

Health and wellness tips for your work and life—  
presented by HealthCheck360



## Fight the Flu with These Simple Tips

The arrival of the fall and winter months signals many things, including the beginning of flu season. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, flu activity peaks between December and February.

Seasonal influenza can cause serious complications for people of any age, but children and the elderly are more vulnerable. To help keep your household healthy this flu season, consider the following suggestions:

- Get the flu vaccine.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and stay away from others when you feel under the weather.
- Wash your hands often using soap and warm water to protect against germs.
- Get plenty of sleep, stay physically active and drink plenty of water to keep your immune system strong.



## A Beginner's Guide to Mindfulness

It's no secret that the holidays bring joy, but they can also bring stress. We all know that prolonged and chronic stress can wreak havoc on your overall health and wellness, so it's important to find healthy ways to manage it. One effective way to do so is to practice mindfulness.

### The Basics

Mindfulness is the process of bringing your full attention to experiences in the present moment. Being mindful means being aware of where you are and what you're doing, as well as not being reactive or overwhelmed with what's going on around you. Many people achieve mindfulness through meditation and yoga.

### Getting Started

Mastering meditation takes practice, but getting started can be easy and not time-consuming. Try the following two quick mindful meditation techniques next time you're feeling stressed.

1. **One-minute relaxation breathing**—Close your eyes and take a deep breath in for a count of four, and then exhale for a count of eight. Repeat five times.
2. **Five-minute body scan meditation**—Sit or lay down in a comfortable position and take a few moments to find a calm, steady breath. Bring your awareness to sensations in your body, where you will spend several slow breaths on each focal point beginning with the left toes and all the way through the left hip. Repeat on the right side. From there, follow the same process through your torso, arms and up through your head.

## Super Stuffed Squash

2 acorn squash  
2 ½ cups water  
1 cup brown rice  
1 pound ground pork  
1 medium onion (chopped)  
3 garlic cloves (minced)  
1 medium sweet apple (peeled, diced)  
1 tsp. smoked paprika  
4 tsp. olive oil  
Fresh parsley (chopped)

### PREPARATIONS

1. Heat oven to 350 F. On a large baking sheet, place the squash in the oven for 30 minutes. Then remove from oven, cut in half, and remove and discard the seeds. Cook for another 20 minutes or until soft.
2. In a large stockpot, bring the water and the rice to a boil. Cover, reduce the heat to low, and simmer until the rice is tender and liquid has been absorbed.
3. In a large nonstick skillet, warm 3 tsp. olive oil over medium heat and add the pork. Once the meat is browned, add onions, garlic, apples, smoked paprika, cayenne, salt and pepper. Cook until onion is soft. Add the brown rice.
4. When squash is done, turn cut-side up in the baking dish. Add a teaspoon of olive oil to the center of each squash half. Divide the meat and rice mixture amongst the four squashes. Return to the oven for 10 minutes. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley and serve.

Makes: 4 servings

### Nutritional Information (per serving)

Total Calories	631
Total Fat	30 g
Protein	26 g
Carbohydrates	66 g
Dietary Fiber	8 g
Saturated Fat	10 g
Sodium	125 mg
Total Sugars	5 g

Source: USDA

## Pack a Work Lunch to Stay Healthy and Save Money

Eating out can be a quick and easy lunchtime solution during busy workdays, but that convenience comes at a cost. Many convenience food options are low in nutrients and high in empty calories. Luckily, a little planning goes a long way, and you don't need to spend a lot of extra time planning and packing healthy lunches for work.

A salad or sandwich can be prepared in just a few minutes the night before. When preparing a salad, be sure to pack the dressing separately so the lettuce doesn't get soggy! To make a healthy and filling sandwich, use hearty whole grain bread, and focus on combining a variety of vegetables with lean protein. And don't forget to bring a snack, such as an apple, in case you become hungry later.

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## Build a Better Sandwich

### Healthy sandwiches

don't have to be bland. To build a better sandwich, skip the mayo, which packs 94 calories per tablespoon, and use a healthier spread in its place. Here are some delicious and creative sandwich spreads to try.

#### Avocado Spread



1 Tbsp. = 29  
calories

#### Dijon Mustard



1 Tbsp. = 15  
calories

#### Olive Tapenade



1 Tbsp. = 25  
calories