

PURSUIT

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Florida Blue 
BetterYou 

A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You



Giving the Gifts that Matter Most

The greatest gifts of the holiday season don't get wrapped in pretty paper and tied up with ribbon. They come wrapped inside time spent with family and friends. And they're punctuated with the laughter of young and old alike, the love shared, and the memories made.

But it takes some effort to appreciate these gifts. Life is always ready to place distractions in the way, and that usually means stress. If you pause, you can recognize the things that don't matter in the long run. Then you can refocus on relationships, acts of kindness and spending time with the people you love.

Just remember that holidays are better together. That's true even if "being together" means connecting by phone, Zoom, FaceTime or What's App.

As you enjoy the holiday season with family and friends, it's vital to take steps to ensure you remain healthy. Wash your hands often; bundle up to stay warm; get vaccinated; and stay active. And if you eat healthy foods during the week, you can enjoy festive foods without beating yourself up! These healthy habits can help you and your loved ones create memories that can last a lifetime.

Resource: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

Does 'Merry' Seem Brittle this Season?

If you're struggling with the holiday season, you're not alone. It's natural to long for the large family gatherings of pre-COVID times that may still be out of reach. When home-baked cookies and pies fill holiday table, it's hard to opt for celery sticks and carrots. Or you could be missing a person you care about.

Be sure to make your mental well-being a priority. Last month's issue mentioned a webinar on staying positive during the holidays. If you missed it, don't worry. You can catch the recording of Dr. Kim Sundling's "Resilience During the Holidays" by clicking [here](#).

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Do More, Give More with Less

Helping others – whether it's volunteering, a donation or time spent with someone – is good for your health. When you feel good emotionally, it lowers your blood pressure and stress levels. Your self-esteem goes up and depression can go down. Helping others can increase your happiness and may mean a longer life.

But how do you do more, give more with less?

One way to free up your time is to take stock of your things. Determine what is important and what isn't. Then ask yourself how much time,

money and effort you spend maintaining non-essentials. Do they play an important role in your life? Or are they distracting you, causing you to neglect life and your inner self?

Letting go of things that don't matter can be helpful. If you sell them, it can put money in your pocket. If you give them away, you can brighten someone's day. And it can give you back the time, money and effort you spent on maintenance.

With a more simplified life, one can do more and give more. That means more time to spend with family and friends. Or you can volunteer in your community. More importantly, you can focus on yourself and what's important to you. Giving



more can lead to greater self-esteem, lower depression and lower stress. Your mental and physical health will thank you!

■ ■ **We make a living by what we get.**

We make a life by what we give. ■ ■

-- Winston S. Churchill

Resources: clevelandclinic.org; medicinenet.com; mequilibrium.com

Crab-Stuffed Mushrooms (Serves 8)

Ingredients:

- 24 fresh cremini mushrooms, stems removed
- ½ cup chopped hearts of palm
- 5 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh chives
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh tarragon
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ¾ teaspoon Creole seasoning
- 1 clove garlic, grated
- 8 ounces fresh lump crabmeat, drained and picked over
- 3 tablespoons whole-wheat panko breadcrumbs

- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- Lemon wedges for serving

Directions

Preheat to 425 degrees with rack in upper oven. Place mushroom caps, gill-sides down, on a rimmed baking sheet. Roast until the mushrooms begin to release their juices and are tender when pierced with a paring knife, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, combine hearts of palm, mayonnaise, chives, tarragon, lemon juice, Creole seasoning and garlic in a medium bowl; stir until well blended. Add crab; stir gently to combine.

Adjust oven temperature to low broil. Turn the mushrooms over and stuff each mushroom cap with



1 tablespoon of the crab mixture. Combine panko, oil and salt in a small bowl; sprinkle evenly over the mushrooms. Broil until the crab mixture is warmed through and the breadcrumbs are crisp and deeply browned, about 5 minutes. Transfer the mushrooms to a platter; serve with lemon wedges.

Recipe courtesy of Eatingwell.com; for nutritional information click [here](#).

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