



## Now and Then

John Lennon wrote the song “Now and Then” around 1977 but it was not released until 2023. What is remarkable about this track is that artificial intelligence was used to remove background noise from a cassette recording so that John Lennon’s voice could be combined with new recordings from McCartney and Starr and prior recordings of Harrison on guitar.

The song title is ironic; Lennon would never have predicted a song written back “then” would finally be released in 2023. This edition of our newsletter focuses on the “now and then”: being prepared when planning travel, saving time when prepping healthy meals, making workouts efficient, and even using AI tools to make healthy food choices.

The lyrics to the song say, “and if I make it through, it’s all because of you.” If you spend time investing in your health, someday in the future, you might look back and thank the person you were “then.”

Written by **Brad Dicianno, MD**

## What is AI?

AI, or “Artificial Intelligence” is nothing new. However, recently there has been a lot of buzz about it. Have you ever asked yourself how AI impacts people with disabilities?

When someone says “AI”, what they are referring to is computer programming (like you would see when using an app or a website) that imitates human intelligence. That means that you are interacting with AI anytime a computer appears to make decisions, suggestions, or communicate like a person would. We actually already use AI in our daily lives in many ways. These AI decisions are behind the recommendations we take for articles we read and products we purchase online. We use AI when we call on Alexa and Siri to play a song we like or suggest a recipe. The list goes on and on.

AI can positively impact the lives of people with disabilities by improving access to technology. For example, voice recognition software can empower a person with limited use of their hands to use a computer or phone. You do not necessarily need to be able to read to learn information from books thanks to technology that reads for you. AI can improve communication with auto-captioning as people talk. It can improve movement and mobility with prosthetics that detect muscle movement. Face and object recognition assists people with vision impairments. There is potential for AI to help people with time and task management, language simplification, social guidance... and so on.

There are tons of healthcare apps that use AI and may benefit you. Several are designed to help improve eating habits. One example I think worth knowing about is “My Plate.” It is a healthcare app designed to help you understand your current diet, teach you how much you need from each food group, and help support you in making healthy changes. You can learn more at the website:

<https://www.myplate.gov>.

Written by **Darcie Petrillo PA-C**



## Affordable Connectivity Program Ending

The Affordable Connectivity Program is a Federal Communications Commission program to assist low-income households pay for internet services as well as devices (i.e. laptop or tablet). At present, there is a lack of ongoing funding and the program stopped accepting new applications and enrollments on February 7, 2024. We will keep you updated if we hear about future opportunities to apply for these services.

*Written by Brad Dicianno, MD*

## Don't Sweat it

### No Cook Meals

In the blazing heat of the summer, it can be less than appealing to cook a hot meal in the oven or on the stove. But don't worry – you can make a quick and healthy meal without cooking at all. Below are a few ideas you can use all summer long! This can also be a good option for people whose kitchens do not have accessible ways to safely use the stove or oven alone.

*Written by Jacquelyn Klunk, MS, RDN, LDN*



## Chick Pea Salad

Prep Time: 10 min | Cook Time: 0 mins | Makes: 2 servings (for meal-sized portion)

### Ingredients

- 2 ¼ cups diced cucumbers (partially peeled)
- 1 cup tomato (seeded and diced)
- ¼ cup red onion (diced)
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 pinch black pepper (to taste)
- 15 ounce can reduced sodium chickpeas (rinsed and drained)
- 2 oz chopped mozzarella cheese (for ease, you can use 2 light string cheese sticks)

### Directions

- Combine all the ingredients together and toss well.

### Notes

- You can use no-salt added canned diced tomatoes (1 cup = ½ of a 15 ounce can) instead of the fresh tomato, but the flavor will be more mild.
- You can use 1 shallot in place of ¼ cup red onion
- You can use the pulse function of a food processor or a vegetable chopper to make cutting the vegetables even quicker, especially if you aren't comfortable using a knife.

Adapted from Skinnytaste: <https://www.skinnytaste.com/chickpea-salad/>

## Salmon Wrap

Prep Time: 5 min | Cook Time: 0 mins

Makes: 1 serving (1 wrap)

### Ingredients

- 1 (2.5-ounce) pouch salmon (or half of a 5-ounce can boneless skinless salmon in water, drained)
- 1 teaspoon olive oil-based mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ½ cup coleslaw mix or broccoli slaw mix
- 1 (8-inch) whole-wheat tortilla or wrap

### Directions

1. In a small bowl, stir together the salmon, mayonnaise, and mustard.
2. Transfer the salmon mixture to the middle of the tortilla or wrap, then top with the coleslaw mix or broccoli slaw.
3. Roll into a wrap, folding over the sides to seal the ends.
4. Serve right away.

### Notes

- The salmon mixture will keep in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. Consider making a larger batch for lunches throughout the week. When ready to serve, add to the tortilla(s) with the slaw and roll into a wrap.
- The salmon mixture can also be served on a whole-wheat pita, sandwich thin, or sliced bread.

Recipe source: VA Nutrition Cooking with Ease cookbook.



## Crunchy Thai Chicken Salad

Prep Time: 10 min | Cook Time: 0 mins

Makes: 6 servings Serving Size: 1 ½ cups

### Ingredients

- 1 (14-ounce) bag slaw mix (about 6 cups shredded cabbage)
- 1 red or orange bell pepper, thinly sliced (about 1 cup)
- 2 cups cooked chicken, cubed or shredded (can use canned or rotisserie chicken)
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro (optional)
- ½ cup peanut butter or other nut butter
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 ½ tablespoons reduced sodium soy sauce
- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 ½ tablespoons honey
- ½ cup chopped peanuts or cashews

### Directions

1. Place the shredded cabbage or slaw mix in a large bowl. Add the bell pepper, cooked chicken and cilantro.
2. In a small bowl or jar with a lid, combine the peanut butter, lime juice, soy sauce, rice vinegar and honey. Whisk or shake until well combined.
3. Add the sauce to the vegetable and chicken mixture and stir well.
4. Top with chopped nuts and toss to combine.
5. Serve cold. Refrigerate leftovers for up to 3 days.

Recipe Source: VA Nutrition website, adapted from The Lean Green Bean Blog. Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO



## Full Body Fitness

We are coming into the warm summer months which can often lead us to want to get outside as much as possible, whether it is hanging out with friends and family, or experiencing nature, public events, concerts, and my personal favorite, outdoor exercise! These months are obviously great for fun experiences and to relax with loved ones, however we can sometimes get too relaxed and fall off the rails with our fitness and nutrition goals. To stay on track, it is important to remember why we start a lifestyle change in the first place. Remembering our “why,” setting up a game plan, tracking changes, and being aware of our wins and losses throughout the lifelong journey of health and wellness is vital to a healthy, strong life!

If you are anything like me, you probably have a favorite exercise or favorite days to train, but you probably also have exercises that you don’t necessarily enjoy doing but know you should be doing them. Often, remembering the importance of why we do what we do, and having a solid plan in place can help us get through those days we feel less than enthused about “sticking to the program.” We aren’t always going to be in the mood to work out, but completing a workout can give you a sense of accomplishment.

Movement is the best medicine! Below is a sample workout that involves every major muscle group in the body. Do not be discouraged if you are physically unable

to do a certain movement because you can’t move those muscles. Focus on what you CAN control, and do not worry about what you cannot control. Give this workout a try and make sure to track your results so you can go back to it later and see how you improved as well as the areas you might need to improve upon.

### Full Body Workout Program:

**Do 3 sets, 10-15 reps, 2 minutes rest between sets for each exercise**

- **Chest Press**  
(Resistance band, Dumbbell, Machine, or Barbell)
- **Horizontal Row or Bent Over Row**  
(Resistance Bands, Dumbbells, or Machine)
- **Biceps Curls**  
(Resistance Bands, Dumbbells, or Machine)
- **Triceps Extensions**  
(Resistance Bands, Dumbbells, or Machine)
- **Lateral Raise**  
(Resistance Bands, Dumbbells, or Machine)
- **Bodyweight Squats**  
(or Figure 4 Stretch & Seated Leg Extensions)

*Written by Dan McCoy MS, CPT, PLY*



## Going to an Amusement Park?

### Be Prepared for Accessibility

If you are traveling to a park this summer, you may want to read the accessibility information on their website and contact the park in advance.

### Many parks offer **Accessibility Services** such as:

- Rental wheelchairs, scooters, and strollers
- Passes that allow boarding of rides with caregivers or mobility devices, or that allow boarding at specific times
- Sign language interpreters or amplification devices for shows
- Videos that help you plan your day
- Video chatting with staff for pre-registration
- Quiet break areas
- Braille maps
- Dietary modifications
- Guides for people with cognitive impairments. These can help you understand what certain rides are like (noise, darkness, etc.). Here is an [example](#)
- Information about service animals which are sometimes allowed on some gentle rides like a train or carousel
- Disposable ear protection

### Travel Planning Tips:

- Certain rides may not accommodate braces, prostheses, casts, or oxygen tanks.
- Locate the accessible restrooms, adult changing stations, accessible parking, and first aid stations in advance.
- Bring a safety bracelet or nametag.
- Plan a meeting location in case someone gets lost.
- Ask about availability of accessible pool lifts.

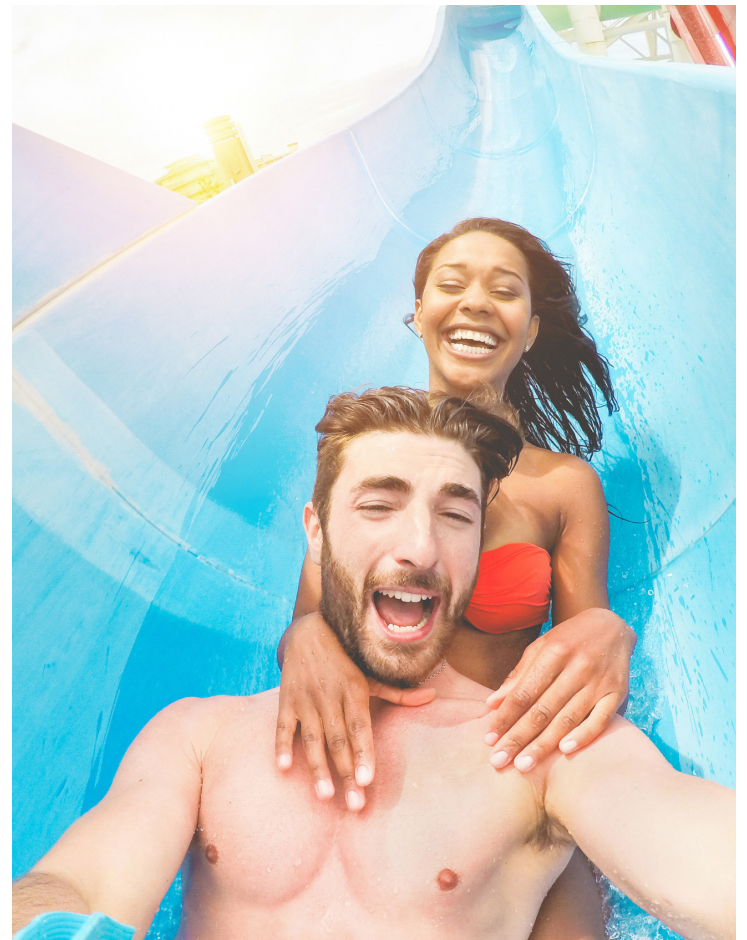
## Accessibility Information for Specific Parks

- [Kennywood Park \(West Mifflin, PA\)](#)
- [Sandcastle Water Park \(West Homestead, PA\)](#)
- [DelGrosso's Park & Laguna Splash \(Tipton, PA\)](#)
- [Waldameer & Water World \(Erie, PA\)](#)
- [Idlewild & Soak Zoan \(Ligoneir, PA\)](#)
- [Sesame Place \(Langhorne, PA\)](#)
- [Disney World \(Orlando, FL\)](#)
- [Disney Land \(Anaheim, CA\)](#)
- [Cedar Point \(Sandusky, OH\)](#)

## Information for People with Ostomies

Ostomies are surgically-created openings (stoma) that help with eliminating urine or stool from the body. People who have ostomies often wonder if they can go to pool facilities or water parks. The answer is yes! United Ostomy Associations of America published a "Frequently Asked Question" document at this [link](#). The document explains how people can use these facilities, what measures a person can take to maintain a good seal on the pouch, and what would happen if the pouch leaks.

*Written by Brad Dicianno, MD and Amy Kiska, BSW*





**SPINA BIFIDA  
ASSOCIATION**

## 2024 Spina Bifida Clinical Care Meeting

May 31 - Jun 1, 2024, Sacramento, CA

The Spina Bifida Clinical Care Meeting is a unique forum that focuses on new and evolving aspects of medical care for people with Spina Bifida. This year it will be held in conjunction with UC Davis Health. The UPMC Adult Spina Bifida Clinic team will be attending and presenting on our unique model of care delivery that integrates peers as part of the care team. For more information about the meeting, visit: <https://www.eventcreate.com/e/2024ccm>

*Written by Brad Dicianno, MD*

## SBAWP Events

**Jun 23, 2024**

**11th Annual Afternoon JamFest**

Jergel's Rhythm Grille

**Jun 30-Jul 6, 2024**

**Adult Camp - Camp Guyasuta**

**Jul 29, 2024**

**36th Annual John L. Moroney III Memorial Golf Classic**

Hickory Heights Golf Club

**Sep 21, 2024**

**9th Annual Noll-Spratt Golf Scramble**

Beaver Valley Golf Club

**Sep 27-28, 2024**

**Adult Retreat - Camp Guyasuta**

**Nov 9, 2024**

**11th Annual Girlfriends for Good Purse Bash**

Divine Parish – St. Ferdinand's Oldenski Hall, Cranberry Twp

**Dec 6-8, 2024**

**Adult Retreat Dec 6-8 - Camp Guyasuta**

For more information, visit

<https://sbawp.org/events/>



## Do you have ideas for our Newsletter?

If you have particular topics you'd like to see in our newsletter, please reach out and let us know.

### Contact us

**UPMC Adult Spina Bifida Clinic**

UPMC Mercy Pavilion

1622 Locust Street, 4th Floor PM&R Clinic

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Phone: 412-232-8902

Check out our other newsletters and clinic information at: [UPMC.com/SpinaBifida](https://UPMC.com/SpinaBifida)

## Disability Pride Pittsburgh

The Disability Pride Festival will be held in Pittsburgh on August 24, 2024. For more details, visit

<https://www.disabilitypridepa.org/>

## SBA "Join the Conversation" Zoom for adults with Spina Bifida

<https://fb.me/e/2gWe3dbFU> & <https://bit.ly/2SpBEom>

First and third Thursday of every month at 7pm ET



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