12 Simple Ways to Spring Clean Your Health

Ah, spring. There's something simply magical about the season. But there’s nothing that can kill your warm weather-induced buzz faster than the idea of "spring cleaning." Not to worry, we’re not going to tell you to set aside several days for massive home cleaning. Instead, we’ve got 12 essentials to help you kick your healthy habits up a notch with nary a cleaning binge in sight.

1. Choose in-season, local produce: Seasonal produce offers more flavor as well as price savings. Local produce supports farmers and also spares the environment by eliminating long-distance delivery systems.

2. Schedule screenings and doctor visits: Plan ahead to keep track of wellness appointments during the year. Talk with your doctor for a plan that suits your needs.

3. Venture outside: Walking for exercise benefits your cardiovascular system and burns calories. Take a walk in the woods and you’ll also reap the benefits of anti-cancer proteins. Called “forest bathing,” researchers found that walking in the forest lowers blood pressure and stress and boosts the immune system.

4. De-clutter your medicine cabinet: First off, medicine should be stored in a cool, dry cabinet, not in the bathroom. The expiration date is your best guidance for the potency of a medicine, but if you’re unsure, toss it if it smells bad or looks off-color.

5. Go wheat free for a month: If you can’t seem to shake those last few winter pounds, try eliminating wheat from your diet. Swap wheat-based products for rice, quinoa, legumes, buckwheat, tapioca, and potatoes.

6. Learn how to de-stress instantly: Resolve to finally learn how to handle your stress this spring. If you can’t spare a block of time every day to meditate, squeeze in a few minutes each hour to experience the same benefits. Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. Focus on pulling the air down into your belly. Breathe in for a count of five, hold the breath for a moment, and then slowly release. Continue for three to five minutes.

7. Allergy-proof your house: You can help put the kibosh on spring allergies by washing all linens and blankets. The greatest number of dust mites live in the bedroom. All smooth surfaces, including ceiling fan blades and window coverings should be wiped with a cloth.

8. Purge old makeup: Most products have at least a one-year shelf life, although organic products may go bad faster. Throw it out if you notice changes in the product, such as an odor or separation of ingredients.

9. Replace old workout shoes: Your comfy, worn-out running shoes may do more harm than good. The material, particularly in the heel, wears out with use, and loses its cushioning effect.

10. Smarten up your TV time: Sneak in some brain-boosting options. Watch shows that stimulate thoughtful conversation like PBS, the Discovery Channel or ones that focus on hobbies you find interesting.

11. Organize your in-box: Chances are, the giant stack of junk mail and flyers on your kitchen counter isn’t the only mail source gathering dust.

12. Up your daily happiness potential: Try these quick happiness-boosting tips
   - Throw away your ex—or at least pictures and mementos that make you sad.
   - Rid your closet of clothes that don’t flatter you. You just don’t need that baggage.
   - Give away the stuff you don’t want: Research shows that helping out others improves your own happiness.
UPCOMING WELLNESS POINT OPPORTUNITIES

* March Healthy You Challenge—1 point per day: Earn 1 point for each day you track how many servings of dairy you ate that day using Healthy You!
* March Educate Yourself Session—50 points: Wednesday, March 13th at 4:30 pm at the High School in Room 301. Make Your Own Elderberry Syrup presented by Brandis Stout. Learn the benefits of this wonderful syrup and how to save money by making it yourself. Everyone that attends will take home a 1/2 pint jar of homemade elderberry syrup. RSVP required by Friday, March 8th—email bstout@scs-k12.net
* Tim Dorsey Fitness Classes—10 points per class: Pick one FREE class a week! See the full class schedule on the Sandusky Wellness website.
* Open Way Yoga Classes—10 points per class: Tuesdays at 4:30 pm. See the Sandusky Wellness website for class registration instructions.
* Facebook post—10 points: Post a picture of a healthy recipe that you made at home, share a local fitness event opportunity or share a local volunteer opportunity onto the Sandusky Wellness Facebook page.
* March Wellness Puzzle—25 points: Complete the crossword puzzle on page 4.

HEALTHY GREEN SMOOTHIE BOWL

Celebrate St. Patrick’s Day by trying this healthy green smoothie bowl! This recipe makes 1 bowl and it can easily be double or tripled.

Ingredients
- 1 bananas
- 1/2 cup mango, diced (fresh or frozen)
- 3 handfuls baby kale or spinach
- 2 tablespoons hemp or flax seeds
- 1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk or preferred milk
- 1/8 teaspoon pink salt or sea salt
- handful ice

Instructions
1. Combine all of the ingredients in a blender and process until totally smooth.
2. Pour the smoothie into a bowl and layer on the toppings.
Toppings: fresh fruit, hemp seeds, chia seeds, honey, unsweetened shredded coconut, almonds, cacao nibs and nut butter

WELLNESS WINNERS

February Wellness Puzzle
$25 Wellness Dollars to
- **Kelly Sims**—Ontario
February Educate Yourself Session
$25 Wellness Dollars to
- **Beth Wells**—SHS

1st Quarter Wellness Competitor
$50 Wellness Dollars to
- **Holly Blanton**—Ontario
1st Quarter Wellness All Star
$100 Wellness Dollars to
- **Megan Rice**—Venice
1st Quarter Wellness Champion
$200 Wellness Dollars to
- **Renee Neyman**—RCAAS
National Nutrition Month Ideas

1. **Embrace the Healthy Eating Lifestyle Benefits:**
The body is like a car in that it needs the correct fuel to keep going. If you constantly put low-quality fuel in your tank, you’re going to run into health problems. Type 2 diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure are just a few of the consequences of a poor diet. Consider this: Is it more inconvenient to chop veggies for a salad each day or go to the doctor a few times a month because healthy eating wasn’t a priority?

**Key takeaway:** Ask yourself how you want to feel. Next time greasy or high-sugar foods tempt you, think of how you felt the last time you ate those foods. It may encourage you to choose more wisely.

2. **Don’t Shoot for Perfection:**
Diets are full of rules. And the one you’ll do best on is the one that you’ll stick to because it works for you. Not your favorite celebrity. Not your best friend. Not your co-worker. You. Consider changes in your eating patterns as healthy lifestyle changes instead of a diet.

**Key takeaway:** It’s best to keep it simple. Eating right doesn’t have to be as complicated as you think. Stick to an 80-20 rule — as long as you eat healthy 80% of the time, you’re probably doing fine.

3. **Choose Quality Over Quantity:**
While a plate of greasy french fries may sound really appetizing, it’s unlikely full of quality nutrients the body actually needs. Instead, if you want a starchy fix, consider how you can get quality nutrients while still fulfilling your craving. A sweet potato topped with black beans and corn or even a homemade avocado dressing is a better choice to up your dietary fiber and vitamins intake.

**Key takeaway:** Be mindful of portion sizes. Are you really that hungry, or does the food just look good? High-quality fruits and veggies are always a better pick over convenient, pre-packed foods.

4. **Sugar is Sneaky:**
Unfortunately, added sugar is in a lot of the foods most of us consider healthy. Yogurt, fruit juices, condiments, and salad dressings, are just a few of the top offenders. To make it even more challenging, sugar has at least 61 different names it goes by. To name a few: Sucrose, high fructose corn syrup, barley malt, dextrose, maltose, and rice syrup.

**Key takeaway:** The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends no more than 9 teaspoons (38 grams) of added sugar per day for males, and 6 teaspoons (25 grams) per day for female. Read labels carefully to make sure you’re not getting added sugars without knowing it.

5. **Ask Nutrition Experts:**
When in doubt, ask the experts. You can only turn to Dr. Google so much. A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can offer nutrition advice based on your preferences, lifestyle, and health needs. You won’t find a nutritionist offering tips for a crash diet, but they will offer a way to overhaul eating habits that can cause disease and other issues.

**Key takeaway:** Diets and new lifestyle changes are tricky to make sometimes. To find a nutrition expert in your area, visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ website.

6. **Snacks Can Be Healthy:**
If you find yourself starving by the end of the work day, you probably didn’t get enough necessary nutrients and fiber. Adding healthy snacks throughout the day — like almonds or fruit — can keep energy levels stable. It also prevents binge eating later on when it’s meal time.

**Key takeaway:** Avoiding convenience foods in the work vending machine can be challenging. Always have healthy go-to options on hand when hunger strikes during the work day.

**National Nutrition Month Tips**

**Shop Local:** Visit your local farmer’s market for fresh fruits and veggies. You’ll support local businesses and eat what’s in season.

**Plan Ahead:** See what you already have in your cabinets and pantry before running to the store. Make a shopping list ahead of time based on how many meals you’ll need to make.

**Store Food Properly:** Don’t overbuy produce or you’ll end up wasting it. When you properly store fruits and veggies, it lasts longer. Store fruits and veggies in separate drawers.

**Prep:** Get all your perishable foods prepared right after shopping. Chop up veggies and fruits to store in clear storage containers. You’ll have healthy snacks and meal ingredients available when hunger strikes.

**Give it Away:** Buy too much? Going on vacation soon and have leftovers? Share with a neighbor. If it’s pre-packaged and not opened, donate it to your local food bank so it doesn’t end up in a landfill.
Across
2. If you constantly put low-quality fuel in your tank, you're going to run into ______ problems.
4. Consider changes in your eating ______ as healthy lifestyle changes instead of a diet.
6. ______ wheat-based products for rice, quinoa, legumes, buckwheat, tapioca, and potatoes.
8. Adding healthy snacks throughout the day — like almonds or fruit — can keep ______ levels stable.
9. RSVP is required for the March ______ Yourself session by Friday, March 8th.
10. Get all your perishable foods ______ right after shopping.
11. Medicine should be ______ in a cool, dry cabinet, not in the bathroom.

Down
1. If you can’t spare a block of time every day to meditate, squeeze in a few minutes each hour to experience the same ______.
3. Toppings for smoothie bowels include but aren't limited to fresh fruit, hemp seeds, chia seeds, honey, ______ shredded coconut, almonds, cacao nibs and nut butter.
5. Local produce ______ farmers and also spares the environment by eliminating long-distance delivery systems.
6. Read labels carefully to make sure you’re not getting added ______ without knowing it.
7. The greatest number of dust mites live in the ______.

Name: ____________________________
Building: ________________________

Submit your completed puzzle to Brandis Stout via email or to the Board Office by Friday, March 22nd.