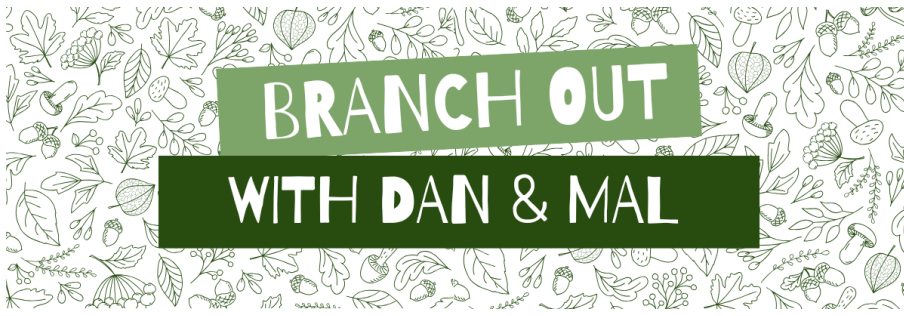




Welcome to Branch Out with Dan & Mal, a weekly newsletter on all things health, wellbeing, and wellness at Midland!

OAKay, Let's Talk...

Mallory's Report:

What a week! Between an onslaught of sore throats, soaring emotions, and academic overwhelm, it's been a rollercoaster ride. The highlight of my week was sitting in front of the horse barn looking out at the students riding horses in the arena with a perfect view of Grass Mountain in the background (shoutout to Quinby for being great company). Amidst the feeling of acceleration as we near MIDterms and break, it was wonderful to take an hour away from my office to be out on the property. I'm hoping to find more moments like that next week.

Dan's Report:

Having worked at independent boarding schools over the past 22 years across the US, I've become accustomed to some patterns that can be somewhat universal. One of these patterns is the surging of stress, both communally and/or individually. This stretch of the school year has felt noticeably heavier, trickier, and less predictable. From crisis response/management to academic intensity, the ongoing college process, and now many months just living/working/playing together, sometimes it all converges in unique ways that most of us feel on some level.

When this happens there are several ways to respond, and I just want to touch on one that can be an impactful starting point. Humans tend to fall into a pattern of defensiveness intimately known to most of us as avoidance or isolation. While time alone is very healthy in doses, it can quickly become dark and narrow, in perspective-taking and thought patterns. When this occurs it can become a trap that nobody around us notices. This is when community is needed. In the week to come, take a moment each day to notice those around you and ask them, "Hey, are you good?", or "How've you been doing today?". Don't just listen to their words, but feel their energy and notice their expressions. Communication leads to connection, and connection can provide light for someone stuck within the dark and narrow. Let's lift each other UP!

In a Nutshell -- Deep Dive of the Week

This past Wednesday I finished my Wilderness EMT training in Joshua Tree National Park. It was a blast and I feel rich in knowledge! One of the most interesting tidbits I gleaned from the course was the difference between dehydration and hyponatremia. Most people only ever think about the former, but the latter can be just as dangerous, and it's caused by drinking too much water. For our deep dive today we'll break down the differences and how you can avoid both.

We've all heard the refrain that hydration is key, but it also matters how you're hydrating. Proper hydration is necessary for good health and helps us tolerate heat, altitude, and cold. Imagine you're on a ten-mile hike in the blazing sun and forgot to pack water. You might start feeling thirsty, weak, and develop a headache. As things escalate, you may get lightheaded, irritable, and notice dark, concentrated urine. **This is dehydration, and it's not good.**

To address dehydration, drink water until you're no longer thirsty. Plain water works fine for rehydration, but adding electrolytes or some salt won't hurt. Prioritize water or electrolyte drinks over coffee, alcohol, or tea when you're trying to catch up.

Now imagine the opposite scenario: you're on that same ten-mile hike, but you've been religiously drinking liter after liter of plain water. You develop a headache, unusual fatigue, and notice swelling or bloating. If you keep drinking, you may even vomit. **This is hyponatremia, a condition where excessive water intake dilutes your blood sodium levels.** Your body is telling you it has too much water and not enough salt.

For mild hyponatremia, the treatment is simple: stop drinking fluids, rest until symptoms subside, and eat salty snacks. Severe symptoms, including confusion, altered mental status, or seizures, require emergency medical care, whether you're in the frontcountry or the backcountry.

Both ends of the spectrum are bad for you. When you're out on the trail, listen to your thirst rather than forcing fluids, and balance your water intake with electrolytes and salty snacks. Your body usually knows what it needs.

Acorny Ending

We hope you make some time to jump for joy this weekend! This may or may not be foreshadowing that only students that read this newsletter to the end will

understand.

We're on your team—and we're rooting for you.



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