a Fitness Feat!

## 5 Ways to Turn Your Walk into a True Workout

Regular exercise has countless benefits—it reduces your risk for chronic disease, depression and anxiety, improves your mood, increases your body's ability to control blood sugar and can help you lose weight. And best of all—you don't have to be a CrossFit champ or marathoner to reap the benefits. Indeed, good old fashion walking can do the trick.

A few tweaks to your daily walk can equate to a much better workout for your heart and muscles, and as an added bonus you can torch more calories too! Here's how you can step to it:

**Focus on quick, short steps.** Longer steps usually result in bouncier walking and the longer stride may increase your risk of injury.

**Track your steps and record progress.** Pedometers, wrist bands, apps—there are several gadgets that can help you track your activity, and there are proven benefits for doing so. According to a study in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, participants walked 15 percent more each day when they wore pedometers and recorded their daily steps than when they just wore pedometers but didn't track their progress. The walkers who logged their strides also often tried to beat, or at least maintain, their step counts from the previous day.

**Squeeze your abdominal muscles as you walk.** It will help ensure proper form—your shoulders back and your back straight (as opposed to a slouching, hunched over walk).

**Push off with your toe to work your calves and hamstrings.** As you walk heel-to-toe, make an effort to push off with your toe, it will give your legs an added workout.

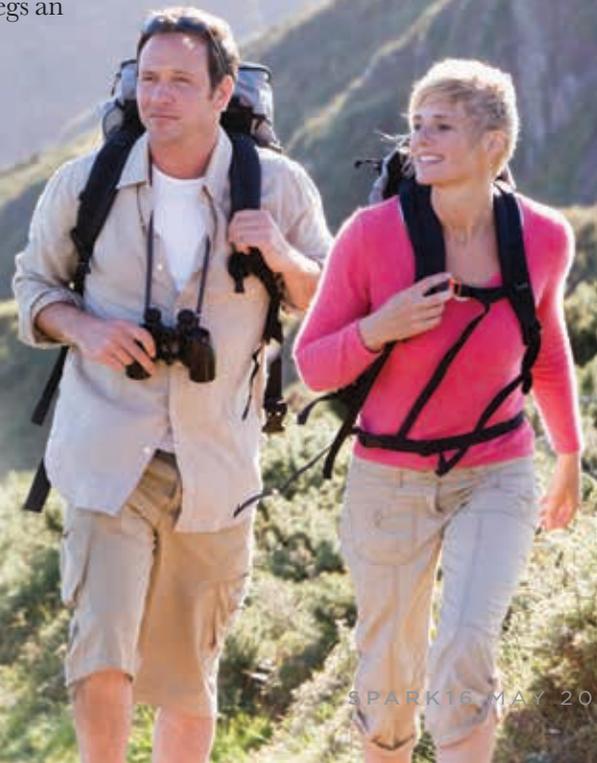
**Turn on your favorite tunes.** A recent study from the *Journal of Sports & Exercise Psychology* found that when people walked to fast-tempo music with a strong rhythm, they walked 15 percent longer than those who did so in silence. Researchers noted that the music improved participants' moods, motivation and focus, and also distracted them from feeling tired for longer than compared to non-music listeners.

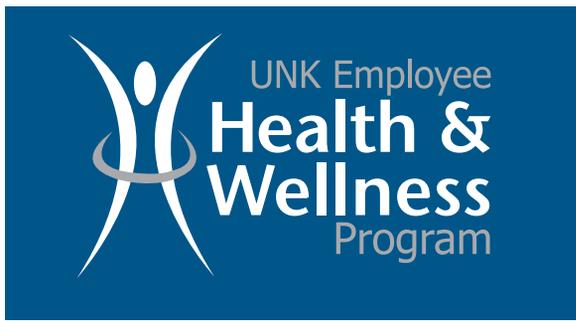
Aim for at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity exercise such as brisk walking.

## Make Walking Fun and Stay Fit!

Making walking fun is one of the best ways to ensure long-term fitness success. To achieve this may be as simple as going back to grade school. Think of all the fun ways you found to entertain yourself when walking to school, to your friend's house or to a park and incorporate those activities into your daily walking. How about walking and . . .

- Singing
- Laughing
- Skipping
- Jumping
- Being adventurous (walk on a scenic trail, make your walk a scavenger hunt, etc.)
- Being mindful (take a moment to be in the present and acknowledge your surroundings)





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### I DID YOU KNOW?

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A STUDY IN PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY FOUND THAT A 10-MINUTE WALK COULD HELP YOU FEEL REVVED UP FOR AS LONG AS TWO HOURS AFTERWARD.
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## Myth Busters!

### Common Misconceptions about Fatigue

**COMMON MISCONCEPTION:** *“You should fight through fatigue at all costs.”*

If you feel severely fatigued, you need to slow down and take steps to address it. If you try to “fight” through it, you could be compromising your health and safety (i.e., a car accident, an accident at work, etc.). It’s important to prioritize activities so you’re giving yourself enough downtime to take care of yourself. It’s ok to say no if it’s not a top priority in your life!

**COMMON MISCONCEPTION:** *“Fatigue is a direct result of lack of sleep.”*

No doubt that a lack of sleep will leave you feeling drowsy and sluggish, but there are other reasons for fatigue. It could be tied to a chronic condition like depression, anemia, liver disease or type 2 diabetes. If you’re getting sufficient rest but still feel fatigued, call your doctor so he/she can evaluate your symptoms.

**COMMON MISCONCEPTION:** *“The best way to address fatigue is by staying in bed.”*

Yes, you should aim for seven to nine hours of sleep a night to avoid or address fatigue, but staying in bed isn’t always an option. Moreover, in some cases, you may feel better if you get up and get into your daily routine. If you feel chronically fatigued, talk to your boss about it. Perhaps you can adjust your schedule or tasks in a way that helps you address your symptoms while still being productive at work. Again, if you have tried self-care strategies and still feel tired, talk to your doctor.

## WHAT'S IN A NUMBER?



# 25+

A typical “energy” drink can have at least 25 grams of sugar in a serving. The drink may pick you up short-term, but the high dose of sugar will cause you to just as quickly crash.



# 0

Plain water has no added sugar and science reveals that proper hydration can help you feel refreshed and energized.

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