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## Digital high fives

Social media can be a powerful tool to uplift and support the people you care about. Use your online presence for good to be a source of encouragement and genuine connection.

### BOOSTING YOUR BUDDIES

- Instead of just a “like,” take a moment to write a specific, positive comment. “So proud of your achievement!” goes a long way.
- If a friend celebrates an accomplishment, share their post to your own story or feed (with their permission, if private). This amplifies their joy and shows you’re their cheerleader.
- See an article, meme, or product that reminds you of them? Tag them! It shows you’re thinking of them and understand their interests.
- If you see unwarranted negativity directed at a friend, consider stepping in with a supportive comment or reporting abusive content. Be mindful of not escalating conflicts.
- Share uplifting quotes, inspirational messages, or even just a beautiful photo with a caption encouraging self-care or gratitude.

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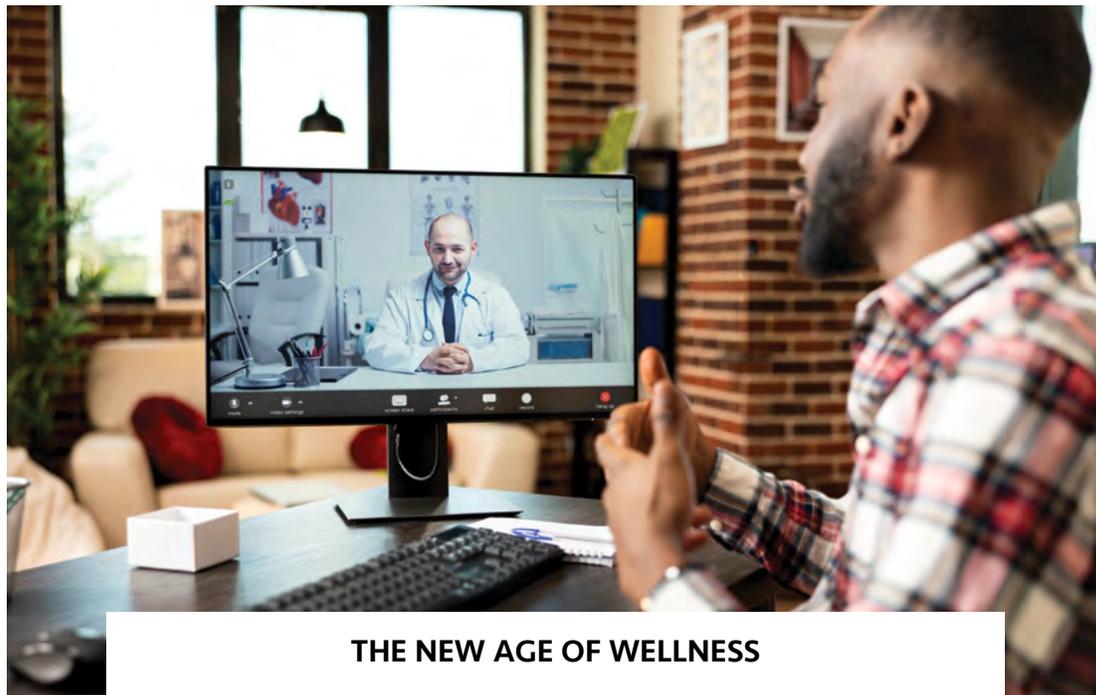
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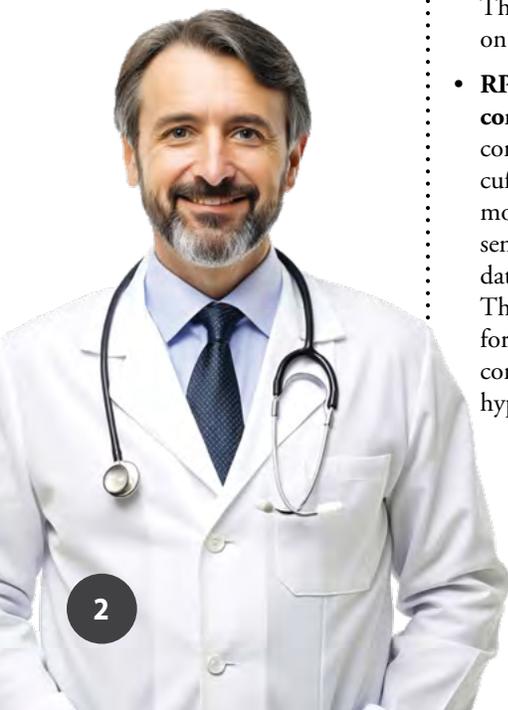
# Your virtual care upgrade

The evolution of healthcare is bringing the doctor's office right into your living room. Telehealth and Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) use digital tools like video, apps, and connected devices to provide convenient, accessible, and continuous care.



## THE NEW AGE OF WELLNESS

- **Convenience of telehealth appointments:** You can have virtual doctor visits via video or phone for many common appointments, follow-ups, and mental health counseling. This saves time and money on travel and missed work.
- **Early intervention:** Continuous monitoring lets your doctor spot subtle changes in your health sooner than waiting for your next in-person visit. This allows for proactive adjustments to your treatment plan.
- **Not a replacement for in-person care:** Virtual care cannot replace every visit. Certain diagnostics, hands-on physical exams, and emergency situations still require a traditional, in-person clinical setting.
- **RPM for chronic conditions:** Devices like connected blood pressure cuffs, continuous glucose monitors, and smart scales send real-time health data to your care team. This is particularly vital for managing chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension.
- **Improves access for all:** Virtual care is a lifeline for people in rural areas, those with mobility issues, or individuals who lack reliable transportation, ensuring they receive the care they need.
- **Patient engagement:** Being able to see and track your own health data in real-time, coupled with easy communication with providers, helps you become a more active and informed participant in your overall health.
- **Data security:** Health systems follow strict federal guidelines like the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to ensure health information transmitted via telehealth and RPM platforms is secure and protected.
- **Technical barriers:** Reliable internet access and familiarity with digital devices are necessary for successful telehealth. Lack of technology or connectivity can be a challenge to full access.



# Mystery of SPS

Stiff Person Syndrome (SPS) is a rare autoimmune neurological disorder. It's characterized by progressive and fluctuating muscle stiffness and painful spasms, often starting in the trunk and legs. Sometimes mistaken for a simple muscle issue, SPS is a complex condition where the immune system mistakenly attacks the central nervous system.



## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- **Muscle stiffness:** Fluctuating rigidity, mainly in the torso and legs, that can be so severe it affects posture and ability to walk ("tin-man" gait).
- **Painful spasms:** Severe, sudden muscle contractions that can be triggered by sudden noise, unexpected touch, cold, or emotional distress.

## CAUSES

- SPS is an autoimmune disease, meaning the body's immune system attacks healthy nerve cells.
- A majority of people with SPS produce antibodies against glutamic acid decarboxylase (GAD). This is an enzyme essential for making GABA, a neurotransmitter that helps control muscle movement and reduce nerve excitability.



## TREATMENT

- A medical professional typically recommends seeing a neurologist experienced in SPS for an accurate diagnosis. Then, a personalized treatment plan is developed, as early intervention is vital to manage symptoms and maintain mobility.
- Neurologists typically prescribe GABA-enhancing drugs, such as benzodiazepines (like diazepam), to help reduce muscle stiffness and spasms.
- Drugs like baclofen may be an additional medicine used to further help with spasms and rigidity.
- Treatments like Intravenous Immunoglobulin (IVIg) or plasma exchange may be used to help slow disease progression.

## SELF-CARE

- Specialized physical therapy, often including water therapy (hydrotherapy), is important to help maintain flexibility and mobility and prevent falls.
- Since stress, loud noises, and sudden movements can trigger severe spasms, self-care should focus on stress reduction techniques.
- Applying heat, like heating pads or warm baths, can often help soothe stiff and spasming muscles.
- Due to the chronic pain and unpredictable nature of the condition, managing anxiety and depression with the help of a mental health professional is often an essential part of comprehensive care.



# Protein power up



As we age, our bodies process protein less efficiently, making high-quality protein essential for everyone.

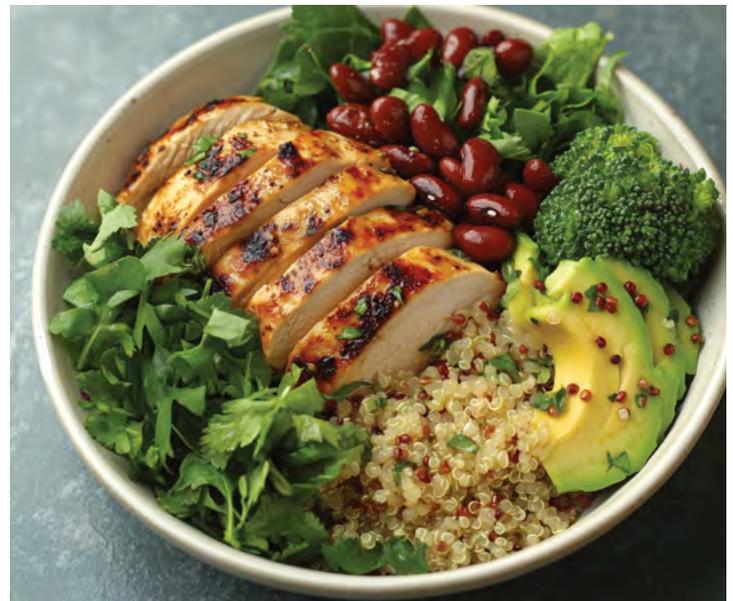
## FUELING YOUR BODY

- Protein is the building block for muscle. Adequate intake helps slow down sarcopenia (age-related muscle loss), which is key to maintaining mobility, strength, and balance.
- Protein builds antibodies and immune cells. It also helps your body fight illness and infection, which is crucial as the immune system naturally weakens with age.
- Protein helps manage a healthy weight by promoting satiety (feeling full), which can support healthy blood sugar levels and weight management.
- Include a source of lean protein (like poultry, fish, beans, lentils, eggs, yogurt, or tofu) in every meal and some snacks.

# Recipe: Chicken & quinoa power bowl

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 small (or 1 large) boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 3 tablespoons olive oil (divided)
- 1/2 teaspoon each of smoked paprika and garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper
- 1/2 cup uncooked quinoa, rinsed
- 1 cup water or low-sodium broth
- 1 cup canned kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups broccoli florets
- 2 handfuls fresh greens (spinach, mixed, etc.)
- 1/2 ripe avocado, sliced
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar (or lemon juice)
- 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, minced



## DIRECTIONS

1. Combine rinsed quinoa and 1 cup water/broth in a saucepan. Boil, then cover, reduce heat, and simmer for 15 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes, then fluff.
2. Rub chicken with 1 tablespoon of olive oil, smoked paprika, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Grill on medium-high for 5-7 minutes per side until internal temperature reaches 165°F. Rest 5 minutes, then slice.
3. Steam broccoli until tender-crisp. Briefly warm kidney beans or serve them chilled.
4. Whisk together 2 tablespoons of olive oil, red wine vinegar (or lemon juice), Dijon mustard, and minced garlic.
5. In two bowls, layer fresh greens, quinoa, and kidney beans. Top with sliced chicken, broccoli, and avocado slices. Drizzle with vinaigrette.

**NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:** Serves 2  
Per serving: 630 calories, 20g total fat, 3g saturated fat, 50g carbohydrates, 0g added sugar, 12g fiber, 40g protein, 250mg sodium

# Time off pays

Taking time away from work often feels like a luxury, or even a setback. Disconnecting from the daily grind isn't just about relaxation. It's also a powerful strategy for boosting your productivity. Embracing vacation time is one of the smartest investments you can make in your personal and professional well-being.

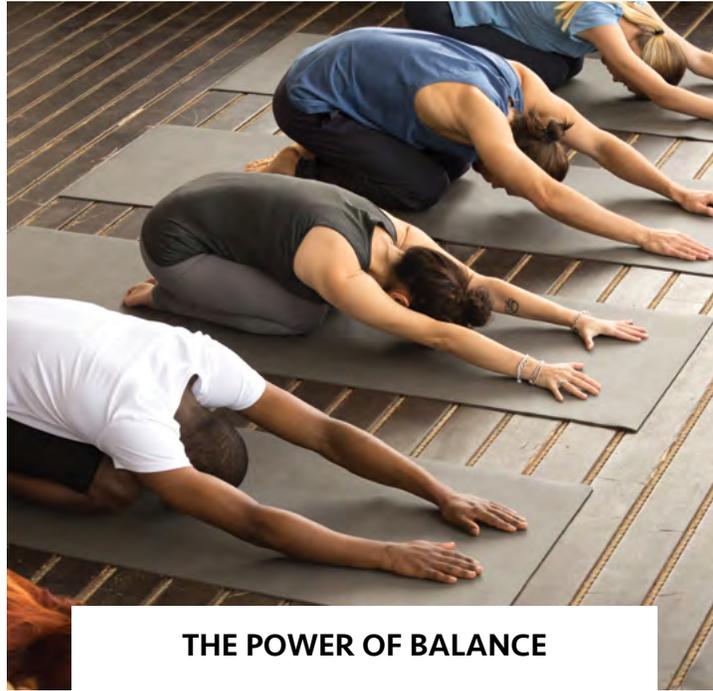


## REQUIRED RESET BUTTON

- Chronic stress is a major health risk, contributing to conditions like heart disease and high blood pressure. Vacations provide a crucial opportunity to step away from stressors, allowing your mind and body to reset. Taking regular time off can significantly lower stress levels.
- Stepping out of your routine and experiencing new environments can dramatically improve mood. Vacations can lead to increased happiness, reduced anxiety, and a more positive outlook. This mental refresh helps combat feelings of overwhelm and promotes emotional resilience.
- When you're constantly working, your brain is under continuous strain. A break allows for mental downtime, which is essential for creative thinking and problem-solving. Giving your mind space to wander can lead to fresh perspectives and innovative ideas upon your return, making you more effective at work.
- Adequate rest and stress reduction from vacations can lead to better sleep patterns, which in turn supports overall physical health. Good sleep is vital for immune function, metabolism, and cardiovascular health. Taking time off can also encourage physical activity, whether it's hiking, swimming, or simply exploring a new city on foot.
- Vacations offer invaluable time to reconnect with family and friends without the distractions of work. Strong social connections are fundamental to mental and emotional health, fostering a sense of belonging and reducing feelings of isolation. This renewed connection can also translate into stronger professional relationships when you return.
- While it might seem counterintuitive, stepping away from your desk makes you more productive when you return. You come back refreshed, focused, and often with a renewed sense of purpose and energy. This can lead to greater efficiency and higher-quality work, making vacation time a net gain for your productivity.

# Slow down to speed up

The secret to long-term fitness isn't just pushing harder. It's about balancing high-intensity workouts with gentle movement. This approach, known as active recovery, is essential for keeping your body strong, avoiding burnout, and preventing injury.



THE POWER OF BALANCE

- **Improves muscle recovery and reduces soreness:** After a demanding session like a High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) class or heavy weightlifting, your muscles need to flush out metabolic waste. Gentle movement, such as a light walk or cycling, increases blood flow without causing further muscle damage, speeding up the repair process.
- **Maintains joint health and flexibility:** Intense workouts can put stress on joints. Low-impact activities like yoga, stretching, or Tai Chi help improve range of motion and joint lubrication. This flexibility is vital for preventing injuries and maintaining mobility as you age.
- **Supports cardiovascular health:** While high-intensity exercise boosts your heart rate, gentle movement on recovery days keeps your cardiovascular system active and efficient. It allows your heart to practice maintaining a steady, healthy rhythm.
- **Prevents mental fatigue and enhances motivation:** Constantly pushing to your limit can be mentally exhausting, leading to workout burnout. Switching to a gentle activity provides a mental break. The change in pace can feel more enjoyable, helping you stay consistent with your fitness routine and fostering a positive relationship with exercise.



## GENTLE MOVEMENT FOR ACTIVE RECOVERY

- **Walk:** Take a brisk 20-30 minute outdoor walk the day after a tough leg workout.
- **Foam rolling/stretching:** Spend 15 minutes targeting muscles used heavily during the intense session.
- **Leisurely swim or bike ride:** Try low-impact cardio that minimizes joint strain.
- **Restorative yoga:** Focus on long, gentle poses to relax the nervous system and increase flexibility.



## PAIRING WITH HIGH-INTENSITY WORKOUTS

- **Pairing 1:** Monday: Heavy Weight Training. Tuesday: Restorative Yoga.
- **Pairing 2:** Wednesday: HIIT Class. Thursday: Light walk and foam rolling.
- **Pairing 3:** Saturday: Long Run. Sunday: Gentle cycling and stretching.



# Build a stronger you

TRUE WELL-BEING IS A DYNAMIC BALANCE OF MULTIPLE LIFE FACTORS. THINK OF YOUR HEALTH AS A STRUCTURE SUPPORTED BY INTERCONNECTED PILLARS, STRENGTHENING EACH ONE MAKES YOUR ENTIRE LIFE MORE STABLE & RESILIENT.

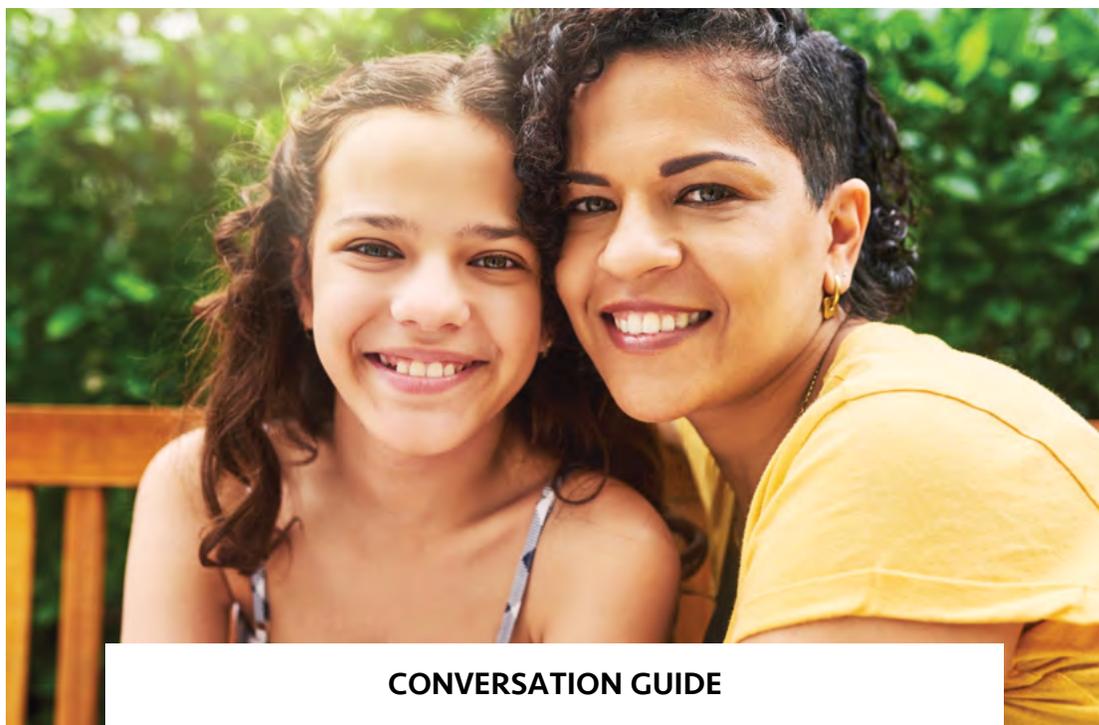


## PILLARS

- **Self-care & mind-body connection:** Practice activities that promote both mental and physical health. Techniques like mindfulness, meditation, and journaling can reduce stress and improve sleep, supporting your body's overall function.
- **Relationships & community:** Positive relationships with friends, family, or community groups provide positive emotions like joy and kindness, along with emotional support, which can lead to a longer and healthier life.
- **Environment & surroundings:** Your physical environment directly impacts your health. This includes having access to green spaces, clean air and water, and a safe, decluttered home, which is crucial for reducing daily stressors.
- **Traditional medical care:** Regular engagement with healthcare professionals is non-negotiable. This pillar involves routine physicals, screenings, vaccinations, and treatment for conditions, helping to ensure preventive and effective care.

# Starting the puberty chat

Puberty is a period of dramatic physical and emotional changes that can be confusing or even scary for a pre-teen. Starting open conversations early helps normalize the process.



## CONVERSATION GUIDE

- Break the topic down into small, comfortable chats rather than one big talk. Encourage them to ask questions and share what they already know. This makes the information feel less overwhelming and more relatable.
- Puberty involves hormonal shifts that can lead to mood swings, irritability, or feelings of self-consciousness. Reassure them that emotional changes are a normal part of puberty.
- Explain that physical changes, such as height spurts or developing breasts/testicles, are normal signs that their body is preparing for adulthood. Discuss the functions of these changes to reduce mystery and anxiety.
- Talk about the practical side, including the need for regular showering, using deodorant, and understanding menstruation. Focusing on hygiene habits gives them tools for managing the physical aspects.

