



# Living Well Calhoun

## ASK THE DIETITIAN

By Amanda Latchaw, Dietetic Intern, Health Department.

### Eating during the holiday season

If eating during the holiday season stresses you out - I hear you. It is already hard enough to stay healthy during the cold weather, let alone trying to avoid gaining extra pounds around this time. Let's face it, a lot of us love to cook our favorite foods around this time of the year, and why not, food gives us comforting feelings and we share our love through food. Let's make this holiday season simple - Eat as if it's any other day. We can indulge in a slice of pie or two or go for an extra helping of mashed potatoes and gravy. Grab a little bit of what you want to eat and when you're done with your first plate and are still feeling hungry, get a little bit more. Eat to the point where you are no longer hungry but do not feel overstuffed. The more we restrict ourselves from eating, the more likely we will overindulge later. We should do away with any negative feelings with food and embrace the memories created around the breakfast/lunch/dinner table.

Happy Eating!

If you have questions you would like to ask Amanda, email them to [mstamand@calhouncountymi.gov](mailto:mstamand@calhouncountymi.gov)

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### How to Find Reliable Online Health Information

Having access to reliable, evidence-based health information can be very useful and empowering. More and more people are turning to the internet for answers to their health questions. The internet can be a great source of information, but with millions of websites available, it can be difficult to tell if the information is reliable.

#### Key Questions to Ask When Evaluating a Website

- Who published the information? (.gov – Federal Government, .edu – Educational institutions, .org – non-profit organisations and .com – for-profit organisations)
- Who wrote the information?
- Is the information peer reviewed?
- Is the information current?
- Is the information based on scientific evidence and supported by facts?

#### When to Be Sceptical of information

- The information is anonymous.
- There is a conflict of interest.
- The information is one-sided or biased.
- The information is outdated.
- There is a claim of a miracle cure.
- No evidence is cited.
- The grammar is poor, and words are misspelled.

Reference: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/online-health-information-it-reliable>

Visit [www.helpnetep.com](http://www.helpnetep.com) or call **1-888-975-9355** to speak to a wellness coach about additional resources available.

HelpNet

# THE SWEET HISTORY OF HONEY

Honey holds a sweet rich history throughout the ages with its medicinal properties dating back to the ancient cultures of the world. Honey is alluded to the Sumerian and Babylonian cuneiform writing, the Hittite code and the sacred writings of India, the Veda and in the ancient writings of Egypt.



During the Egyptian times (30th Century B.C.) honey was used in most households as a sweetening agent. The people of this time valued honey highly and it was commonly used as a tribute or payment. Honey was also used to feed sacred animals. Egypt is one of the first societies to have extensive records of beekeeping. Honeybees and beekeeping were crucial to Egyptian society, and their usage pervaded into almost every aspect of Egyptian life. From an ingredient in cakes, to ceremonies, and even in burial, honey was used. Overall the bee was valued, and its importance is proven by the socio-political-religious implications and uses.



The Sumerians, Assyrians and Babylonians poured honey over thresholds and stones for commemorative offerings. Honey and wine were also poured over bolts that were to be used in sacred buildings.

During the 7th Century B.C., in Greece, it was a custom to offer honey to the gods and spirits of the dead. Mead, an alcohol drink made with honey, was considered the drink of the gods.





# THE BENEFITS OF HONEY

- ◆ **Make your own healthy, rehydrating sports drink.** Add a spoonful of raw honey and protein powder, with a pinch of Himalayan sea salt to a glass of spring water, stir vigorously, and drink to replace electrolytes, increase energy, and athletic performance.
- ◆ **Need to soothe a minor sunburn?** Try this relieving remedy. Mix ½ cup of honey and 1 cup of milk. Apply the mixture to the sunburned area. Leave on as long as possible to ease the pain and to prevent skin from peeling. Reapply as needed to ease discomfort and to promote healing. Severe sunburn can produce swelling, blisters, nausea, fever, and chills. Seek professional medical attention if these symptoms arise.
- ◆ **Healing salve for minor burns, cuts, or scrapes.** Applied topically, honey is a natural antiseptic, containing 3 powerful wound-healing components: sugar, hydrogen peroxide, and propolis. The nectar-based compound propolis kills bacteria, while hydrogen peroxide disinfects. The sugar absorbs moisture, creating an environment in which bacteria cannot survive. Another plus, as the honey dries, it forms a natural bandage.
- ◆ **Eating unfiltered, unheated, raw honey produced within your area, (50-mile radius or less) is like receiving a natural anti-allergy shot!** Quercetin, a component of honey, has been found in studies to reduce inflammation and pollen allergy symptoms. It stabilizes the cell membranes that release histamine, which triggers allergic reactions. Raw honey also contains bee pollen and bee propolis, which boosts the immune system, and builds immunity to allergens.
- ◆ **Cough suppressant** – Mix apple cider vinegar and honey to taste in a small glass jar. Take a tablespoon as often as needed to relieve minor coughs, colds, and sore throats.
- ◆ **Promote relaxation and restful sleep.** Take a spoonful of raw honey at bedtime.



*Note:* Never feed honey to an infant younger than one year old. Honey can contain spores of the bacteria that cause botulism. While this poses no problem for adults and children, the spores can colonize in an infant's digestive tract and produce the deadly botulin toxin.

Sources: <https://www.benefits-of-honey.com/local-honey/>  
<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/the-benefits-of-honey-how-to-incorporate-it-into-your-diet/>  
<https://historyofbees.weebly.com/ancient-civilizations.html>

# Healthy Recipes

Good for a fit ticket point with submission of recipe

## Submitted by Jennifer Baffi Pumpkin Spinach Smoothie

### Ingredients:

1/2 cup pumpkin puree  
1 frozen banana  
1/2 an avocado  
1 - 2 cups spinach  
1 - 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice  
1/4 inch piece of fresh ginger  
1/2 cup apple cider  
1/2 cup almond milk  
Ice if needed

### Preparation:

Add all the ingredients into a blender in the order listed. Blend on high until smooth and creamy. If you want it a little thicker add some ice and re-blend. Pour into a glass and enjoy!



## Take a Breather & Feel Better

These days it's hard not to get overwhelmed once in a while. Between juggling work, family, and other commitments, you can become too stressed out and busy. However you need to set time aside to unwind or your mental and physical health can suffer.

After scrambling to get the kids fed and off to school, dodging traffic, combating road rage, and gulping down coffee in lieu of a healthy breakfast, many people arrive to work already stressed. This will make you more reactive to stress in the workplace.

You might be surprised by how affected by workplace stress you are when you have a stressful morning. When you start off the day with planning, good nutrition, and a positive attitude, you might find that the stress of your job rolls off your back more easily.

As important as it is to be engaged and productive when you're working on a project at work or home, it is equally valuable to be able to unplug and relax. This downtime can bring you renewed energy and often a new perspective.

Unplugging and having some downtime is not only about giving yourself breathing space by temporarily disengaging from your work and your worries. It also provides the perfect environment for your body and mind to relax. In fact, when you allow yourself time for relaxation, you activate your *parasympathetic nervous system*, which is also known as the "rest and digest" mode of your nervous system, in contrast to the "flight or fight" mode of the sympathetic nervous system.

The rest and digest mode allows your body to repair itself and your mind to relax. The parasympathetic nervous system causes a cascade of events that brings your body and mind to a place of renewal and healing.

- ◆ The head clears, and thoughts become less erratic.
- ◆ An overall sense of well-being is experienced.

Even a little bit of downtime for renewal can help you better handle life's stressors. Carve out some time from your day, every day, to take care of yourself. Even 10 to 15 minutes can have a big impact on how balanced you feel.

Slowing down your breathing is a great way to prompt the parasympathetic nervous system. Rhythmically breathe in and out, slowly and regularly. Count the length of your inhales and exhales to help you make your breaths longer as you start to relax more. Doing a deep breathing exercise as little as 5 minutes can be enough to get your relaxation response going. Making time for relaxation is a reward in itself. Yet, it also comes with the extra benefits of contributing to a healthier and more balanced you.

Exercise is an effective method for stress relief, as the after effects trigger the body's rest and digest response. Plus, exercise will improve your mood, but you have to do it often for it to pay off.

So how much should you exercise every week? Work up to 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderately intense exercise like brisk walks or 75 minutes of a more vigorous exercise like swimming laps, jogging or other sports.

Many people feel the ill effects of leading a sedentary lifestyle. You can combat the physical and mental effects of work stress by getting some exercise on your lunch break. If your schedule allows for it, you might try taking short exercise breaks throughout the day. This can help you blow off steam, lift your mood, and get into better shape. Focus on setting fitness goals you can meet so you don't give up. Most of all remember that doing any exercise is better than none at all.

When you're stressed, your muscles get tense. You can help loosen them up on your own and refresh your body by:

- ◆ Stretching
- ◆ Enjoying a massage
- ◆ Taking a hot bath or shower
- ◆ Getting a good night's sleep

Eating a regular, well-balanced diet will help you feel better in general. It may also help control your moods. Your meals should be full of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and lean protein for energy. Also try avoiding skipping meals, it's not good for you and can put you in a bad mood, which can actually increase your stress.

You need to plan on some real downtime, even for only a few minutes, to give your mind time off from stress, this may be hard for you at first, but stick with it and you'll look forward to these moments. Restful things you can do include:

- ◆ Meditation
- ◆ Yoga
- ◆ Listening to your favorite music
- ◆ Lock yourself in the bathroom with a good book if needed!

You need to set aside time for things you enjoy. Try to do something every day that makes you feel good, and it will help relieve your stress. It doesn't have to be a ton of time, even 15 to 20 minutes will do. Relaxing hobbies include things like:

- Reading
- Knitting
- Doing an art project
- Playing golf
- Watching a movie
- Doing puzzles
- Playing cards and board games

If things are bothering you, talking about them can help lower your stress. You can talk to family members, friends, a co-worker. You can also talk to yourself. It's called self-talk and we all do it. But in order for self-talk to help reduce stress you need to make sure it's positive and not negative. So listen closely to what you're thinking or saying when you're stressed out. If you're giving yourself a negative message, change it to a positive one. For example, don't tell yourself "I can't do this." Tell yourself instead: "I can do this," or "I'm doing the best I can."

Accept that you can't do things perfectly no matter how hard you try. You also can't control everything in your life. So do yourself a favor and stop thinking you can do so much. Don't forget to also keep a good sense of humor, laughter goes a long way towards making you feel relaxed.

Even if you're a naturally disorganized person, planning ahead to stay organized can greatly decrease your stress at work. Being organized with your time means less rushing in the morning to avoid being late as well as less hustling to get out at the end of the day. Keeping yourself organized can also mean avoiding the negative effects of clutter and being more efficient with your work. Multitasking was once heralded as a fantastic way to maximize one's time and get more done in a day. However, people eventually began to realize that if they had a phone to their ear and were making calculations at the same time, their speed and accuracy (not to mention sanity) often suffered. There is a certain "frazzled" feeling that comes from splitting your focus and it doesn't work well for most people.

Being a high achiever might make you feel good about yourself and help you excel at work but being a perfectionist can create problems for you (and those around you). You might not be able to do everything perfectly, every time, especially in a busy, fast-paced job. A good strategy to avoid the perfectionism trap is always striving to just do your best and making time to congratulate yourself on your efforts. You may find that your results are better and you'll be much less stressed at work.

Listening to music also offers many benefits and can be an effective way to relieve stress before, during, and after work. Playing an uplifting song while you make breakfast can help you start the day off feeling better prepared to interact with the people in your life. Likewise, combating the stress of a long day with your favorite music on the drive home can help you wind down and feel less stressed when you get there.

Sources: <https://www.verywellmind.com>, HelpNet, WebMD