

A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You

Here's Why and How to **Keep Your Thyroid Humming**

There's a little gland at the base of your throat that affects every function in your body. It's the thyroid, and it's shaped like a butterfly. The thyroid's hormones regulate your energy level, ability to think and food digestion. When your thyroid works as it should, life is good.

But 1 in 8 Americans have a thyroid that's out of balance. If it makes too few hormones, you can feel sluggish and gain weight. If it produces too many, it can make your heart race, or cause irritability and unexplained weight loss.

It's a delicate balancing act, but one you can manage with a little focus.

Start with keeping up your mineral levels. To function well, the thyroid needs iodine found in cranberries, sardines, shrimp, yogurt, eggs, capers and iodized table salt. It also needs selenium found in Brazil



nuts, and zinc, which is found in nuts, legumes and chocolate.

Fermented foods foster good bacteria that make inactive thyroid hormones active. (You may have heard about T4, which is inactive, and T3, which is active.) Try kimchi, sauerkraut, yogurt and kefir. Pickled foods, raw vegetables and dandelion root also help.

Opt for filtered water. Fluoride and chlorine can block iodine from reaching the thyroid. A high-end pitcher, faucet and shower head filter (so your skin doesn't absorb fluoride and chlorine) can remove these chemicals.

Use safe cosmetics. Some makeup, nail polish and shampoo contain chemicals that are bad for hormones.

Check the safety of your cosmetics and find alternatives on the database at ewg.org/skindeep. (It's managed by the Environmental Working Group Skin Deep Cosmetics Database.)

Get your yoga on. Yoga poses can improve blood circulation to the thyroid gland. That helps keep it functioning.

Sources:
webmd.com; ewg.org

Move from Resolutions To Results during 2021

Less than 10 percent of people who make resolutions for the New Year actually keep them. The secret to connecting your goals with results is in small, sustainable steps.

In *Tiny Habits—The Small Changes that Change Everything*, B.J. Fogg, PhD, says it's almost impossible to create a health habit if you start big. Here are some tips for improving your health through better habits.

- As suggested in the first article, drink pure water. It's one of the best lifestyle changes ever. This means steering clear of sweetened and/or flavored beverages. Also, limit your alcohol consumption.
- Go for high-quality protein. Choose organic eggs and dairy products along with grass-fed meat and free-range chicken. For salmon, wild-caught Alaskan is the best choice.
- Get plenty of healthy fats in your diet. Eating the right fats is good for your heart, your brain, your gut and your hormones. Find good sources of healthy fats in avocados, olive oil, coconut oil, raw nuts and seeds, and high-quality protein.
- Keep moving throughout the day. Research shows that exercise is "the best preventive drug" for many common ailments. That includes mental disorders, heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Choose activities you like so you stick with them. The key is to move. Simply standing up from a seated position fights any effects of sitting too long.
- Make your emotional health a priority. With the unprecedented stressors of 2020, this is vital. Resiliency depends on effectively addressing your stress. Stay connected with people you love. Practice gratitude daily and spend time in meditation or prayer. Get outdoors and into the sunshine. Focus on the other small changes involving good nutrition and physical activity. Also, try to get six to eight hours of quality sleep.

Resource: *Tiny Habits—The Small Changes that Change Everything* by B.J. Fogg, PhD; webmd.com

Mediterranean Chickpea Quinoa Bowl (Serves 4)

Ingredients:

- 1 (7 ounce) jar roasted red peppers, rinsed
- ¼ cup slivered almonds
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 small clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper (optional)
- 2 cups cooked quinoa

- ¼ cup Kalamata olives, chopped
- ¼ cup finely chopped red onion
- 1 (15 ounce) can chickpeas, rinsed
- 1 cup diced cucumber
- ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley

Directions

Place peppers, almonds, 2 tablespoons oil, garlic, paprika, cumin and crushed red pepper (if using) in a mini food processor. Puree until fairly smooth.

Combine quinoa, olives, red onion and the remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a medium bowl.

To serve, divide the quinoa mixture among 4 bowls and top with equal amounts of the chickpeas, cucumber and the red pepper sauce. Sprinkle with feta and parsley.

To make ahead: Prepare the red pepper sauce and the quinoa mixture; refrigerate in separate containers and assemble just before serving.

Recipe courtesy of EatingWell.com.
For nutritional information, [click here](#).

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