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Hello,
Summer!

Arwen Rasmussen, 715.831.0325
editor@secondopinionmagazine.com

Graphic Design: Brigit Olson | Editor: Becky Streeter

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Poppy Day - Honor and Support Our Veterans

Each year on the Friday before Memorial Day in the United States, members of the American Legion Family hand out small paper or silk poppies for people to wear in honor of our past, current and future veterans. It's celebrated as Poppy Day, and this year it falls on Friday, May 24, 2024.

The origins of Poppy Day come from World War I, specifically starting in France and Belgium. It is believed that the rubble left by the war there enriched the soil with lime, and the poppy flourished during and after the war.



Shortly after seeing the beautiful, bright red flowers on the front line, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, M.D. penned the haunting poem "In Flanders Fields." The poppy soon became a symbol for all the blood shed during the war.

On September 27, 1920, the American Legion began to use the poppy as the official flower to memorialize soldiers from WWI, and then began nationally distributing them in 1924. Today, the flower honors all the living and those who have fallen in service to our country. Your donation helps support the medical and financial needs of all veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families.

Ways to participate in honoring our veterans on Poppy Day:

- Wear a red poppy and explain it to people who ask
- Distribute poppies (see website below for details)
- If you accept a poppy from someone, make a donation
- Collect donations for the Poppy Program (see website below for details)
- Share on social media

Source: American Legion Auxiliary. "National Poppy Day." <https://www.legion-aux.org/national-poppy-day>



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Dementia Risk Factors for Veterans

by Shelley Krupa, Business Operations Coordinator Lake Hallie Memory Care



Is there a connection between a younger veteran's time in the service and their contracting dementia after being discharged? Maybe.

Isn't dementia or Alzheimer's disease an older person's disease? Yes, we know the greatest risk factor for Alzheimer's is being over the age of 65, but every person with a brain is at risk for dementia, at any age.

When a younger veteran is admitted to a memory care facility before they turn 65 years of age, they've no doubt struggled due to an early onset of some type of brain injury-induced dementia.

Veterans are significantly more at risk for a diagnosis of dementia than those who haven't served. What are the risk factors for veterans who served? Traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress, blast-induced neurotrauma, successive concussion syndrome, and depression. A daunting list, right?

Damages to the brain resulting from stresses once a veteran is no longer in service can add up. While depression can linger for years, it often leads to drinking or drugs, damaging the brain even further. Lifestyle risks, plus their in-service risks, compound their brains for contracting dementia as veterans age.

What about their diets? When in service, veterans are fed 3 balanced meals a day, comprised 50% or more of carbohydrates in the 3000-4000 calories/day. Those calories provided the energy needed for daily activities. Once they are out of service, the need for so many calories diminishes.

Any overindulgence in carb-loaded meals and treats for comfort measures adds to the hidden causes of dementia. That slow icing on the cake adds layers to the progression of damage to the brain via a less than healthy diet.

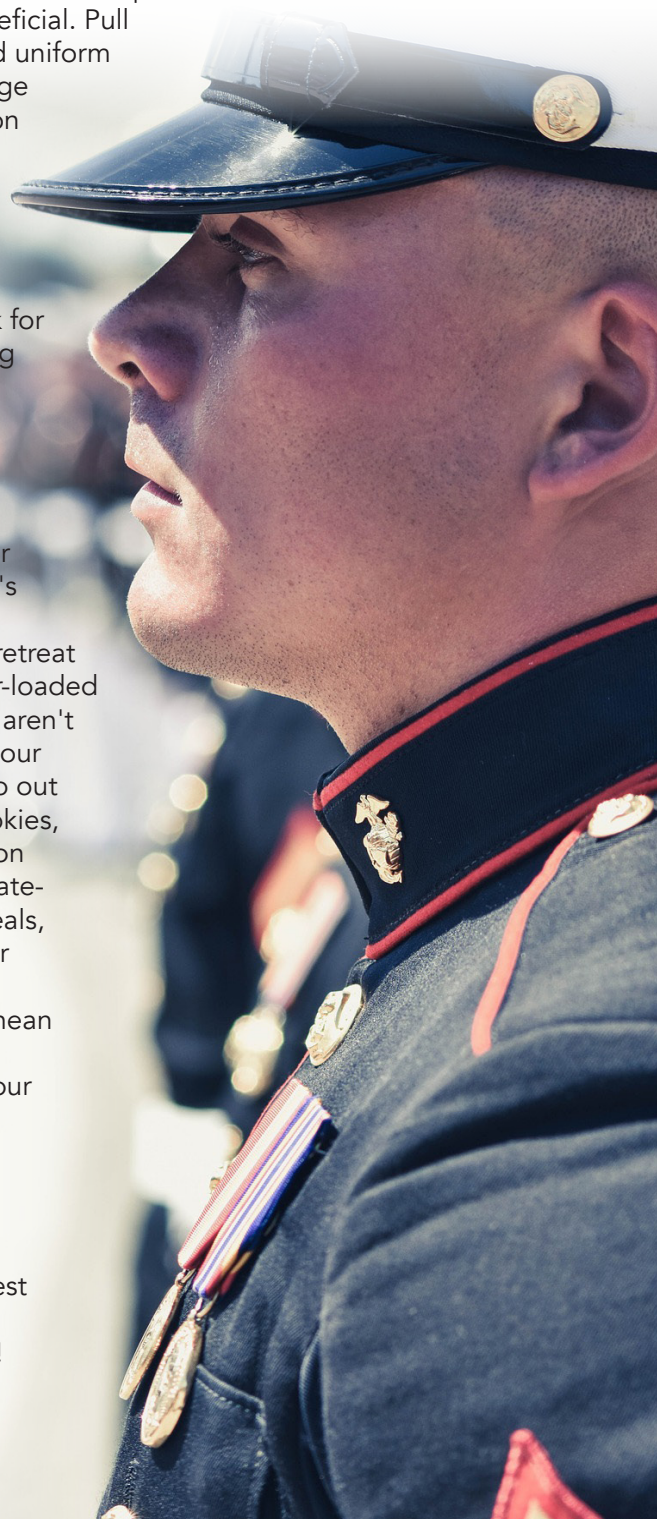
When they are out of service, daily exercise decreases. Coupled with continued eating of sweet treats, many veterans will find the need to loosen up belt buckles around their waistlines.

Those who continue eating a higher calorie and carb-loaded diet, like the standard American diet, will end up adding pounds, causing diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc. These all increase their risk factors of causes for a variety of dementias.

What can veterans do to prevent or help their brains stay healthy for as long as possible after they discharge from service? At the first signs of mild cognitive impairment, seek out a professional evaluation or research Veterans Against Alzheimer's for tips on who to contact.

Protect brain health by enlisting in healthy lifestyle changes. Revive the daily discipline of exercising - a 30-minute brisk walk per day is beneficial. Pull out the old uniform from storage and try it on for size - if it still fits you're on a great track for maintaining a healthy weight. If not, and there's a bulging waistline or a BMI that's growing in numbers, retreat from sugar-loaded treats that aren't good for your brain. Skip out on the cookies, cut down on carbohydrate-loaded meals, switch your meals to a Mediterranean diet, and notice if your symptoms improve.

Be bold, brave, and do your best to protect your brain!





Honoring Our Veterans - Mental Health Awareness

by Stokes, Prock & Mundt Funeral Chapel

As we celebrate the brave men and women who have selflessly served our nation, it's important to recognize not just their physical sacrifices but also their mental well-being. Veterans, with their unwavering dedication and resilience, deserve our utmost gratitude and support, particularly in fostering their mental health. The significance of prioritizing mental well-being among veterans cannot be emphasized enough.

Acknowledging the mental health challenges faced by veterans is essential. The experiences they endure during their service, from combat situations to the stress of deployments, can leave profound emotional scars. However, it's crucial to emphasize that seeking help is not a sign of weakness but rather a testament to their strength and courage. By openly discussing mental health and eradicating the stigma associated with it, veterans can feel empowered to seek the assistance they deserve.

One of the most uplifting aspects of supporting veterans' mental health is witnessing the transformation it brings. With access to proper resources and compassionate care, veterans can embark on a journey of healing and restoration. Through therapy, peer support groups, and community outreach programs, they find solace in knowing they are not alone in their struggles. Moreover, as they navigate their mental health challenges, veterans often discover newfound resilience and inner strength, paving the way for a brighter future.

Prioritizing veterans' mental health yields significant benefits not only for the individuals themselves but also for society as a whole. When veterans receive the support they need to overcome mental health obstacles, they can fully reintegrate into civilian life and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Whether pursuing careers, further education, or volunteering opportunities, mentally healthy veterans enrich society with their unique skills, experiences, and perspectives.

Investing in veterans' mental health fosters a culture of gratitude and respect, wherein their sacrifices are honored and their well-being prioritized. By advocating for comprehensive mental health services tailored to veterans' needs, we demonstrate our unwavering commitment to those who have served our nation with valor and dedication. This commitment extends beyond mere words of thanks—it entails tangible actions aimed at ensuring veterans lead fulfilling lives long after their military service has ended.

It's essential to recognize the resilience and strength inherent in the veteran community. Time and again, veterans have demonstrated their ability to overcome adversity and thrive in the face of challenges. By harnessing the power of this brotherhood and sisterhood, leaning on each other, and promoting a positive mindset, veterans can conquer mental health obstacles and emerge stronger than ever before.

Through resilience-building activities, such as physical fitness, mindfulness practices, and creative outlets, veterans cultivate the skills needed to navigate life's ups and downs with grace and perseverance.

Honoring veterans entails more than just celebrating their service on designated holidays; it involves championing their mental health and well-being every day. We must foster a culture of support, understanding, and compassion, so that we can empower veterans to confront their mental health challenges. Together, let us stand in solidarity with our veterans, recognizing the importance of mental health and ensuring they receive the care and support they deserve. Through our collective efforts, we can create a brighter future where veterans thrive, embodying the true spirit of resilience and perseverance.

At Stokes, Prock & Mundt Funeral Chapel and Cremation Society of Wisconsin, we are proud to support our veterans in any way that we can—past, present and future.





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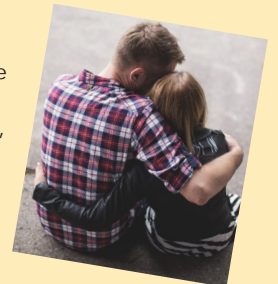
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For more information on the application process, or to make a monetary donation to this 501(c)3 non-profit organization, please visit www.helpfulheartswi.org.



**Helpful Hearts
Foundation**



Unlikely Recruits - Hope for Veterans Haunted by PTSD

By Becky Streecher

Toni Mattson, co-founder of Trinity Equestrian Center in Eau Claire, recently released her first book titled *Unlikely Recruits: How God Enlists Horses to Heal Veterans*. *Unlikely Recruits* is compiled of 20 very true and very personal stories, all meant to provide hope to veterans. "I've had an astounding front-row seat," says Mattson, "to witness and participate in the miraculous changes realized by these brave, but broken veterans. Stories about hope and healing, grace and redemption, and the often agonizing journey that paves the groundwork for their personal transformation and triumph."

When veterans arrive at Trinity, they are often there as a last resort. The heroes that show up there have all but given up. And then they meet the horses. "Veterans often readily trust the horse," Mattson says. "The horse doesn't judge them and won't lie to them—none of the things humans tend to do." Veterans easily form a connection and relationship with their horse, and from that foundation, the Trinity team can begin to help the veteran maneuver the process of healing.

Unlikely Recruits is not only about the trials of the veterans, but more importantly about their triumphs. "These are the accounts of the hell they went and continue to go through, but also the amazing story of their victory," Mattson says. "The stories are really about what happens when veterans are courageous enough to say they need help, and that they are willing to step into that journey."

Stories like Duncan, a 43-year-old, four-time deployed Army veteran, struggling with haunting nightmares and survivor's guilt



about not being able to save his best friend, Karl, while in battle. After working with his horse for 11 weeks, the staff tried a new tactic with a game called Keep Out. No matter what Duncan did, he could not keep his horse away from the food it wanted. During this exercise, he finally realized the truth: his friend Karl had an addiction to adrenaline and it caused him to do dangerous and irresponsible things. Duncan finally accepted that what happened to Karl wasn't his fault, and after more therapy with Trinity's horses, Duncan's nightmares subsided and he felt some peace about his past.

Through *Unlikely Recruits*, Mattson wanted to give veterans like Duncan a voice, and in so doing, give other veterans hope. "I wanted to give them proof to see that this is real," she says. "And show them it's possible to find healing, experience it, feel it, be restored and redeemed—everything they say they so badly need."

For more information, visit Mattson's website at Tonimattson.com. *Unlikely Recruits* can be purchased from Amazon, and proceeds go to support the Veteran Wellness Program at Trinity Equestrian Center. All programs are always free to veterans and their families.



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Healing Companions: The Bond Between Animals and Veterans

The bond between animals and humans is a remarkable phenomenon that transcends species boundaries. Nowhere is this bond more evident and transformative than in the relationship between animals and military veterans. Across the globe, organizations are harnessing the power of this connection to provide invaluable support and companionship to those who have served their countries. From service dogs to therapeutic horseback riding, these initiatives are making a profound difference in the lives of veterans, offering hope, healing, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Service dogs are perhaps the most well-known and widely utilized form of animal assistance for veterans. These specially trained canines provide a range of services tailored to meet the unique needs of their handlers. For veterans coping with physical disabilities, such as mobility issues or loss of limb, service dogs offer practical assistance with tasks like retrieving objects, opening doors, and providing stability while walking. For those struggling with invisible wounds, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI), service dogs provide emotional support and a sense of security, helping to mitigate symptoms and improve overall well-being.

The impact of service dogs on veterans' lives is profound and multifaceted.

Beyond their practical assistance, these canine companions provide unconditional love and companionship, helping veterans to feel less isolated and more connected to the world around them. Studies have shown that interactions with animals can reduce feelings of anxiety, depression, and loneliness, while also promoting relaxation and stress relief. For veterans navigating the challenges of reintegration into civilian life, the presence of a loyal and devoted service dog can make all the difference, providing a source of comfort and stability during times of transition.

In addition to service dogs, other animal-assisted therapies are also gaining recognition as effective interventions for veterans' mental and emotional well-being. Equine therapy, for example, involves interactions with horses under the guidance of trained professionals and has been shown to be particularly beneficial for veterans with PTSD and other trauma-related conditions. Through activities such as grooming, feeding, and riding horses, veterans can develop trust, confidence, and self-awareness, while also learning valuable coping skills and emotional regulation techniques.

Similarly, programs that pair veterans with shelter animals for companionship and support are gaining popularity as a means of promoting mutual healing and rehabilitation. These initiatives not only provide much-needed homes for animals in need, but also offer veterans a sense of purpose and responsibility as they care for and bond with their animal companions. The unconditional love and acceptance offered by these animals can be a powerful antidote to feelings of isolation and despair, helping veterans to reconnect with themselves and the world around them.

In conclusion, the bond between animals and veterans is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the healing power of connection. Whether through service dogs, equine therapy, or other animal-assisted interventions, these initiatives are providing invaluable support and companionship to those who have served their countries.

As we honor the sacrifices of veterans around the world, let us also recognize the profound impact that animals can have on their lives and the potential for healing that exists within these unique and special relationships.



Reiki for Trauma

By Sandi Anderson RM CHTr



Jack, retired plumber and father of four, served in the navy with the Sea Bees during the 1950's and was in Korea during the war. Jack came home with physical scars as well as invisible scars. His hyper-vigilance and re-occurring bad memories made it hard to connect with loved ones.

After his years of service, Jack built his own business as a plumber. He was up early, out late, and working multiple jobs a long way from home, which meant driving when tired. The years of long days, short nights, poor diet, and lots of coffee took a toll on his mental and physical health and personal life: diabetes, weight gain, irritability, heart attack and several divorces.

While driving home after a very long day and week, Jack fell asleep at the wheel and rolled his truck. He was hospitalized with multiple injuries, and surgery was needed for his wrist and hand. The accident triggered his hyper-vigilance, war memories, depression, high blood pressure, and insomnia.

One of his adult daughters, a Reiki Master, suggested that Reiki could help him. A Japanese healing technique, Reiki uses the laying of hands on or just above the body to promote relaxation, reduce stress, and promote healing on the physical, emotional and spiritual levels. The practice has been used to help individuals who survived trauma.

During his first session with a certified Reiki practitioner, Jack lay comfortably on a massage table while the practitioner gently placed their hands on or above different areas of his body, with intentions of releasing blocked energy and promoting balance and harmony. Jack was surprised. He felt a growing sense of calm and relaxation as the Reiki energy moved through his body. His worried thoughts and feeling slowed down, and he felt peaceful. As his session continued, Jack noted his pain level improved as well.

Jack thanked his daughter for her persistent encouragement to try something new. After one Reiki session, the biggest improvement Jack noticed was that he slept better and through the night. He continued to receive regular Reiki sessions, along with PT for his hand and wrist. Over time, his hyper-vigilance and stress levels decreased, improving his sense of well-being and peace, and he recovered from surgery faster than expected. He developed greater appreciation of life.

Reiki promotes healing from the outside in and reminds the body how to feel calm again. During a flight, fight, or freeze response, emotions that assist a person through a traumatic experience are often buried. Reiki gently helps to release those trapped emotions and free people from their trauma.

Reiki is a complementary therapy and should not be used as a substitute for professional medical or psychiatric care. Those interested in adding Reiki to their wellness plan should consult a qualified Reiki practitioner and work together with their health care team.

Additional Resources:

- * Reiki for Mental Health: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9326483/>
- * Reiki and Post - Traumatic Stress Disorder: <https://www.reiki.org/articles-and-post-traumatic-stress-disorder>
- * University of Minnesota: takingcharge.csh.umn.edu

Sandra Anderson R.M.,CHTr.,Cht., LUT: Intuitive Life & Soul Coach, Integrative Energy Healer, Spiritual Guide and Medium. Professional Reiki III, certified in other modalities that can help trauma. Serving the Chippewa Valley over 29 years. My work: Empowering you to become your best. sandi-anderson.com



We ARE Nature

By Ann Brand



Here's the deal: we are nature. - Sebene Selassie

With spring emerging in the Chippewa Valley, our hearts and minds turn outdoors. With warming temperatures and budding trees, we begin to come out from our winter hibernation. Time to get outside and get back into nature!

The truth is, we are not separate from nature. It isn't so much that we need to get back into nature, but rather remind ourselves that we are part of nature, just like the lakes, trees, soil, and birds. While it is certainly easier and more comfortable to do this when the temperatures are warmer, we can remind ourselves of this at any time of year through our mindfulness practice.

When we drop our awareness into the breath and the body, which are always in the present moment, we reconnect with the same natural elements that are part of us and all of nature.

Earth: Just like trees are rooted in the ground and mountains emerge from the earth, we can feel the steadiness of gravity holding our bodies in place. We can notice the density of muscles and bones in the body, and feel our feet connected to the earth with each step.

Water: We can notice flowing and gurgling within the body, just like a stream flows and gurgles. The water that makes up 60% of our body is the same as the water element that flows in the Eau Claire River.

Fire: As the temperatures outside warm and cool, so do our bodies. We can notice changes in the temperature of the body when we sit in the sun and when we take a dip in the lake.

Air: Sitting with our attention on the sensation of the breath moving in and out of our bodies reminds us that the air around us is the same as the air inside us. Just like trees and plants take in carbon dioxide and water, and release oxygen through photosynthesis, we take in oxygen and release carbon dioxide with each breath.

This spring, we can take this awareness of our elemental nature from our meditation cushion outside to be reminded that we are nature. Nature is always in the present moment. When we notice the elements of earth, water, fire, and air both internally and externally, we are also in the present moment where our lives are actually happening and we can engage with joy and gratitude.



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Fresh, Premium Beef from DZ Wagyu By Becky Streeter

After 35 years of dairy farming, Bloomer-based farmer Doug Zwiefelhofer decided it was time to retire. Like many small dairy farms these days, it was a lot of work without a lot of return. But Doug loved the cows, and he wanted to continue working with cattle in some capacity. Then his son suggested using their dairy heifers to create an elite beef farm, and in 2017, they established DZ Wagyu.

The transition from dairy farming to raising Wagyu became a family affair. Doug and Patty's son Eric and his wife Miranda were/are instrumental to the project with their reproductive knowledge and technical skills gained from their PhD research at the University of Saskatchewan. Doug works with the heifers from insemination to the birth of the calves, and then cares for the cattle until it's time for processing. And his wife, Patty, a retired math teacher, took on the business of marketing the beef to the public.

Wagyu are a Japanese beef cattle breed. According to the American Wagyu Association, "Wagyu were originally draft animals used in agriculture, and were selected for their physical endurance. This selection favored animals with more intramuscular fat cells – 'marbling'...The unique taste and tenderness of highly marbled Wagyu beef makes for an unrivaled eating experience... Wagyu beef naturally contains a higher percentage of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids than typical beef. Not only will consumers enjoy the extraordinary quality of Wagyu beef, but it's heart healthy as well."

Wagyu cattle are classified by their ancestry. F1 means 50% Wagyu by DNA, F2 is 75%, etc. According to Patty Zwiefelhofer, beef advertised as 'Wagyu' in grocery stores and restaurants is often only 50% Wagyu DNA, unless otherwise indicated. Patty states, "Over 30 animals on our farm are 100% (fullblood) Wagyu beef, which means cattle whose DNA is traceable to Japanese native breeds." The

Zwiefelhofers also share pedigree information for all the DZ Wagyu beef they sell, so the customer knows exactly what they purchase.

Doug is hands-on for the entire process. He helps inseminate and then flush embryos from a donor animal. His son, Eric checks for viability, and then places embryos in surrogate females who will carry the pregnancy. Doug's favorite part is after the calves are born. "I love animal husbandry - breeding and caring for farm animals," he says. "Seeing God's creatures being born, caring for the new calves and helping them thrive. Watching the cow/calf pair running in the pasture together and witnessing the bond between the two animals. That is the best part."



The calves are pasture-raised and grass-fed for 27-30 months, much longer than 18-20 months for an Angus steer. About three to four months before processing, they come off pasture and are fed a high energy diet to enhance marbling and flavor of the meat. Occasionally, this is a sad time for Doug who has grown attached to a few special animals, and he has to remind himself that this is the cycle of life.

It's because of the care and dedication of the Zwiefelhofers from start to finish that people are starting to rave about DZ Wagyu. They partner with Wilson Creek Inn in Menomonie and have had great success. Online sales are increasing. Patty says, "We've been told by the processor that our steers are some of the finest Wagyu they've seen. I love hearing customers say it's the best beef they've ever tasted. And because our Wagyu is pasture-raised and grain-finished on a local farm using existing facilities, it's probably more affordable than people might think."

To learn more about DZ Wagyu, or to start an order, visit www.dzwagyu.com.





Summer Adventures and Your Pet By Ruff Life Pet Hotel

As summer approaches, many of us pet owners have travel plans to places that do not allow our furry companions to join us. So what do you do? How about having your pet take a vacation, too! Boarding facilities are a convenient, safe, and fun option for your puppy while you're away. However, preparing your puppy for boarding requires some forethought and planning to ensure their comfort and safety.

Here are some tips to help make the boarding experience as smooth as possible for both puppy and you:

1. Start Early: Introduce your puppy to the boarding facility well in advance of your trip. This allows them to become familiar with the environment, staff, and routine, reducing anxiety on the day of drop-off. Consider scheduling a few short visits, even just a few hours, leading up to your departure to acclimate your puppy to the facility gradually.

2. Vaccinations and Health Checks: Make sure your puppy is up-to-date on vaccinations and has received any necessary preventative treatments, such as flea and tick prevention. Most boarding facilities require proof of vaccinations that can include rabies, distemper, and Bordetella to ensure the health and safety of all guests. Schedule a vet check-up before boarding to confirm your puppy is in good health and free from any contagious illnesses.

3. Pack Comforts from Home: Bring along familiar items from home, such as your puppy's blanket, favorite toys, and a piece of clothing with your scent on it. These familiar scents and objects can provide comfort and reassurance to your puppy in an unfamiliar environment, helping them feel more at ease during their stay.


4. Provide Detailed Instructions: Communicate your puppy's routine, dietary preferences, and any special needs or medications to the boarding staff. Providing clear instructions to ensure that your puppy's needs are met helps maintain consistent care while you're away. Additional tip, this is not the time to switch their food as changing could give them an upset tummy on top of any nervousness they may have.

5. Stay Calm and Positive: Dogs are highly attuned to your emotions, so it's very important to remain calm and positive when dropping off your puppy at the boarding facility. Reassure them with a confident and cheerful demeanor that they will be ok and you will be back for them. Avoid lingering or making a dramatic exit, as this can increase your puppy's anxiety.

6. Stay Connected: Some boarding facilities offer amenities such as live webcams or regular updates via email, text message, and/or social media. Take advantage of these options to stay connected with your puppy and alleviate any worries you may have about their well-being while you're away.

7. Take Time: When you return, take some time to provide plenty of affection and attention to your puppy. Be patient and understanding if your puppy exhibits any signs of stress or anxiety following their boarding experience, and give them time to readjust to being back home.

By following these tips and taking proactive steps to prepare your puppy for boarding, you can help ensure a positive, stress-free, and fun experience for both you and your furry friend. With the right preparation and care, boarding can be a safe and enjoyable option for keeping your puppy happy and well-cared for while you enjoy your summer adventures.



BRING BACK THE BEES!

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SPRING	THRIFT Ameria maritima	CRANESBILL Geranium macrorrhizum	CHIVES Allium schoenoprasum
	EARLY SUMMER	LUPIN Lupinus polyphyllus	ROSE Rosa
HIGH SUMMER	LAVENDER Lavandula angustifolia	GOLDENROD Solidago Canadensis	FENNEL Foeniculum Vulgare
LATE SUMMER	SUNFLOWER Helianthus annuus	VERBENA Verbena bonariensis	BLACK EYED SUSAN Rudbeckia

48% OF HONEYBEE COLONIES IN THE UNITED STATES DIED FROM APRIL 2022 - APRIL 2023*
*Source: beeinformed.org



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Fresh Is Best for Your Pet By Becky Streecher

Many dog and cat owners love their pets so much they consider them to be members of the family. We buy them Christmas and birthday presents (some of us even wrap them!). We let them snuggle on our couches and in our beds at night. And sure, they might not sit at the dinner table with us and use a fork and knife to eat, but they do deserve to eat a high-quality, nutritious diet, just like we do. Fresh Is Best is a Milwaukee-based pet food company committed to helping pets live healthy, long lives through whole fresh foods diets.

Stacy La Point, owner and founder of Fresh Is Best, is passionate about providing species-appropriate food for your truest companion. Stacy says, "The most frequent feedback I hear from customers is they are as concerned about the quality of their pet food as they are for their own food. This is the standard we use with our products."

Regular kibble is packed with carbohydrates, fillers and artificial flavors, none of which are natural for dogs and cats. According to Stacy, "When we feed dry food to pets, heavy in starch and carbohydrates, it robs their body of moisture. They have to drink water from a bowl, but they often don't have the patience or energy to drink until they are fully hydrated. Because of this, they can end up with chronic ailments." A diet of simply kibble alone can lead to a myriad of health concerns including obesity, allergic reactions, digestive illness, diabetes, dental issues, and renal failure.

A raw foods diet, on the other hand, can be extremely beneficial for pets. Owners report seeing weight loss in overweight pets, increased muscle mass, reduced behavioral problems if caused from allergies, elimination of allergy symptoms including GI troubles and hot spots on skin, fresher smelling coats and breath, and a strengthened immune system.



Fresh Is Best has been producing human-quality, raw, grain-free, natural pet food since it opened in 2001. All recipes meet or exceed the accepted nutritional profiles for dogs and cats as determined by the Association of Animal Feed Control Officials (AAFCO). Fresh Is Best dog food consists of approximately 80% meat and 20% vegetables, and their cat food is 90% meat and 10% vegetables. They use only humanely raised meat that is USDA grass-fed, cage-free, antibiotic-free and/or wild-harvested. None of their food contains grains, white potatoes, peas, legumes, flour, or starches of any kind. It is simple, natural and healthy.

Fresh Is Best aims to deliver the freshest products possible. Recipes are slowly freeze-dried and then quickly packaged using high oxygen barrier bags to preserve maximum nutrition and freshness. They are shipped almost immediately after packaging. "We maintain small batches and don't warehouse anything," Stacy says. "When you buy from our website, you are getting the most recent batch, and our quality control is impeccable. The point is to preserve our products in a high-quality way and get it from farm to bowl as quickly as we can."

TT
#1 Quality Assurance

Stacy understands fresh food can get expensive. One of her favorite things about her business is speaking with customers and "helping educate people to find a food that works for their pets and their budget." Fresh Is Best offers full meal options, meal toppers and treats that can double as meal supplements. Stacy's number one goal is to get your pet on a track for a healthier diet and help them live their best lives in the freshest way.

To learn more about or order products directly from Fresh Is Best, visit freshisbest.com.

Stacy
(Our Mom)

Minnow
#1 Chief Taster



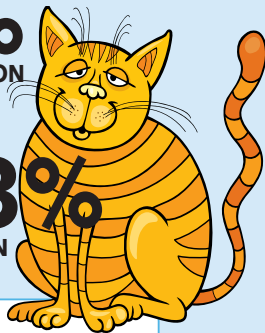
The SKINNY on PET OBESITY

FAT PETS ARE NOTHING TO TAKE LIGHTLY



The percentage of dogs and cats in the U.S. that are overweight or obese.*

52.5%
OF POPULATION



58.3%
OF POPULATION

Did you know?

Weight loss for our feline friends is more complicated than it is for dogs or people. **Never put your cat on a diet without veterinary supervision**—you could actually endanger his health.

DOGS



How many extra pounds does it take to put your pet at risk for developing serious medical conditions?*

CATS



45%

of pet owners incorrectly identified their pets as being a normal weight.*

Transition your pet to a new diet over a two-week period



Days 1-4:

1/4 new food
3/4 old food

Days 5-8:

1/2 new food
1/2 old food

Days 9-13:

3/4 new food
1/4 old food

Day 14:

100% new food

Overweight pets are more prone to:

Diabetes

Arthritis

Kidney disease

ACL injury

Shorter life



4x

Overweight cats are 4 times more likely to develop diabetes.*

*Source: Association for Pet Obesity Prevention

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Local Company!

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Perfect Clean 2-in-1 Scalp Scrub & Clarifying Shampoo

A limited scent from the brand's best-selling Scalp Scrub. This gentle foaming sugar scrub with probiotic-rich sake water gently removes product build-up and environmental impurities to reveal a healthy scalp and immensely shiny hair. Color Safe. naturelab.com

02 | CTZN COSMETICS
Lip Stroke Lip Liner

A high-intensity, long-lasting vegan lip liner with major color payoff, long durability, and a velvety texture and finish to correspond with your perfect shade of nude. Available in 14 shades. It can also be used to contour your lips but is also pigmented enough to cover your entire lip as a replacement for lipstick. ctzncosmetics.com

03 | FLORASIS
Blooming Rouge Love Lock Lipstick

An exceptionally soft matte lipstick that contains silk oil that gently evaporates, leaving a soft, non-sticky finish. Formulated with a hydrophobic microsphere, this lipstick smoothes lips, minimizes lip lines, and resists transfer even when drinking. florasis.com

04 | BLK+GRN
Sade Baron Moi Beauty Balm - has a delicate, sweet smell and prevents roughness while replenishing moisture. Luv + Co. Mascara - you only need 1-2 coats of this deep black mascara to get that striking, fuller, thicker lashes look of faux lashes. Eve Milan New York - The Lacial Masque - restores and strengthens the skin's barrier to prevent wrinkles, irritation, and breakouts. Great for all skin types. blkgrn.com

05 | SALWA PETERSEN
Chébé Wash Day Essentials

The key ingredient is their 100% natural ChébéBond™ Complex formulated with an ancestral variety of organic Chébé seeds, exclusively grown on their regenerative farm in Chad. Their complex is clinically proven to promote stronger, longer, and softer curly, kinky, coily and wavy hair. salwapetersen.com

06 | GOOD ASS HAIR DAY
Dry Shampoos

Extend the life of your hair between washes with this natural dry shampoo - a powder substance that is used to soak up oil and dirt on the scalp to freshen hair. They utilize all-natural ingredients and are benzene, silica, and aerosol free. They are an Eau Claire, Wisconsin based small business! goodassday.com

07 | TESTAMENT BEAUTY
Turkish Coffee 3-in-1 Mask

This triple action scrub-mask-moisturizer resurfaces, tightens and hydrates the skin. Formulated with Arabica coffee seeds (ground into a delicate powder), skin-nourishing avocado oil, antioxidant-packed cacao and a garden-grown blend of anti-inflammatory botanicals. testamentbeauty.com

08 | TOUCHLAND
Hand Sanitizer

Designed to calm and soothe dry and dull skin. This hypoallergenic hand sanitizer helps soothe the stressed skin and strengthen the skin's moisture barrier for a healthier-looking, more hydrated complexion. touchland.com

Joyce Sobotta
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BLK + GRN Celebrates Health

BLK + GRN is a marketplace for Black-owned natural beauty, wellness, and lifestyle products. Founded by Dr. Kristian Henderson, a public health professor, the platform was born out of a desire to address the lack of representation and access to natural products for people of color. Dr. Henderson recognized the importance of supporting Black-owned businesses and promoting products that are safe, non-toxic, and effective.

The platform is a celebration of Black entrepreneurship and aims to empower consumers to make informed choices about the products they use in their daily lives. BLK + GRN carefully curates its selection, ensuring that every product meets high standards of quality, sustainability, and ethical sourcing. From skincare and haircare to home goods and wellness products, each item is crafted with care and consideration.

BLK + GRN is more than just a marketplace; it's a community. Through its blog, social media channels, and events, the platform fosters connections between consumers and brands, sparking conversations about natural living, self-care, and entrepreneurship. By highlighting the stories

behind the products and the people who create them, BLK + GRN seeks to inspire and uplift.

At its core, BLK + GRN is driven by a commitment to social and environmental justice. The platform champions diversity, equity, and inclusion, both within the beauty and wellness industries and beyond. By amplifying the voices of Black artisans and entrepreneurs, BLK + GRN challenges the status quo and promotes a more inclusive vision of beauty and wellness.

As a marketplace, BLK + GRN offers consumers the opportunity to support Black-owned businesses and invest in products that align with their values. Whether you're looking for clean beauty products, sustainable home goods, or holistic wellness solutions, BLK + GRN provides a curated selection of products that prioritize your health, your community, and the planet.



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Fun Guy Farm Fresh Mushrooms and How to Cook Them

By Becky Streeeter

Spring is here, and that means it's mushroom time! (Although, it's always mushroom time at Fun Guy Farm.) With the warmer weather, we tend to gravitate towards fresher meals. Whether you are a mushroom aficionado or not, there are many ways to prepare and cook fresh mushrooms, and Steve Scholtz at Fun Guy Farm has the scoop.

"The methods of cooking mushrooms vary from a simple sauté or stir fry to more elaborate dishes such as lion's mane mushroom 'crab' cakes," Scholtz says. "Most mushrooms will absorb the flavor of the seasonings and other items they are cooked with and impart a wonderful umami flavor to the dish."

Here are some great ways to cook a few popular mushrooms:

Lion's Mane - Can be made into "steak" by a quick dry fry without oil, giving it a firmer texture. It is also a great seafood replacement.

King Trumpet - Can be marinated before grilling, crosscut to make a faux scallop, or shredded and barbecued to make a great pulled mushroom sandwich.

Black Pearls - Have a meaty stem that can be a nice tofu replacement. Like King Trumpet, Black Pearls are wonderful meat replacements for those looking to eat a more plant-based diet, even though mushrooms are not plants.

When cooking, keep the temperature in mind. "Mushrooms need to be cooked to 160 F to break down the cellular walls so our bodies can absorb the nutrients," says Scholtz. "However, temperatures over 190 F can diminish some of the medicinal compounds found in the mushrooms."

Being located in a warehouse, Fun Guy Farm has the ability to grow any mushroom at any time of the year, but they do like to rotate in some seasonal varieties that grow naturally in warmer climates, such as pink and golden oyster mushrooms—watch for these beauties at farmers markets! And for those looking to start their own outdoor mushroom beds, keep an eye out for their almond agaricus and wine cap spawn.

To purchase fresh mushrooms, visit Fun Guy Farm on Western Ave in Eau Claire. And soon you can also find them, along with lots of other great fresh foods, at the following markets:

Eau Claire Downtown Farmers Market
Menomonie Farmer Market
Chippewa Falls Festival Foods Farmers Market
The Country Lane Market in Barron, WI



Try this recipe:

Sauté mushrooms and finish them off with heavy whipping cream and parmesan cheese. This makes a delicious mushroom cream sauce that can be enjoyed over pasta, risotto, or any meat.

Sleep for Parents

For new parents, sleep can feel like a rare and precious commodity, especially with a newborn in the house. The arrival of a new baby brings boundless joy, but it also introduces a new set of challenges, one of the most significant being the disruption of sleep patterns. However, with patience, support, and some practical strategies, parents can find ways to catch those much-needed Z's, even with a little one in tow.

First and foremost, accept help when it's offered. Whether it's a partner, family member, or friend, having someone else take over baby duty for a few hours can provide invaluable relief. This allows you to sneak in a nap or get a solid block of uninterrupted sleep, helping to recharge batteries and cope with the demands of caring for a newborn.

Creating a comfortable sleep environment can also make a big difference. Parents should prioritize rest when the baby sleeps, even if it means letting go of other tasks or responsibilities. Setting up a cozy sleep space with soft bedding, dim lighting, and white noise can help promote relaxation and encourage better sleep quality, even if it's just for a short nap.

For your newborn, establishing a bedtime routine can help signal to the baby that it's time to wind down. This could include activities like a warm bath, gentle massage, or reading a bedtime story. Consistency is key, as babies thrive on routine and predictability. Over time, this routine can help regulate the baby's sleep patterns, allowing the whole house to get more restful and needed sleep.

It's also important for parents to prioritize self-care during this challenging time. Eating nutritious meals, staying hydrated, and finding moments for relaxation can all contribute to overall well-being and better sleep. Taking short breaks throughout the day, even if it's just to enjoy a cup of tea or take a few deep breaths, can help everyone recharge and tackle the demands of parenthood with renewed energy.

In addition to physical self-care, it's crucial to address emotional needs as well. Adjusting to life with a new baby can be overwhelming, and it's normal to experience a range of emotions, from joy and excitement to frustration and exhaustion.

Seeking support from loved ones, joining a new baby group, or talking to a therapist can provide a safe space to share feelings and receive validation and encouragement.



Finally, it's important to remember that the newborn phase is just that—a phase. While it may feel like sleepless nights will last forever, babies grow and develop quickly, and their sleep patterns will eventually become more predictable. In the meantime, the family can take comfort in knowing that they are not alone and that there is support available to help them navigate this challenging but rewarding journey. With patience, perseverance, and a little creativity, parents can find ways to prioritize their sleep and well-being while caring for their precious new bundle of joy.

If you are a parent who would like support and education, the APPLE Pregnancy Care Center is here to help. Please call us at 715-834-5254 for more information. You're not alone!

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SLEEP & MENTAL HEALTH

50 to 70 million adults in the United States alone suffer from sleep disorders like insomnia, hypersomnia, sleep apnea, and narcolepsy. Insomnia is the most common sleep disorder, with 30% of adults experiencing short-term insomnia. About 10% of people have long-lasting insomnia.

75% of depressed people show signs of insomnia. Nearly half of young adults with diagnosed depression also suffer from sleep issues

56% of US residents suffered from sleep problems in 2021; nearly a third of participants were classified as having insomnia.

66.4 MILLION people in the United States suffer from anxiety, with twice as many women as men

450 MILLION people worldwide suffer from mental health issues.

ANXIETY

Excessive night-time worry can create a negative feedback loop that can trigger sleeplessness. Anxiety can make these loops worse, and cause distressing dreams.

DEPRESSION

There is a clear bidirectional relationship connecting sleep and depression. Studies have shown that treating sleep problems can **PREVENT** depression.

Suicidal Ideation

Poor sleep has been linked to an increased risk of suicidal ideation and behavior. Studies have found that individuals with insomnia are more likely to report suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts.

TRAUMA

One of the first signs of PTSD is sleep disturbances which can include insomnia, nightmares and fractured REM sleep. Studies have shown that behavioral therapies are **more** effective than medication for PTSD.



WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- 👉 **Make your bedroom sleep friendly.** Sleep in a cool, quiet, dark place. Avoid TV or electronic devices, as the light from these sources can disrupt your sleep-wake cycle.
- 👉 **Go to sleep** and wake up around the same time each day, even on the weekends.
- 👉 **Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol** close to your bedtime. Although alcohol can make it easier to fall asleep, it can cause you to have a sleep that tends to be lighter than normal. This makes it more likely that you will wake up during the night.
- 👉 **Get regular physical activity during the daytime**, at least 5 to 6 hours before going to bed. Exercising close to bedtime can make it harder to fall asleep. Avoid naps, especially in the afternoon. This may help you sleep longer at night. Eat meals on a regular schedule and avoid late-night dinners.
- 👉 **Manage stress.** Follow a routine that helps you wind down and relax before bed. I.E. read a book, listen to soothing music, or take a hot bath. Your doctor may also recommend massage therapy, meditation, or yoga to help you relax.
- 👉 **Acupuncture** may also help improve insomnia, especially in older adults.
- 👉 **Avoid certain over-the-counter and prescription medicines** that can disrupt sleep (i.e., cold and allergy medicines).

How to Use Cannabis for Better Sleep By Becky Streeter

Most people have problems falling and/or staying asleep at some point in their lives. Stress and anxiety can stem from life situations, pain and inflammation, even digestion. Whatever stressor is keeping you up at night, Chris Buske, owner of Wonders of Nature in Eau Claire, believes that CBD and THC might help you get back on track.

Often, people suffering with sleep problems have likely and unknowingly trained their own bodies to be in a constant state of fight or flight. According to Buske, "Sleep issues may be a warning sign or symptom that a person's autonomic nervous system has been conditioned from day-to-day life or traumas to be hyper-alert. When that happens, we can't just easily shut it off and go to sleep." That is where CBD can come into play.

CBD provides a general sense of well-being and may help reset the body's stress response. Chronic stress can cause weakened immune system, susceptibility to autoimmune disorders, cardiovascular stress, indigestion, and mental health concerns. "If we use CBD daily and throughout the day, along with other stress-reducing practices, we support the parasympathetic nervous system," says Buske. "This may reduce inflammation levels and reset the body to a new normal, a homeostasis, where it can use its own natural healing capabilities to reduce dysfunction being created by daily life."

Buske starts customers off with Wonders of Nature's Full Spectrum CBD Rich Hemp Extract three times per day. It's not enough to typically make a person feel sleepy, but they will accumulate the benefits throughout the day. People usually feel the effects gradually over the first few days, and then really start to notice better sleep within two weeks.

If CBD isn't quite enough on its own, THC in small doses may help a person become drowsy and can enhance the benefits of CBD for sleep. Buske says to

use CBD during the day and THC at night, when you're in the comforts of your own home. As every situation and individual is different, Buske recommends starting low with THC and titrating up. "You don't want to take any more than is needed to get the desired benefits," he says. "More is not better—it's finding that happy amount that works for the individual."

If you're new to CBD and THC, Wonders of Nature is a great place to start. They sell high quality, federally legal products and make sure to speak with customers about their situations and needs before making specific recommendations. Buske says, "After using our products for a while, people might notice improvements in other areas of their lives they didn't even associate with the stress that's keeping them up at night. By treating one problem correctly, we actually treat others, too."

For more information, visit their website at <https://www.wondersofnatureonline.com>, or stop by the Wonders of Nature storefront at 416 South Barstow St. in Eau Claire. 715-497-8740



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Getting Some Zzzzzzz's

By Emily Smith Nguyen, Smith & Prissel Chiropractic and Massage

"I'm tired...." It's a refrain I hear in my chiropractic office from both young and old (though sometimes it's BECAUSE of the young that the "old" are tired!). There are a lot of factors that play into whether we have a good night's sleep. Here are some helpful suggestions to get and stay asleep:

- Avoid too much or late intake of caffeine
- Limit alcohol consumption before bed
- Avoid late-night snacking (stop eating 3 hours before bed)
- Avoid screens and electronic devices at least 30-60 minutes before bed
- Exercise/move your body 30 minutes daily
- Follow the sun for sleep/wake times
- Keep your bedroom a peaceful place...if this is not an option, due to kids/pets/partner/spouse, just make it a point to do the other above suggestions as best you can!

Aside from the last item from the above list, the most common reason I hear from adults as to why they didn't sleep well is pain. This could be from a variety of sources, but often it's pain in the neck or low back that interferes with the ability to find a comfortable position. Since sleep is necessary in order to heal, it's even more important that those with neck or back issues are able to get the rest they need.

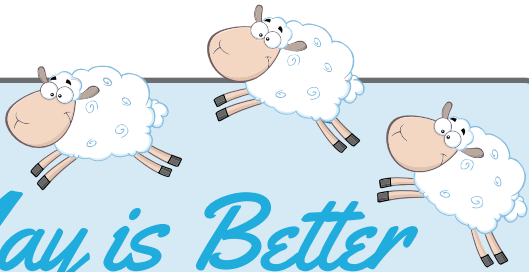
If we look at pain as your body's way of trying to tell you that something is wrong (rather than something that needs to be covered up), it makes sense to look into the option of trying chiropractic as a way to eliminate or reduce the pain symptoms. Chiropractic care addresses the position of the spinal vertebrae in relation to other vertebrae, discs, nerves and muscles. A misalignment of these vertebrae can lead

to pain, and a chiropractic spinal adjustment can help to relieve the cause of that pain.

How you sleep also matters, including having a mattress that is supportive and neither too hard or too soft. The ideal sleeping position, to avoid unnecessary pressure points or twisting within the spine, is to lie on your back, with support under the neck and knees. Side-sleeping is also an option, but make sure to support the space between the ear and outside edge of the shoulder (in order to keep the head in line with the rest of the spine) and use a pillow between the knees (to help hold the pelvis in proper alignment as well). You may have noticed that I didn't yet mention stomach sleeping, and that is because it would be ideal to avoid this position (due to the excessive one-sided rotation of the neck and typical elevation of one arm overhead). If you must sleep on your stomach, it's best to lay half side/half stomach with the support of a body pillow underneath you. This will help lessen the negative effects of this sleeping position.

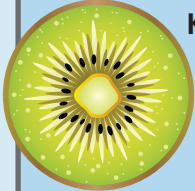
Chiropractic care for babies and children can also be beneficial in ensuring proper sleep for the whole family. Unlike adults, spinal pain is not typically the cause for kiddos waking in the night. Symptoms of growing pains, constipation/gas, headaches, ear pain and frequent illness are often what I hear from exhausted parents. These are all issues that typically improve with the addition of chiropractic care. In fact, I often witness the resolution of constipation before the family is even able to leave the office. It's also common to hear that children sleep much better after their chiropractic adjustment, which is great because it means that while they are sleeping, their body is able to grow and heal!





May is Better Sleep Month!

EAT THIS: SLEEP BETTER



KIWI could be the ultimate pre-bed treat. Studies show people who ate two kiwis an hour before bed, slept almost a full hour longer than those who didn't. Kiwis are full of vitamins C and E, serotonin and folate - all can help you get your zzz's.

SOYFOODS such as tofu and edamame are rich in isoflavones, which increase the production of serotonin. Those who ate two or more servings of soy a day slept longer and reported a better quality of sleep.

FIBER-RICH FOODS could be key for sleeping better. Fiber prevents a surge in blood sugars that may lower melatonin. Get a boost of fiber from artichokes, quinoa, and bran cereal.

Are pets ok in bed?

Many people let their pets sleep with them. Whether your cat or dog hurts or helps your sleep depends on your pet's temperament, there is no definitive rule. There are some other things to consider, too. Make sure your pets are up to date on their vaccines. Some diseases can be passed from pets to people. Also, good grooming can help keep you from getting things like poison ivy from your pet. From a behavioral perspective, pets should only be allowed on the bed by invitation.

WOMEN WHO REPORT BETTER SLEEP WERE **33% MORE LIKELY TO HIT THEIR WEIGHT LOSS GOALS.**

CHECK OUT THIS AWESOME PRODUCT WE'VE BEEN USING TO HELP US GET OUR ZZZ'S!

CALM AME-1 NATURAL SUPPLEMENT

Amanita Muscaria mushroom extract



Drift into dreamland with a shroom that puts you to sleep without the high. Formulated to deliver a warm fuzzy feeling of relaxation to help you doze off and wake up feeling recharged.

- Enjoyable light "buzz" w/no hangover
 - Results after first use
 - May promote dreaming

SMITH & PRISSEL CHIROPRACTIC and MASSAGE



We specialize in the chiropractic care that can be beneficial in ensuring proper sleep.

*Choose Wisely.
Choose Wellness.*



Dr. Angela Prissel
Chiropractor,
FICPA

Dr. Emily Smith
Chiropractor, Pediatric
Specialist (DICCP)

829 West Clairemont Avenue
Eau Claire, WI

715.833.3505

myECchiroandmassage.com