

How

THE Well

Are You?

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS - HEALTH & WELLNESS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

SPECIAL SERVICES FOR MILITARY FDNY MEMBERS

NEED ASSISTANCE COPING WITH DEPLOYMENT OR LIFE BACK HOME? THE FDNY COUNSELING SERVICE UNIT (FDNY-CSU) OFFERS THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF SUPPORT AND SERVICES TO THE FDNY MILITARY PERSONNEL AND TO THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS:

* VIDEO TAPING SESSIONS OF YOUR FAMILY TO SEND VIDEO MESSAGES TO YOUR LOVED ONES OVERSEAS.

* OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET UP WITH OTHERS FROM THE FDNY MILITARY COMMUNITY.

* INDIVIDUAL OR COUPLE'S COUNSELING OR TELEPHONE SUPPORT WITH CLINICIANS AND PEER COUNSELORS FAMILIAR WITH ISSUES FACING MILITARY FAMILIES.

* SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE EVEN WHILE LOVED ONES ARE AWAY.

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:
DIANNE KANE (212) 570-1693 X305

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"HOW THE WELL ARE YOU?" IS BROUGHT
TO YOU BY COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
AND THE COUNSELING SERVICE UNIT OF
THE FIRE DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK.

Cold is cool ... for some.

Snow lovers and winter sports fans can't wait for the first snowfall. But for beachgoers and fans of outdoor barbeques, one month of winter is too much.

Whether you are a summer or winter person, Community Connections is here to offer tips to feel your best during all

seasons. In this issue, learn about foods and activities that can help you feel better, more energetic, and relaxed during the colder months. Make sure to check out our articles on meditation and



Traditional Chinese Medicine for some suggestions.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

In 2006, nearly 1000 members of the FDNY community participated in our programs and services. Here are some of the things we did: Yoga classes in Manhattan, Brentwood, and Staten Island helped members reduce stress, improve posture, and enhance flexibility. 300 FDNY employees and their family members tried acupuncture with us last year for the first time. The top three reasons you came? For help sleeping and easing your stress and chronic pain. We also ran workshops at the CSU sites on meditation, nutrition, aromatherapy, qigong and tai chi, sleep disorders, and the benefits of Chinese herbs.

WE CAME TO YOU

Community Connections offered acupuncture and massage services closer to you by adding two new sites – out at the Randall's Island training facility and at St. Boniface church just steps away from FDNY Headquarters in Metrotech. We also joined FDNY members at their own events; providing wellness services and information at FDNY company picnics, holiday celebrations, and at EMS Medal Week.

Developing programs for a work force the size of the FDNY is a big challenge. The more contact we have with the community, the easier it is to determine the types of services and programs that interest you. So, if you have ideas for us, or want to find out if we have a program that could help you – even if you aren't sure, contact us for more information.

We hope that this winter, we can help you stay active to fight off the winter blues. Take a look at the Community Connections' calendar to see what peaks your interest!

LYNN WALKER
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

RECIPE WINNER

Congratulations
to Kelly Maher
who submitted the
#1 winning recipe!



SWEET & SPICY CHICKEN OVER SESAME NOODLES

12 ounces soba noodles
1 jalapeno (seeds removed)
1/3 cup honey
1/4 cup fresh cilantro
1/2 tspn salt
1/2 tspn black pepper
2 tspn olive oil
1/2 rotisserie chicken
(shredded or sliced)
3 tbspn soy sauce
2 tspn sesame oil
1/4 cup chopped scallions

Cook soba noodles according to package directions. Drain and set aside.

In a blender or food processor, combine jalapenos, honey, cilantro, and 1/2 teaspoon each of salt and black pepper. Puree until smooth. Add 2-3 tablespoons of water to the mixture to achieved desired consistency. Pour 2 teaspoons of olive oil into a preheated skillet. Add shredded chicken and blended sauce and cook until heated through.

In a medium serving bowl, combine cooked soba noodles, soy sauce, sesame oil, and scallions. Toss to coat, then top with the heated chicken and sauce. Enjoy!

SEASONAL HEALTH

What is a healthy diet according to Traditional Chinese Medicine?

A healthy diet is the same in most cultures:

- Fresh food, prepared with a minimum of chemicals, preservatives, or additives
- Grains cooked thoroughly for easy and complete digestion
- Vegetables (not overcooked) to conserve valuable vitamins and enzymes
- Diets low in sugar, salt, oil, and fat and high in roughage and fiber

When designing a healthy diet, TCM also looks at unique characteristics in people, the properties of different foods (like hot/cold), and environmental/lifestyle factors.

How should your diet change with the seasons?

Optimal health is achieved when the individual is in balance with the world and with nature.

For instance, winter is cold and damp, so we recommend eating foods that warm the stomach. If you are going to eat cold foods like salads, balance them with soups and teas. Good winter foods are beef, lamb, chicken, and duck and more cooked foods than raw fruits and vegetables.

I treat a lot of patients who have arthritis. Most of them feel worse when it's cold and damp outside. According to

INTERVIEW WITH VANESSA VARTOLO, LICENSED

ACUPUNCTURIST & BOARD CERTIFIED CHINESE

HERBOLOGIST. VANESSA OFFERS ACUPUNCTURE

TO THE FDNY COMMUNITY ON THURSDAY EVENINGS

AT THE STATEN ISLAND CSU. SHE RECENTLY LED

A WORKSHOP ENTITLED, "HEALTHY EATING TO

ACCORDING TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE (TCM)"

TCM, that could be caused by an imbalance in diet or environmental exposure.

What about exercise?

"Winter is a time of storage, rest, repair, and revitalization". The best way to take care of your body during the colder season is to conserve and replenish energy levels by getting light to moderate exercise. Swimming, walking, biking, Pilates, yoga and Tai Chi will get the circulation moving, warm up the body, and keep you energized and healthy.

Are there differences in the way Western medicine and TCM approach illness?

There is a famous saying in Chinese medicine: One disease, different treatments: Different diseases, one treatment.

Two patients may have arthritis but could receive different treatments, because the cause of their arthritis is different. On the other hand, someone with arthritis might receive the same treatment as someone

who has stomach pain or digestion problems.

In Western medicine, this may seem odd. Western doctors look at signs and symptoms and label them as particular diseases. Anyone with the same diagnosis can receive similar treatment.

A Chinese medicine practitioner, just like your regular doctor, will take a full history including all of your symptoms, but they will also look at characteristics of the tongue, examine the quality of the pulse, consider emotional factors, and will try to establish an individual's "pattern of disharmony" before recommending a treatment.

For example, if a person suffers from arthritis, their pattern might be "damp heat trapped in the body" or "damp cold". The treatments would be totally different for those two patterns.

If you would like to find out more about Chinese Medicine, look out for one of Vanessa's workshops or check out our schedule for other similar talks.

NOW & ZEN

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Sitting quietly and breathing are the building blocks of mindful meditation, a technique with growing popularity due to a key result: improved stress management skills.

Mindfulness is that sense of “flow” you feel when you’re fully engaged. Playing sports, woodworking, or practicing a musical instrument can trigger a sense of focus. Mind and body are connected to the present; nothing else seems to matter, you’re in The Zone. Lakers Coach Phil Jackson has used mindfulness meditation during championship seasons.

“For me, meditation is a tool that allows me to stay calm and centered (well, most of the time) during the stressful highs and lows of basketball and life ...” Phil Jackson states in *Sacred Hoops: Spiritual Lessons of a Hardwood Warrior*.

When you think of meditation, maybe you imagine a monastery, the smell of incense, monks...meditation is part of every great spiritual tradition. But you don’t need to take monastic vows to learn meditation: mindfulness practice is available to anyone, any time.

So how do you meditate?

Did your mom ever tell you to count to ten when you were angry? Meditation is that simple – and that complex.



“The secret is not thinking. That doesn’t mean being stupid; it means quieting the endless jabbering of thoughts so that your body can do instinctively what it’s been trained to do without the mind getting in the way.”

– PHIL JACKSON

There are many techniques: one general instruction is to sit quietly, and pay attention to your breath. Then, count your breaths. As you count, notice when thoughts interrupt the process of counting. When this happens, start counting again from the beginning.

In a recent CSU meditation workshop, FDNY members and CSU staffers learned this technique. After two minutes, the instructor requested a show of hands: who had counted to ten? There were no hands raised. Not even the instructor’s! It’s not easy, but regular practice helps.

Actually, it’s not about counting to ten, or doing it “right”: when you notice the thoughts that naturally interfere with counting, you are meditating. Regular practice creates awareness of the flow and range of thoughts, and leads to an unexpected outcome: a settling and quieting of the mind.

The result? Scientists have documented meditation’s stress management benefits. In a research study at the University of Pennsylvania, students in a weekly mindfulness meditation course reported reductions in anxiety, depression, fatigue, and anger. Students reported increased vigor, and feeling more rested and relaxed.

Athletes practice endless ball-handling drills, musicians play scales, and woodworkers measure twice, and cut once. To gain benefits, you must practice. Jackson’s teams practice meditation together, because community supports learning. “When players practice what is known as mindfulness...not only do they play better and win more, they also become more attuned with each other.”

Parents teach counting to ten as a mental time-out, so that kids will make a good choice : to respond, rather than to react. In meditation practice, you train yourself to do exactly the same thing.

– Anne Libby

RECIPE:

Patricia Dorph’s Mango Salsa is the runner-up in our healthy recipe contest. This easy to prepare salsa is will liven up an everyday dish like grilled fish or chicken, or can be used as dip.

Mango Salsa

2 ripe mangoes
1 cucumber
2 limes
1/2 cup chopped cilantro
hot sauce to taste

Peel and dice mangoes and cucumber. Add the juice of two limes. Combine with all the remaining ingredients. Chill for at least one hour before serving.

THE CSU

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MIDDLETOWN, (845) 695-1029

To learn more about meditation, or to find opportunities meditate with others, please contact: Lynn Walker (212) 570-1693, x318
walkerly@fdny.nyc.gov

CALENDAR

ACUPUNCTURE

Brentwood:

Wednesdays, 11am-1pm

Fort Totten:

Mondays, 3pm-5pm

Manhattan:

Wednesdays, 3pm-5pm

Middletown:

Wednesdays, 1pm-3pm

Staten Island:

Thursdays, 5pm-7pm

TAI CHI

Brentwood:

Tuesdays; 2/27/07-4/03/07,

7pm-8:30pm

YOGA

Manhattan:

Thursdays; 3/15/07-5/03/07,

4:30pm-6pm

Staten Island:

Wednesdays; 2/28/07-4/18/07,

7pm-8:30pm

WIVES & PARTNERS GROUP

Middletown

Wednesdays through 3/28/07;

10am-11am

MIDDLETOWN SERIES:

WEDNESDAY WORKSHOPS

Massage for the Novice

3/18/07, 6:30pm-8pm

Five Star Relationships

4/18/07, 6:30pm-8pm

STATEN ISLAND SERIES: THURSDAY WORKSHOPS

Aromatherapy

3/22/07, 7pm-8pm

Eat Right For The Spring

4/26/07, 7pm-8pm

FORT TOTTEN SERIES

MONDAY WORKSHOPS:

Self-Healing Exercise

2/26/07, 5pm-6pm

Chinese Herbs for Health, Part 2

3/05/07, 5pm-6pm

Pilates Demonstration

3/26/07, 5pm-6pm

Chinese Herbs for Health, Part 3

4/23/07, 5pm-6pm

* CALL THE CSU FOR MORE DETAILS
AND/OR TO RSVP TO ANY EVENT.

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of the FDNY-CSU

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