

# AUGUST 2024

## Is Gastroparesis Awareness Month

Gastroparesis is a condition that affects the muscles of the stomach, preventing proper stomach emptying. It can cause indigestion, pain, bloating, heartburn and blood sugar fluctuations. Nearly 1 in 3 people who have diabetes develop gastroparesis, but it can also arise following surgery, the use of certain medications or in association with another illness.

August is Gastroparesis Awareness Month. You can help prevent or manage gastroparesis with healthy eating choices, such as eating small, nutritious meals and staying hydrated. Use this month as a reminder to take an active role in your health.

Contact us for more information regarding gastroparesis.

Live Well,  
Work Well



August 2024

## The Health Benefits of Camping



Millions of Americans enjoy camping each year, especially as temperatures rise and days get longer in the summer. Moreover, interest among noncampers has been growing steadily for years. According to a 2024 report by camping platform Dyrt, more than 20 million Americans have gone camping for the first time since 2021, including 5.5 million first-time campers just in 2023.

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**Dyrt revealed that nearly 2 out of 3 Americans say they are somewhat interested in camping in the next three years.**

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Camping has seen a resurgence in popularity as more people seek ways to unplug from their daily routines and reconnect with nature. Beyond the scenic views and adventures, camping offers the following wellness benefits that can significantly enhance your physical and mental health:

- **Increased physical activity**—Camping naturally encourages movement. Activities such as hiking, setting up camp or gathering firewood provide a full-body workout.
- **Boosted immune system**—Fresh air improves respiratory function and boosts the immune system. Sunlight helps the body produce vitamin D, which is crucial for bone health and immune support.
- **Better sleep**—Natural light regulates the body's circadian rhythm, which can help reset sleep patterns. This can lead to deeper, restorative sleep so you wake up feeling refreshed.
- **Reduced stress**—The calming effect of natural surroundings helps lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol.
- **Enhanced mood**—Exposure to green spaces and natural light can improve mood and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. Being outdoors can also trigger the release of endorphins, the body's natural mood enhancers.
- **Elevated mental clarity**—Camping provides an opportunity to disconnect from technology and daily distractions, allowing for mindfulness.
- **Heightened creativity**—Immersing yourself in nature can stimulate creativity and encourage problem-solving.

Whether you're a seasoned camping pro or an eager newcomer, it's a good idea to review camping safety before heading outdoors. Also, always strive to leave things better than you found them so others can enjoy the beauty of nature as you have.

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## Drowning Rates on the Rise

After two decades of decline, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that accidental drowning rates are increasing in the United States. According to the latest data, more than 4,500 people died due to drowning each year from 2020–22, which is 500 more individuals per year compared to 2019.

Drowning has long been the leading cause of death for preschool-age children. However, it's important to note that roughly 15% of adults—40 million people—don't know how to swim, and more than half of adults have never taken a swimming lesson. The new CDC study found that, in general, many Americans lack the skills they need to stay safe in the water. Regardless of age, it's important to learn basic swimming and water safety skills. Check out the infographic below for water safety tips to help prevent drowning.

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## Water Safety Tips

- **Learn how to swim.**
  - **Know how to perform CPR.**
  - **Wear life jackets when boating and swimming.**
  - **Avoid alcohol during water activities.**
  - **Supervise children around water.**
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## Are You Up to Date on Your Immunizations?

August is recognized as National Immunization Awareness Month to promote the importance of immunizations at all life stages. Vaccination protects against severe illnesses and complications of vaccine-preventable diseases, including measles, polio, hepatitis, meningococcal meningitis and COVID-19.

Vaccinations are so vital that the CDC offers immunization schedules to help you understand if you or others are up to date on shots:

- [Infants and children](#) (birth to age 6)
- [Preteens and teens](#) (ages 7-18)
- [Adults](#) (ages 19 and older)
- [Pregnant women](#) (before, during and after pregnancy)

Talk to your doctor for more information on vaccines or to learn more about which ones you may need.

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## Broiled Tomatoes and Cheese

Makes: 3 servings

### Ingredients

- 3 large firm tomatoes
- 8 oz. low-fat cottage cheese
- ½ tsp. dried basil
- ⅛ tsp. black pepper
- 3 Tbsp. breadcrumbs
- Cooking spray

### Preparations

1. Wash the tomatoes and cut them in half.
2. Mix the cottage cheese, basil and black pepper.
3. Spread cheese on the tomato halves.
4. Sprinkle the halves with bread crumbs and spray them with cooking spray.
5. Spray the broiler pan with cooking spray. Place the prepared tomatoes on a pan and broil for about 10 minutes.

### Nutritional Information (per serving)

- Total calories: 127

- Total fat: 3 g
- Protein: 11 g
- Sodium: 307 mg
- Carbohydrate: 15 g
- Dietary fiber: 3 g
- Saturated fat: 1 g
- Total sugars: 8 g

*Source: MyPlate*

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[b\_disclaimer]

# MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

AUGUST 2024



## Zoning Out: The Signs, Causes and When to Get Help

“Zoning out” is a mild and common form of dissociation. Nearly everyone does it from time to time. Zoning out can serve as a coping mechanism when you are bored, tired, distracted, stressed, anxious or dealing with a difficulty in life.

Zoning out is like your brain switching into autopilot mode. During this short period, you may feel disconnected from the things happening around you and briefly forget what you’re doing or where you are. Daydreaming is a common way of zoning out.

Zoning out is a normal brain function but has pros and cons. It can offer a brief mental break from external pressures or stresses, allowing the mind to recharge. However, zoning out can lead to errors or accidents during critical tasks. For example, it could impact productivity and impair workplace performance. Also, zoning out in social settings could impact interpersonal communication and relationships, potentially leading to misunderstandings.

## Getting Back in the Zone

Consider these strategies to help you refocus and not zone out during less-than-ideal times:

- Track when you’re zoning out to help identify any patterns of mind-wandering. With that awareness, you can proactively try to change them.
- Ground yourself by breathing in a strong fragrance, enjoying a hard candy with an intense flavor (e.g., sour, peppermint and cinnamon), or running cold or warm water over your hands.
- Take short, frequent breaks during the day to stretch, rest and fuel up with a snack to increase concentration.

It’s essential to seek medical attention if zoning out involves repeat episodes or occurs for more than a few minutes. Memory loss, odd or uncharacteristic behavior, loss of bowel or bladder control, and injury are also red flags. Mental health professionals can offer personal guidance and support when exploring the causes of zoning out and developing coping techniques.

## Social Media and the Risks of Self-diagnosis

More individuals are using technology and social media platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok, to self-diagnose mental health conditions. While awareness and understanding of mental health issues are important, certain exposure to information on these platforms can be harmful. Getting an accurate diagnosis is key to mental health treatment and recovery.

Self-diagnosis can be a step toward taking responsibility for your mental health and overall well-being. As such, seeking information about mental health on social media has potential benefits. Learning about mental health conditions and hearing how others experience them can be helpful. As a result, you may pay more attention to yourself and how you’re feeling. In general, consuming content about mental health concerns or conditions can destigmatize them, normalizing the topics and offering a starting point to learn more about mental health.

Conversely, there are risks associated with consuming online content and self-

diagnosing. Just as easy as it is for influencers, celebrities and others to share content on social media, it’s even easier to spread misinformation or misconceptions about mental health diagnoses. Keep in mind that the DSM-5 TR, the standard classification of mental disorders used by U.S. mental health professionals, lists nearly 300 mental illnesses. Each diagnosis varies from person to person, which makes interpreting mental health information and diagnosing accurately even more challenging. An incorrect self-diagnosis can lead to several issues, such as focusing on the diagnostic label instead of coping strategies or solutions.

## Takeaway

Although social media is not meant to replace professional health care, these platforms can help destigmatize mental illnesses and increase your mental health literacy. However, self-diagnosis is no replacement for professional help. Contact a qualified medical provider for a personalized diagnosis and guidance.





August 2024

# In the Loop

## The Impact of SCOTUS Overruling Chevron Deference

On June 28, 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo* and *Relentless Inc. v. Department of Commerce*. The Court overruled its 1984 decision in *Chevron, U.S.A. Inc. v. Natural Resources Defense Council Inc.*, which held that courts should defer to federal agencies to interpret ambiguities and gaps in the laws that the agencies implement (known as *Chevron* deference). Congress has the authority to pass laws that govern employers, and federal agencies have the authority to enforce those laws. To fill in any gaps or to remedy ambiguities, federal agencies may issue more detailed guidance on how the laws should be interpreted and applied. For example, agencies may publish informal guidance, issue opinions or publish formal regulations. Under the doctrine of *Chevron* deference, courts are directed to defer to such agency guidance where the statute is ambiguous and the agency's interpretation is reasonable.

**Federal employment agencies, including the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, OSHA, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the National Labor Relations Board, have relied on *Chevron* deference in issuing and defending agency interpretations.**

The Supreme Court overruled *Chevron* deference in a 6-3 decision. In its opinion, the Supreme Court held that the Administrative Procedure Act requires courts to exercise their independent judgment in interpreting the law, and consequently, "courts may not defer to

an agency interpretation of the law simply because the statute is ambiguous." However, the Supreme Court noted that the holdings of prior cases that relied on *Chevron* deference remain lawful and may not be overturned solely because they relied on *Chevron*.

### Impact on the Workplace

*Chevron* deference is a landmark administrative law decision. It has had a meaningful influence on the interpretation and enforcement of employment laws. In light of the Supreme Court's ruling, federal agencies will not be able to rely on *Chevron* deference in existing litigation, including lawsuits that have been filed to challenge the DOL's independent contractor and overtime rules, and may be subject to additional legal challenges regarding existing rules. Federal agencies may also issue fewer regulations and take more moderate positions in the regulations they issue, and they may face greater difficulty in addressing policy issues.

From an employee perspective, this decision signals a possible major change in regulatory power. It has the potential to impact agencies that regulate the workplace and protect employees against influences like discrimination. At this point, it's too early to determine the full impact, so employees and employers alike will have to wait and see.



## Recent Case Serves as Reminder That Employees Are Entitled to Certain Benefit-related Documents

The U.S. District Court for the District of Montana recently awarded over \$32,000 in penalties against an employer's self-insured health plan and its third-party administrator (TPA) for failing to provide information to a plan participant upon request. Employees should be aware of their benefits-related rights and understand how to obtain the information they need.

### What Are ERISA Requirements?

The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) is a federal law that sets minimum standards for employee benefit plans maintained by private-sector employers, requiring employers to automatically provide employees with certain benefits-related documents, such as a summary plan description (SPD).

**ERISA also requires employers to provide certain documents upon written request by a participant or a beneficiary. These documents include the latest SPD, Form 5500, bargaining agreement, trust agreement, and any contract or other instrument under which the plan is established or operated.**

### What Happened in Court?

In this most recent case, a plan participant and his daughter sued their self-insured health plan and its TPA after the plan denied coverage for the daughter's mental health treatments. In part, the plaintiffs alleged that the plan violated the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) by applying a more restrictive limitation on mental health treatment than on treatment for medical and surgical issues. The plaintiffs requested a copy of documents related to the plan's compliance with MHPAEA, including information regarding the plan's application of nonquantitative treatment limitations.

The court concluded that the requested MHPAEA-related documents fell under ERISA's disclosure requirement, which means that the defendant's failure to respond triggered penalties. The court awarded penalties of \$110 per day for 294 days, from 30 days after the plaintiffs' written request through the date the lawsuit was filed, totaling \$32,340.

### What Does This Mean?

ERISA is meant to help employee benefits plan participants understand how their plan works and their eligibility for benefits. As such, employees are entitled to certain benefit-related documents, and upon request, they must be provided in a timely manner.

Talk to your manager or HR representative if you have any questions or concerns about employee benefits.

# BBQ Chicken Pizza

August 2024 Recipe

Makes: 12 servings



## Ingredients

6 whole-wheat English muffins  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup barbecue sauce  
1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups chicken breast, skinless (cooked, cut up)  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup shredded cheddar cheese  
1 bell pepper (chopped)

### Nutritional information for 1 serving

Calories	143
Total fat	4 g
Saturated fat	2 g
Cholesterol	24 mg
Sodium	393 mg
Carbohydrate	19 g
Dietary fiber	2 g
Total sugars	8 g
Added sugars included	7 g
Protein	10 g

## Directions

1. Heat oven to 450 F.
2. Slice English muffins in half and place on an ungreased cookie sheet.
3. Cut up bell pepper.
4. Spread barbecue sauce on English muffins to within  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch of edges.
5. Top with chicken, cheese and bell pepper.
6. Bake 7 to 12 minutes or until the cheese is melted.