## **Managing Diet to Promote Sleep**

An important hormone that regulates our sleep is melatonin. Melatonin is produced in the brain and the amount we produce is affected by our diet.

One of the biggest influences on melatonin levels is the intake of a protein called tryptophan. Secondary influencers are calcium, magnesium, and vitamin B6 which help the brain utilize tryptophan and produce melatonin.

# The gold standard for a pre-bedtime beverage is still warm milk.

Several foods are good sources of tryptophan and/or melatonin, here are some examples:

#### Milk

Milk products have high amounts of tryptophan and are also excellent sources of calcium.

#### **Nuts and Seeds**

A handful of walnuts provides an excellent source of melatonin. Almonds, peanuts, sunflower seeds, and flax seed also provide reasonable levels. Nuts and seeds overall are rich in tryptophan, especially pumpkin seeds.

#### **Fruits**

Certain fruits contain higher levels of melatonin which may help you fall asleep faster and wake up less often during the night.

Research shows that tart sour cherries have the highest levels of melatonin of any type of food. Other good sources are bananas, strawberries, raspberries, pomegranates, red grapes, and kiwis.

#### **Whole Grains**

Excellent sources of melatonin are found in rolled oats, barley, and rice.

#### **Vegetables**

There is also melatonin in corn, asparagus, tomatoes, broccoli, cucumber, and brussel sprouts.

#### **Protein sources**

Tryptophan is found in turkey, chicken, shrimp, salmon, halibut, tuna, cod, and lean red meat. Legumes are also a great source, such as kidney beans, lima beans, black beans, split peas, chick peas, and tofu.

Additional high sources of melatonin include ginger root, black and green olives, and fresh mint.

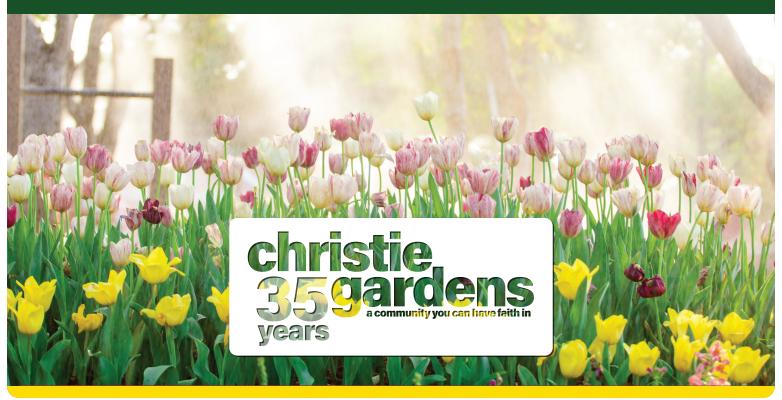
Overall a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, grains, and lean protein sources will contain adequate levels of dietary melatonin and tryptophan. Vitamins and minerals from these foods will help contribute to the synthesis of melatonin.

Sleep and eat well!

# WELLNESS QUARTERLY

wellbeing news, advice, and opinions from christie gardens staff and residents

spring 2019



# **Body Mechanics: The Triceps Dip**

The triceps dip represents a movement that we have all done at some point: getting up from a chair while pushing up from the armrest to assist.

Practicing this exercise regularly really helps to strengthen the triceps, anterior deltoids, chest muscles and the rhomboid muscles of the back.

The key to properly performing this exercise is to use just the right amount of leg strength in order to fully extend the arms. It is important to concentrate on the arms to press up, while lightly assisting with the legs.

Cheers to your health!





- start from a seated position in a chair with armrests. Hands are resting on armrests and the elbows are tucked in behind. The feet are directly under the chair
- push up with the arms and elevate yourself from the chair, help only a little with the legs.
- return to your neutral position but only enough to "tap" onto the chair seat before beginning the next repetition.
   Repeat 10 times.

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# WELLNESS QUARTERLY wellbeing news, advice, and opinions from christie gardens staff and residents

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# **Sleep Your Way to Better Health**

One thing all humans have in common is that we all require extended periods of sleep to successfully carry out our daily activities.

You might not be aware of it, but during sleeping hours, we are going through an important period of processing, restoration, and strengthening. However, many aspects of exactly how this occurs remain a mystery to scientists.

There is evidence to support that we require sleep to repair tissue, synthesize hormones, and consolidate memories.

Throughout the day our brains take in a lot of information. Overnight, bits and pieces of information are transferred from more tentative, short-term memory to stronger, long-term memory — a process called consolidation.

Research has shown that after we sleep, we tend to retain more information and perform better on memory tasks.

Without sufficient sleep, your body produces less of the proteins called cytokines. Cytokines are both produced and released during sleep, they target infection and inflammation and are essential for a strong immune system.

Chronic sleep loss has even been shown to increase your risk of contracting an influenza infection.

A healthy amount of sleep can also protect you from health issues such as heart disease, diabetes and obesity. Often, when we're sick, we require more sleep to recover. This is because our immune system and sleeping habits are so closely linked.

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Foods to Promote Sleep

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Estrellita Gumayan



**2019 Healthy Living Fair** 

# **Sleep Your Way to Better Health (continued)**

# Maintain a consistent sleep schedule Go to hed and wake up at the same

Go to bed and wake up at the same times every day, even on weekends.

#### Naturally boost your melatonin levels

Artificial lights at night can suppress your body's production of melatonin, the hormone that makes you sleepy. Turn off the TV and computer at least one hour before bed.

#### **Develop soothing bedtime rituals**

Taking a bath, playing music, or practicing a relaxation technique can help you wind down before bed.

# Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, and cool, and your bed is comfortable

Using a sound machine, ear plugs, or a sleep mask can help.

#### Take short naps

Nap between 15-45mins in the early afternoon. Napping too late in the day can cause disrupted nighttime sleep.

#### Move bedroom clocks out of view

The light can disrupt your sleep and anxiously watching the minutes tick by is a sure-fire recipe for insomnia.

# Get enough exercise and mental stimuli

Being too sedentary or socially isolated may cause sleep disturbances. Regular daily exercise and social engagement helps prepare your body for sleep.

# Limit caffeine, alcohol and sugar consumption, especially before bed

A low-sugar snack before bed or a small glass of warm milk is best. Minimize your liquid intake before bed to decreased number of overnight washroom trips.

#### Finally, manage your stress level

Lack of sleep can cause your emotions to be out of control and decrease your ability to cope with life's stressors.

Utilize your support system and healthcare team to help you.

Be sure to talk to your doctor if you are suffering from chronic sleep disturbances before taking any over-the-counter sleep medication.

# Po Healthy Living Fair Thursday, April 11, 2019 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm Christie Gardens, 600 Melita Crescent Auditorium, Lower Level

# **Profile: Estrellita Gumayan, RPN**

#### Tell us a bit about yourself.

I am originally from Manila, Philippines. In Manila I became a Registered Midwife and after working in a hospital I decided to work abroad.

At 22 I was hired as a staff nurse in an Emergency Room in one of the largest private hospitals in Jeddah, Saudia Arabia. I worked there for 13 years and learned Arabic as most locals do not speak English.

While in Jeddah I gained nursing skills and emergency experience, and I am grateful that I am able to incorporate those skills when I need to handle emergency situations here at Christie Gardens.

I met my husband through my future sister-in-law, who was a colleague at the hospital in Jeddah. We married in the Philippines and raised two of our boys in Saudi Arabia. When they were still young we decided to immigrate to Canada, because we felt it was a family-oriented country and would give our boys better educational opportunities.

To get into the workforce in Canada, I studied Practical Nursing at Seneca College, later becoming a Registered Practical Nurse. Now I am a mother of three boys, aged 22, 20, and 8. My husband and I love coffee — so we make it a point to meet up at Tim Horton's after work. We call it our "short date", it's our moment to vent or brag to each other about how our days went.

#### Why did you get into Nursing?

Since I was a child, I dreamed of becoming a Doctor but due to financial constraints I decided to find another way to have a medical career. I love nursing.



I am so fulfilled with my position as a Wellness Centre Nurse where I can practice my nursing skills to support and assist residents as their health condition changes.

#### What is your philosophy of care?

My philosophy of care is to provide resident-centered care that empowers our aging population to adapt and be able to make their own decisions based on their ability and capacity.

To me, the appropriateness of communication plays a vital role to address every resident's needs when they come to me for health advice. The first thing that comes to my mind is to always withhold judgement and instead to offer help, thus gain a trusting relationship. It surprises me and is so gratifying when residents start opening up even about critical personal issues in their lives.

My philosophy of care is also based on my belief that aging should be a continued stage of development and growth, rather than a period of decline.

# What do you enjoy most about Christie Gardens?

What I enjoy and take pride about Christie Gardens is the atmosphere of good camaraderie and mutual support. Teamwork is essential to successfully provide exemplary service to residents.

Being in the Wellness Centre I often hear from our residents how grateful and appreciative they are of what we are providing for them in terms of care. They love to live in this community where everyone is very conscientious about their well-being.

Thank you Estrellita for taking the time to help us get to know more about you. Now we know why the Wellness Centre coffee is so popular!