

WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2006

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HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMITTEE

In May 2005, a Health Risk Appraisal was conducted by the Wellness Institute and a summary report was presented to the Health & Wellness Committee in June 2005. This report has led to the development of the Operating Plan which was presented to the Board of Trustees on October 22, 2005. The Board of Trustees unanimously supported the plan and provided financial resources to assist the committee for the remainder of the school year.

A growing body of research indicates that a focus on workplace health and wellness initiatives have positive implications for both companies and employees. Studies have found that health benefits and economic benefits can result through the implementation of workplace wellness policies and programs in organizations.

The future success of the Seine River School Division is dependent on having well-qualified, motivated and healthy employees. As employers struggle to do more with less, workers tend to experience higher

levels of stress exacerbated by other external factors such as elder care and dual career families, driving health-related costs higher.

With the evidence of the positive effects of comprehensive workplace wellness policies and programs mounting, such as reduced medical costs, sick leave absenteeism, employee turnover and lower job accident rates, companies can ill afford not to get involved.

The operating plan of the committee focuses on 4 main priorities which include Communication, Morale, Physical Activity and Stress Management. Since October 2005, steps have been taken to raise the profile of Health & Wellness in the division. Some of these steps include:

- Ongoing meetings of the standing committee to discuss how to best promote a healthy workplace;
- Implementation of a Regenera-

tive Leave provision which is available to teachers of the division;

- Volunteer Wellness Representatives at each school to help promote, encourage and champion wellness at their school;
- Various site based wellness initiatives such as participating in yoga and stretching exercises, jokes of the day and making efforts to focus on a positive attitude;
- Distribution of wellness related information;
- Seine River School Division's First Annual Fishing Derby;
- Divisional participation in the Sunrise Teacher's Association Hockey Tournament;

The committee is currently planning ahead and looking forward to maintain our momentum for the 2006/2007 school year!

HEALTH AND WELLNESS
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Tammy McCallum – École St. Norbert Immersion
Sandy Turcotte – Collège St. Norbert Collegiate
Bruce North – Collège St. Norbert Collegiate
Doug Proch – La Salle School
Helen Grandmont – Bus Driver
Susan Lepage – Dawson Trail School
Simon Laplante – École St. Norbert Immersion
Chris Huppe – Division Office
Roy Seidler – Division Office
Greg Reid – Trustee

Wellness at Arborgate School

By Carol Martens, Wellness Representative

My job as Wellness Representative began at the very inspirational meeting at Club Regent Hotel. What a great meeting! Although Arborgate is a great school with our principal, Elaine Wilson being a one-person wellness encourager herself, I have tried to implement a few new ideas, which I presented at our February Staff Meeting.

1. Morale: 100-day Teaching Certificates were handed out to our two first-year teachers, Mandy Carswell and Marsha Funk.

2. Physical Fitness: A pedometer was given to one staff member to use and record steps for 2 days and then pass on to another staff member. Unfortunately, the second tracker was away for a week so the pedometer was not distributed quickly. We will continue, with a prize (rubber running shoe award?) for the person with the most steps.

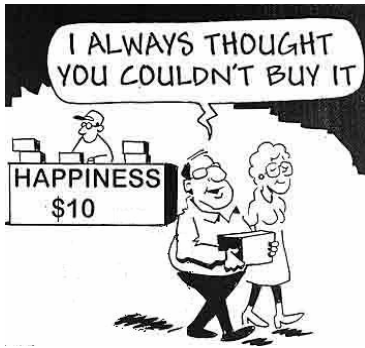
3. Stress: A joke wall "for stress-relief" was put up on the staff washroom wall. Appropriate jokes have already been shared.

4. Communication: A communication

"pocket chart" will be put up on a cupboard door in the staff room soon. (Our staff room is very crowded.) This will be for leisure calendars, business cards for massage therapists, and other health-related brochures.

Stress: Next staff meeting there will be a draw for 2 reflexology treatments, compliments of a skilled reflexologist on our staff. I'm also working on getting some discount coupons from a newly licensed massage therapist in Steinbach.

Battling Teacher Burnout



Learn to say no

Dedicated teachers always want to do more for their students, but sometimes the best thing is not to take on additional responsibilities. Doing less can feel like a betrayal of students, but it is worse when a caring, dedicated teacher burns out and permanently leaves the classroom.

Do something new each year

Take a class or attend a workshop.

Find an online community you can tap for ideas. Talk with your colleagues about new ways to present your lessons. Search the Internet for creative resources. Plan a field trip or have your students put on a play. Let students help teach a lesson. New experiences can rejuvenate you.

Find balance

Try not to let the paperwork and planning that go along with teaching lead you to an "all work and no play" life. Hobbies, recreation and interests outside of school are important.

Manage your time

While this is easier said than done, good time management can be the key to finding balance and putting the joy back into teaching.

Take care of #1

When you are overwhelmed, it is tempting to keep working and let caring for yourself fall to the bottom of the list. Pay attention

to the connection between your mind and body. Without sleep, nutritious food, exercise and relaxation, it is harder to battle stress and burnout and maintain the quality of your work.

Work collaboratively

Since isolation feeds burnout, try team teaching or ask your colleagues for help in developing creative solutions for the stress of teaching. Many of your colleagues have probably dealt with burnout and could offer suggestions on how to fight it.

Tap into help from your principal or school district

Look into ways your principal can better support teachers through flexible scheduling, mentoring, professional development or other supports that rejuvenate teachers. Look, too, into the school district's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). It should offer confidential counseling for work and personal stress and for career and health concerns.

Remember why you went into teaching

Step back and look at the meaningful work you do in helping young minds learn and grow. As one teacher Enid Valdez says, "When I'm really stressed out from too many committees and meetings, I go to the classroom. The kids give me a sense of balance and purpose and remind me why I am here."



That doesn't mean there will not be discomfort. Your muscles may ache. Holding some poses may prove challenging. You're likely to lose your balance. Just remember, all of your experiences are part of the practice. In yoga, you're learning to watch how your body responds, and maintain your equanimity even when experiencing a difficult or challenging physical sensation. Yoga brings you into a closer connection with your body, and practicing these lessons over and over again will eventually lead you to deal with stressful situations more easily when you're off your yoga mat and in your day-to-day life.

Some Tips for Dealing with the Burdens of Life:

- Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their maker.
- If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
- If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
- Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.
- Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
- Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.
- When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
- You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.
- Some mistakes are too much fun to only make once.
- A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.

Have an awesome day and know that someone has thought about you today....I did.

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Wellness at La Salle School

By Geri Porath, Wellness Rep.

One initiative that we started a few years ago was the sharing of Social Committee duties. Staff members serve on the Social Committee in groups of four or five for a two-month period. During each group's two month term, they are responsible for providing one staff luncheon, buying flowers/gifts as necessary for any events which occur (births, showers, weddings, departures/retirements, illnesses, deaths), and planning one party/game/event. Taking care of social committee busi-

ness as we do at La Salle School has resulted in wonderful camaraderie which no doubt has a positive affect on staff morale. Furthermore the responsibility for (and stress of) looking after a year's worth of social committee obligations is equitably shared.

This year we also put together a teacher performance in our Local Idol talent competition ... great fun practising together and then performing for our students!

The Pleasure of Yoga

With pop stars from Madonna to Sting embracing yoga, it's become the new trend in workouts, with 16 million practitioners in the U.S. according to a recent Yoga Journal estimate. If you're a yoga regular, you already know how well it tones and strengthens the body while clearing the mind, offering mental and physically flexibility you won't get from jogging, lifting weights, or in spin class.

If you haven't tried yoga, or your practice has lapsed, now is a perfect time to recommit.

Just Say Om

Contrary to what some people think, you don't have to be elastic to practice yoga.

Part of the challenge, and pleasure, is starting exactly where you're at. If that means you can't touch your toes, so be it. If it means you can barely bend at your waist, that's fine too. Good teachers will remind you to go to your edge, but not to strain: A fine balance that only you can finally arbitrate. Listening deeply to your body's truth, which is whatever you're experiencing in the moment, and honouring that experience by pulling back if necessary, is one of yoga's most important lessons. Those of us who grew up thinking "no pain, no gain" are advised to reverse that dictum in yoga, because in the yoga studio, pain generally means no gain.

BUS DRIVER HEALTH BY HELEN GRANDMONT (BUS #10)

Sometimes it must seem like there is no one out there representing us but I still am. I am in constant contact with the division office as your representative. I have also been on the wellness committee since it was formed a year and a half ago. I am sure the committee is fed of me saying, "but it is different for bus drivers". We do not have much contact with other parts of the division. The wellness committee was formed to bring some all around communication between all of us and to also find a way to ensure the mental and physical health of

the employees. It is difficult for us all to communicate based on the geographic separation between our schools.

I wanted to take this opportunity to share some of my recent experiences. Since the wellness survey in May 2005 I have come to realize how at risk I was to heart attack and stroke. I knew I was overweight. I have since lost 50lbs! I still have many aches and pains, as most of you can relate after being a bus driver for a long time but I am much

healthier for it. I recently read an article in a magazine that said, "Using extra virgin olive oil in our food has the same benefit as using Ibuprofen (Advil). Over the years we have been taught that fats are not good for us, but olive oil actually is good for us. It is good for our heart, arteries, and our joints. That is something to think about, and use.

Please contact me with any concerns or questions.

HOW DO WE BRING MORE HUMOR AND LAUGHTER INTO OUR LIVES?

When we consider the inestimable benefits of humor, we want to bring as much laughter into our lives as possible. But for those who grew up in humor-deprived environments, where fun was discouraged or thought of as frivolous, finding opportunities to belly laugh at ourselves and with (not at) others may be rare and experienced as awkward.

Fortunately, as individuals we are programmed to laugh. Think of times when others were laughing around you - and maybe you didn't even know why - but you found yourself laughing uncontrollably with them. There are many kinds of humor and many opportunities for developing humor. We can learn to laugh more frequently by expanding our sense of humor and using it with others. Learning about the nature and variety of humorous experience helps us see that our lives abound with opportunities for finding humor and exercising laughter.

SLEEP: GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S WORTH

How much sleep do you really need? In general, most adults need 7-8 hours of sleep per night. Children and adolescents need even more - around 9-10 hours per night. However, the amount of sleep that people need varies widely, ranging from 5 to 10 hours per night. The important thing is to find out how much sleep you need to stay healthy and alert, and then try to get this amount of sleep each night.

The right amount of sleep is the amount that lets you wake up feel-

ing refreshed and well. You may be able to function on the amount of sleep you are getting now, but it still may not be enough for you to reach your full potential. Here's how to tell if you're not getting enough sleep:

- You need an alarm clock to wake up
- You sleep longer and better on weekends
- You have trouble getting out of bed in the morning
- You feel tired during the day
- You have bags or dark circles

under your eyes

- You doze off while sitting in a public place, such as a movie theatre or meeting
- You doze off while driving
- You have trouble concentrating
- You have early morning headaches

If you notice any of these signs, you may not be getting enough sleep. Try to gradually increase the amount of sleep that you get each night until you find the right amount -

you'll know that you've got it when these signs start to go away. If you haven't been getting enough sleep for a long time, it may take a while to recover.

Meditation: Brainbuilding and Bliss

For thousands of years, monks throughout the world have sat in contemplative silence meditating as part of their path to enlightenment. But research shows that you don't have to be a monk—or spend your life meditating—to enjoy meditation's benefits.

Boost Your Brain

Researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital have found that meditating increases the thickness of the cortex, improving the parts of your brain involved in attention and sensory processing. And a study at the University of Kentucky com-

pared the mental sharpness of people who'd just spent 40 minutes sleeping with people who had just meditated. The nappers showed improved performance after recovering from an hour of grogginess, but those who meditated—none of whom had meditation experience—showed similar improvements in performance immediately.

Reduce Stress

Meditation doesn't just improve brainpower and performance. It also reduces stress, anxiety, and can help alleviate mild forms of

depression. One study at the Maharishi School of Management in Fairfield, Iowa, for instance, found that people who meditated for just four months produced less cortisol, a stress hormone. The Mayo Clinic encourages meditation as a way to reduce the stress-related effects of allergies, asthma, and chronic pain. And researchers at the University of Wisconsin found that people who did eight weeks of meditation led to more positive feelings as well as improved functioning of their immune system.

How to Meditate

There are many different types of meditation, from transcendental to mindfulness. (The websites under

"Learn More" will direct you to many different styles and provide additional tips on getting started.) At its core, though, meditation involves being quiet and focusing on your breath, a word, or a part of your body. Start by sitting in a chair, sitting crosslegged, laying down, or even standing. As your mind wanders, bring it back to your point of focus. Watch whatever sensations or thoughts come up without getting caught up in them, as if they're clouds passing through your experience. Meditating like this for as little as 10 minutes a day can soon yield a sense of being relaxed, more present, and more connected to your body.

Making Each Step Count

Is walking really a step in the right (or left) direction if you want to lose weight? Experts say that walking 10,000 steps a day will help keep you healthy and that walking 15,000 steps a day can lead to weight loss (when combined with a healthy diet). This is an inexpensive and simple solution which can be done all year round. Besides weight loss, research shows that walking may fight high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. But, how easy is it to actually take that many steps?

Before one starts making excuses, remember that this includes all the steps you take during the day—not just the planned walks in the park. The trick to this challenge is in using

a pedometer and following these simple steps:

1. Get a pedometer. This will not only keep track of your steps but will be a constant encouragement and reminder to walk. You'll have a reason to take the stairs instead of the elevator or to park at the far end of the parking lot.
2. Calculate your steps. Wear the pedometer every day for a week. Write down your total step count at the end of each day. At the end of the week, add up the daily totals and divide by 7 to get your average daily step count.
3. Advance step-by-step. To tack on steps little by little in order to reach your goal without feeling overwhelmed, multiply your average daily step count by 10%. Let that be your aim for week two. At the start of each week, in-

crease your total daily steps by another 10% until you reach 10,000.

4. Make sure you wear the pedometer correctly. The best position is on your waistband, in line with the center of your knee. If that's not comfortable, wear it on your waistband at your side or at the small of your back.

The 10,000-steps-a-day goal originated in Japan, where a researcher measured the number of steps taken by healthy, active people. He found that on average they accumulated 10,000 steps a day, between everyday activities and planned walking for exercise. Similar findings in the United States also supported this research.

More than 10,000 steps may be required for some people. The

National Weight Control Registry, a database of more than 5000 people who have lost an average of 60 pounds and maintained that weight loss for at least 5 years, reveals that taking approximately 11,000 steps a day is the key to fighting rebound pounds. More like 12,000 to 15,000 steps are necessary for taking off pounds.

Intensity is another factor. To improve your heart health and fitness level and to boost your calorie burn, you should make sure that a portion of your steps (about 2000-4000 steps) are performed at a moderate intensity. Moderate means you should feel slightly out of breath—walking as if you are about to miss the bus.

Happy walking!

(Submitted by Carol Martens, Arbor-gate School)

10 Simple Ideas To Make You A Healthier Person

by Linda Shrieves *Orlando Sentinel*

Instead of trying to meet unattainable goals that hinge on an exercise and eating routine you can't possibly stick to, why not take a manageable approach?

We asked dieticians to come up with 10 simple ideas that could make you a healthier person.

Always eat breakfast. Not only does breakfast perk you up for the coming day, but traditional foods provide some nutrients – calcium, fibre and vitamin C – that many Canadians don't get in the rest of their diets. "If you eat a bowl of whole-grain cereal and drink a glass of orange juice at breakfast," said dietician Karen Sue Beerbower of Nutritional Guidance in Winter Park, Florida, "you'll get fibre, vitamin C and calcium. Many people may not get any more vitamin C or calcium the rest of the day."

Avoid high-calorie muffins and other questionable

breakfast foods. "Sometimes muffins have as much fat in them as a double cheese-burger", said dietician Bonnie Miller. Also beware of breakfast foods available from fast-food joints. Many are high in fat and low in nutrients.

Drink six to eight glasses of water a day. That's water, not soft drinks or iced tea. Your body craves water, not only for the minerals it contains, but because plain old water helps regulate your body temperature and helps you get rid of waste more effectively. And here's a bonus: drinking all that water will help curb your appetite.

When you want fruit juice, reach for a piece of fruit instead. You will get the same vitamins, but you'll also be getting more fibre. Also, be wary of fruit drinks. Most do not contain 100 per cent fruit juice and are loaded with water and sugar.

Eliminate one tablespoon of butter or margarine a day. If

you eat buttered toast each morning, try the toast without the butter. If you're sautéing vegetables, use a non-fat cooking spray instead of a pat of butter. Over a year, this step adds up. You could lose 10 pounds in one year, Beerbower said.

Eat at least three food groups at each meal. Every time you eat, make sure your meal includes foods from at least three different food groups. "Most people don't eat enough fruit and vegetables," Beerbower said. "This forces them to bring in that fruit or vegetable for every meal." This can even be applied to snacking. If you want to chow down on Oreos between meals, have the cookies with a glass of milk and a banana. You'll eat fewer Oreos and get healthier food too, says Beerbower.

Switch from cream to half-and-half in your coffee or from whole milk to two per cent milk on your cereal. It's hard for whole milk lovers to switch to skim milk overnight. But taking small steps makes the change palatable, Miller said.

Pick more healthful choices when you eat out. If you eat out for lunch every day, Miller suggests that you pick a healthful item off the menu two or three days a week.

Treat yourself occasionally. If you stop eating all of your favourite foods, you'll quickly sour on this lifestyle change. Instead, Miller suggests that you treat yourself a couple of times a week or drastically cut your serving size. For example, if you're an ice cream freak and have to have it every night, cut the serving size.

Begin walking. Exercise is the easiest way to keep weight under control. And the easiest – and cheapest – exercise around is walking. Start out with an attainable goal: walk 15 minutes twice a week. Then when that becomes routine, increase your goal to 20 minutes three days a week. You can gradually add to your schedule as time goes by. But walking won't help if you don't eat wisely. It takes two hours of brisk walking to burn the calories in a Big Mac.

IDEAL EXERCISE: SWIMMING LIKE A FISH

If there's an ideal exercise, swimming may be it. Not only can it work every major muscle group in your body, it provides a great cardiovascular workout and improves oxygen flow to your muscles. And unlike jogging, cycling, and running, it's easy on your joints, so even those with leg, knee, or back problems can benefit.

Pool Party for Health

What makes swimming so ideal? According to an Ohio State University study, you'll get the same benefits from swimming you get from land-based exercise with significantly less muscle pain. Under water your body weighs one tenth of its weight on land, which allows your joints to relax while your muscles do all the work.

Time in a pool can also help you heal. Those who undergo surgery

and spend time in a pool reduce their healing time, and health practitioners in many fields recognize swimming as an excellent form of rehabilitation. Swimming is also great for pregnant women, strengthening the abdomen and shoulders while lowering blood pressure and reducing joint stiffness associated with pregnancy.

Diving In: Getting Started

Regardless of your age or fitness level, it's easy to start a swimming regimen. First, find a place to swim! Most cities have municipal pools with adult swim times; check your local Parks and Recreation for options. If you live near a lake or ocean, you can often swim for free. And

many YMCAs, colleges and universities, and local gyms have pools.

Next, set a schedule and stick to it. Doctors recommend exercising for at least 30 minutes five days a week or more. For people who feel they are too busy to commit to a certain time each day, this may mean splitting up that 30 minutes into a 10 minute morning walk and a 20 minute evening swim, still reaping the benefits of regular exercise. Make plans to swim with a friend; having an exercise buddy can be the best way to stay motivated.

Maximizing Your Exercise

Get the most out of your time in the water by alternating

your strokes between freestyle, breaststroke and backstroke, which will engage all major muscle groups. If these strokes sound alien to you or you just can't remember that swim lesson you took as a kid, seek out coaches at your local pool or fitness club. Don't be afraid to take a lesson to ensure proper form, which will help you feel confident in swimming and succeed in your fitness plan without unnecessary injury.



Lorraine Hebert and her big fish during the SRSD first fishing derby! (January 14, 2006)

Top Stress Relievers: The Best Ways To Feel Better

There are many ways to reduce tension and relax. Here are the ten stress relievers I believe are most effective for the amount of work and time involved. Some can be learned in the time it takes to read this page, while others take a little more practice, but there's something here for everyone!

Breathing Exercises - Deep breathing is an easy stress reliever that has numerous benefits for the body, including oxygenating the blood, which 'wakes up' the brain, relaxing muscles and quieting the mind. Breathing exercises are especially helpful because you can do them anywhere, and they work quickly so you can de-stress in a flash.

2) Meditation - Meditation builds on deep breathing, and takes it a step further. When you meditate, your brain enters an area of functioning that's similar to sleep, but carries some added benefits you can't achieve as well in any other state, including the release of certain hormones that promote

health. Also, the mental focus on nothingness keeps your mind from working overtime and increasing your stress level.

3) Guided Imagery - It takes slightly more time to practice guided imagery, but this is a great way to leave your stress behind for a while and relax your body. Some find it easier to practice than meditation, as lots of us find it more doable to focus on 'something' than on 'nothing'. You can play natural sounds in the background as you practice, to promote a more immersive experience.

4) Visualizations - Building on guided imagery, you can also imagine yourself achieving goals like becoming healthier and more relaxed, doing well at tasks, and handling conflict in better ways. Also, visualizing yourself doing well on tasks you're trying to master actually functions like physical practice, so you can improve your performance through visualizations as well.

5) Self-hypnosis - Self-hypnosis incorporates some of the features of guided imagery and visualizations, with the added benefit of enabling you to communicate directly with your subconscious mind to enhance your abilities, more easily give up bad habits, feel less pain, more effectively develop healthier habits, and even find answers to questions that may not be clear to your waking mind! It takes some practice and training, but is well worth it. Learn more about using hypnosis to manage stress in your life.

6) Massage - Your sense of touch is closely linked to your state of mind and is vital to your sense of well-being. In fact, babies who are not touched enough can fail to thrive and even die! Work with this need by getting a massage from a friend or a professional. If neither is available, you can use a self-massager, which will also work great in promoting circulation, releasing tension, and helping you feel more relaxed.

7) Progressive Muscle Relaxation - By tensing and relaxing all the mus-

cle groups in your body, you can relieve tension and feel much more relaxed in minutes, with no special training or equipment. Start by tensing all the muscles in your face, holding a tight grimace ten seconds, then completely relaxing for ten seconds. Repeat this with your neck, followed by your shoulders, etc. You can do this anywhere, and as you practice, you will find you can relax more quickly and easily, reducing tension as quickly as it starts!

8) Music - Music therapy has shown numerous health benefits for people with conditions ranging from mild (like stress) to severe (like cancer). When dealing with stress, the right music can actually lower your blood pressure, relax your body and calm your mind. Here are some suggestions of different types of music to listen to for effective stress management.

9) Yoga - Yoga is one of the oldest self-improvement practices around, dating back over 5 thousand years! It combines the practices of several other stress management techniques such as breathing, meditation, imagery and movement, giving you a lot of benefit for the amount of time and energy required.

***Take care of yourself:***

- Eat well
- Be active
- Be smoke-free
- Take time for your spiritual well-being
- Allow time for yourself

Manage your day:

- Make “to do” lists and cross off completed tasks
- Establish priorities
- Share routine tasks with other family members
- Learn to say “no”

Consider workplace measures:

- Support co-workers
- Take time for breaks and lunches
- Find out if you can use “special leave” for emergency child care
- Leave your work at the office

Balancing Work and Home

Tips to Make It Easier

Improve communication at home:

- Try a message board
- Plan family meetings
- Spend time with family and friends
- Have some family meals together

Keep your expectations realistic:

- Acknowledge your successes each day
- Avoid guilt—no one can do it all!

Seek support from others:

- Find out about resources in your community and at work
- Share concerns and ideas with others



EMPLOYEE WELLNESS REPRESENTATIVES

Jeannine Allard	École Ste. Anne Immersion
Carol Martens	Arborgate School
Karen Benjamin	Division Office
Paulo Borges	Collège Lorette Collegiate
Glen Dawyduk	Ste. Anne Elementary
Jonathan Elcomb	Adult Learning Centre
Lori Gauthier	Dawson Trail School
Helen Grandmont	Transportation Department
Laurel Kosman	École St. Adolphe School
Simone Lamoureux	École Ile des Chênes School
Debra Mitosinka	La Barrière Crossings School
Geri Porath	La Salle School
Michael Slobodian	Collège St. Norbert Collegiate
Liette Weir	École St. Norbert Immersion
Marielle Wiebe	Richer School
Warren Woodhouse	Ste. Anne Collegiate
Ida Yachison	École Lorette Immersion
Lisa Yagi	Parc La Salle School

Get Your Antioxidant Fix from Whole Foods

Antioxidants may be in vogue, but what do they do? And given the many people praising them, which antioxidant rich sources are best for you? Supplements? Coffee? Blueberries? Pecans? Here's what you need to know.

The Consensus

Experts on antioxidants, including experts at the The American Heart Association, agree on one thing: You should eat at least five servings of antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables each day, because antioxidants perform their best when ingested in the whole foods in which they were produced.

Antioxidants Explained

An excess amount of free radicals, which can arise from natural processes such as metabolism, and unnatural processes such as pollution, play a role in causing cancer, heart disease, stroke, and skin deterioration. Antioxidants, including Vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, and minerals like selenium, neutralize free radicals by donating electrons to them; otherwise, free radicals would steal electrons from fat, protein, and DNA molecules, leading to deterioration and disease.

The Best Supplements Are Whole Foods

Recent studies have suggested that taking lots of antioxidant supplements may generate excess free radicals, while some doctors believe the introduction of antioxidants via supplements or vitamin-rich foods could interfere with the body's natural ability to produce antioxidants. To get the best results from antioxidants, take them in the form of whole foods. In other words, eat healthy. By making antioxidant-rich foods a part of your diet, and choosing organic foods (which contain more antioxidants than their conventional counterparts), you'll tame the (free) radicals without adverse consequences to your health.

What You Should Know about Antioxidants in Common Foods

Pecans	Vitamin A, Vitamin C	Most antioxidant-rich of nuts, with walnuts and hazelnuts coming in second and third.
Apples	Polyphenols	6 times more antioxidants are contained in the skin than in the flesh. Red Delicious is the most antioxidant-rich.
Spinach	Lutein	Spinach can help the eyes, as lutein is the main pigment in the eyes' macula
Chocolate	Flavonoids	Flavonoids are more efficient than the antioxidants in green and black tea.
Green Tea	Catechins	Green tea has 10 times more antioxidants than coffee. It takes 5 minutes for the catechins to be released when steeped.
Coffee	Chlorogenic Acid, Caffeic Acid	Coffee is the #1 source of antioxidants in the U.S. only because the average American consumes 45 gallons per year. You get the same amount by eating 1 pint of blueberries per year.
Blueberries	Proantho-cyanidins	Blueberries have 1000 times more antioxidants per volume than coffee.
Wine	Resveratrol, Quercetin, Catechins	Grapes' skin is their chief antioxidant source, so red wine is a greater source than white, because red wine is dyed by the skin.
Olive Oil	Phenol, Vitamin C	When combined with tomatoes, the antioxidant benefits of olive oil increase.
Tomatoes	Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Lycopene	According to a recent study, men who eat at least 10 servings per week (as opposed to 2), are 40% less at risk of prostate cancer.

