

Employee Newsletter & Resources

May Is Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental illnesses are some of the most common health conditions in the United States. In fact, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that more than 50% of the population will be diagnosed with a mental illness at some point. Your mental health can change over time due to various factors.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, so check in on yourself and others. Along with increased transparency and empathy around mental health, new resources, such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline), are also available. Americans can dial 988 for a direct connection to care for anyone experiencing mental health-related distress, including thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis, or other emotional struggles. You can also call the Lifeline if you're worried about a loved one who may need emergency support.



Boosting Your Daily Mental Health

Mental Health Awareness Month, observed every May, is a time to raise awareness and break the stigma about mental health, and support people with mental illness. In fact, more than half of adults in the United States will be diagnosed with a mental illness—a variety of conditions that affect one's mood, behavior, feelings or thinking—at some point in their life.

1 in 5 Americans experience mental illness each year.

Mental health plays a huge role in your overall health and well-being. It affects everything, including how you think, feel and act, and helps determine how you make healthy choices and cope with stress. Because it's such a crucial component of your wellness, focusing on maintaining or improving your mental health is important. Here are five ways to boost or prioritize your mental health every day:

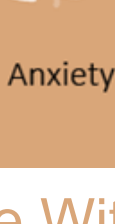
- **Express gratitude.** Taking five minutes daily to write down the things you are grateful for has been proven to lower stress levels and can help you achieve a more positive mindset.

- **Get moving.** Exercising regularly can benefit your brain function, reduce anxiety and improve your self-image.
- **Spend time outdoors.** Getting outside, especially when it's sunny, can greatly improve your mood, which benefits your mental health.
- **Be kind.** Helping others and being kind not only helps the recipient, but can also benefit your mental health. Simply holding the door for someone or giving a compliment can go a long way.
- **Get a good night's sleep.** Fatigued individuals typically experience drowsiness, mood changes, loss of energy and appetite, headaches, and a lack of motivation, concentration and alertness. Strive for seven to eight hours of sleep a night.

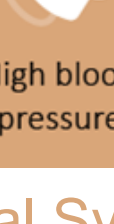
Seek help from your primary care doctor or a mental health professional if you're concerned about your mental health. If you need mental health-related crisis support, or are worried about someone else, the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available by calling or texting 988 and chatting online at 988lifeline.org.

The Health Risks of Coffee Consumption

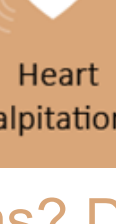
Coffee in moderation is reasonable, but excessive amounts are linked to the following health risks:



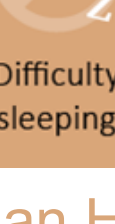
Anxiety



High blood pressure



Heart palpitations



Difficulty sleeping

Caffeine Withdrawal Symptoms? Decaf Can Help

According to Drive Research, about 75% of Americans drink coffee every day, and half of the surveyed adults drink three to five cups daily. Unfortunately, drinking too much coffee may have negative side effects on your health. But if you're reducing your coffee intake, you may experience caffeine withdrawal symptoms, making it more challenging to cut back. Common symptoms include headache, fatigue and irritability.

Fortunately, new research from the University of Sydney has a tip for people trying to drink less coffee. Researchers found drinking a cup of high-quality decaffeinated coffee temporarily reduces withdrawal symptoms. The study noted that the cup of decaffeinated coffee should taste like the real deal to have an impact. The point was that some study participants were unaware they were drinking decaf. This is due to conditioning. Many people associate coffee and its surrounding stimuli (e.g., taste and smell). Therefore, a quality cup of decaffeinated coffee can offer those same experiences without caffeine.

If you have concerns about your coffee consumption, talk to your doctor.

Improving Your Relationship With Your Phone

Smartphones have made our lives so much easier, but they can also impact our physical and mental well-being. To build a healthier relationship with your phone, try the following strategies:

- **Turn off notifications.** Disable notifications for social media apps or mute group chats to avoid being tempted by distractions.
- **Check at specific times.** Create achievable boundaries by checking your phone at certain times or leaving your phone in another room.
- **Avoid use before bed.** Try to cut down on phone use in bed or right before sleeping. The bright screen can signal to your body that it's time to be awake, so you may have trouble falling asleep or experience lower sleep quality.

Take Charge of Your Health

Breathe to Relieve Anxiety



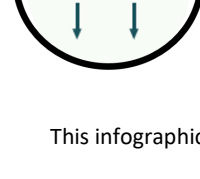
Equal Breathing

From a sitting or lying-down position, inhale for the same amount of time as you're exhaling. Try using a four-second count and be mindful of your lungs filling and emptying.



Mindful Breathing

Focus on your breathing and bring your mind's attention to the present. Don't let your mind drift.



Slow Breathing

You usually take 10 to 20 breaths per minute, so strive to take four to 10 breaths per minute.



Resonant Breathing

Lie down and close your eyes. Gently breathe in through your nose for six seconds and slowly exhale for six seconds. Try this for 10 minutes. The goal is to take long slow breaths to get into a relaxed state.

This infographic is intended for informational purposes only and is not intended to be exhaustive, nor should any discussion or opinions be construed as professional advice. Readers should contact a health professional for appropriate advice.

MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

May 2023



Elevating Your Psychological Resiliency

Psychological resilience is the ability to mentally withstand or adapt to uncertainty and adversity. Building resilience to life's inevitable changes and challenges can help you cope with and manage stressors. It can also help protect you from various adverse mental health symptoms. Health care professionals are noticing stress and anxiety developing at a rapid rate, and because May is Mental Health Awareness Month, now is a great time to check in on your feelings and thoughts.

Resilience isn't developed overnight; it's built over time and shaped by personal experiences. Just like building muscle, elevating your psychological resilience requires commitment. Consider the following strategies:

- **Adopt a healthy lifestyle.** For a holistic approach to maintaining physical wellness, you should prioritize sleep, eat healthily, stay hydrated and engage in physical activity regularly.
- **Practice self-care.** Get into the habit of caring for yourself and doing activities that make you happy. With the rise in mental health issues, it's important to prioritize yourself now more than ever.
- **Maintain an optimistic outlook.** Adjusting your thought process and reframing any negative thoughts can be beneficial. Own your negative thoughts; they can lose their power when you say them out loud.
- **Review your employee benefits.** Your employer may offer mental well-being support and resources, so check what's available in your health plan.

Make your psychological resilience a priority this month. A good way to start is by focusing on doing at least one thing every day for yourself that supports your overall well-being.

If you have any concerns, contact a health care professional or use the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline by calling 800-662-HELP (4357).

Self-care and Your Mental Health

Self-care is the practice of intentionally engaging in activities that positively impact mental, physical and emotional well-being. This practice has a direct correlation to mental health. For instance, self-care techniques can help create healthy coping mechanisms for unavoidable stressors in everyday life. In turn, practicing these techniques can soothe negative symptoms of mental illness or help you relax.

It's important to note that not everyone practices self-care the same way. To effectively practice self-care for your mental health, self-awareness is important; it can help you recognize when you're experiencing certain emotions or worsened symptoms of a mental illness. Once you know your common triggers and symptoms, you can find the best self-care techniques.

Here are some ideas for how to practice self-care:

- Eat a balanced diet and stay hydrated. Not only do the foods and drinks you consume impact your mood, but they also fuel your body with the nutrients it needs.
- Prioritize movement; physical activity can help you cope with stress. It's even better to do the activity outside, as spending time in nature can boost your mental health.
- Practice healthy sleep habits (e.g., stick to a schedule, get enough quality sleep and avoid devices before bedtime) and make time for rest and recharging.
- Connect regularly with friends and family who encourage and support you.
- Pamper yourself by watching your favorite TV show, taking a bubble bath or reading a book.
- Find ways to relax, including meditating, practicing yoga, breathing exercises or journaling.
- Set self-care goals and priorities to help you better understand what triggers certain symptoms and what coping mechanisms work best for managing your mental health.

Self-care looks different for every person since it involves doing things you enjoy or need. The goal is to try to do something you enjoy every day. While self-care is not a cure for mental illness, it can help you understand what triggers certain symptoms and what coping mechanisms best manage your mental health. If you have concerns, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Pasta Frittata With Peas

May 2023 Recipe

Makes: 5 servings



Ingredients

4 ounces spaghetti (whole grain, regular or thin)
4 eggs (lightly beaten)
A dash of nutmeg (optional)
¼ tsp. black pepper
¼ tsp. salt (optional)
¾ cup shredded cheese (e.g., mozzarella, Monterey Jack or cheddar)
1 cup peas

Nutritional information for 1 serving

Calories	222
Total fat	9 g
Saturated fat	5 g
Cholesterol	165 mg
Sodium	249 mg
Carbohydrate	22 g
Dietary fiber	5 g
Total sugars	2 g
Added sugars included	0 g
Protein	14 g

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Cook the pasta according to the package directions. Drain and place in a 9-inch pie plate sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.
3. Combine the eggs, seasonings, cheese and peas. Spread the egg mixture over the top of the spaghetti so that the mixture covers the frittata and some of it sinks between the spaghetti strands.
4. Bake for 20 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Let the frittata stand for five minutes before serving.

EMPOWERING EMPLOYERS
STRENGTHENING EMPLOYEES