

# WellMASS Newsletter

## MARCH 2016



## SLEEP

If you feel tired during the day, chances are, you didn't get enough sleep the night before. Experts recommend seven to nine hours of sleep for most adults. Not getting enough shut-eye can have a big impact on the way you feel every day—as well as your health.

### Too Little Sleep Takes a Toll

Skimping on sleep too often can:

- Damage your nervous and immune systems
- Impair memory
- Affect physical performance
- Increase your risk for accidents and injuries

Long-term sleep deprivation can lead to mood swings, hallucinations, and chronic disorders such as heart disease.

### Positive Bedtime Habits Enhance Sleep

Sleep is not only about quantity. Quality counts, too. Try these tips to improve your slumber:

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day—even on weekends.
- Aim for 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days. However, try to allow at least 2-3 hours between exercise and bedtime, as exercise increases metabolism and body temperature, which may make it difficult to fall asleep.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine before bedtime. These substances can disrupt your sleep cycle.
- Set up a regular bedtime routine, such as taking a warm bath, listening to music, or reading.
- Designate your bedroom a "sleep-only" zone. Avoid watching television or doing work in your bedroom.
- If you have trouble falling asleep, get up and read until you feel tired.

If you tend to toss and turn at night, consider creating a sleep diary to help you identify any habits that may be preventing you from getting a restful night's sleep. For each 24-hour period, record when you go to bed and rise. Keep track of how long it takes for you to fall asleep and how often you wake up during the night. Include any naps you may have taken in your total sleep time for the 24-hour period. Then, estimate how tired you feel in the morning, afternoon, and evening on a scale of 0-10. (0= wide awake and 10= very sleepy.) Record this information for a minimum of ten days and then try to determine potential causes for drowsiness. Choose one of the potential causes and begin tracking it in the diary. After ten days pass, try isolating and tracking a different potential cause. Repeat this with each cause you have identified and make note of which behavioral changes improve your sleep habits.





## RECIPE OF THE MONTH: HERBED SHRIMP AND WHITE BEAN SALAD

### INGREDIENTS

1 red bell pepper  
4 cups arugula, loosely packed  
½ cup thinly vertically sliced red onion  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley  
1 (15-ounce) can low-sodium cannellini beans or other white beans, rinsed and drained  
½ teaspoon grated lemon rind  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
1 garlic clove, minced  
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
¼ teaspoon black pepper, divided  
Cooking spray  
1 pound peeled and deveined large shrimp  
2 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat broiler to high.
2. Halve bell pepper lengthwise; discard seeds and membranes. Place halves, skin sides up, on a baking sheet. Broil 12 minutes or until blackened. Seal in a paper bag. Let stand 5 minutes. Peel; chop. Combine bell pepper and next 6 ingredients (through beans). Combine rind, juice, garlic, oil, and ¼ teaspoon pepper.
3. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Sprinkle shrimp with remaining pepper. Cook 2 minutes on each side or until done. Add shrimp, lemon mixture, and nuts to arugula mixture; toss.

Recipe from [Cooking Light](#).





Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Group Insurance Commission

## MARCH CHALLENGE: IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP HABITS

Throughout the month of March, challenge yourself to make behavior changes that promote a more restful night's sleep. Below are some items to try throughout the month to make small, but achievable steps to help you improve your sleep habits.

Complete a minimum of one tip per day for 20 days. As you finish a healthy tip, fill in a circle to track your progress. Remember, you can use these tips more than once.

- ○ ○ ○ ○ I went to bed and woke up at the same time every day for a week, including the weekend.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I was physically active for 30 minutes a day, most days this week.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I allowed at least 2 hours between exercising and going to bed.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I avoided caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine in the evening.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I established a bedtime routine to help me wind down in the evening, such as taking a hot shower, reading, or lighting candles.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I limited my "screen time" before bed by turning off my computer and cell phone.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I avoided watching TV or doing work in my bedroom to keep it a "sleep only" zone.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I tracked my sleep habits in a diary every night this week.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ I practiced deep breathing exercises or meditation to help me relax before bedtime.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ Instead of tossing and turning when I didn't feel sleepy, I got out of bed and read until I felt ready to go to sleep.

### **MARCH WEBINAR: DEVELOPING BETTER SLEEP HABITS**

**Tuesday, March 9**

**10:00-10:30 AM and 1:00-1:30 PM**

To participate, call (866) 740-1260 and log on to <http://staywell.readytalk.com>, and enter access code **7317756**.

