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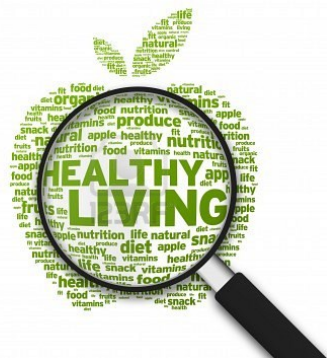
# Wellness

## Miami-Dade County

PROVIDING EMPLOYEES WITH THE LATEST FITNESS AND WELLNESS NEWS, PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

### 4 Areas of Your Health You May Be Neglecting

Typically, when we want to get our weight or health back on track, we develop a plan to optimize our nutrition and make a pledge to start hitting the gym. This is a great start. Sedentary lifestyles and inappropriate food choices definitely play major roles in our nation's obesity and health epidemics. The problem is there are many other areas of our lives that can affect both our weight and our health.



#### 1. Sleep

This is arguably the most important area to fix first. One night of sleep deprivation can alter our hormones and increase our caloric intake by up to 600 calories without us even realizing it. It can also alter the leptin and ghrelin hormones, setting the stage to promote obesity. Leptin is the hormone responsible for telling us when to eat and how much fat to store. Ghrelin tells us when we are hungry. So, ditch the artificial light sixty to ninety minutes before bed or get some amber sunglasses to filter out the blue light. Make sure you are getting seven to nine hours of sleep in a completely blacked-out room. This will make sure you are recovering from workouts and help make a switch to eating real foods easier due to the decrease in hunger and cravings.

#### 2. Stress Management

Many times in my practice, people say that exercise is their stress

management. Exercise is important to help us recover from stress, but it is also a stressor itself. To balance this, we need to actively take part in activities that reduce our stress levels. Our body is built up on a check and balances system. We need balance between our *sympathetic nervous system* (our fight or flight) and our *parasympathetic nervous system* (our rest and digest). Exercise elicits a response from our sympathetic nervous system, while activities such as mindful meditation, deep breathing, and going for a walk while listening to relaxing music elicit a response from our parasympathetic nervous system.

#### 3. Vitamin D

Most of us have probably heard that vitamin D helps prevent osteoporosis, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. New research also suggests that vitamin D may play a vital role in how much food we eat. All of this is important because anywhere between 40 to 75% of the population may be deficient in vitamin D. So, get your vitamin D checked twice per year and make sure the values fall between 40 to 60ng/ml.

#### 4. Social Relationships

This is the last area, but certainly not the least important to our health and well-being. A meta-analysis looking at social relationships and overall mortality concluded by stating that social relationships are as important as other lifestyle choices, such as smoking. So, it's vital to our health to spend time with family and friends. The reason social relationships may be so important might be due to a hormone called *oxytocin*. Oxytocin may play a role as an immunoregulatory hormone. It has been shown to be released during times of infection and interact with inflammatory markers.

Take a quick assessment of your life and see how you are performing in each of these areas. Fix the weakest links and pay attention to how you look, feel, and perform. I think you will be happily surprised with the results.

# Foods to Help You Gain Muscle Mass

What if I told you that you could gain more muscle mass with less training? Or retain more muscle mass with less training? And even gain/retain more strength with less training? The secret is nutrition.

To get you started, here is my list of the top ten foods to help you gain more muscle mass and strength:

## 1. Lean Beef

This should be a STAPLE of your diet if you want to gain muscle mass. Why? Because it is loaded with all sorts of things conducive to muscle growth. On average, a three-ounce serving of lean beef is only 154 calories, yet it provides ten essential nutrients, including iron, zinc and B-vitamins. More importantly, it provides your body with high quality protein (not all proteins are equal), and a high level of amino acid that works with insulin to promote muscle growth. For those who are trying to lose weight, this should come as great news – a 3 ounce serving of lean beef provides roughly the same amount of protein as 1.5 cups of beans, but at half the calories.

## 2. Skinless Chicken

Like beef, it is an excellent source of high quality protein, which is important for muscle maintenance and repair, bone health, and weight maintenance. And of course, there are so many ways you can cook and prepare chicken. Go down to the store and you can easily find chicken meat cut into single serving sizes that can be seasoned and quickly cooked.

## 3. Cottage Cheese

Not many people know this, but cottage cheese constitutes relatively pure casein protein. For those who don't know, casein protein is a slow-digesting protein, which means it is perfect for muscle maintenance. This is useful especially for guys who have no choice but to go long periods without eating. Not forgetting, cottage

cheese is also an excellent source of vitamin B12, calcium, and other important nutrients. My advice: buy the nonfat/low-fat versions.

## 4. Eggs

Eggs contain high quality protein, nine essential amino acids, choline, the right kind of fat, and vitamin D. To sum it up, they are the most value for money. And please note, eggs are not harmful for your health, as numerous studies have already shown.

## 5. Whey Protein

There is a reason why whey protein supplements are the most popular supplement in the bodybuilding world: because they provide a fast and convenient source of protein at an affordable price. Bodybuilders normally use them when they wake up, right after their workout, and mixed with some of their meals. However, for those of us non-bodybuilders, simply using it right after our workouts can be very effective for muscle mass gains. Do not rely on it completely though. It's more important to get high quality protein from whole foods, and use whey protein as a boost.



## Countywide Employee Wellness Challenge

### *Brought to you by AvMed*

In an effort to bring awareness of the numerous online wellness tools available to employees, we challenge you to take the first step towards embracing better health!

What is the Challenge? Employees who complete an online personal Health Assessment (PHA) by June 30th, 2015! It will help their department win a day of relaxing wellness activities onsite.

How to join this Challenge:

Simply visit [www.avmed.org/mdc](http://www.avmed.org/mdc) and log in to your AvMed account.\*

Select Health and Wellness and under Tools for a Healthier You select Wellness Portal powered by Healthyroads®, click "agree" on the consent form, then select the Take PHA button.

- Remember that the AvMed Wellness Portal is available 24/7 and there are many wellness tools available to help you embrace better health.
- All PHA participants will be entered into a drawing for additional wellness prizes

\*If you do not have an AvMed account, click the Register button in the Account Login section and follow the steps to register . Be aware that the user ID and password are case sensitive



## “THE SLOW-CARB DIET” 30-DAY CHALLENGE

Are you ready to rid your body of that unwanted fat but don't have a lot of time to work out? Complete the 30-Day Slow-Carb Diet (SCD) Challenge and turn your body into a fat burning machine instantly! By only following five simple rules it is not uncommon to lose pounds of fat, lower your cholesterol, blood sugar and more in only 30 days. The Slow-Carb Diet (SCD) works almost beyond belief and it affects much more than appearance. It works for both women and men of all body types. The diet is designed to be very effective — follow it strictly and prepare to be amazed. Let us guide you through the challenge and equip you with the tools and information you need to be successful.

The challenge will begin May 18. If you are interested in participating [click here](#). We will send you all of the details.



## Active Events: May/June

### Baptist Health Tour of The Gables 5K

Saturday, May 16 @ 7:30am  
Coral Gables City Hall, Miami, FL  
[Click here for details](#)

### FIU 2575 Triathlon North Miami 2015

Sunday, May 17 @ 7:00am  
FIU Biscayne Bay Campus, Miami, FL  
[Click here for details](#)

### DOWN2EARTH Trail Run

Sunday, May 24 @ 7:30am  
Oleta River State Park, North Miami Beach, FL  
[Click here for details](#)



### South Miami Hospital Twilight 5K

Sunday, May 31 @ 7:00pm  
Footworks South Miami, Miami, FL  
[Click here for details](#)

### La Roottaaa Mt. Biking # 5 FINALE

Sunday, June 7 @ 9:00am  
Virginia Key Beach Park, Miami, FL  
[Click here for details](#)

### Virginia Key 50 Miles

Sunday June, 14 @ 9:00am  
Virginia Key Beach Park, Miami, FL  
[Click here for details](#)

**Are you acquainted with the County's Worksite Wellness Program "WW" events and activities?** The Program is endorsed by Mayor *Carlos A. Gimenez*' Office under delegated authority to Deputy Mayor *Russell Benford*. The WW Program is coordinated through *Dennys E. Gonzalez*, from the Internal Services Department, who channels information to every County department through designated *Wellness Liaisons*. To find out who your department liaison is please visit [this link](#). Under its tagline "**Wellness Works**" and the blue "**W**" identifier the County's WW Program aims to engage employees on the benefits of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through educational activities, "health & wellness fairs" and ad-hoc department-level initiatives. Our goal is to join forces with existing employee-benefit resources and in-kind services from several County departments to bring information, resources and opportunities to all Miami-Dade County Employees and to lead a healthy lifestyle that promotes responsible individual choices. For related events and WW information visit <http://www.miamidade.gov/mayor/wellness.asp>. Feel free to contact [wellnessworks@miamidade.gov](mailto:wellnessworks@miamidade.gov) for more information.