Getting On Track for the New Year
Joy A. Dugan, MPH, DHSc, PA-C

Did you make a New Year’s Resolution for 2020? Did you already break it? Instead of making New Year’s Resolutions, we suggest making a monthly commitment to try new healthy activities. Whether it’s trying a new exercise type, new recipe, or habit, making small changes each month may be more helpful than creating one big (and often unattainable) goal.

If you are going to set a resolution for 2020, engaging in friends and family may be the best way to meet your goals. Find an activity or a class that you can do with them. When setting goals, we often start with smaller, attainable goals, which are steps to the overall goal. Just like a novice runner should not just set out to run a marathon, our goals should have benchmarks to guide us along the way.

If fitness was a challenge for you in 2019, try to discover some new activities that you may enjoy in 2020. Want to try a ballet or Pilates class in your own home? Please visit www.forte.fit for hundreds of exercise classes from yoga to Boot Camp (note, this website is not affiliated with Touro University). Every city has a community activities bulletin. You consider checking out what is available at your local community centers. Swimming lessons, tennis tournaments, or pickle ball leagues may be ways to help you get fit and meet others in your community.

Consider investing in an instant pot if healthy eating is your resolution. It’s a slow cooker and pressure cooker all-in-one. There are thousands of recipes online to help you get started with this quick form of cooking. You can literally cook homemade soup in less than 30 minutes with this device. The other tip for eating healthier is meal prep. Set aside one evening each week to meal planning and preparation. Having readily available healthy snacks and pre-portioned meals is helpful when you get busy and don’t have time to cook.

Last but not least, wish you all a JOYFUL 2020!!!
Project HAPPY

Project HAPPY (Healthy Attitudes Produce Positive Youth) is a community-based, family-centered educational series that teaches positive psychosocial development, good nutrition, and healthy exercise habits to children and their families. Each cohort is designed to be followed with a program evaluation for future improvements to be incorporated in subsequent yearly cohorts. This program is also designed as a living classroom, in which first year medical students from Touro University California College of Osteopathic Medicine participate as family navigators and health coaches for the participants (while remaining under direct supervision by a licensed pediatrician).

Prior to 2018 there had not been an evidence-based obesity and diabetes prevention program focused on the pediatric population in Solano County. In this way, Project HAPPY has been the first of its kind. Project HAPPY was created by a board-certified pediatrician based on a combination of the success of the Diabetes Prevention Program for adults, and the latest research on pediatric obesity prevention programs in order to address the urgent needs of the Solano County communities. Solano County has higher rates of overweight, obese, and inactive children than the average rates across the state of California.

Each Project HAPPY session consists of a group check-in and physical activity, followed by the weekly didactic session (on topics ranging from overcoming barriers, to highlighting the importance of fiber, and increasing fruit and vegetable intake). Then there is an interactive healthy cooking demonstration during which the families can see firsthand how to incorporate the lessons into their daily lives. The families are then encouraged to connect with one another and share their personal experiences incorporating the lessons of Project HAPPY into their daily lives. Finally there is a wrap-up time when weekly goals are identified and reviewed. The family participants are incentivized to continue with Project HAPPY through gift cards, prizes, community connection, and awards.

Project HAPPY started in the Spring of 2018 with a pilot program that ran for 6-weeks at a local elementary school. Due to the success of that pilot program, Project HAPPY received funding from a Sutter grant in order to continue. The second Project HAPPY cohort took place across 12 weeks in the Spring of 2019. Due to a relocation of the elementary school where Project HAPPY ran its first two cohorts and to expand the reach of the program to the broader community, Project HAPPY will be taking place at another more centralized location for the 2020 cohort and beyond.

Contact Information for Project HAPPY:

Project HAPPY Project Coordinator
Ms. Abla Almoraissi, abla.almoraissi@tu.edu
Project HAPPY Founder & Medical Director
Dr. Tami Hendriksz, tami.hendriksz@tu.edu
Project HAPPY

It has been such a pleasure to watch Project HAPPY grow and develop over these last couple of years. It is hard to describe how impactful it is to witness the realization of one of your ideas and dreams. My favorite parts of Project HAPPY are seeing how truly happy the participants and student navigators are during the sessions. It is so fun to watch the families interact with one another and discuss what they have tried, what they have struggled with, and what has worked well. I love hearing what a difference the lessons and experiences make on the lives of the families who participate. I did not expect Project HAPPY to have such a significant impact on the student volunteers - but after just the first session it was clear how much our students learn and grow through the process of educating and partnering with local families to seek out their optimal health.

Dr. Tami Hendriksz, DO
Associate Dean of Clinical Education/Associate Professor Clinical Education
TUC-COM

Helen Meng, OMS II

Coming into Touro as a first-year medical student, I knew that I wanted to spend time committed to serving the community and working closely with the local population. I became interested in Project HAPPY because of its emphasis on community outreach and health education for the youth. It was one of the most rewarding experiences getting to build a close connection with my cohort/family and working with them to help improve their health and lifestyle.

One of my favorite memories during my time as a facilitator was when we were gifting our families with tickets to museums or parks as a goodbye present and the child I was teaching mentioned that she wanted me to go with them. It made me realize not only how much I valued our bond together, but also how much she valued the bond we had created. To this day, I still contact her mom to see how they are doing. It was always so thrilled when she would excitedly tell me about how much water she drank that week or how she had created an exercise board for herself to get healthy. All of these little things made such a big difference in her health, with her mom observing her running around more and having more energy. It was exciting for me to work so closely with them to improve the health of their entire family.

Project HAPPY provided me an opportunity to establish a close bond with a group that I may have never had a chance to interact with otherwise. I got to watch as my family grew each week, learning from the lessons I taught them about how to take care of their health and be accountable for their own well-being. It was such a fantastic experience and solidified my interest in serving the community through medicine and health education.

Cameron Peres, OMS I

I wanted to go into medicine to help families with members of all ages improve their wellbeing to its fullest capacity. So much of our health is enforced by the people around us, and what better way to improve health than with the help of your loved ones. That was why I was so ecstatic to join when I found out that HAPPY was doing just that. Children are sponges ready for guidance at a young age and being able to facilitate healthy habits early is such a wonderful opportunity. Not everyone has access to programs or people that will be there by their side to keep them motivated and assist them along the way. What makes Project HAPPY so unique is that the activities are so special and valuable to the families we help.

My favorite part of working with families and focusing on the children is when the children reinforce good habits engaging their parents. Work, commuting, and family chores can really pile up on parents and make it difficult not to take the easy way out with unhealthy foods. Although when their children are excited to participate in cooking and are encouraging their parents to buy healthy foods, everyone becomes a cohesive family unit.

I don’t have one single memory that sticks out from my time in HAPPY so far, but it makes me so happy to see the smiles on the family’s faces every week. The parents and the kids have been at work and school all day and the fact that we are still able to keep them laughing and having fun while learning makes the hard work we have put into this project so rewarding.
Cauliflower Fried Rice

If you have thought about reducing your carbohydrate intake, you may have heard of cauliflower rice. No, it is not a new grain. Cauliflower rice refers to cauliflower chopped up to little pieces so it resembles rice. People may cook it like fried rice, adding other vegetables to add color and various textures. This recipe can be used as a base to make a lower carbohydrate side dish. Adding chopped-up, left-over chicken or tofu and other vegetables will give you a delicious complete meal. Enjoy this easy recipe!

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 package of frozen cauliflower rice
- 1 large egg
- 8 oz. of protein of choice

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in medium non-stick pan. Sauté onion and garlic on medium heat until fragrant or onion is translucent. Add cauliflower and stir fry until warmed through 5 min. Create small well in center of pan and crack egg into well. Let egg cook halfway through then evenly mix into cauliflower mixture. Continue cooking until egg is cooked throughout mix. Serve with a protein. Use as a substitute for rice or mix a ¼ ratio of steamed rice for a lower carbohydrate rice alternative. Makes 4 servings.

Recipe By: Leslie Nguyen MSPAS MPH Class of 2020
Our Community

Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP): A Success Story

In 2014, I was diagnosed with pre-diabetes. Someone mentioned to me that I could lower my A1c through exercising. So, I joined aerobic classes. It was fun and exhausting and made me hungry after the workouts. After one year of hard work, my A1c had not budged, so my frustration was building. It was then that I decided to get into a different HMO. What a difference it was! I was referred to a nutritionist, who showed me on how to track the foods I ate, explained macronutrients (carbohydrates, Proteins, Fats), changed my way of eating, as well as taught me healthy vs. easy (fast food) foods, nutritional values, and more. To better understand how food affects my blood glucose, I had to check my blood sugar before and after meals. She also encouraged me to participate in four classes. It was the care and patience she had demonstrated that ignited my efforts to eat healthily and be active, thus ultimately lowered my A1c! I, then, learned about the DPP class. It reinforced what I had heard and learned from the previous four sessions. When I was asked to be a coach, I thought to myself that if I had changed myself through DPP, I could be supportive to others. DPP is a healthy lifestyle change!

Tessa Badua-Larsen, Lifestyle Coach

MOBEC (Mobile Diabetes Education Center) Event Recap

Anne Lee, RD, CDE

On November 10, 2019, the MOBEC Team joined the annual Diabetes Health Fair hosted by the Diablo Society of Health System Pharmacists (DSHP). This year’s event was held at St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church in Vallejo. We are honored to be one of the vendors, who are passionate about promoting diabetes self-management among residents of Solano County.

MOBEC was present to provide blood glucose and blood pressure screening along with a nutrition booth providing resources for kids and adults who were interested in preventing or taking care of diabetes. Over 80 participants visited us in a few short hours, not only did the participants benefit from free services, pharmacy students also gained valuable experience working with an interdisciplinary team to serve the public. Everyone had a great time!

Editorial Team

Editor: Clipper Young, PharmD, MPH
Newsletter Designer: Maryelli Ray

Community Partners:

Sutter Health
Solano Public Health