

# Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

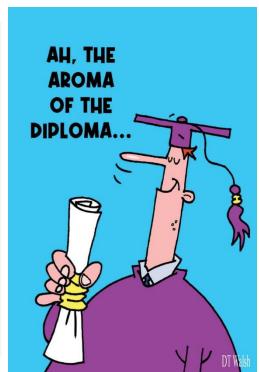
Issue 30– Student Edition May 2025

#### **Comments from Linda**

We are doing an excellent job of student engagement this semester – thanks so much to our program participants for your involvement with them. The spring semester is nearly over, but we'll still get some good work out of them before the start of summer.

Each semester I like to put out a student edition for the newsletter. I asked all our research students (ID201) to share something. It is wonderful to hear their reasons for being with us. I have included things other students have shared as well. Be on the lookout for other materials they will be presenting as they wrap up projects in the next few weeks. Thank you so much, program clients, for the continued success of our inter-generational offerings. Thanks so much, students, for your enthusiasm and interest, and hard work.





#### **Spring 2025 Student Intern Roster**

Gerontology (Gero 130/131) Jessica, Lizbeth, Leanne, Pheonix Community Nutrition (NuFD117) Ashika & Marti Community Nursing (Nur144) Cassie & Tim Community Psychology (Psy143) Juan, Michelle, Mursal, Shaya ID201 Daneila, Joyce, Karisma, Kenia, Lydia, Miriam, Many occasional helpers from Gero 101, Gero 103, Nursing 144



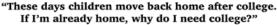
Normally when I am trying to put together a student edition, I have to essentially browbeat students for several weeks to get some material. This edition I am slightly on the overwhelmed side with respect to material. Thanks everyone!

I did want to share comments about student projects this semester. (from Linda)

- We had many nursing student visitors this semester and they are slowly learning our program is a wonderful opportunity for observing/participating in intergenerational interactions. With 80 new nursing students every semester, we are happy they discover us somewhat by accident and their attendance is merely occasional. One of the courses 4<sup>th</sup> semester nursing students have is on public health and community nursing − two of them (Cassie & Tim) were assigned special time with just our program for that class.
- ♥ Several of our program clients participated in PT assessments last year with Daniel and Henry, under the guidance of Dr. Dias. Just recently I learned they will be finally sharing some results with us, hopefully this summer.
- **▼** This semester our 2:30 pm balance class blossomed with the steady assistance of Jasmine, a  $2^{nd}$  year PT student. She did a really nice job recruiting her classmates to help her and we hope to have study help with this session next semester. (Of course you are stuck with me over the summer!).
- ▶ This semester Gero 101 students completed service hours with us and we also had many Gro 103 students. They put on a healthy aging fair on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. We also had Zoom interactive sessions throughout the semester and I very much appreciate the client involvement with these. As Gero classes move more and more online, these sessions are likely to be a regular part of our schedule. Please join them when you can.

Again, client involvement with the students is appreciated and I know you are aware how important this is. Thank you so much, program clients, for the continued success of our intergenerational offerings.



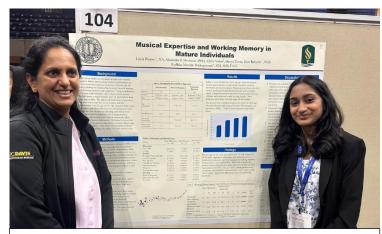




Our student reach extends beyond the Sac State campus. This semester, several students have presented research conducted on our clients at student research seminars.



Anand Mepperla presented sleep tracking data he collected with us the summer of 2023 at Virginia Commonwealth University.



Shreya Thota presented our music, memory project at a UC Davis student research seminar. Since it was close, Dr. Bukkapatnam was able to visit the session.

Kiara, a research intern with Kim Roberts in psychology, presented a sleep habits study, based on data collected from our clients, at the regional Western Psychology Association meeting in Las Vegas.

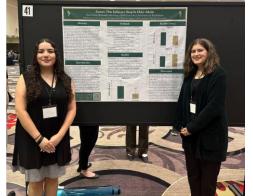
Hi everyone! My name is Kiara Souza, I am a third year at Sacramento State and I am the first

author on a poster using data collected from CWP clients! In the picture with me from left to right is Dr Roberts, Hailie Fernandez, myself and Marissa Bardales. We presented our research with your data on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 amongst other amazing research conducted by fellow students attending schools in the west. We talked with various professors and students,

explaining our research and what the data meant for the betterment of research within the entire field of psychology. Our data unfortunately did not succeed at obtaining the golden ticket of statistical significance, but



it was still meaningful. From this study we identified what we can change for further studies in order to better understand sleep quality. On this trip, we spent time looking at research conducted by fellow students while also socializing with administrators from graduate programs. All of this would not have been possible without your participation in our research, as it obviously cannot be



conducted without participants! We thank you from the bottom of our hearts and cannot wait to conduct more research with your participation in the future if you're not sick of us yet ③. Thanks from the Spring of 2025 lab ③!

#### **Hummus Recipe by Mursal Reha**

1 15 oz can garbanzo beans, drained

½ cup olive oil (use less or none please!)

¹/₃ cup sesame tahini

½ cup lemon juice (or juice of 1 lemon)

½ onion, chopped

1 clove garlic

Salt to taste

Celery, washed and cut into sticks Carrots, peeled and cut into sticks



Mix ingredients in a blender. You may need to pulse the blender, turn it off, then push the ingredients close to the blade and pulse again a few times to get a smooth consistency. Adjust the amount of olive oil, onion and salt to your taste. When smooth, pour into a dish and serve with celery and carrot sticks.

#### Mursal's Rice Pudding

2 cups uncooked rice

4 cups milk

1 cup sugar

½ cup almond flour or finely ground almonds

Almond slices for garnish



Soak the rice for 3 hours in water and drain. Put the drained rice in 5 cups of water in a nonstick pot and bring to a boil. Boil for 20 minutes. The grains should be soft and puffy and the water should have been absorbed. Add milk and stir constantly for 15 minutes. It will scorch if it is not stirred. Stir until the milk is absorbed by the rice, it shouldn't be soupy. After 15 minutes, add 1 cup sugar then add ½ cup almond flour. When the rice is coagulated to a pudding texture, turn off the fire and let it cool. Dish it out and add almond slices on top for garnish.

Our Community Psychology Students, Juan, Michelle, Mursal, & Shaya









# THE POWER OF THE BREATH

GUIDED BREATHWORK FOR ENERGY, TRANQUILITY, AND REST

#### COFFEE BREATH

Inhale quickly through the nose, then exhale through the nose in short, equal bursts.

This quick, rhythmic breathing stimulates the sympthetic nervous system for an energizing boost.



# **BOX BREATHING**

Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4. Continue for several rounds.

This calm, even breathing helps to deactivate the stress response and bring the nervous system into balance.



#### EXTENDED EXHALE

Inhale for a count of 4, then exhale slowly for a count of 6-8. Repeat unfil relaxed.

Extending the exhalation encourages parasympathetic activity, aiding the body relax.

Created with love by

Shaya Biancalana

#### From Juan & Michelle:

Hello everyone, our names are Michelle Rodriguez and Juan Flores. We are 4th year Psychology majors. It has been our pleasure to have volunteered at the CWP this semester.

During our time here we were able to present a presentation about Sleep along with another volunteer Miriam Jordan who is a nursing student. We discussed why sleep is important, negatives when we do not sleep, health benefits of sleep, and habits to sleep better. Sleep is essential for everyone. While we sleep it gives our body a moment to restore physically, cleans the brain of toxins, regulates our mood, helps one process information better, and strengthens our immune system.

#### **Common Sleep Disorders**

**Sleep Apnea**- A disorder in which a person's breathing is interrupted during sleep, leading to brief awakenings throughout the night.

**Insomnia**- The most common sleep disorder which includes difficulty falling or staying asleep, waking up too early, or feeling unrefreshed upon waking.

**Narcolepsy**- A neurological disorder with daytime sleepiness and sudden sleep attacks.

## HOW TO IMPROVE SLEEP QUALITY

- 1. Create a relaxing sleep environment
- 2. Stick to a regular sleep schedule
- 3. Avoid stimulants before bedtime
- 4. Practice relaxation techniques
- 5. Take fewer or no daytime naps

Even though sleep is one of the last things we do before we call it a night, it is one of the key pieces to being rested the next day. Prioritizing sleep is just as important as getting some exercise, eating a healthy meal or drinking water to stay hydrated.

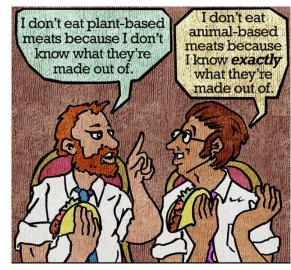
Sleep is important!

(Another sleep habit item at the end of the newsletter!)

We had two community nutrition students this past semester, Ashika and Marti. Both are about to graduate.







#### From Marti;

My name is Marti Christensen, and I'm graduating this semester with a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition. I grew up in Washington State on a farm where we maintained a garden, fruit trees, and raised our own cows, chickens, goats, and pigs. Most of our food was organic and homegrown, and we got our milk from a local dairy. This lifestyle deeply influenced my decision to return to school to study nutrition and reconnect with wholesome, natural eating.

Working with the CWP was an incredibly rewarding experience. It introduced me to new ways of preparing meals, with more vegetables and less oil, and sparked fresh ideas for heart-healthy cooking. I especially enjoyed getting to know the staff and program participants, as well as participating in and leading cooking demonstrations. Watching others present and learning from their knowledge gave me insight into various aspects of health and wellness.

I also appreciated the well-rounded exercise classes led by Linda and found them enjoyable and engaging. Overall, my experience with the program was enriching, educational, and affirming my passion for nutrition and holistic health.





My name is Karisma Thao. I wanted to talk about some healthy recipes for cooking. I used to take care of my grandfather and would look for healthy recipes for him to try as he has very sensitive teeth and doesn't have many teeth left. I found this recipe to be beneficial for improving health overall. This recipe isn't very high in carbs so it could be used as a snack so others that don't have a big appetite could eat them but also feel full.

I did a presentation with one of my groupmates about a recipe called Lentil Banana Muffins. It has many ingredients that give health benefits that can improve the body and the mind. It is plant based and no dairy ingredients. Some benefits include being high in fiber for good digestion and low in sugar and carbs. The fiber in the recipe is from lentils and oats which help with bowel

movements. Bananas are richer in nutrients which support healthy blood vessels. Cinnamon may help with blood sugar control. Flaxseeds are beneficial for feeling full and may reduce snack seeking which may help with weight loss.

I wanted to let others know that healthy snacks could be tasty even though they are plant based and would encourage others to use the recipe.



\

Hi Everyone! My name is Daniela Gomez and I am a third year psychology major at Sacramento State. I am currently trying to figure out what field I want to go into but I'm slowly taking the time to figure it out and dip my toes in a variety of different volunteer/internships programs. This is why I found myself here at the Cardiovascular Wellness Program! My time here has been incredibly fun and if it wasn't for this program I would have never learned the wonderful game of Mahjongg. I enjoyed creating my survey and reading members' eating, exercise and mood habits especially listening to their songs that

remind them of a good memory. I also enjoyed baking muffins that contained hidden vegetables and having members guess what the hidden vegetable could be. These small things make my heart so very full and seeing people smile is just the cherry on top. I will take the valuable lessons I learned at CWP and share them with my family and friends and even teach them Mahjongg so I have people I can play with over the summer. Thank you to everyone in the program who has made my experience so much fun, it will truly hold a special place in my heart.

Hi, my name is Lydia! I am a Psychology major and minoring in Ethnic Studies. Life as an older student with a family has been challenging to say the least. Coming into the Cardiovascular Wellness Program (CWP) has been an eye opener to me. When I talk to older people outside CWP, I say things like, "it's ok, I'll be there one day too," after they have apologized for not hearing me because they are going deaf.

Being an intern at CWP provided me with the opportunity to do what I love, which is talking to you all and exercising. I have learned so much about nutrition too! PB2. What? Who knew? Well, I guess all of you guys did! All the presentations were very informative as well.



Speaking of presentations, I hope you guys like ours about "Play!" Kenia and I were tossing a few ideas around and after talking with Linda we decided to do our presentation about the benefits of play. The survey questions we sent out provided us with great entertainment. Thank you to all who participated! Of course, we cannot play as when we were children, but it does not take away from the importance of continuing to play, just differently. All the ways that we consider play are very beneficial for our health. So, keep it up, everyone!

Meeting you all has greatly enriched my life. The connections I have made, I will always remember. I am hopeful that I will return to visit in the following semesters.

Hello, My name is Kenia Quintanilla and I am a second year Health Science major at Sacramento State University with an interest in joining a nursing program. My ultimate goal is to become a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner. It has been an aspiration for me. I have a deep passion in working with children and want to make a positive impact on the lives of children and families during a difficult time.

This semester, I began interning with the Cardiovascular Wellness program, which helps older adults manage or prevent cardiovascular disease. Being part of this program has given me the opportunity with hands-on experience, such as learning to take blood pressure

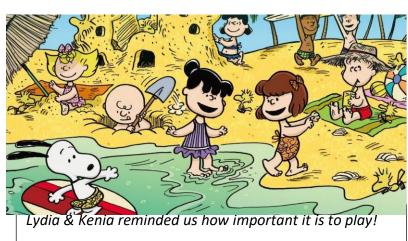


manually and gaining skills that will serve me in my future career. I have learned many skills, information and advice from everyone such as making healthy food recipes, daily exercising, and advice for my career. Throughout the program I built many connections and developed friendships in the program that have strengthened my social skills. I've also seen how everyone involved motivates each other in helping others and being a welcoming community which has been truly inspiring in my journey toward nursing. I am grateful for the Cardiovascular Wellness Program for giving me the opportunity to be in the program.



Hello everyone! My name is Joyce and I'm currently a third-year student at Sacramento State majoring in Health Science. Although I'm not entirely committed to a specific pathway at the moment, I have taken an interest in the biology and physiology of the human body and how the body works or is constantly changing. And so, being at the Cardiovascular Wellness Program (CWP), I was taught how to manually take the blood pressure of other people and notice how the blood pressure changes with various intensity exercises, and this contributes to what I'm interested in learning more about. CWP also holds various lectures featuring nurses, doctors, and other students who talk about what happens in various body systems that come with aging (typically not good) and how to maintain bodily homeostasis for those instances. Alongside

learning about blood pressure, CWP also holds several cooking demonstrations for various healthy recipes. Learning about various food recipes can be beneficial for me to learn because diet also plays an important role in how the body develops. Putting diet together with blood pressure, diet greatly affects how blood pressure changes, both negatively and positively and can help me with understanding what types of food could increase or decrease blood pressure. Blood pressure aside, CWP has allowed me to meet a ton of wonderful individuals, one of which has taught me how to play Mahjongg! I've also learned, from another individual, about new thrifting locations to find the best items. CWP has been such an amazing and welcoming place to make connections with other people, both volunteers and participants, and I've enjoyed every moment of my time here! I hope CWP doesn't get sick of me yet, because I plan to come back in the following semesters as a volunteer!





**Miriam Jordan** Miriam is a  $2^{nd}$  semester nursing student who found time in the midst of her busy course schedule to work with us. Thank you! She put together a nice article about stress.

#### We All Feel Stress in our daily lives

Life is an everyday challenge. School/work, family, money, and health can make us feel worried or tired. This is called **stress**. Too much stress can hurt our body and mind. But don't worry! There are easy ways to feel better.



There is a stress hormone that circulates in our blood that can either be helpful or not. It is called CORTISOL. Our body produces cortisol during stressful situations. It is helpful in emergency events because it activates the sympathetic nervous system and causes adrenaline rush! We often need this during exams, competitions, and event preparations. However, cortisol causes elevated blood sugar and prolonged cortisol in the blood can damage blood vessels, leading to cardiovascular disease. As always, we should maintain balance in our lives as well as in our body.

In this newsletter, I will share ways to prevent the extended accumulation of cortisol in our blood through exercise, eating healthily, and talking to people—these can all help you manage stress.

- **Exercise Helps.** When you move your body, your brain feels happy. This is because exercise makes special chemicals called endorphins that help you feel good and happy, then lower cortisol levels. You don't need to go to the gym. You can:
  - Walk for at least 30 minutes 5 x a week.
  - Do stretches at home
  - Cleaning/ organizing at home with some music that you like!

Just moving a little every day can make a big difference.

- **Healthy Eating**. Food is important for your body and your mind. When you eat good quality food, you can feel calmer and think better. Plant based diet is beneficial to our body in many ways:
  - 1. Boosts Energy Naturally. Whole plant-based foods are rich in complex carbohydrates (like whole grains, beans, fruits, and veggies), which provide steady energy without the crash that comes from processed foods or refined sugars.
  - 2. Improves Mood. Many plant foods are high in nutrients like B vitamins, magnesium, and omega-3s, which are crucial for brain health and mood regulation. A diet high in colorful fruits and vegetables is also associated with lower levels of anxiety and depression in some studies.
  - 3. Supports Gut Health. Plant-based foods are loaded with fiber, which feeds the good bacteria in your gut. A healthy gut microbiome is increasingly linked to better mood, stronger immunity, and reduced inflammation.
  - 4. Reduces Inflammation. A whole-food, plant-based diet is naturally anti-inflammatory thanks to antioxidants and phytonutrients. Less inflammation means = less fatigue, better joint health, and improved mental clarity.
  - 5. Promotes Feelings of Lightness and Clarity. People often report feeling "lighter" and more mentally clear on plant-based diets, possibly due to reduced intake of processed foods, additives, and heavy saturated fats.
  - 6. Empowerment and Purpose. Choosing plant-based can also align with personal values—like sustainability, animal welfare, or wellness—which can bring a strong sense of fulfillment and purpose.

Excess cortisol causes inflammation in our blood vessels leading to plaque build up, and stenosis, so we can prevent it by eating plant based foods. And don't forget to drink water!

#### Talk to Someone.



You don't have to feel stress alone. There is a love/bonding hormone called OXYTOCIN that counteracts cortisol. Socializing promotes the production of Oxytocin, which makes us less stressed and more comfortable. Feeling comfortable and safe decreases cortisol in our body; thus decreasing the chances of heart disease.

Ways to talk are:

- With a friend
- Volunteering at social events
- Joining communities such as the Cardiovascular Wellness Program

You can also join a group or volunteer. Being with kind people helps you feel better.

**One Last Thing:** Stress is normal, and we can control it. When we move our body, eat healthily, and talk to others, we feel stronger and happier. Take care and be proud of yourself! You are doing your best—and that's enough.

We had four gerontology students with us this semester. A short recap of their projects

Lizbeth Cruz. Social connections through art projects. She is graduating and heading back to San Bernardino. We thoroughly enjoyed the projects she led this past semester.



Pheonix Xiong is about to complete the first semester of her two semester obligation with us. She is brewing a very worthwhile fun sounding project on fraud awareness—look for that come fall!





Leanne Dawson – so ingrained as our student assistant and very valued program aide, we forget she's still a student. She should graduate by the fall and her capstone project deals with elder abuse awareness.



Jessie Ramirez, a gero minor, opted to do a project with us. She has an interest in pet therapy. She gathered information from many of you, creating a compelling story about the value of pet ownership. She is about to graduate with hopeful ideas for her future.

We have had several nursing students help out this semester. Two of them, Cassie and Tim, had an extra obligation for a public health class they were all taking. They gave a presentation on protein power and also led a journal club discussion on cannabis education.

An excerpt from the Power of Protein talk:



Cassie Siskoff

The Good News!

Regular strength training and proper nutrition can slow or reverse muscle loss!

- Resistance training
  - Grip strength, gait speed, skeletal muscle index
  - Stimulate the proliferation of muscle satellite cells and rate of protein synthesis
- Heart-healthy protein rich foods
  - Beans and legumes
  - Nuts and seeds
  - Lentils

Summary of the Cannabis Presentation that was held on 4/15/2025

This discussion aimed to educate ourselves on how cannabis interacts with the brain and body. With cannabis becoming legal in many states, it's important to understand both the benefits and risks, as well as addressing common misconceptions through evidence-based research. We explored how cannabis influences cardiovascular health, memory, chronic pain, and sleep. Plus, we took a closer look at the key differences between THC (which has psychoactive effects) and CBD (non-psychoactive), along with their potential benefits and risks.

Participants actively engaged in conversation, especially around cannabis use for sleep and pain. Many shared experiences or knowledge that aligned with the current research, highlighting the growing public interest in this topic.

Overall, this discussion informed us of current research, and one major takeaway was this: If you're considering cannabis use for any reason, it's essential to consult your doctor. Cannabis can affect blood pressure, heart function, and brain health, especially in those with underlying medical conditions. So medical guidance is key in deciding if it's a safe option for you.



Tim Govorukhin

#### 3 Things to Keep in Mind for Heart-Healthy Eating

By Ananyaa Arvand

We all want to be the healthiest we can, but oftentimes it can be hard. In this article, I'll go through some tips and reminders to be prepared to eat well while keeping our heart-healthy goals in mind.

#### **Controlling Portion Sizes**

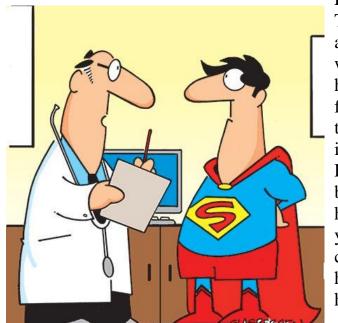
How much you eat is just as important as *WHAT* you eat. We can often overload our plates, but a few simple tips can make sure that we are managing what we eat.

- 1. Use a small plate or bowl to help control our portions
- 2. Eat more nutrient-dense, low-calorie foods such as fruits and vegetables, and less red meat. Make sure to incorporate a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, and not the same ones every day.
- 3. Eat smaller amounts of high-calorie, high-sodium foods. These include refined, processed, and fast foods.

#### **Eating an Overall Healthy Diet Pattern**

When making and eating food, try to emphasize:

- 1. A wide variety of fruits and vegetables
- 2. Whole grains -- good sources of fiber and other nutrients that play roles in heart health and controlling blood pressure. You can get more whole grains by making simple swaps with refined grain products.
- 3. Healthy sources of protein -- Lean meat, poultry and fish; low-fat or fat-free dairy products; and eggs are sources of protein if you prefer animal products.
- 4. Limiting Sodium Intake -- Eating foods with lots of added sodium can lead to high blood pressure; ideally one should only be eating no more than 1,500 mg of sodium a day



### **Planning Ahead & Eating Mindfully**

Try to create daily menus for yourself using the rules above. However, we all human, so there may be days when it is just not possible to cook for ourselves at home. You can to enjoy food at a restaurant even if you follow a heart-healthy dietary pattern. Make sure to read the nutrition facts or ingredients list, and to choose items with less sodium, added sugars, and saturated fat. Look for the Heart-Check mark to find foods that have been certified by the American Heart Association as heart-healthy. Lastly, make sure that you do not berate yourself for not following this diet 100% of the time. A candy bar or handful of potato chips won't derail your heart-healthy diet. What's important is that you eat healthy foods most of the time



This is Ananyaa the summer she was a high school student with us. She has now graduated from UC Berkeley and I obviously need to get an updated photo. She still comes back and regales us with Indian cooking when she can.

# Test Your Sleeping Habits!

Check each good and bad sleeping habit you have, then add them up.



Can you improve your sleep habits?

Z Z z

Rad	Habits		Good	Habits
_				

The Talanta Illanta		
Do NOT wake up at the same	wake up at the same time every	
time every day.	day.	
Do NOT go to sleep at the same	Go to sleep at the same time	
time every night	every night	
Commonly over or under sleep.	Average 7-9 hours of sleep a night.	
Take naps in the afternoon and	Avoid naps in the afternoon and	
evening.	evening.	
Drink caffeine in the afternoon	Avoid caffeine in the afternoon	
and evening.	and evening.	
Drink excessive alcohol.	Avoid excessive alcohol.	
Eat large meals before bed.	Avoid large meals before bed.	
use electronics or watch TV in the	Avoid using electronics or watching	
bedroom.	TV in the bedroom.	
Bedroom is NOT ideal for quiet,	Bedroom is kept quiet, relaxing,	
restful sleep. Bedroom is hot.	and cool.	
Do NOT exercise.	Exercise regularly.	
Diet is not healthy.	Maintain a healthy diet.	
Total =	Total =	





# **Lentil Banana Muffins**

These Lentil Banana Muffins make a healthy, high-fiber breakfast or snack. They're kid-friendly and freeze well. And I promise you can't even taste the lentils!

Yield: Makes 12 muffins

## **Ingredients**

- 1 cup cooked lentils (approx ½ cup dry)
- ¾ cup mashed banana
- ¼ cup applesauce
- 1 Tbs flaxseed meal mixed with 3 Tbs water (egg substitute)
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- <sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> cup oats
- <sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> cup white whole wheat flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ cup raisins

#### **Directions**

- 1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
- 2. Add cooked lentils to food processor and process until smooth.
- 3. Add mashed banana, applesauce, flaxseed mixture, sugar and vanilla and process again.
- 4. Transfer mixture to mixing bowl. Add oats, flour, baking soda, and cinnamon and stir until just mixed.
- 5. Stir in raisins.
- 6. Scoop into prepared muffin tins\* and bake 18-20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into center comes clean.



Nutritio	on I	ac	cts
12 servings per Serving size	contair 1/12 r		(59g
Amount per servin	g	1	10
	9	% Daily	Value
Total Fat 1.5g			2%
Saturated Fat 0g			0%
Trans Fat 0g			
Cholesterol 0mg			0%
Sodium 135mg			6%
Total Carbohydrate	22g		8%
Dietary Fiber 3g			11%
Total Sugars 12g			
Includes 4g Ad	ded Suga	ars	8%
Protein 3g			
1.6			
Vitamin D 0mcg			0%
Calcium 64mg			4%
			6%
Potassium 202mg			4%
Iron 1mg	to a daily di	et. 2,000 d	6 4 tina

out

<sup>\*</sup>silicone muffin cups work really well to bake these grease-free