THIS EDITION FEATURES:

Produce:

To Cook or Not To Cook?

- Love Your Body
- Lucky Foods to Kick Off the New Year
- How to Set Goals You Can Achieve
- WARNING! Toxic Relationship
Produce: To Cook or Not To Cook?

The raw food fad may have you believing that cooking kills vitamins and minerals in foods, but it turns out that raw isn’t always the healthiest choice. While some fruits and vegetables are better for you raw, some actually become more nutritious when heated. Here’s some information to get you started.

When to cook
Cooking can soften foods that our teeth and digestive system can’t handle. The heat breaks down the plant’s cell walls so the body can absorb more nutrients. Cooking vegetables like carrots, spinach, mushrooms, asparagus, cabbage, and peppers can supply more antioxidants to the body. Cooking tomatoes decreases their vitamin C levels, but increases lycopene, which studies show can lower the risk of cancer and heart attacks. How these vegetables are cooked is vital: boiling, steaming, or roasting is best. Deep-frying destroys antioxidants.

When to go raw
Cooking cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, kale, and radishes can damage their important enzymes and reduce the potency of their benefits. Raw fruits are full of fiber, have a high water content, and can help fill you up.

Bottom line: Eat a variety of fruit and veggies, no matter how they are prepared!

Love Your Body

Let’s face it, most people have something that they would change about their body. But consider how it would feel to accept or maybe even love your body. Appreciating all of its marvelous functions is the first step to feeling better about your body.

Here are a few tips to help build a positive body image:

• Stop comparing yourself to others. Frequent comparing increases negative body image. Your physiology is unique to you.

• Focus on feeling well. Focus on the way physical activity and healthy eating make you feel and also how they benefit you.

• Be grateful for your body. Treat yourself with the respect and care you deserve; the physical transformation will come naturally.

• Don’t feel intimidated at the gym. The gym is for everyone, wherever they are on their personal wellness journey.

Look in the mirror, smile, and be happy with what you see, no matter what you see.
Lucky Foods to Kick Off the New Year

Can foods bring you good luck, prosperity, and health? According to some cultures, they can when eaten at the beginning of a new year. Here’s a list of healthy and possibly lucky foods to eat in 2016.

**Grains** such as rice, quinoa, and barley symbolize abundance.

**Fruit** with seeds, such as pomegranates, stand for prosperity. Figs are a symbol of fertility. In Spain, 12 grapes are eaten at midnight; each sweet grape represents a good month.

**Fish** served with the head and tail intact ensures a good year from start to finish. The Chinese word for “fish” also sounds like abundance.

**Greens** help to bring in the green! It’s believed that the more leafy veggies you eat, including kale, collards, and cabbage, the more prosperous you’ll be.

**Beans** symbolize coins. Black beans, lentils, or black-eyed peas symbolize growing wealth.

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**WARNING!**

**Toxic Relationship**

Did you know that unhappy or stressful relationships can be hazardous to your health? While all relationships have conflict, toxic friends, family members, partners, or even acquaintances can lead to stress, anxiety, depression, and even physical problems.

Here are some healthy ways to deal with the toxic people in your life:

1. **Identify the toxic relationship by answering a few questions:**
   - After spending time with this person, do you feel drained of energy?
   - Is there an equal “give and take,” or are you always giving?
   - Are you comfortable being yourself around this person?
   - Do you feel hurt, taken advantage of, or used?

2. **Believe that you deserve to be treated differently.**
   - Surround yourself with a support system of positive people.
   - Seek insight and assistance from healthy relationships.

3. **Take control of your happiness.**
   - Establish boundaries. Set limits and distance yourself when necessary.
   - Don’t get sucked in. If someone’s behavior is irrational, don’t allow yourself to respond emotionally.

Don’t give a toxic person power over you. Allow your self-worth to come from within.

4. **Signs of a Toxic Person**
   1. Tendency to see the downside
   2. Critical of optimism
   3. Often retelling sad stories
   4. Patronizing attitude
How to Set Goals You Can Achieve

Having goals, whether large or small, is part of what gives us a sense of purpose. Setting goals can help you achieve your best life — but did you know that how you set goals can affect how likely you are to accomplish them? Here are some suggestions to help you follow through.

- **Decide on a direction.** Choose a goal that excites you, but remember that it’s okay to start small.
- **Write it down.** Be specific and use positive terms. For example, “I will be smoke-free by the end of January,” rather than “I want to quit smoking.”
- **Break it down.** Sometimes it helps to set smaller goals that lead to a bigger goal. This keeps you motivated and makes each step easier.
- **Take the first step.** Even if it’s just researching how to get started.
- **Keep going.** Celebrate small successes and, if struggling, adjust goals as necessary. Goals are meant to help you along a path, and it’s important to remain flexible if other opportunities present themselves.

Tips to Help Pay Down Your Debt

When looking to escape debt, it’s easy to get overwhelmed by the wide range of suggestions, options, and products aimed at helping people become debt-free. Here are three popular approaches:

1. **Start small.** Financial author Dave Ramsey recommends listing all debts (except for your house) in order of amount owed, then paying the debts one at a time, from smallest to largest.

2. **Balance transfers.** Banks will actually compete for your debt. They offer very low introductory rates if you move your debt from another bank. If you use this tactic, have a plan for the end of the promotional period when the interest rate will rise.

3. **Personal loans.** Borrow a fixed amount of money at a fixed interest rate for a fixed period of time. This strategy may be useful if you have a good credit score and you won’t be tempted to use the credit cards once their balances are paid by the loan.

**Be aware:** Both balance transfers and personal loans create more available credit, which can either help your credit score or open the door to accumulating even more debt. These options can be helpful only with discipline and a budget.
1. Which of the following is NOT a way to build a positive body image?
   a. Compare yourself to others.
   b. Treat yourself with respect and care.
   c. Focus on how physical activity benefits your body.
   d. Look in the mirror and smile.

2. Which of the following are signs of a toxic relationship?
   a. Time with this person leaves you drained of energy.
   b. You are always giving, and they are always taking.
   c. You are not comfortable to be yourself around this person.
   d. All of the above

3. Choose the statement below that is most true.
   a. Never using credit cards is the only way to become debt-free.
   b. Transferring all balances to a low-interest-rate card is the best way to pay off debt.
   c. A personal loan is always the answer to get out of debt.
   d. There are multiple approaches to paying off debt. Always research which is right for your situation.

Recipe of the Month:
Pomegranate Punch

**Ingredients:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 cup pomegranate juice</th>
<th>Lemon or lime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 1/2 cups seltzer or sparkling water</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Instructions:**

Combine pomegranate juice and seltzer. Stir gently. Garnish with a twist of lemon or lime.

Monthly Quiz:

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