

# Growing Stronger Families

Opportunities for Otsego | 3 West Broadway, Oneonta | 607.433.8071 | [www.ofoinc.org](http://www.ofoinc.org)

## Cinnamon Apple Smoothie

### Ingredients

1 cup unsweetened apple juice  
1 pear, cored and sliced  
1 apple, cored and sliced  
1 cup fresh spinach  
1 tsp. ground cinnamon  
½ cup ice



Directions: Place all ingredients in a blender.

Cover and blend until smooth. Sprinkle with a little cinnamon, add a sprig of mint and voila!!

## Shiitake Mushroom Spaghetti

### Ingredients

1 LB. dried spaghetti  
3 cups fresh shiitake mushrooms, de-stemmed  
8 gloves garlic, minced  
½ cup flat leaf Italian parsley, rough chopped  
¾ cup olive oil, extra virgin  
Salt and pepper  
Grated parmesan cheese



### Directions

1. Cook pasta according to the package until it is al dente. Remove and drain quickly. In the meantime, use ¼ cup of extra virgin olive oil and place in a large skillet. Heat on medium for a few minutes and then add the de-stemmed shiitake mushrooms and cook for 4 to 5 minutes. Remove and add to a small bowl.
2. Add the ½-cup virgin olive oil and heat on medium. Add minced garlic and cooked shiitake mushrooms. Heat for 1 to 2 minutes. Add the cooked spaghetti and toss together with the oil, mushrooms and garlic. Taste and then season with salt and pepper. Toss in the flat leaf parsley. Serve topped with the desired amount of parmesan cheese to taste. Enjoy!



### Hours of Operation

Monday	8:00AM – 5:00PM
Tuesday	8:00AM – 5:00PM
Wednesday	8:00AM – 6:00PM
Thursday	8:00AM – 5:00PM
Friday	8:00AM – 5:00PM

We are open on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month from 8:00AM – 12:30PM. This month we are open on Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>.

### Outreach Days

April 5<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> Richfield Springs  
9:45AM – 2:00PM\*

April 9<sup>th</sup> Cooperstown  
9:30AM – 2:00PM\*

April 19<sup>th</sup> Cherry Valley  
9:45AM – 2:00PM\*

\*LAST APPOINTMENT ON SITE DAYS IS AT 1:30PM.

## The Importance of Stress Awareness

In the United Kingdom, April is Stress Awareness Month. They recognize that understanding and managing stress is an important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. It began in 1992 as a way for health professionals to discuss the types of stress and healthy ways to cope with stress in everyday life. It is a month about learning how to find the healthy balance needed to live a productive, happy life.

We live with stress every day, some is good, too much can be overwhelming. It makes it hard to think straight and is counterproductive. Prolonged stress leads to real physical problems and can cause strokes, IBS, ulcers, diabetes, muscle and joint pain and miscarriages. Stress causes the body to produce cortisol; in small amounts, it can boost our immunity by limiting inflammation. Over time, our body can get used to having too much cortisol in the blood, which allows for more inflammation. Stress also decreases the body's lymphocytes; the white blood cells that help fight infection. The lower the level, the more at risk we are for infection. The higher the stress levels, the more chances for depression and anxiety. This means the immune system is overworked, over-tired and not effective.

Learning ways to control and manage stress is essential. Some common ways to do this are by giving your mind a

break. Many do this through exercise. Exercise releases endorphins and lowers cortisol levels. Two common exercises targeted towards helping reduce stress are practicing meditation and yoga. Research shows that 10-15 minutes of meditation three or four times a week can reduce your stress while also preventing the breakdown of chromosomes that lead to cancer and premature aging. Yoga also lowers stress by calming your nerves and deep breathing helps boost our resistance to infection. Inverted poses help circulate fluid through our lymphatic system, thus filtering out toxins. Taking a walk and enjoying nature or any exercise can have the same effects.

Other ways to reduce stress include reducing your caffeine consumption, spending time laughing with family and friends and using natural supplements to help you feel more at ease. Caffeine can make us jittery increasing our stress and anxiety, so cutting down will help, even if we don't want to! Spending and enjoying time with friends and family, allows us to have a good time, gets our mind off what is troubling us and allows us to enjoy life. Using essential oils or remedies like lavender, green tea, lemon balm and omega-3 fatty acids have a calming effect and will help us reduce stress.

Learning about and managing stress is important, and should be a topic we all address. How will you manage stress?

## Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Section

### Colostrum

The first milk your body makes is called Colostrum. Colostrum is a thick, golden colored milk that is rich in Beta-carotene and other nutrients, as well as concentrated immune & growth properties. It is exactly what your baby's tiny tummy & tired body need during their first hours and days of life. Your body begins producing Colostrum about halfway through pregnancy. Many women notice breast changes during their pregnancy, and some even experience small amounts of leaking. After giving birth, when the placenta has detached, the hormone Progesterone is withdrawn. This triggers your body to begin making mature milk. Your Colostrum will thin out & become whitish as it gradually increases in volume. The change to mature milk is usually noticeable on the 2nd or 3rd day after birth.

Next month: Mature Milk!

Article submitted by PC Ginny

## Simple Ways to Boost Your Immune System

It is that time of year when we continue to get sick and have a hard time getting well, especially with children around. Respiratory illnesses are the most common, according to the CDC. The flu continues to wreak havoc in 41 states. The immune system is our defense against illnesses and keeping it healthy helps us stay healthy. Here are some simple and natural ways to boost our immune system.

**Get enough sleep and manage stress.** Sleep deprivation and stress overload increase our cortisol levels and prolonged increases suppress immune function. Getting enough sleep can be challenging with children, as can managing stress. It is important to take time for ourselves so we can better take care of our families.

**Avoid tobacco smoke.** Tobacco smoke undermines the basic immune defenses and raises the risk of bronchitis, pneumonia and middle ear infections in children.

**Drink less alcohol.** Increased consumption impairs the immune system and increases vulnerability of lung function.

**Eat plenty of vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds.** These provide the body with the nutrients your immune system needs. A study in older adults showed that boosting fruit and vegetable intake improved antibody response to the Pneumovax vaccine, which protects against *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.

**Consider probiotics.** Studies indicate supplements reduce the incidence of respiratory and gastrointestinal infections. Fermented milk products have also been shown to reduce respiratory infections in adults and children.

**Catch some rays.** Sunlight triggers the production of Vitamin D. In the summer, 10-15 minutes of exposure is enough, however, more is needed in the winter and often supplements are indicated. Low vitamin D levels correlate with greater risk of respiratory infection.

**Go for the garlic.** Garlic is a broad-spectrum antimicrobial agent and immune booster. Heat deactivates a key ingredient so it is important to add to food just before serving.

**Eat medicinal mushrooms.** A recent study showed that concentrated shiitake extract enhanced immune function in women with breast cancer.

Keeping our immune system healthy keeps us healthy and ready to take on the world. How will you keep your immune system healthy?

## Fun Spring Activities

It is that time of year when, at the first signs of spring, we are ready to get outside after a long, cold winter. There is so much you can do inside and out, exploring nature and learning from it. Here is a list of some fun activities to do just that.

1. Blow and chase bubbles. You can even make ones that bounce!
2. Fly a kite.
3. Take a family picnic and go on a nature hike, ride bikes, play hide and seek, tag, play catch or do whatever!
4. Make colored flowers by putting a white flower in colored water and watching it turn colors over time!
5. Start your own seeds indoors and transfer them outside when they are ready.
6. Make a birdfeeder by covering a pinecone with various seeds and hanging it on a tree.
7. Play with sidewalk chalk and let your imagination run wild!

There is a lot you can do and explore! Have fun!!



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- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
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