Cathedral
CENTRE FOR WELLNESS

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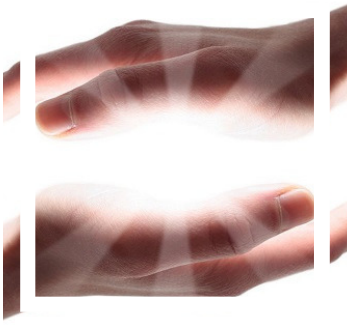

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Cleaning out your pantry

by Allison Ziegler N.D.

"The best way to serve our unique nutritional needs is to empower ourselves with knowledge, listen to our bodies and respond with healthy, nourishing choices."
~ Terry Walters

With the new season comes the desire to make goals, make changes, live better and feel healthier. An area we can have a significant impact on is what we choose to nourish ourselves with. With the rising amount and availability of processed and convenience foods, our nutrition has veered too far from the nutrient dense, whole foods. As a result, diseases such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease, cancer, autoimmune and mental illnesses are on the rise. Each item of food we choose to eat should serve a single goal of nourishment to our body, allowing the body to live to its healthiest and fullest by providing the very essence for work and play.

Cleaning out the pantry by replacing foods that hinder health with life giving, nutrient rich foods can help you create healthier patterns, feel better and prevent disease.

1. Begin by getting rid of any foods containing:

White and Brown Refined Sugar and High Fructose Corn Syrup

Canadians consume, on average, 110 grams of sugar a day, which is equivalent to 46 teaspoons. Refined sugar has been overly processed, essentially voiding itself of any nutrients. As a result, consuming refined sugar does not provide any nutrient value to the body and is only a source of empty calories. When sugar is consumed, excess amounts are stored in the liver and eventually are returned to the bloodstream as fatty acids, which ultimately end up as fat. In addition to contributing to diabetes and obesity, consumption of refined sugar has been linked to a weakened immune system, yeast infections, hyperactivity, ADHD, mental and emotional disorders and chemical imbalances in the brain.

Sugar is hiding in many different food items; therefore, when trying to get rid of foods that contain processed sugar, label reading is essential. Sugar can be identified as glucose, sucrose, fructose, sucralose, dextrose, maltose, maltodextrin and high fructose corn syrup, to name a few. Some common food items that sugar can be lurking in are cereals, crackers, bread, candy, pasta sauces, salad dressings and condiments.

Trans Fats and Saturated Fats

Trans fats are synthetically derived fats that are identified as hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils. Saturated fats are solid at room temperature, such as butter, margarine, red meat, and shortening.

Consuming foods high in trans and saturated fats increase inflammation in the body and are the number one leading cause of heart disease. These unhealthy fats can be found not only in butter and oils, but also in chips, cookies, cereals, breads and just about any highly processed food item.

A good rule of thumb to follow is having only olive, grape seed, safflower, flax and sesame oils in your pantry (keep the flax oil in the fridge!). Even though it is a saturated fat, coconut oil is also good to have on hand because it is one of the only oils that can be safely heated at high temperatures.

White flour/Pasta
Food products containing white flour such as pastas, crackers, breads and cereals are simple carbohydrates that adversely affect health. White flour begins as the whole grain; however, through processing it is stripped of its vitamins, minerals, fibre and enzymes, which leaves a product with no nutritional value. As a result, like sugar and high-fructose corn syrup, white flour products elevate blood sugar levels, contributing to diabetes, weight gain, fluctuating energy levels, mood swings and decreased immune system.

Regular Table Salt
Regular table salt is mined from underground salt deposits and more heavily processed to remove minerals and tends to have additives to prevent clumping. Sea salt, on the other hand, is made from evaporated seawater and contains other trace minerals, which offer many health benefits such as thyroid support, muscle and immune health.

Anything That Has More Than 3 Unrecognizable Ingredients
The Rule of 3 is a great way to prevent consuming food items that contain unhealthy ingredients. If you read a label of a food product that has more than 3 ingredients that you do not understand, get rid of or do not purchase it. Get your children involved! They love being detectives and can have a lot of fun with this. Include them while cleaning out and restocking your pantry.

2. Replace the items with healthy options:
Throw Away: White/brown processed sugar; high fructose corn syrup; cookies and snacks sweetened with them, and sweetened peanut butter.
Replace With: Coconut sugar, brown rice syrup, maple syrup, honey and stevia, cookies sweetened with any of this list or evaporated cane juice (Kashi is a good brand), all natural peanut butter or almond butter.

Throw Away: Butter, margarine and shortening and regular potato chips that are high in unhealthy fats.
Replace With: Olive, flax seed, sesame, coconut and grape seed oil, rice chips, vegetable chips and kale chips.

Throw Away: White flour products including pasta and crackers.
Replace With: Spelt, buckwheat or brown rice pasta, rice chips/crackers, brown rice and quinoa.

Throw Away: Regular table salt and products containing high sodium (canned soup, salad dressings and sauces).
Replace With: Sea salt, homemade salad dressings using olive oil and balsamic vinegar or lemon juice.

Keeping the goal in mind that each item of food we choose to eat should serve as a source of nutrients to the body can be helpful when making the lifestyle change to clean out your pantry and restock it with healthy foods. The nutrients gained from our food acts as the foundation for the rest of our health. If we provide our body what it needs to function properly, health and vitality will result!

Dietary Health Hacks - The Power of a Green Smoothie

by Michelle Sthamann N.D.

Have you ever wondered what else you can do to optimize your health? What supplements? What diets? What foods? You are not alone. Even as a licensed Naturopathic Doctor with eight years of science-based education, the information available to us is vast and biased. However, one aspect of nutrition that will never fail to provide undeniable health benefits are vegetables.

Now, we all know vegetables are good for us, but let me just throw some powerful facts at you… Fruits, vegetables, and other antioxidant rich foods have been associated with longer telomeres which are the caps at the end of our DNA strands preventing damage to and the ultimate shortening of our genetic material. These healthy foods have been shown to boost telomerase activity, which is the enzyme responsible for repairing our telomeres. In a five year follow up study, a control group eating a standard American diet was compared to a healthy plant-based diet group and the results showed the telomeres shrunk less, and actually lengthened in the people eating strictly plants. This research suggests you can reverse cellular aging. Experimental dietary changes positively impacted the DNA damage results much more than vigorous exercise or caloric restriction.

Another powerful area of nutrition research is on sulforaphane produced after ingesting cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, brussel sprouts etc.). Eating broccoli has been shown to activate the Ah receptors in the intestinal lining which stimulate lymphocytes which are a part of our immune system to heal the cells. Another study showed how chronic smokers who ate twenty-five times more broccoli per day which actually was only a single stalk per day compared to broccoli avoiding smokers, suffered forty-one percent fewer DNA mutations in their bloodstream over ten days. Even when the DNA was extracted from subjects' bodies and exposed to a known DNA-damaging chemical, the genetic material from broccoli

eaters showed significantly less damage, suggesting that eating vegetables like broccoli may make you more resilient at a sub cellular level. Three hours after eating a cup of broccoli sprouts, the enzyme that cancers use to help silence our defenses is suppressed in your bloodstream to an extent equal or greater than the chemotherapy agent specifically designed for that purpose without the toxic side effects.
New research is being published all the time regarding the potential benefits of these natural foods, but they are not marketed to us as much as they should be. Companies cannot patent broccoli, and therefore cannot reap the benefits to be used as a medication or supplement. The most efficient way to increase your vegetable intake would be to make green smoothies daily. Utilizing various produce like chard, and kale, along with different fresh herbs such as cilantro and parsley can tremendously impact your health as the research above proves to support. Challenge yourself and take control!

Mom's to Be: Don't Forget Your Probiotics!

by Marika Geis N.D.

Breast milk is widely acknowledged as being the most complete form of nutrition for infants. Beyond the perfect combination of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, and nutrition that change continuously according to the needs of a growing baby – it is responsible for several significant outcomes regarding immune function. In infancy these will manifest as:
· A threefold decreased risk of respiratory infection
· A three to fourfold decreased risk of diarrheal disease
· A decrease in the incidence of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)
· A decrease in the incidence of atopic conditions (eczema, asthma and allergies)
· Cumulatively, in developing countries, breastfeeding appears to be a critical factor in a baby's survival. Infants in Brazil are fourteen times more likely to die if not breastfed.
Later in life, the immunological benefits of breastfeeding for 6 months or more are associated with:
· Decreased incidence of food allergy/sensitivity
· Decreased incidence of ear infections
· Decreased incidence of obesity
· Decreased risk of developing autoimmune disease
· An eight-fold decreased risk of developing cancer prior to the age of 15

While conventional wisdom attributed the majority of these effects to the various compounds present within human breastmilk, namely immunoglobulins (antibodies derived mainly from maternal gut and lungs), lactoferrin (inhibits growth of bacteria, viruses and fungi) and lysozymes (directly toxic to pathogenic organisms), little thought was given as to whether or not commensal (symbiotic) or beneficial bacteria could be a factor since breastmilk was thought of as sterile. However, in 2003, a Spanish study published in the Journal of Pediatrics revealed breastmilk to be a major source of lactic acid bacteria for the infant gut. Beyond the vital exposure to commensal/beneficial bacteria that babies receive as a result of a vaginal birth (vagina/rectum/skin), it appears that babies consume as much as 100,000 to 10 million bacteria daily (based on an average consumption of 26 ounces daily). This is hardly surprising given that non-human micro-organisms greatly outnumber our own cells; three to one by some estimates.

If one were to take a cursory look at the available research on the benefits of probiotics, they would likely find a striking similarity between their supplementation and the effects observed above among many others. Yet while the research shows that breastfeeding and probiotics (and even probiotics during pregnancy) reduce the likelihood of developing the conditions listed above, to date, research linking the two variables is sparse. This is presumably due to the fact that up until recently, researchers had yet to explain how something residing solely on the so-called external environments of our body (gut, lungs, genitals, oral, skin), made their way to into breastmilk.

What the research suggests is something of a pathway that exists between the maternal gut and mammary glands via the immune system. Firstly, white blood cells that normally serve a ‘Pac Man’-like function (engulf and destroy foreign material) alter their activity and instead ‘sip’ the environment of the maternal gut, take samples of the resident bacteria, travel through the bloodstream, and deposit their contents in the mammary glands. Indeed, small numbers of bacteria can reside inside these cells for several days prior to reaching their destination. Changes to maternal physiology, specifically, weakness in the gut wall, increased permeability of the gut wall, and decreased motility allow for this incredible process starting in the third trimester and continues up until the point of weaning. Once these bacteria reach the infant gut, there are literally no barriers to colonization. It’s warm and moist with an endless supply of food-the complex sugars of the mother’s breastmilk.

So what are the implications of this profound relationship between mother and baby? It’s important to realize that the first month of breastfeeding is a critical period for establishing the bacterial profile of the infant gut. Samples taken from eight and nine year olds show that the streptococcus and staphylococcus profiles established within the first month of life remain intact. This finding lends new insight to the negative impact that antibiotic use, modern diets, and stress have on the maternal microbiome and the potential for chronic disease in children.

Given what we know of the benefits of probiotics and that breastfeeding is a principle source of beneficial bacteria for the newborn, the utmost care must be taken to protect this sensitive and diverse ecosystem. As naturopaths, we often talk about the healing power of nature. While conception, pregnancy, and birth aren't necessarily conditions that require healing, this is just one more example of how the wisdom of Mother Nature manifests to ensure that we are able to survive the environment we're born into.

Living Within the Window of Tolerance: The Different Zones of Arousal

by Julie Zepp Rutledge N.D.

Living Within The Window of Tolerance: The Different Zones of Arousal

HYPERAROUSAL ZONE

Sympathetic "Fight or Flight Response"
(Too much arousal)

SIGNS YOU ARE HERE:

- Tension, shaking
- Emotional reactivity
- Defensiveness
- Racing thoughts
- Intrusive imagery
- Emotional overwhelm
- Feeling unsafe
- Obsessive/cyclical thoughts
- Hyper-vigilance
- Impulsivity
- Anger/Rage

OPTIMAL AROUSAL ZONE

Ventral Vagal "Window of Tolerance"

SIGNS YOU ARE HERE:

- Feel and think simultaneously
- Experience empathy
- Feelings are tolerable
- Awareness of boundaries (yours & others)
- Reactions adapt to fit the situation
- Feel safe
- Present moment awareness - "Right here, right now"
- Feel open and curious (versus judgmental and defensive)

HYPOAROUSAL ZONE

Parasympathetic "Immobilization Response"
(Too little arousal)

SIGNS YOU ARE HERE:

- Relative absence of sensation
- No energy
- Reduced physical movement
- "Not there"
- Can't defend oneself
- Numbing of emotions
- Disconnected
- No feelings
- Ashamed
- Flat affect
- Feeling 'dead'
- Shut down
- Passive
- Can't say no
- Disabled cognitive processing/"can't think"

Through good genetics, a strong constitution, wonderful parental modeling of good health habits, a strong and passionate personal interest in the pursuit of the health of mind, body and spirit, the acceptance of things as they are (most of the time!), a generally healthy outlook on life and lots of past work with naturopathic doctors, counselors, psychologists, energy therapists and a personal coach and mentor—I have the good fortune to feel strong and balanced much of the time. And have the tools and strategies that I need in order to get to that place fairly quickly when I am thrown off of my game, which definitely happens!

There is a concept in counseling referred to as a "Window of Tolerance" and what I described above represents me with the ability to exist (most of the time!) within my own window of tolerance. The accompanying photo shows this beautifully. The window of tolerance describes an ideal state of living that allows us to most effectively take in information and respond effectively to it.
When we are within our window of tolerance we are not too activated (Hyper-aroused) nor we are shut down (Hypo-aroused) in response to a difficult set of circumstances.

In the hyper-aroused state we may find ourselves being chronically "on the go". We might feel like we constantly need to be busy or doing something and find we don't know how to, or can't, seem to slow down and relax In a more extreme state of hyper-arousal this can result in feeling anxious and always concerned that another stressful experienced is around the corner, and therefore are always working to try to "stay in control" (which, as we know all to well in life is impossible!).

In the hypo-aroused state we might feel as though we lack ambition or motivation. We have little or no ability to "get up and go". Overtime we might begin feel completely numb and unable to feel any emotions whatsoever—including joy but also sadness. We may start to feel depressed and apathetic. Note that sadness and depression are not the same thing! In our society that tends to want to deny "bad" or "negative" feelings, we include sadness in this category—but in fact sadness —like anger, fear, and joy—are all part of the spectrum of human emotions that we are designed to feel. (For more information on Permission to feel, please refer to my Winter 2012 Newsletter) Depression is a function of being in the hypo-arousal state, outside of our window of tolerance for too long.

I see many people who either stay on one side of the window of tolerance or another, or often swing between these two extremes; they are emotionally dis-regulated. Unfortunately I see a lot of all three (hyper and hypo-aroused and fluctuating) of these situations in my practice and when we live most of our days outside of our windows of tolerance our bodies (not to mention minds and spirits!) pay the price.

I need to mention that while we want to avoid moving outside of our window of tolerance, it is important to note that this is a window of tolerance and not a narrow line, meaning there is a range within this area in which we operate. Occasionally we need to mobilize our forces to bring us into a higher state of arousal, if we are responding to a stressful situation like working to meet a deadline, juggling making dinner and watching the kids, engaging in a competitive sport, etc.

At other times we need to invoke a state of relaxation that allows us to slow down, to sit down (even if we have things “to do”), breathe, and enter into a state of calm. This ma be out of necessity as we wait at a red light when we have somewhere to go or sit in a waiting room for an hour before an appointment; or it might be by choice at the end of our work day when we have been in “go mode” and now it is time to slow down and enjoy the pace of being at home, with family in a calmer and more present way without carrying the hurry of the day home with us.

Some people are better able to stay within their window of tolerance to others—they might have been born with more resiliency, their early lives may have been less stressful or traumatic or they might simply not have learned the tools they need to “self-regulate”, which means to stay and move within their windows of tolerance. This also usually means they have wider windows of tolerance, in general, meaning a greater resiliency to a wider range of stressors. New research to support the wonders and miracles of meditation and mindfulness also shows that as we develop those skills and our ability to be present we are then able to recognize when we are moving towards one extreme or the other and then gently invoke some strategies in order to pull ourselves back into “the zone” and also increase the size of our zone.

These arousal states also correspond to the famous Hans Selye’s “General Adaptation Syndrome” which describes the human body’s response to stress. He talks about 1) Alarm State (hyper-arousal), 2) Adaptation State (the window of tolerance, the ability to return to baseline after stressful situations without “crashing”), 3) Exhaustion State (hypo-arousal aka “the crash”).

In the “alarm” state the adrenal glands (small glands on the back wall of our bodies that sit atop the kidneys) produce stress hormones that help us to respond to stress—this is known as the “fight or flight” response. We all know this feeling and some of us all too well! The sweaty palms, the racing heart, the drop in blood sugar that creates an internal “shakiness”. This is a natural response to stress and helps us fight or flee in order to save ourselves from danger. The exhaustion response can come about if we remain in this activated state for too long and we “burn out”. The other way we can enter this phase, though, does not require the alarm state —but rather another type of stress response, less well-known but equally powerful—the “freeze” response. This is akin to the response that animals get when they realize as they run from their pursuer that they might be too small to fight and too slow or tired to flee—and so they freeze (play dead) and shut themselves down. Humans do this too, in their own way.

Some people adopt this strategy over fight or flight as a learned strategy for dealing with stress —they become paralyzed in the face of danger and just “shut down”.

How these stress responses might look in our society:

Someone who invokes the fight version of the stress response might compensate for stress by working harder, over-exercising, pushing themselves (or others) harder to try to manage the stress.

Someone who invokes the flight version of the stress response might procrastinate, shirk responsibilities, watch television, or distract themselves in another way from the impending stress (sort of like the rebel teen).

Someone who invokes the freeze response may do similar things to someone in flight however the freeze response is much more collapsed. There is more exhaustion and less avoidance. Their might be a will to do what needs to be done but there is a fear, paralysis or general lack of motivation behind the inertia.

In a healthy state (the state of adaptation, or being within our window of tolerance), we recognize what needs to be done, we observe our response to the task, we are able to rise to the task of accomplishing our goal in such a way that allows us to remain more or less calm and capable, we are able to know our limits and when to relax first then act, when appropriate.

Okay, so now how do we increase the size of our window of tolerance and learn tools on how to navigate within this window?

For the most part I will save this discussion for Part 2, coming in the Fall newsletter, and leave you with the task of simply creating awareness around your state of being. Observe which of these zones or states you are most often in. Notice what situations pull you into different states. It is important not to judge yourself harshly when you notice yourself reacting in a certain way. New research shows that we do not learn when under the stress invoked by a critic, even when that critic is self. From the literature we see emerging that change occurs best under conditions of compassion and curiosity. This is different than enabling—don't let yourself off the hook but don't beat yourself up either! Hold yourself lovingly and gently to a high standard for yourself.

From my own experience this can be tough to wrap our heads around. I used to use what I call the "iron whip" to motivate myself. Pushing, reprimanding, even punishing myself (either through self-destructive thoughts or self-destructive behaviors like over-work/over-exercise, or some form of over-compensation) to stay "on track" or to get back on when I "fell off".

After learning about mindfulness I discovered my body might actually be telling me it needed something other than what my brain was pushing me to do: perhaps to take a break, rest, put my feet up…

Due to old conditioning and programs this was “laziness” and it has taken some work to overcome this mental chatter that still speaks to me at times. Cultivating what I call “disciplined gentleness” has been the antidote to this “seesaw” behavior between over-and under-pushing. I now know how to notice, listen to and respect myself and as such am able to engage in the actions that keep me healthy.

In the next newsletter I will discuss in a little more detail the affects these three states have on our physical bodies and I will give you some tools for self-regulation (staying within “the zone”) and will also provide you with some “habits of health” that we need to cultivate in our lives in order to repair the damage that has been created in our bodies by living outside “the zone” for so long and those we need to cultivate on a daily basis to assist us with our resiliency, stress response and that will help keep us within this

Reiki Master Kim Lawrence

We love love love having Reiki Master Kim Lawrence at the Cathedral Centre for Wellness! Check out her beautiful offerings!

Upcoming Classes

Dr. Marika Geis ND is pleased to announce an exciting new opportunity to learn about the foundations of naturopathic medicine in the context of your own health at every stage of life. This 9 week exploration into our body's organizing principles, will cover:

1) How stress and nutrition influence hormonal regulation and their impact on menopause and andropause ('man-o-pause') including people looking to grow their families

2) Medical diets and their efficacy for stubborn digestive issues

3) The Gut/Brain/Skin connection as it relates to allergies, eczema, allergies and behavioral issues in children

4) How our immunity is impacted by diet and stress (among other things), the consequences of which can be seen on multiple levels including digestion, memory and concentration

5) Provide an understanding of the elements at play in the aging process

You will not only walk away with a deep understanding of the variables that contribute to chronic disease but have solid framework with which to identify when problems arise and how to effectively mitigate and treat them.

Join me in this fun but powerful exploration into the deeper workings of our bodies. These basic principles have the potential to radically shift how we live and experience our bodies. When you're aligned and feeling your best, there's no limit to what you can accomplish. Carpe diem!

There are a total of 9 classes: 8 of which are listed and the introductory class which is mandatory. The classes are available either as a group of 9 or in 2 or 3 class blocks. Please register as soon as you are able as space is limited. I am so excited to be able to share this information with you. Hope to see you all soon!

Topics:
· Optimizing Fertility
· Enjoying a Healthy Pregnancy
· Pediatric Eczema, Allergies and Asthma
· Stress and Immunity
· Demystifying Digestion and Therapeutic Diets
· Menopause
· Andropause (The Male Menopause)
· Aging Healthfully

Fees:
$300 for all 9 classes
$115 for 3 classes
(the introductory class is included in this fee for a total of 4 classes)
$85 for 2 classes
(the introductory class is included in this fee for a total of 3 classes)

Dates: May 2-june 27th thursdays
Time: 10:30-12:30 pm
Location: 2146 Robinson Street, 2nd floor Boardroom

Gut Health with Dr. Geis ND

Dr. Marika Geis ND will also be offering drop in gut health classes beginning April 23, 2019!

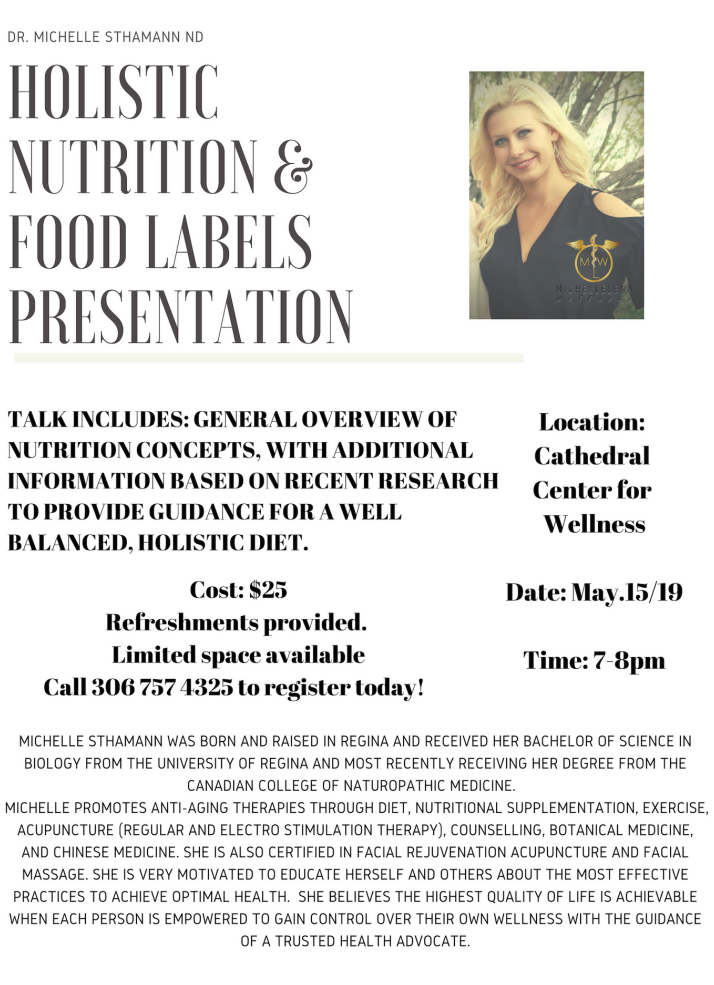
Come by Tuesday evenings from 6-8 pm for more information about gut health!

Upcoming Classes

Join Dr. Michelle Sthamann ND at one of her talks in May!
Limited spots available, please call 306-757-4325 to book your spot!

Date: May 11, 2019
Location: Dads Organic Market
Time: 2-3 pm
Cost: $25

Date: May 15, 2019
Location: Cathedral Centre for Wellness
Time: 7-8 pm
Cost: $25



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Thank you for taking time to read our newsletter and invest in YOU!