

Cougars Wellbeing Newsletter

February 2026 | Issue 66

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**JANUARY
RAFFLE WINNER:**

Light Therapy Lamp
Lilia Jimenez

Congratulations!

FEBRUARY

February: A Month for Maintenance & Care

February is a time for realism, kindness, and care for ourselves. The momentum of the new year can slow down, so this is an excellent time to pause and check in.

If you set goals for 2026, ask yourself:

Am I consistent? Do I need to adjust the goal or the steps I'm taking to reach it?

Resetting is responding to where you are.

Mid-winter mood dips are common, especially during the winter when we tend to spend more time indoors. Creating space for reflection, tuning into your inner wisdom and finding small sources of inspiration can help. Remember to keep your body awake with simple movement: walks, stretching and/or short strength sessions. Support your energy with hydration, Vitamin D, iron, and balance comfort foods with nourishment. This month focus on steady care over pressure-small, consistent actions matter and make a difference.

Your feedback is important to us so continue to communicate with us through wellbeing@cscc.edu about your wellbeing interests. There are more exciting wellbeing activities on the horizon.

Remember, HR SUPPORTS YOUR SUCCESS.

Dr. Nic



Women's Heart Health Virtual Presentation



Women's Employee Resource Group (WERG) invites the entire college community to join a presentation and conversation with Nurse Practitioner [Tonya Bower](#).

She will speak on the clinical aspects of women's cardiovascular disease and Annette Castle, Wellness Consultant, will offer lifestyle recommendations on nutrition, exercise, sleep & preventive screenings.

Join us via Teams Thursday, Feb. 12, at 11:30 a.m.

Link: [Click to Join](#)

Save the Date

Biometric Screenings on Columbus campus open to all employees.



(stay tuned for registration information)
March 24, 2026 (MH-AEP Boardroom)
& May 19, 2026 (WD 4th Fl)

Heart Health Month and Vision Health Awareness Month

[Heart health | UnitedHealthcare](#)

[Eye health | UnitedHealthcare](#)

[Computer vision syndrome symptoms and causes | UnitedHealthcare](#)

Visit the CSMC Wellbeing webpage for more resources and to stay connected:

[Wellbeing | Columbus State Community College](#)



Wellbeing 360 Rewards Program Eligible

THR
FEB
5

Meal Planning and Prepping

11am EST | [REGISTER NOW!](#)

Learning how to simplify your week with smart meal planning and prepping strategies. We'll cover time-saving tips, portion control, and how to keep meals balanced and flavorful. RECIPE: Cheddar Cauliflower Soup

WED
FEB
18

Nutrition Strategies for Heart Health

12pm EST | [REGISTER NOW!](#)

Learn evidence-based dietary approaches to support cardiovascular wellness and reduce heart disease risk. We'll discuss the evidence and learn practical ways to incorporate cancer-fighting foods into your daily routine.

THR
FEB
19

James Diagnostic Clinic-Support

11am EST | [REGISTER NOW!](#)

If you suspect that you may have cancer, you want answers quickly. Join us as a James cancer expert discusses how our Cancer Diagnostic Center can provide you and your family with direct, expedited access to diagnostic testing.

TUE
FEB
24

Financial Planning w/ Huntington Bank

12pm EST | [REGISTER NOW!](#)

Join us as our financial experts with Huntington Bank talk about financial planning considerations for the year ahead.

THR
FEB
26

Starting Strong with Self-Care

12pm EST | [REGISTER NOW!](#)

Kick off the series by exploring what self-care really means and why it often feels so hard to prioritize. You'll look at the real-life challenges that drain your energy and learn how to recognize early signs that your system may need support. This session offers a foundation for a year of sustainable, meaningful self-care.

For cancer-related questions: (855) 366-7700

For questions about these events: hello@mycancerbridge.com

Financial Wellbeing Seminars (*Rewards eligible)

THR
FEB
19

Health Savings Account (HSA): Here's to Your Health

Voya Financial Services,
Barnett McGowan, JD

11:00 am | [Link to join: Join the meeting now](#)

FRI
FEB
27

Retirement Income (repeat)

Voya Financial Services, Barnett McGowan, JD

10:00 am | [Link to join: Join the meeting now](#)



Reminder to employees and spouses/domestic partners on UHC health coverage: participation in the **Wellbeing 360 Engagement Program** is necessary to maintain paying 20% of healthcare premium. **(2 activities to complete by JUNE 30, 2026) (The Engagement Program does not apply to employees who are members of CSEA or Teamsters.)** Details: [Wellbeing 360 | Columbus State Community College](#)

Get Involved with AccelWELL!

THU
FEB
26

Virtual 1-on-1 Health Coaching
10:00am – 3:00pm
Wellbeing 360 Rewards Program Eligible



AccelWELL
Inspire Purpose • Drive Performance

HOW TO SIGN UP:

From your AccelWELL 3.0 [portal](#) or WellSteps app, select the **menu** in the upper right-hand corner. From there, select the **calendar tool** to be redirected to a calendar view of the month's events. Find the correct day and event and click the blue **R**. Select your reminder preference, enter your preferred phone number in which to be reached for your telephonic session, and select a timeslot that best works for you. Lastly, click **Register**.

After signing up for a time, your Coach will call you at the number you provided when registering.

Upcoming Event: National Wear Red Day | Friday, February 6th

The first Friday of February is **National Wear Red Day**, a nationwide movement dedicated to raising awareness about heart disease and stroke.

It's a simple way for all of us to come together, spark conversation, and shine a light on the importance of protecting our heart health.

Join your AccelWELL community by **wearing red on Friday, February 6th**.

Your choice to participate helps spread awareness, supports those impacted by cardiovascular disease, and reinforces the message that small actions can make a meaningful difference.

Submit a photo of yourself wearing red on Friday, February 6th to coach@accelwell.com to be entered into the raffle to win a [home pilates kit!](#)



Meal Prep with AccelWELL: Heart Healthy Recipe

Join AccelWELL Coach, Jenny, as she guides you through a simple, no-cook recipe loaded with heart-healthy ingredients. It's quick, fresh, and perfect for fueling your February wellness goals.

Click [HERE](#) for the full video to follow along.

Mediterranean Chickpea Salad

Ingredients

- 1 can (15 oz) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup cucumber, diced (about $\frac{1}{2}$ a large cucumber)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup red onion, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Kalamata olives, sliced
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- Juice of 1 lemon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried oregano
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup feta cheese, crumbled (optional)

Instructions

1. Combine chickpeas, tomatoes, cucumber, red onion, olives, and parsley into a large bowl.
2. In a small bowl, add lemon juice, olive oil, oregano, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Whisk dressing.
3. Pour dressing over salad ingredients and mix to combine. Top with an optional sprinkle of feta cheese & enjoy!



WORKOUT OF THE MONTH



HEART HEALTH MOVEMENT CIRCUIT



Get your heart pumping with simple, joint-friendly movements

How the Circuit Works

- ♥ Move through all 6 stations
- ♥ Work for 30–60 seconds each
- ♥ Rest 30 seconds between moves
- ♥ Repeat the circuit 1–2 rounds

1 Brisk March or Walk



March in place or walk quickly to gently raise your heart rate.
Modification: March slowly and reduce arm movement.

3 Modified Jumping Jacks



Step one foot out at a time while raising arms overhead.
Modification: Keep arms below shoulder height or step slower.

5 Standing Knee Lifts



Lift one knee at a time while standing tall and balanced.
Modification: Hold onto a chair or lift knees lower.

2 Sit-to-Stand Squats



Stand up from a chair, then sit back down with control.
Modification: Use armrests or perform partial stands.

4 Wall Push-Ups



Press hands into a wall and bend elbows to lower chest forward.
Modification: Stand closer to the wall to reduce difficulty.

6 Recovery Breathing



Slow, deep breaths to bring heart rate down and calm the body.
Modification: Sit comfortably and breathe at your own pace.

CHOLESTEROL 101

WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in your bloodstream. Your body makes all the cholesterol it needs, but cholesterol is also consumed through animal-based foods such as red meat, full-fat dairy, eggs and fried foods.

Cholesterol helps build cells, produce hormones and vitamin D — but unfavorable levels can increase health risks.



WHAT HEALTH RISKS ARE LINKED TO HIGH CHOLESTEROL?

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Artery disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

“Knowing your numbers” means being aware of a few key measurements that give you a snapshot of your overall health and potential risks. Knowing your cholesterol numbers can help assess heart and blood vessel health.

HDL Cholesterol (Good)

- Removes excess cholesterol
- Goal:
 - Men: > 40 mg/dL
 - Women: > 50 mg/dL

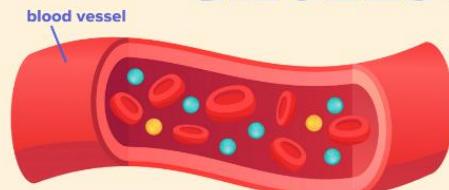
LDL Cholesterol (Bad)

- Builds plaque in arteries
- Goal: < 100 mg/dL

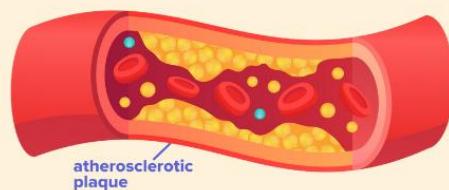
Total Cholesterol

- Goal: < 200 mg/dL

Types of CHOLESTEROL

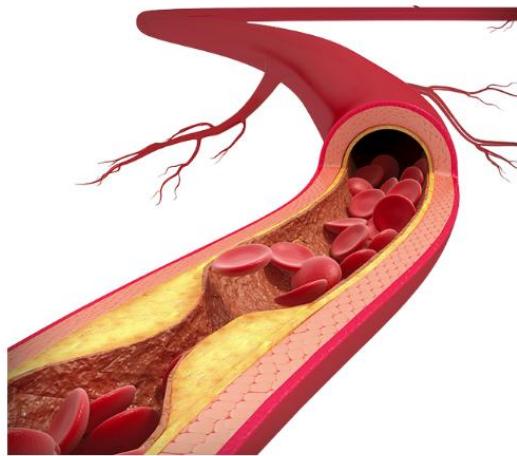


HDL
High-density lipoprotein
Good cholesterol



LDL
Low-density lipoprotein
Bad cholesterol

DAILY HABITS TO IMPROVE HEART HEALTH



LIMIT → CHOOSE MORE OFTEN

- ✗ Butter → Olive oil ✓
- ✗ Fatty meats → Lean meats & fish ✓
- ✗ Full-fat dairy → Low-fat dairy ✓
- ✗ Chips → Nuts & seeds ✓
- ✗ Baked goods → Dark chocolate ✓

BUILD SUSTAINABLE NUTRITION HABITS

- 🌿 Choose unsaturated fats (olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocado)
- 🐟 Include omega-3 rich foods like fatty fish, walnuts, flaxseeds, and chia seeds
- 🥦 Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables
- 🥕 Aim for adequate fiber to help lower LDL cholesterol



MOVEMENT AND DAILY SUPPORT HABITS

- ⌚ Aim for 150 minutes of moderate activity per week
- 🏃 Even short bouts of movement throughout the day count
- 💪 Include strength training when possible
- 😴 Prioritize sleep and manage stress
- 🚫 Avoid smoking and limit alcohol

READY TO START?

TRY FREE HEALTH COACHING WITH ACCELWELL!

Health Coaching can help you:

- Understand your cholesterol numbers
- Build sustainable nutrition habits
- Create a movement routine that fits your lifestyle
- Stay consistent



Contact coach@accelwell.com to schedule an appointment!

ACTIVITY OF THE MONTH



Cholesterol Check-In

When was the last time you had your cholesterol checked?
(approximate date and occasion)

What were your cholesterol readings when it was last checked?

HDL

LDL

TOTAL

Using the below ranges, where do your results land you?



HEALTHY*

Total Cholesterol

Less than 200

HDL Cholesterol

60 and above

LDL Cholesterol

Less than 100



BORDERLINE

Total Cholesterol

200 – 239

HDL Cholesterol

40 – 59 (male)
50 – 59 (female)

LDL Cholesterol

100 to 159



DANGEROUS

Total Cholesterol

240 and above

HDL Cholesterol

Less than 40 (male)
Less than 50 (female)

LDL Cholesterol

160 and above

TOTAL	HDL	LDL
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HEALTHY

BORDERLINE

DANGEROUS

Using the information on the Daily Habits to Improve Heart Health education page, what is one step you can take to maintain or improve your current cholesterol numbers?

THE DISH

RECIPES CURATED BY ACCELWELL

BALSAMIC CRANBERRY CHICKEN SKILLET

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh thyme or 2 teaspoons dried
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary or 2 teaspoons dried
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 and 1/2 cups fresh cranberries
- 2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tablespoons brown sugar light or dark
- 1 Tablespoon extra virgin olive oil



Instructions

[Balsamic Cranberry Chicken Skillet Recipe](#)

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Sprinkle both sides of the chicken lightly with salt, pepper, thyme, and rosemary. Place flour in a shallow bowl and dredge each chicken breast through to coat lightly. Set aside.
2. Combine cranberries, brown sugar, and balsamic vinegar in a small bowl. Stir well and set aside.
3. In a cast-iron or other oven-safe skillet, warm olive oil over medium-high heat. When oil is hot, add the chicken. Cook for 2-3 minutes on each side, just until a golden crust develops. They should not be cooked all the way through. Remove pan from the heat.
4. Pour the cranberry mixture over the chicken, including the sugar and juices at the bottom of the bowl.
5. Transfer pan to the oven, and bake for 15-20 minutes, until chicken is cooked through (165°F) and the cranberries are tender and wrinkled. Serve with additional sprigs of herbs, if desired.

Cranberries!

These little berries are jam-packed with powerful nutrients.

Antioxidants: Antioxidants are molecules that are protective against inflammation. Consumption of antioxidants is correlated with decreased cancer risk, lower blood pressure, and protection against liver disease.

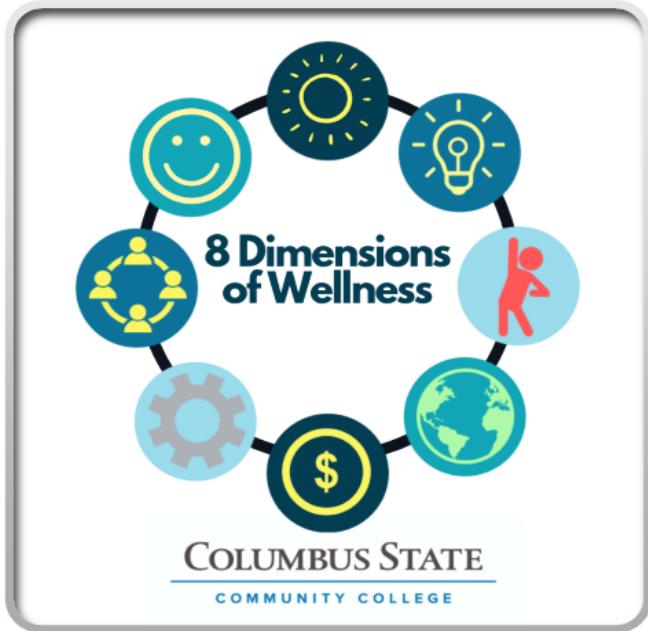
Fiber: There are loads of health benefits associated with fiber, including a healthier gut microbiome, decreased diabetes risk, and lower cholesterol. The daily recommendation for fiber is rarely met in the US, and incorporating cranberries into your diet might help you meet this.

Vitamins and Minerals: Cranberries are a great source of vitamin C, which helps your immune system and improves iron absorption from the diet. It is also a good source of manganese which is a mineral that is crucial to macronutrient metabolism and has antioxidant properties.



Your Wellbeing Advisory Committee:

Nichole Bowman-Glover, PhD, Wellbeing Benefits Analyst



Tommy Tucker, Mitchell Hall

Vena Hill, Human Resources

Jason Love, Human Resources

Yvette Johnson Veterinary, Imaging & Surgical Technology Department

Terrence Lawrence, Inclusive Advising Innovation

Shawntera Hollinshead, Police Communications & Admin

Join us on Microsoft Teams: “Cougars Living Well” **Join Us Today!**

Cougars Living Well is a place for you to engage in conversations about health and wellness, share resources and words of encouragement, and receive updates about all the wellbeing services and resources available to you. To join this public Team, **log into Teams, click “join or create a team,” search for *Cougars Living Well* and click “Join Team.”** If you have questions or need assistance joining *Cougars Living Well*, please reach out to Nichole Bowman-Glover/Vena Hill.

We'd love to connect with you on [LinkedIn](#) & [Instagram](#)!



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