MARCH IS...

**Endometriosis Awareness Month**

About 5 million American women suffer from Endometriosis, a condition in which the tissue that lines the uterus grows outside the uterus, most often in ovaries, fallopian tubes, and the outer surface of the uterus. It is most common in women in their 30s and 40s.

Symptoms include:

- Pain—painful period cramps, pain in the lower back and pelvis, pain during or after sex, intestinal pain, painful bowel movements or urination during your period
- Bleeding or spotting between periods
- Difficulty getting pregnant
- Stomach problems, such as diarrhea, constipation, bloating, or nausea, especially during your period

You can't prevent endometriosis, but lowering estrogen levels can help. Consider:

- Hormonal birth control methods
- Regular exercise—lower body fat helps decrease the amount of estrogen circulating in the body
- Avoiding large amounts of alcohol and caffeine.

If you have symptoms of Endometriosis, talk with your doctor. [Information adapted from - http://womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/endometriosis.html]

CATCH SOME Z's...

**Sleepfoundation.org** reports that two-thirds of women experience a sleep problem at least a few nights each week and as many as half report waking up feeling un-refreshed. Not only does lack of sleep lead to more daytime sleepiness and accidents, it also can increase the likelihood of developing heart disease, diabetes, and depression. Consider these healthy sleep habits:

- Take a warm bath or shower before bed
- Avoid heavy meals, caffeine, alcohol and nicotine before bed
- Keep electronic devices out of the bedroom (and turn off the TV)
- Keep consistent bedtimes, waketimes and routines
- Avoid daytime napping

**EAT WELL, FEEL WELL**

**Sweet Potato Mac and Cheese**

Mac and Cheese is a crowd pleaser, and like most things that taste great, it’s full of fat and calories. Here’s an option that uses sweet potato as a base for the sauce—it’s packed with fiber, potassium, and calcium, but is low in cholesterol.

2 cups whole-wheat elbow noodles
1 medium sweet potato
2 tablespoons flour
1 small clove garlic, minced
1 1/4 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
Salt and pepper
1/2 cup frozen peas, thawed (optional)
3 tablespoons whole-wheat breadcrumbs
1 teaspoon olive oil

Position a rack in upper third of oven; preheat broiler. Coat a 2-quart broiler-safe baking dish with cooking spray. Cook noodles, drain, set aside. Prick sweet potato with a fork in several places. Microwave on High for 7 to 10 minutes. Over medium heat, whisk milk, flour and garlic in a large saucepan, until steaming and hot, but not boiling. Remove from heat. Scoop sweet potato flesh into the steaming milk and combine well (puree in a blender if you have). Add cheese, mustard, salt and pepper and stir until the cheese melts. Add the pasta and peas to the sauce and stir to coat. Transfer to the prepared baking dish. Combine breadcrumbs and oil and sprinkle on the pasta. Broil on the upper rack until the top is lightly browned and crispy, 1 to 2 minutes. [Recipe from www.eatingwell.com]

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Or call Iwona Juskiewicz: (585) 275-3687