

BETTER HEALTH

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Emotional Intelligence: The skill that changes everything

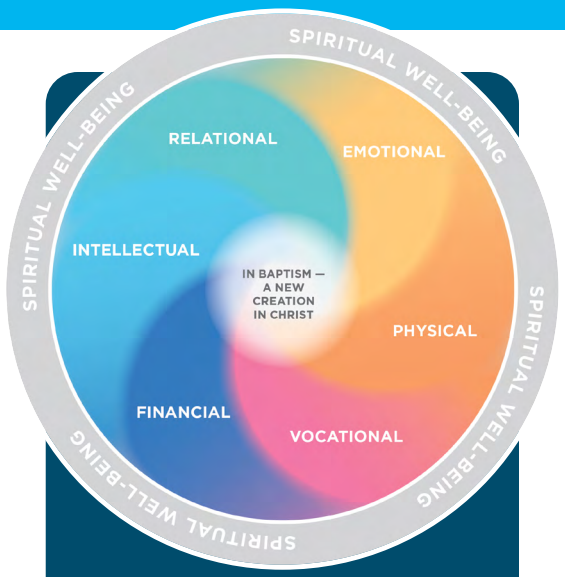
Mental health shapes how we feel, think, communicate and connect with others. The LCMS Wellness Wheel describes emotional wellness as the ability to experience, understand and express our God-given emotions – and to recognize the feelings of those around us. These are the skills at the heart of your emotional intelligence (EI).

Unlike IQ, EI can grow. Practicing self-awareness, active listening and feedback builds a stronger foundation for resilience. A higher EI helps us handle stress, build meaningful relationships and navigate tough times with grace – making a positive difference for ourselves and others.



Emotional wellness also means cultivating gratitude – pausing to praise and thank God for His daily gifts. Stewarding our emotional health means managing feelings healthily, sometimes with pastoral or counseling support, so we can share hope in Jesus with others.

Sources: *Lutheran Witness; LCMS Stewardship Ministry; LCMS.org; PubMed; Harvard*



Whole-person wellness, grounded in Christ

The LCMS Wellness Wheel illustrates our multifaceted well-being, with Baptism in Christ at the core and spiritual wellness encompassing all aspects. Each facet reflects God's order and His promise to bear fruit in our lives.

Safety disclaimer: *This newsletter is for educational purposes only and should not replace medical advice from your healthcare provider. Although we strive to provide accurate and helpful information, individual needs and circumstances vary. The articles are meant to encourage reflection and personal consideration – not to serve as strict guidelines. Always consult a trusted medical professional before starting any new wellness routine.*

The 50-cent supplement with surprising benefits



Creatine monohydrate is one of the most researched, available and affordable supplements on the market – supporting physical and mental health at an average cost of 50 cents per daily 5g dose. Benefits include improved energy, performance, muscle building and faster recovery.

Creatine is safe. For healthy adults, creatine is safe – even long-term. Side effects are rare, with bloating and stomach discomfort typically only occuring at unnecessarily high doses (25-30g daily). However, consult your doctor if you have kidney concerns. For best absorption, mix with a low sugar drink like diluted fruit juice.

It's not just for athletes. A daily dose in older adults – especially women after menopause – can support muscle retention, building and recovery. It's also a crucial addition to vegetarian and vegan diets that lack natural creatine.

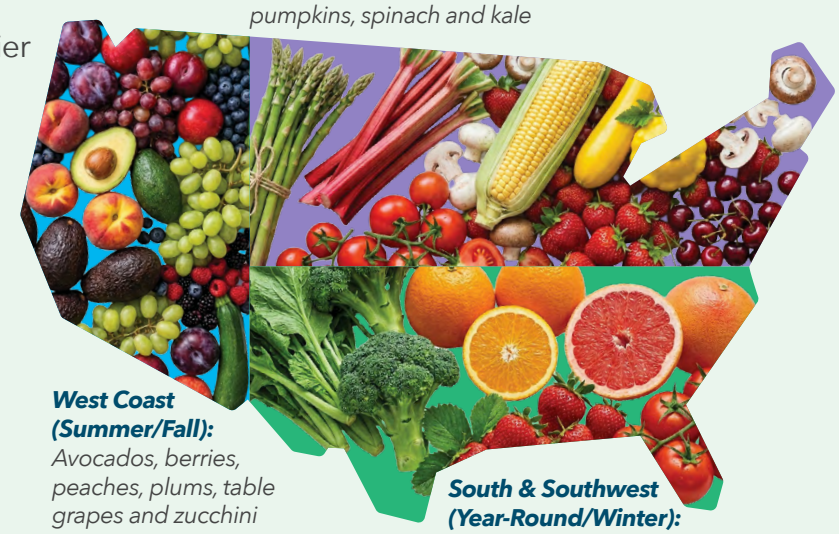
Mental benefits. Research suggests that 10g of creatine spread throughout the day may support memory, focus and mental health – particularly when used alongside other treatments.

Sources: *SciTechDaily https://search.app/BqTD9; Morning Brew https://search.app/Y9hyB*

Eat with the seasons for better health and flavor

Seasonal produce isn't just more nutritious, tastier and cost-effective. It's also more sustainably accessible. Check your region's peak produce season and discover a new seasonal favorite!

Northeast & Midwest (Spring/Summer): *Asparagus, rhubarb, strawberries, cherries, mushrooms, summer squash, tomatoes and corn*
(Fall/Winter): *Apples, pears, beets, turnips, pumpkins, spinach and kale*



West Coast (Summer/Fall): *Avocados, berries, peaches, plums, table grapes and zucchini*

South & Southwest (Year-Round/Winter): *Leafy greens, broccoli, citrus (oranges, grapefruit), strawberries and tomatoes*

Avoid cooking – try veggies raw

Going raw saves time and can boost nutritional value since heat can break down key nutrients like vitamin C, allicin and antioxidants. A 2018 study even showed eating raw vegetables is linked to reduced depression compared to cooked. Follow these tips for raw vegetables:



Wash well before eating. Even if the veggies have been peeled, wash thoroughly before eating.



Prep and store. Use airtight containers with a damp paper towel to keep chopped veggies fresh all week.



Add a little fat. Nutrients like beta-carotene and vitamin K absorb better with fats like olive oil, nuts or hummus.



Mix it up. Rotate between raw and cooked veggies – both have real health benefits.



Water: Not just for summer fun

Staying well-hydrated supports nearly every system in your body: regulating temperature, lubricating joints, preventing infections, delivering nutrients to cells, maintaining muscle strength and keeping organs functioning. You can survive weeks without food, but dehydration can become life-threatening within days or even hours.

It's no surprise, then, that water rehydrates better than anything else – replenishing fluids lost through metabolism, breathing, sweating and waste removal. One study even found that drinking an extra three cups per day helped participants consume an average of 205 fewer calories and less sugar, fat and sodium daily.

Sources: *https://www.cnn.com/2017/09/27/health/benefits-of-water-and-fluids/index.html; Health.com*

Nutrition labels and guidelines just got an overhaul

Updated 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines and FDA food labels emphasize limiting added sugars, saturated fat and sodium while prioritizing protein, fiber and nutrient-dense foods. This includes high-quality protein, whole grains and healthy fats from sources like avocados and omega-3-rich seafood.

OLD

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 2/3 cup (55g)
Servings Per Container 8

Amount Per Serving
Calories 230 — Calories from Fat 70

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 8g	**12%**
Saturated Fat 1g	**5%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	**0%**
Sodium 160mg	**7%**
Total Carbohydrate 37g	**12%**
Dietary Fiber 4g	**16%**
Sugars 12g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A	10%
Vitamin C	8%
Calcium	20%
Iron	45%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Value may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

NEW

Nutrition Facts
8 servings per container
Serving size **2/3 cup (55g)**

Amount per serving
Calories **230**

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 8g	**10%**
Saturated Fat 1g	**5%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	**0%**
Sodium 160mg	**7%**
Total Carbohydrate 37g	**13%**
Dietary Fiber 4g	**14%**
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	**20%**
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 240mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Key label changes include a mandatory "added sugars" line, larger calorie and serving size fonts, and a new front-of-package system to quickly flag high levels of saturated fat, sodium and added sugars. Notably, "low-fat" alone no longer qualifies a product as "healthy" – updated criteria now exclude high-sugar items.

Source: *FDA.gov*

Spirit & Song

SCRIPTURE:

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." – Romans 12:2

SONG:

"Surrounding Me"
The Songwriter Initiative feat. Colby Key
Listen on Spotify or scan the QR Code.

Enjoy your vacation (and stay healthy)

Stay active. Break up road trips with walks and stretch breaks. At your destination, stay active with bike rides, kayak rentals, resort-offered workouts or simply explore on foot.

Skip the hotel. Accomodations with kitchens give you better control over your meals, keeping breakfast and lunch healthy and affordable before enjoying a local restaurant for dinner.

Limit alcohol. And watch out for sugar-heavy options like daiquiris and frozen cocktails.

Pack your own snacks. Bring fruit, nuts or homemade trail mix to stay healthily fueled and save money between meals.

Source: *"Staying healthy while vacationing" by Steve Gruenwald (2017 Summer "Better Health")*

BETTER HEALTH

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Editor's Pulse: **What is Wellness?**

Wellness means something different to everyone – but at its core, it's about making intentional choices toward better overall health. True health isn't just avoiding illness. It's flourishing. And wellness is the proactive journey toward that goal.

Pursuing wholistic wellness means recognizing that no single part of you can thrive if the others are neglected. If your finances are out of balance, you'll likely feel it emotionally and physically. If your mental and emotional health goes unattended, your body often pays the price – think high blood pressure, poor sleep or unmanaged blood sugar. Everything is connected.

We are wonderfully and complexly made by a multifaceted Creator – so it's no surprise that our well-being is equally interconnected. That's the heart behind the Wellness Wheel. Rooted first in our Baptism in Christ, every dimension of wellness – physical, emotional, relational, financial and more – influences the others.

With that in mind, we invite you to look at your health beyond illness and conditions. How well are you managing all your resources? Is stress showing up as insomnia or headaches? Are your financial habits supporting your peace of mind or undermining them?

After honestly assessing each area, consider what thriving looks like for you. Set priorities, choose small and measurable actions, reach out for support – and start. Celebrate progress, stay curious and keep growing.

In health and wellness,

Kelly

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