

# BUZZ, BODY & BITES

A newsletter for actively aging adults  
Virginia Cooperative Extension  
Family & Consumer Sciences  
December 2021 Newsletter

## Buzz

### BRING CHEER USING THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES

The holiday season is a time we spread good cheer with family and friends. Author and Relationship Counselor, Gary Chapman, introduced the concept of “love languages” in his 1992 book describing five main ways people like to be loved and cared for.

- 1. Words of Affirmation.** This person values spoken and written words of encouragement, compliments, appreciation, and thanks.
- 2. Quality Time.** This person wants your undivided attention when spending time together and listening to what they say and how they feel.
- 3. Receiving Gifts.** For this person, it is not about how large, expensive, or elaborate the gift but a thoughtful visual token of your caring attitude toward them.
- 4. Acts of Service.** This person cherishes your deeds that help or serve them and ease their responsibilities.
- 5. Physical Touch.** This person appreciates your closeness like a kiss, hug, hand holding, pat on the back, a high-five or handshake.

To learn your love language (or those of your family and friends) go to:

[www.5lovelanguages.com/profile](http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile)



### Relationships – The Secret Predictor of Healthy Living

Relationships with friends and family can be some of the most fulfilling and also the most contentious we experience in our life. Research is inviting us to lean in, reach out, and extend forgiveness for the sake of our own health. While we know that healthy eating and physical activity equate to a healthy lifestyle, we forget the third secret element which is good relationships.

In an 80-year old study, one of the longest studies of adult life, research shows that *good* relationships keep us happier and healthier and that loneliness kills (being as powerful as smoking or alcoholism). The emphasis is on good relationships. When it comes to having loved ones in your life, quality is more important than quantity. Even living in a marriage with lots of conflict can be more detrimental to your health than getting a divorce.

“The surprising finding is that our relationships and how happy we are in our relationships has a powerful influence on our health,” said Robert Waldinger, director of the study, a psychiatrist at Massachusetts General Hospital and a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. “Taking care of your body is important, but tending to your relationships is a form of self-care too. That, I think, is the revelation.”

It's incredible to think that tending to our relationships is a form of self-care. Reaching out to a friend for lunch, going on a walk with a colleague, and unwinding with your spouse to ask about their day – all of these efforts contribute to your overall well-being.

The study showed that close relationships keep people happy throughout their lives, even more than money or fame. Close ties shelter people from life's discontents, help delay mental and physical decline, and are better than social class, IQ, or genes at predicting a long and happy life.

As we are in the middle of the holiday season, make an effort to cultivate those special relationships and even revive old ones. With a new year ahead of us, we can put making time for relationships at the top of our list of goals.

“When we gathered together everything we knew about them at age 50, it wasn't their middle-age cholesterol levels that predicted how they were going to grow old,” said Waldinger in a popular TED Talk. “It was how satisfied they were in their relationships. The people who were the most satisfied in their relationships at age 50 were the healthiest at age 80.” Think through how you can extend just one drop of connection, compassion, and concern every day towards those who mean the most to you. It will mean the world to them and be the gift you give yourself this year.

Contributed by: Vanessa Santiago, MBA, Associate Extension Agent, Family and Consumer Sciences, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Source: [news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life](https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life)

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# Bites

## Chocolate Chia Pudding



*This recipe is a twist on a traditional favorite. It uses chia seeds that are high in protein, fiber and healthy fat. Chia seeds absorb a lot of water which allows this recipe to involve no cooking.*

eatsmartmovemoreva.org/recipes/chocolate-chia-pudding

### Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 tablespoon honey
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups 1% milk
- 1/2 cup chia seeds
- 1 1/2 cups your favorite fruit(s)

### Instructions:

- In a mixing bowl, add cocoa powder, honey, cinnamon, salt, and vanilla and whisk to combine. NOTE: Sifting the cocoa powder before adding to the mixing bowl may help to reduce clumps.
- Pour a small amount of milk to the mixing bowl until a paste forms. Then, add remaining milk and whisk until smooth.
- Add chia seeds and whisk once more to combine.
- Refrigerate for at least 3 hours. NOTE: Can also be refrigerated overnight. Pudding will thicken as the seeds absorb the moisture.
- Evenly spoon the pudding into serving containers. Top with fruit of your choice. Toppings can also include granola, coconut flakes, and slivered or chopped nuts.

# Body

## Stretching Exercises

*This is the third in a series of four stretching exercises to promote flexibility and balance.*

### Back Stretch

*Stretches the shoulders and back*



DO:

- Lift arms to shoulder height in a "T" position
- Bring hands behind your back, reaching fingertips toward each other
- Lift the top elbow towards the ceiling
- Reach the bottom elbow towards the ground
- Press your hands into your back, hold position
- Use a towel or strap if your hands don't touch
- Repeat with the other arm

DON'T:

- Arch your back or force your arms

## Mind Games

Every Sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached with logic, dedication, and patience. Enter numbers into the blank spaces so that each row, column, and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9 without repeats. Enjoy!

4		5		6		1		7
8	2		9	5	1	4		6
1			3	7			8	5
		1	5	8	3	6		
5			7	1			2	3
6			2	4	9			1
3		2	4	9	7	5		8
	4	8		3		9	1	2
9	5		1			3		4

## RESOURCES

### The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

Learn more about the importance of friendships and laughter at: [www.aarp.org/search/?q=comedy&c=everywhere](http://www.aarp.org/search/?q=comedy&c=everywhere)

### Virginia Agencies on Aging

Visit [vaaaa.org](http://vaaaa.org) to enjoy the company of other people.

### Audit College Classes for Free

Senior citizens of Virginia can audit a college course for free while meeting new people. Find an institution here: [www.vawizard.org/wizard/college-and-university-in-virginia](http://www.vawizard.org/wizard/college-and-university-in-virginia)

### Rhodes Scholar

Visit <https://www.roadscholar.org/> to learn, travel and gain new friends.

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