

May 2024

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## WHY IS SOCIAL WELLNESS IMPORTANT?

Social wellness involves building healthy, nurturing, and supportive relationships as well as fostering a genuine connection with those around you. Conscious actions are important in learning how to balance your social life with your professional life.

**Maintaining an optimal level of social wellness allows you to build healthy relationships with others.** Having a supportive social network allows you to develop assertive skills and become comfortable with who you are in social situations.

Surrounding yourself with a positive social network increases your self-esteem. Social wellness enables you to create boundaries that encourage communication, trust, and conflict management.

In general, having good social wellness is critical to building emotional resilience.

***On page 2, learn more about how our relationships impact our overall health and well-being.***

## HOW DO RELATIONSHIPS BENEFIT HEALTH?

Social ties influence health behavior, in part, because they influence or “control,” our health habits. For example, a spouse may monitor, inhibit, regulate, or facilitate health behaviors in ways that promote a partner’s health. Religious ties also appear to influence health behavior, in part, through social control. Social ties can instill a sense of responsibility and concern for others that then lead individuals to engage in behaviors that protect the health of others, as well as their own health. Social ties provide information and create norms that further influence health habits.

Social support refers to the emotionally sustaining qualities of relationships (e.g., a sense that one is loved, cared for, and listened to). Hundreds of studies establish that social support benefits mental and physical health. **Social support may have indirect effects on health through enhanced mental health, by reducing the impact of stress, or by fostering a sense of meaning and purpose in life.**

Social support in adulthood reduces physiological responses such as cardiovascular reactivity to both anticipated and existing stressors. Indeed, continuously married adults experience a lower risk of cardiovascular disease compared with those who have experienced a marital loss, in part due to the psychosocial supports conferred by marriage.

## THE ROUTE TO SOCIAL WELLNESS.

As you begin your journey to social wellness, you will discover that you have the power to enhance your personal relationships. Maintaining social wellness allows you to practice empathy and active listening. There are many ways you can begin your journey to social wellness.

Below are some suggestions on how to enhance your social wellness.

- **Reflect** on yourself and your social needs. What aspects of your social life do you enjoy? What parts would you like to improve?
- **Make an effort** to keep in touch with supportive friends and family.
- **Practice** self-disclosure.
- **Participate** in group discussions and practice active listening.





## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

### BAKED COD WITH BURST TOMATOES AND BASIL

**TOTAL TIME: 25 MINUTES**

#### Ingredients:

Spring is in the air! And with the warmer weather headed our way, a light and healthy meal is a perfect way to end the day. Cod fillets are a great source of protein, while the tomatoes in this recipe help add important nutrients such as vitamin C, lycopene, potassium, and vitamin K. Serve over your favorite mashed potatoes or rice for a well-balanced dinner!

- 3 tablespoons olive oil, more for brushing
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar, or sherry vinegar
- 1 shallot, sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, rough chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups cherry or grape tomatoes (mixed colors are nice here)
- 1 lemon – zest (set aside) and lemon slices
- 1– 1 1/4 lb cod fillets 4 -6 pieces (thicker pieces work best here -1 inch thick or more)
- salt, pepper and Aleppo chili flakes to taste
- 1/4 cup basil leaves torn

#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425F.
2. Pour 3 tablespoons olive oil and vinegar into a 9 x13 inch baking dish. Scatter the shallots and garlic. Add the tomatoes, salt, pepper and lemon slices and toss. Roast 10 minutes. Give the tomatoes a good shake.
3. While tomatoes are roasting, pat the fish dry and brush with a little olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper and Aleppo chili flakes. Nestle the fish in the baking dish, between the tomatoes.
4. Lower heat to 400F.
5. Bake the fish for 8-10 minutes then give the pan a good shake, jostling the tomatoes a bit. Scatter with lemon zest. Bake 3-4 more minutes or until fish is cooked through to your liking.
6. When done, add the torn basil leaves, tossing them with the warm tomatoes with tongs so the basil wilts slightly. Then garnish each piece of fish with a few wilted basil leaves.
7. Serve immediately!

**Leftovers taste great for up to 3 days.**