

Volume 11

# Health Motivator Tips

## Health Facts and Fads



Dear Health Motivator,

Congratulations! As a Health Motivator, you will bring a spark of fun and learning to your club this coming year. You will motivate members to take action to live healthier lives. These activities will only take a few minutes at each club meeting, but they may change your life and the lives of other club members, too!

Now, get ready for an exciting new year:

1. Review the Health Motivator tips and calendar.
2. Attend Health Motivator trainings available to you.
3. With the help of your WVU Extension agent, copy one calendar for each club member.
4. At the first group meeting of the year, follow the monthly notes in your Health Motivator tips. Introduce the new program, and give members their calendars. Next, do these four easy tasks:
  - Read and discuss the talking points.
  - Do the quick club activity.
  - For any months with a “Healthy Extra,” please give one to each member.
  - Encourage participants to practice the “Monthly Challenge,” use their calendars and try the new recipes on the back of the calendar.
5. Use the record form on the last page for any group reports you need.
6. At each meeting, follow the tips and do your four easy tasks.
7. At the last club meeting of the year, complete the record form.

We hope you enjoy being a Health Motivator! You and your group members will learn about health and wellness, and share the tips with your families and friends. If you have questions or need help, call your WVU Extension agent. All materials are available on the Extension website.

Sincerely,

The Health Motivator Team

# Tips for Leaders

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- Always encourage members to talk with a health professional about their specific health questions. Your role is to motivate, not give individual health advice.
- Exercise is safe for most people regardless of age. However, encourage participants to talk to their doctor if they have a health condition (heart disease, arthritis, diabetes).
- Help track individual and club goals. Offer advice and guidance in setting and accomplishing goals.
- Share Health Motivator tasks and responsibilities with other members. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it!
- Talk with members about the Health Motivator activities. Ask for their ideas to make it more fun and personal.
- Share and recognize individual successes in improving health habits. Plan special events and celebrations to highlight accomplishments.
- Brainstorm ways to make greater progress.
- Be sure meeting refreshments are healthy choices.
- Support and encourage members. When members struggle or fail to meet their goals, remind them that changing health habits is not easy.
- Talk with your WVU Extension agent about any concerns or questions.

## Source:

McNamara, C. (2008). Free basic guide to leadership and supervision.  
Adapted from *The Field Guide to Leadership and Supervision*.  
Retrieved July 1, 2014 from [www.managementhelp.org](http://www.managementhelp.org).

**Special thanks to the West Virginia Community Educational Outreach Service clubs who inspired the Health Motivator idea and work to improve the health and well-being of families and communities.**

January

# Be a Better Consumer of Health Information

By Ami Cook, WVU Extension Agent –  
Braxton and Clay Counties



**Monthly Challenge:** Ask your doctor’s opinion on a health fad you are curious about.

## Health Motivator Talking Points

- Health fads are common. Information and misinformation spreads quickly and easily through the internet. Protect your health with reliable and accurate information.
- One way to be sure information is true is to look at the source. Ask these questions: Who created or runs the site or app? What are their qualifications? Is information up to date? Are references and facts believable? Does the site or app promise anything? Are they selling something? Credible sources are well-known and give references for the facts.
- Government websites, like [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) (USDA) and [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov) (National Institutes of Health), and educational websites, like [www.wvu.edu](http://www.wvu.edu), have research-based health data. Identify these sources by their .gov and .edu domain names.
- The bottom line is this – do not rely only on online sources. When making health decisions, always talk with your health care provider first before trying any new health approaches.

### Quick Club Activity:

## Fact or Fiction?

Play a game of fact or fiction. Look up accurate health facts on websites and throw in some fiction, too. Have club members guess fact or fiction. Together, do five jumping jacks if they get it right and five toe touches if they get it wrong.

## Learn More

[www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)



### Chuckle of the Month:

Mark Twain warned, “Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint.”

February

# Diet Pills and Shakes

By Dana Wright, WVU Extension Agent – Logan County



**Monthly Challenge:** Fill one-quarter of your plate with a lean protein at each meal. Vary it with plant and animal proteins (meats, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts/seeds and legumes). Take a photo of your plate and share with our group.

## Health Motivator Talking Points

- Americans spent \$2 billion on weight loss supplements in 2015.
- What are some **unsafe** weight loss methods? Very low-calorie diets, weight loss supplements, laxatives, cigarette smoking, unsupervised fasting, excessive exercise and vomiting.
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not test weight loss supplements for their safety and effectiveness. The FDA can have manufacturers remove supplements from the market if they are shown to cause harm.
- Side effects of diet pills include stomach bloating, loose stool and gas.
- Long-term use of weight loss supplements can increase the risk of high blood pressure and heart disease.
- Many diet aids have stimulants, such as caffeine, as the main ingredient. This can cause heart rate irregularities when taken in large quantities.
- Before taking any diet supplements, talk with your health care provider. It is important to take only what you need. Follow all recommendations to avoid adverse reactions, allergies and interactions with other drugs.
- What is the best way to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight? A healthy lifestyle with a balanced diet that does not exceed your daily recommended calorie intake and physical activity.

## Quick Club Activity: Shake It

1. Download Harry Belafonte's song, "Shake, Shake, Shake, Senora."
2. Ask participants to dance, focusing on keeping pace with the music. Alternative dance: While sitting, wave arms and tap feet to the rhythm of the song.

## Learn More

[www.consumer.ftc.gov](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov)



### Chuckle of the Month:

Why shouldn't you fall in love with a pastry chef?  
*He'll dessert you.*

## March

# Gluten Free

By Elizabeth Metheny, WVU Extension Agent – Hardy County

**Monthly Challenge:** Explore gluten-free recipes. Share your favorite with a friend.



## Health Motivator Talking Points

Have you considered going gluten free? Gluten-free diets have gained popularity, with many reporting health and weight loss benefits. Those who suffer from the symptoms of celiac disease and non-celiac gluten sensitivity have found success in limiting gluten in their diet. CD and NCGS are medical conditions that require medical diagnosis and care. Before making drastic diet changes, talk to your health care provider. Be informed and consider these tips:

- Common symptoms of CD and NCGS are tiredness, anxiety, gas, bloating, headache, numbness and intestinal symptoms similar to irritable bowel syndrome.
- Reducing gluten does not mean cutting carbs. Carbohydrates and gluten are two different food compounds. For example, potatoes have carbohydrates and are gluten free.
- Gluten is found in wheat, barley, rye and oats. Gluten can be found in breads and pastas, as well as tomato products that have vinegar from gluten grains.

### Quick Club Activity:

## Spell Gluten

*\*This activity may be done sitting or standing. Choose what works best for you.*

Use one foot to spell “g-l-u-t-e-n.” Now the other. For a real challenge, try using one hand and one foot at the same time!

## Learn More

[www.newsinhealth.nih.gov/2016/05/going-gluten-free](http://www.newsinhealth.nih.gov/2016/05/going-gluten-free)



### Chuckle of the Month:

What do you call a gluten-free joke?

*Corny!*

April

# The Organic Movement

By Becky Smith, WVU Extension Agent – Harrison County



**Monthly Challenge:** Plant a container of herbs or vegetables. See the Environment Working Group's Dirty Dozen List at <https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/full-list.php>.

## Health Motivator Talking Points

- The organic movement began in the 1920s in Europe.
- Today, more and more people shop for organic foods. About 4 percent of total U.S. food purchases are for organic foods, which is more than \$35 billion each year.
- Because of this demand, the USDA has a program called the National Organic Program. This certifies that a product is in compliance with organic standards.
- What is organic? Organic farmers emphasize the use of renewable resources and conservation. Organic meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones. Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides, fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge, bioengineering, or ionizing radiation. For a product to be labeled as organic, a government-approved certifier inspects the farm; they ensure all USDA organic standards are met. Companies that handle or process organic food before it gets to the market or restaurant must be certified, too.
- Organic foods have less exposure to pesticide residue, and they are considered better for the environment and animal welfare than conventional foods.



### Chuckle of the Month:

What kind of water will grow the best organic vegetables?

*Perspiration!*

### Quick Club Activity: Organic Gardening

Pretend we are gardening organic vegetables. Give yourself some space.

Do each for 30 seconds:

1. Use a shovel to dig in the dirt.
2. Trim the bushes with clippers.
3. Push the lawn mower.
4. Rake the ground.
5. After all our hard work, let's go for a swim.
6. Now, we are ready to finish and take a walk home.

## Learn More

U.S. Department of Agriculture – [www.usda.gov/topics/organic](http://www.usda.gov/topics/organic)

May

# Clean Eating

By Gwen Crum, WVU Extension Agent – Wood County



**Monthly Challenge:** Drink 64 ounces (8 cups) or more of plain water each day. Limit sugar-sweetened beverages to less than 12 ounces each day, or none at all.

## Health Motivator Talking Points

Clean eating is a catchy term for eating mostly whole foods - vegetables, fruits, whole grains, healthy proteins and fats. It limits refined grains, pesticides, additives, preservatives, animal fats, sugar and salt. Try these clean eating tips:

- Read ingredients on food labels. If the ingredients/preservatives are not available in the grocery store, it probably isn't considered clean.
- The rule of thumb for fruits and vegetables is fresh over frozen, frozen over dried and dried over canned. Look for items without added sugar and salt.
- Limit animal fats (butter, lard, high-fat dairy, fatty meats). Choose plant-based fats from nuts, avocados and olives.
- Limit added sugar and artificial sweeteners. Use small amounts of cane sugar, raw honey or 100 percent maple syrup. Remember, these sweeteners still add calories to your diet.
- Limit sodium. Buy foods with no salt added. Learn to eat foods without adding salt. Season with herbs and spices.

**Learn More:** [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)



### Chuckle of the Month:

Why did the prune go out with a tomato?  
*He couldn't find a date.*

### Quick Club Activity:

## Slow! Go! Whoa!

Bring a variety of foods from your kitchen, and three brown grocery bags labeled Slow!, Go! and Whoa! Break into two teams. Each team member takes a turn to carry a food item, relay-style, to one of the bags. Foods put in the Slow! bag are unhealthy and should be saved for special occasions (cookies, chips, soda, etc.). Whoa! foods are healthy, but high in fat and calories (cheese) or low in calories and nutrients (pretzels, crackers). These items should be limited. Go! foods can be eaten any time, because they are low in calories and high in nutrients (fruits and veggies). As a group, talk about why they decided to place each food in the bag.



June

# Vitamins, Minerals, Supplements, Oh My!

By Lauren Prinzo, WVU Extension Agent – Marion County



**Monthly Challenge:** Clean out your cabinet. Throw away expired vitamins and supplements. Store safely where children cannot get to them.

## Health Motivator Talking Points

- More than one-third of Americans take multivitamins or supplements.
- Vitamins and supplements include multivitamins and many other products available without a prescription. Examples: calcium, fish oil, omega 3s and protein supplements.
- Not all vitamins and supplements are safe for everyone to take.
- Iron supplements are a leading cause of poisoning in children under age six.
- Many nutrients your body needs are found easily in a healthy diet. For example, the recommended daily value for vitamin C is 60 mg. Just one cup of cantaloupe has 58 mg.
- Remember to check the nutrition label. You may be surprised that your multivitamin includes much more than the recommended daily value or a certain nutrient. Choose wisely.

**Learn More:** [www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov)



### Chuckle of the Month:

What type of vitamins do pirates need?

*Vitamin Sea*

## Quick Club Activity: Food and Nutrient Match

Find the same nutrients in multivitamins in a healthy diet. Write the words, calcium, iron and vitamin C on cards and tape one card on each wall. Tell group members you will say a food and that they need to walk to the wall that matches the nutrient in the food item. *Example:* For milk, walk to the wall labeled calcium. *Hint:* Some foods may have significant amounts of more than one nutrient!

- Bell peppers (vitamin C)
- Broccoli (vitamin C, iron)
- Brussels sprouts (vitamin C)
- Cheese (calcium)
- Fortified cereals (calcium, iron)
- Leafy greens (calcium, iron)
- Legumes (iron)
- Pineapple (vitamin C)
- Shellfish (iron)
- Strawberries (vitamin C)



July

# Beware of Fad Diets

By Lauren Weatherford, WVU Extension Agent –  
Fayette and Nicholas Counties



**Monthly Challenge:** Pick a health fad that interests you. Study the pros and cons, and share what you learned with the group.

## Health Motivator Talking Points

Why do fad diets continue to be so popular? Fads offer something new that promises fast and easy fitness or weight loss. The truth is that achieving weight loss and fitness requires consistent and sustained effort.

Here are some important tips:

- Diets that seem too good to be true, probably are. A healthy lifestyle takes time and effort.
- Always use trusted resources, such as sites ending in .gov, .org or .edu. The information will likely be research- and evidence-based. A reliable source for nutrition and physical activity information is [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov).
- Do your research to see if a diet or fitness tool is proven to be effective. For reliable reviews of many popular diets, read the “U.S. News & World Report Best Diet Rankings” at <https://health.usnews.com/best-diet>.
- Avoid recommending diets to family and friends. While one diet may be perfect for you, someone else may have a health problem that could make your diet extremely dangerous for them. Always ask your health care provider before changing your diet.

## Quick Club Activity: True or False?

List a variety of health fads (include some crazy fads and some good health practices). If it is a crazy health fad (not true), have the group stand up or march in place. If it is a good health practice or movement, have the group do a stretch. Feel free to add your own fads or healthy behaviors to the game, but make sure they are from accurate and trustworthy sources!

## Learn More

<https://health.usnews.com/best-diet>



### Chuckle of the Month:

Why are most horses in shape?  
*Because they are on a stable diet.*

August

# Coconut Oil Craze

By Andi Hoover, WVU Extension Agent –  
Greenbrier County



**Monthly Challenge:** Use coconut oil for your beauty needs – for cuticles, hair conditioner or a body scrub. Use healthier oils, such as canola and olive oil, for cooking, baking and salads.

## Health Motivator Talking Points

- Coconut oil comes from the nut (fruit) of the coconut palm.
- Virgin coconut oil is unprocessed, unbleached, deodorized or unrefined.
- Coconut oil is 86 percent saturated fat, which is higher than butter (64 percent), olive oil (14 percent) and beef fat (40 percent). One tablespoon of coconut oil has 14 grams of total fat and 12 of those fat grams are saturated fat.
- This oil can cook at a very high temperature without burning.
- Studies show that coconut oil may raise LDL cholesterol and increase heart disease risk. The American Heart Association does not recommend eating or cooking with coconut oil. If you do, use very small amounts.
- The Mayo Clinic states that people who include coconut oil in their diets have higher arterial fat (triglycerides) and serum cholesterol. Adding coconut oil to your diet can lead to weight gain.
- Coconut oil is used in shampoo, soap, lotion, cosmetics and fragrances.
- Coconut oil is a good moisturizer and could be a secondary treatment for eczema and psoriasis.

## Quick Club Activity: Coconut Dance

*(Use small plastic or wooden bowls as fake coconuts.)*

Give each participant two coconuts small enough to fit comfortably in their hands. Stand up, using a fluid movement, move the coconuts to your left and click them together, move them to the right and click them, move them behind your back and click, then in front and click. Do this five times and repeat.

## Learn More

[www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)



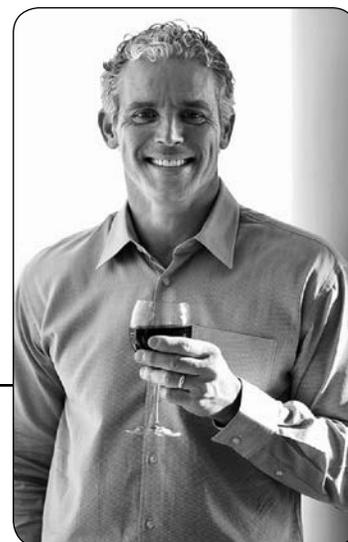
### Chuckle of the Month:

What do you call a coconut that doesn't have milk?  
*A milk dud.*

September

# Fermented Foods

By Zona Hutson, WVU Extension Agent –  
Doddridge County



**Monthly Challenge:** Write down fermented foods you eat this month.

## Health Motivator Talking Points

- Fermented foods have made a resurgence in the food market. This food preservation method has been around for thousands of years, such as in yogurt, wine, beer and sauerkraut.
- Fermentation is the process of using good bacteria and yeast to preserve food and beverages. Fermentation converts carbohydrates to alcohols and carbon dioxide or organic acids. This is done using yeasts, bacteria or a combination with anaerobic (without oxygen) conditions.
- Our bodies have different types of bacteria, both good and bad.
- Bacteria helps with digestion, extracting nutrients from food and protecting us from harmful bacteria.
- Research shows that eating fermented dairy foods may help control weight and lower risk of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes.
- Many fermented foods have several strains of good bacteria and beneficial yeast. Foods rich in these microorganisms are sometimes called probiotic.

### Quick Club Activity: Walking and Talking

Spread out with plenty of room to move around. Pair up. Take a two-minute stroll together around the room. As you walk, talk about fermented foods. Which foods do participants like and dislike? Have you made your own fermented foods? What fermented foods would you like to learn to make?

### Learn More

[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/interested\\_in\\_making\\_your\\_own\\_home\\_fermented\\_foods](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/interested_in_making_your_own_home_fermented_foods)



#### Chuckle of the Month:

Why does yogurt love going to museums?  
*Because it's cultured.*

October

# Copper-infused Garments

By Dave Roberts, WVU Extension Agent – Lincoln County



**Monthly Challenge:** Each time you sit down, do a circulation exercise.

## Health Motivator Talking Points

- A popular trend is to include traces of copper in clothing for possible health benefits. Does this work and are these claims true?
- Copper-infused garments often advertise quick fixes and “too good to be true” results. As with any information you see, check out the source and the research behind the claims.
- There is little to no scientific support for the manufacturer’s claims.
- Copper-infused clothing brands have been fined by the Federal Trade Commission for false and unproven claims that products relieve pain comparable to that of surgery.
- Similar to copper-infused garments are compression garments. Compression socks have proven benefits in improving circulation and combatting blood clots and swelling.
- Also, compression is often recommended for muscle strain or sprains. Remember RICE – rest, ice, compression, elevation.
- Always talk to your health care provider about any concerns before using any compression garment.

## Quick Club Activity: Circulation Circles

How can we keep our blood circulating to prevent swelling and clots? Let’s practice things you can do while seated.

1. Kick off your shoes. Wiggle your toes. Try to stretch down and massage your toes in a circular motion. Next, do the bottoms of your feet and heels.
2. Make small circles with your ankles. Gradually make larger circles.
3. Try the same activity with each arm. Wiggle, massage and make circles.



### Chuckle of the Month:

Why did the golfer wear two copper-infused knee braces?

*In case he got a hole in one.*

## Learn More

[www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)

<https://go4life.nia.nih.gov>

November

# Ketogenic and Paleo Diets Fad

By Cheryl Kaczor, WVU Extension Agent – Marshall County



**Monthly Challenge:** Choose a lean protein to eat at least twice a day.

## Health Motivator Talking Points

The ketogenic and paleo diets have been very popular fads in the last several years. Let's explore why these diets are popular and why they may be unsafe.

### The ketogenic diet . . .

- Is a high fat, low carbohydrate and moderate protein diet.
- Has existed for 100+ years. It has been used to treat drug resistant epilepsy in children, under medical supervision.
- Is bad for your heart, since it promotes high fat foods.
- It may lead to nutrient deficiencies, because high carbohydrate foods (vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes) are eliminated or limited.

### The paleo diet . . .

- Is sometimes called the caveman diet, because it promotes foods (supposedly) eaten in the hunter-gatherer, Stone Age period.
- Promotes foods high in protein and very low in carbohydrates, eliminating all grain foods, legumes and dairy.
- Is not nutritionally balanced. Following this diet for a long time can pose health risks. For example, not enough calcium increases the chance of osteoporosis. Vegetarians would find it difficult to get enough protein on this diet.

## Quick Club Activity: Pass the Water

This is like the hot potato game. Form a circle. The leader has two full water bottles. Pass both to the right around room. Crossing arms over body. When bottles return to leader, pass them in the opposite direction. Make sure you use your entire body to pass them. For a fun twist, add music and stand up.

## Learn More

[www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)



### Chuckle of the Month:

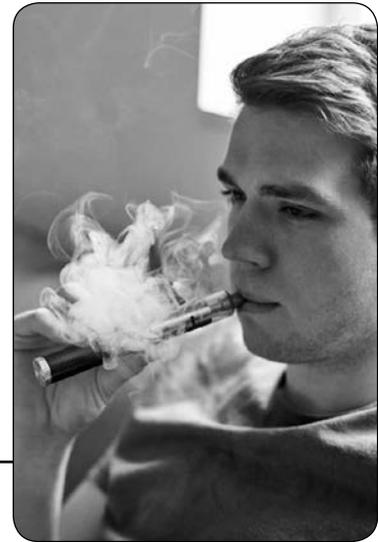
So you want to eat like a caveman?

*Remember, he chased down his food and only lived to be about 35 years old.*

December

# Vaping: The Truth About Blowing Smoke

By Dana Wright, WVU Extension Agent – Logan County



**Monthly Challenge:** Each day, spend five minutes in a quiet place and practice breathing deeply.

## Health Motivator Talking Points

- Have you heard of vaping? It is inhaling a scented, flavored aerosol from an electronic cigarette (e-cigarette or e-cig), vape pen or personal vaporizer.
- The inhaled smoke has flavoring and various chemicals often including highly addictive nicotine. The vapor also may have toxic, cancer-causing chemicals, including metals like cadmium.
- Teens and young adults are extra vulnerable to the dangers of vaping. They often lack the knowledge and understanding of the health risks.
- Teens who use e-cigarettes are more likely to start smoking regular cigarettes, which are known to cause disease and premature death.
- Breathing vapors from other people's e-cigarettes (second-hand exposure) is potentially harmful.
- Vaping is not an effective smoking cessation tool. To quit smoking, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for many helpful resources

### Quick Club Activity:

## Deep Breathing

1. Sit comfortably with feet flat on the floor. Close your eyes.
2. Breathe in through your nose, focusing on filling your lungs with air.
3. Breathe out slowly. Let your lungs empty completely.
4. Repeat several times, focusing on your breath.
5. Slowly open your eyes.

## Learn More

[www.lung.org](http://www.lung.org)

<https://smokefree.gov>



**Chuckle of the Month:** What did the daddy chimney say to the baby chimney?

*You are too little to smoke!*

# Record Form

Club: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Health Motivator: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the form every month at your group meeting. When it is complete at the end of the year, send it to your WVU Extension agent.



Month	Total number of members at meeting	Number of members who tried the Monthly Challenge
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
July		
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		
Total		

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*Contact the WVU Extension Service Office of Communications at 304-293-4222.*