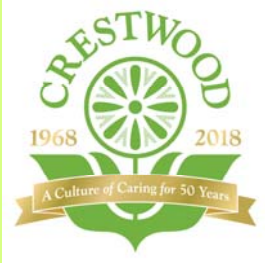


# Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc.

## Nutrition and Wellness

### News



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## How *When* We Eat Affects Our Health

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Scientists have long known about circadian rhythms, which are sort of internal clocks that control our sleep cycles. We now know that many other body processes, like metabolism and hormone levels, are also affected by circadian rhythms.

Some research now suggests that aligning our food intake with our circadian rhythms may help our bodies function optimally and may even help in weight loss.

The idea is that our bodies are naturally primed to take in food in an 8 to 10-hour window, starting early in the day and ending in the early evening. The hormones and enzymes that control our digestion are highest at these times and tend to drop off in the evening as we ideally would be preparing for sleep. For example, the pancreas secretes the most insulin, which controls blood sugar, during the day, and tends to slow down at night.

Enzymes of the digestive system, which help us break down and absorb food, also peak during the day. Even the microbes in our guts have a daily clock that controls when they are most active.



Aligning food intake with these circadian rhythms is called early time-restricted feeding. It is also considered a form of intermittent fasting, since there is a time period during which no food or calorie-containing beverages are consumed. Generally, there is a

window of time, anywhere from 6 to 10 hours a day, during which food is consumed. During the remaining hours of the day, no food or drink containing calories are consumed. For example, if a person rises at 7 am, perhaps they put off eating breakfast until 8:30 am, and then makes sure to eat dinner before 6:30pm. They would then fast the rest of the evening and overnight until breakfast the next morning.

Most research shows that for humans, eating most of your food early in the day is better for blood sugar and metabolism. Blood sugar control is best early in the day and food is digested better earlier in the day.

In studies that have people delay their bedtimes for even short periods of time, say days or weeks, subjects had increased blood pressure, impaired blood sugar control and insulin sensitivity, and even weight gain.



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## How When We Eat Affects Our Health

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In another study, two groups of prediabetic men were given the same diet, but one group ate their meals over the course of a 12-hour day, while the other ate theirs over 6 hours. The subjects were all given enough food to maintain their weight, so the effects of weight loss could be accounted for. The subjects who ate over the 6-hour period had lower insulin levels, less

oxidative stress, less nighttime hunger, and lower blood pressure by the end of the study. Another study had one group of subjects delay their breakfast by 90 minutes and eat dinner 90 minutes earlier than usual, effectively shortening the window of time during which they ate. The control group ate normally. The subjects were not given a specific diet, but those who ate within the shorter window of time ate less food overall than the control group. The subjects who changed their mealtimes lost twice as much body fat as the control group.

Interestingly, some of these studies don't specify what the subjects eat, just when they eat it. This may support the idea that when we eat food is as important as what we are eating. It may also be that limiting the window of time during which food is consumed may simply result in consuming less food, which of course can support weight loss. Either way, eating during a specific window of time, and avoiding eating late into the evening, seems to support weight loss, improved insulin and blood sugar control, and lower blood pressure.

For many people, eating early in the day and avoiding food late in the evening can be challenging. The morning may be too busy a time to eat breakfast, and late work schedules can push dinner far into the evening, not to mention the habit of late night snacking. Many people start eating when they get up and may not stop until they go to bed. And shift workers, who may



work in the evening and overnight, may not have the option of eating most of their meals during the early part of the day. But, if you are looking to lose weight, improve insulin control, or reduce blood pressure, early intermittent fasting may be an effective method to try. To do so, set a window that will work with your work and family schedule, and remember that any food or beverage

that contains calories count, so be sure to keep that coffee in the morning or glass of wine in the evening within your window. And although this method does not require you to necessarily change what you eat, it is always a good idea to include lots of fresh vegetables and fruits, lean proteins, healthy fats, and whole grains in your diet.





# Have a Healthier Thanksgiving

The holidays are approaching, and with them, gatherings with family and friends that likely include lots and lots of food. However, this doesn't have to mean weight gain or "food comas." There are some simple steps you can take to still enjoy festive holiday meals without feeling uncomfortable and guilty later.



butter and a squeeze of lemon for a healthier option.

There are usually lots of finger foods and appetizers at holiday get-togethers, but even these can be made healthier. A crud-

The good news is that many of the foods traditionally eaten at Thanksgiving dinner are already quite nutritious! Turkey is high in protein, vitamins, and minerals. The dark meat of turkey has a bit more vitamins and minerals, but also more fat and calories. To make your meal a bit leaner, go for the white meat and skip the skin to avoid extra fat and calories.

Mashed white potatoes are high in vitamin C and potassium, as well as other vitamins and minerals. However, mashed potatoes tend to be high in calories and fat because of the addition of butter and milk or cream. They can be made a little healthier by using low fat or skim milk, and only a little butter or margarine. An even healthier option, however, are mashed sweet potatoes, which have a lower glycemic index than white potatoes, and are also high in beta carotene, vitamin C, and many other vitamins and minerals. Cinnamon, which is high in antioxidants and has been shown to help maintain blood sugar, is also a nice addition to mashed sweet potatoes.

Brussels sprouts are a cruciferous vegetable chock full of antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Roasting or sautéing them with a little olive oil is a very nutritious addition to the holiday meal. Green beans are also very high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber, but green bean casserole tends to be quite high in fat and sodium. Try steaming or sautéing a side of green beans with a little



ité, or vegetable plate, with hummus or a light dip is a great way to fill up on fresh vegetables before dinner. Soups, like butternut squash soup or French onion, are filling and less calorie-dense than many appetizers. Shrimp cocktail is high in protein and low in fat. And sparkling water can be made festive with some sliced oranges, strawberries or other fruit, and is a good beverage option for those who don't drink alcohol.

A good tip to follow for Thanksgiving dinner, as well as any meal, is to follow the basic guideline set out by both the USDA's My Plate and Harvard's Healthy Plate, and that is to fill half of your plate with vegetables and fruits. Then, fill a quarter with lean protein, and the last quarter with carbohydrates, preferably whole grain. For Thanksgiving, this might look like a half plate of brussels sprouts, green beans, or other vegetables, a quarter plate of turkey meat, and a quarter plate of mashed sweet potatoes. Of course, go easy on the gravy!

If you are dining at someone else's home and concerned that there will be few healthy options, offer to bring a dish. A green salad, a dish of roasted vegetables, or sautéed greens are all good sides for most holiday meals. Another good idea is to use smaller plates. Studies show when people are given larger plates they will serve themselves and consume more food. And lastly, remember, you don't have to finish everything on your plate!

# Give Healthier Gifts

The holidays are a time of giving, and many people exchange gifts with loved ones, friends, and co-workers. This can be a great opportunity to encourage healthy habits and “give the gift of health” by choosing gifts that support a healthier lifestyle. Here are some ideas that range from inexpensive to more pricey, and friendly to more personal.

## Glass Water Bottle

We all know water is vital for health and mental clarity, and bottled water can be wasteful and also contain chemical residue from the plastic it's packaged in. A glass water bottle allows you to fill your bottle with filtered water at home and carry it with you through the day, plastic-free.



## Olive Oil and Vinegar

Olive oil has so many health benefits, and of course pairs beautifully with vinegar on salads and in marinades. There are many artisan brands available that come in beautiful packaging. Or, oil and vinegar decanters for the table can be nice gifts that keep these healthy condiments at hand for cooking and dining.



## Herb Garden Kit or Seeds

For someone who loves to cook but doesn't have space for a garden, an herb garden kit can provide them with fresh herbs year-round. You can even make your own by purchasing seeds, small pots, and a tray, and packaging it in an attractive box or basket.



## Teacup and Tea Accessories

This is a great gift for a co-worker who enjoys tea. A unique teacup and saucer, plus an assortment of teas—some black and green tea for afternoon pick-me-ups, some chamomile for stress, some peppermint to settle an upset stomach, and a few packets of honey, will give your recipient everything they need to enjoy tea at their desk at work.



## Healthy Snacks

Assorted nuts, dried fruits, and some dark chocolate, arranged in a basket or box, makes a nicer, and probably healthier gift, than fruit-cake. Make it personal by making your own candied or spiced nuts. Try the recipe at the end of this newsletter!



## Fitness Tracker or Pedometer

Fitness monitors are a great idea to purchase for a loved one embarking on new fitness goals. There is some evidence that using them helps users stick to their fitness routines and reach their fitness goals.



## Workout Accessories

A yoga mat, gym tote, colorful towel, and water bottle would make a nice gift for someone who practices yoga. For a runner, a pedometer, some soft socks, sunscreen, and water bottle would work.

## Meditation Accessories

A pillow or cushion for sitting, a candle, aromatherapy oils, and singing bowl would be a great gift for someone who practices, or wants to start practicing, meditation.





*"Food, in the end, in our own tradition, is something holy. It's not about nutrients and calories. It's about sharing. It's about honesty. It's about identity."*

*-Louise Fresco*

## Fresh Cranberry Sauce

Instead of the gelatinous, sugary, tin-can shaped cranberry sauce many of us are used to, try this fresh cranberry sauce recipe. It is easy to make, it can be made ahead of time, and it is fresh, tart, and chock full of vitamin C, fiber, and antioxidants. And it won't arrive at the table in the shape of a tin can!

4 cups fresh cranberries  
 ½ whole orange, including peel (wash orange before using)  
 ½ cup white sugar

Combine all ingredients in a food processor or blender. Blend until no chunks remain. Chill until serving.



## Spiced Nuts

These nuts are a little sweet, a little salty, and a little spicy! You can vary the recipe by using your favorite nuts, and you can reduce or increase the amount of cayenne. They would make a great holiday gift in a colorful bag or jelly jar with a ribbon.



4 cups nuts (walnuts, almonds, pecans, etc.)  
 2/3 cup sugar  
 2 tsp salt  
 2 tsp cinnamon  
 1 tsp chili powder  
 ½ tsp allspice  
 ½ tsp cayenne  
 1 egg white

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Whisk the sugar, salt, and spices together in a small bowl, set aside. In another bowl, whisk the egg whites until frothy. Toss the nuts in the egg white until coated, then toss them in the spice mixture until well-coated. Spread the nuts on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake for about 40 to 50 minutes, stirring midway through cooking, until completely dry. Let cool before eating or storing.

### Any Nutrition and Wellness News Questions?

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