



MAY 2024

Is Mental Health Awareness Month

An individual's mental health—how one thinks, feels and acts—can change over time due to various factors. Mental illnesses are some of the most common health conditions in the United States. While 1 in 5 adults experiences mental illness each year, less than half of them receive treatment. The stigma around mental health and treatment has long existed, but fortunately, it's becoming less of a taboo topic.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, but prioritizing mental health is essential year-round. If you know someone who is experiencing a mental illness, be supportive, validate what they are going through and minimize judgment about seeking help. 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.

Contact us for additional mental health resources.

Live Well,
Work Well



May 2024

Breaking Down Mental Health Stigma



May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a national health observance dedicated to shedding light on mental health conditions and fostering understanding and support for those experiencing them. Mental illnesses are among the most common health conditions in the United States.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 1 in 5 adults experience a mental health disorder each year. Despite the prevalence of illnesses and increasing recognition of mental health as a critical component of overall well-being, stigma remains a significant barrier to receiving treatment and support. The fear of judgment and discrimination often prevents individuals from seeking help.

NAMI reports that nearly 60% of adults with a mental illness didn't receive mental health services in the previous year.

It's imperative to raise awareness and educate others about mental health to combat stigma and create a more compassionate and supportive society. Here are some tips for reducing the stigma associated with mental health:

- **Educate yourself and others.** Understanding the complexity of mental illness, including substance use disorders, can help dispel misconceptions. Take the time to learn about mental health conditions, symptoms and treatments.
- **Talk openly.** Break the silence surrounding mental health by initiating open and honest conversations with friends, family and colleagues. By sharing personal experiences or listening without judgment, you can create a safe space for others.
- **Choose your words carefully.** Avoid stigmatizing words and use person-first language emphasizing the individual, not their condition.
- **Encourage equality between physical and mental health conditions.** Mental illness is a medical condition, so it should be treated just like a physical ailment.
- **Speak up.** If you suspect someone is struggling with their mental health, send them messages of support or help them get on the path to treatment.

By taking proactive steps to reduce mental health stigma, you can help create an inclusive and supportive environment where everyone feels empowered to seek help. Together, we can break down the barriers that stand in the way of healing and acceptance.

The Benefits of Active Recovery

A complete fitness routine includes training and strategic recovery. Unlike passive recovery, which involves rest, sitting or inactivity, active recovery keeps you moving and engaged in low-intensity exercises. Active exercises can facilitate faster muscle recovery and enhance performance. Think of it as an add-on to your fitness routine—recovering for 10 to 15 minutes after a strenuous workout or taking it easy the following day. Consider these benefits of active recovery activities:

- Reduced lactic acid buildup in muscles
- Decreased muscle soreness
- Improved circulation
- Flexibility maintenance
- Injury prevention

Active recovery exercises are generally considered safe. However, avoiding active recovery is recommended if you're injured or in pain, and your doctor should immediately evaluate you.

Types of Active Recovery

- Yoga or stretching
- Light resistance training
- Self-myofascial release
- Walking or hiking
- Cycling

Seasonal Eating Health Benefits

It's normal to see the same produce available year-round in today's market. However, that doesn't mean the quality is the same throughout the seasons. Eating seasonally helps you take advantage of the harvest schedule. Fortunately, May is peak spring mode and offers a variety of produce. Spring vegetables include asparagus, artichokes, radishes, rhubarb and peas, as well as fruit like strawberries.

Not only is spring produce vibrant and fresh tasting, but it also offers health benefits. Picked at the peak of their freshness and nutritional value, spring produce is packed with essential vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, providing a natural boost to your immune system and overall well-being. Eating seasonally also means you're adding variety to your diet, along with diverse vitamins and minerals. Seasonality depends on where you live, so let nature be your guide at your local farmers market or grocery store.

Spring Vegetable Saute

Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- ½ cup sweet onion (sliced)
- 1 garlic clove (finely chopped)
- 3 tiny new potatoes (quartered)
- ¾ cup carrot (sliced)
- ¾ cup asparagus pieces
- ¾ cup sugar snap peas or green beans
- ½ cup radishes (quartered)
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- ½ tsp. dried dill

Preparations

1. Heat the oil in a skillet. Cook the onion for two minutes, then add the garlic and cook for another minute.
2. Stir in the potatoes and carrots. Cover, turn the heat to low, and cook until almost tender, about four minutes. Add a tablespoon or two of water if the vegetables start to brown.
3. Add the asparagus, peas, radishes, salt, black pepper and dill. Cook, stirring often, until just tender, about four minutes more.

Nutritional Information (per serving)

- Total calories: 138
- Total fat: 1 g
- Protein: 4 g
- Sodium: 177 mg
- Carbohydrate: 29 g
- Dietary fiber: 5 g
- Saturated fat: 0 g
- Total sugars: 4 g

Source: MyPlate

This article is intended for informational purposes only and is not intended to be exhaustive, nor should any discussion or opinions be construed as professional advice. © 2024 Zywave, Inc. All rights reserved.

[b_disclaimer]

MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

MAY 2024



Mental Health in America and How to Get Help

More than half of adults in the United States will experience mental illness—which refers to a variety of conditions that affect one's mood, behavior, feelings or thinking—at some point in their life. Mental illnesses can occur occasionally, while others are chronic. Common mental illnesses include anxiety, depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Mental Health Awareness Month, observed every May, is a time to raise awareness about mental health, break the stigma and support people with mental illness. Access to mental health care is crucial to helping many individuals receive the support necessary for treatment and recovery. However, roughly half of adults with mental illness in the United States don't receive the treatment they need.

Common barriers include the high costs of and difficulty accessing mental health care, mental health professional shortages, and the stigma associated with mental health. When left untreated, mental health conditions can affect a person's ability to manage both work and personal responsibilities.

Getting Help

Millions of Americans are affected by mental illness each year, so know that you are not alone. Mental health conditions are common, real and often treatable. Each condition has its own symptoms, but here are some common signs of mental illness:

- Excessive fears and worries
- Prolonged sadness or irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Changes in eating habits or weight
- Changes in sleeping habits or energy
- Growing inability to cope with daily life
- Social withdrawal
- Substance misuse
- Suicidal thoughts

If you have concerns, talk to your primary care physician; they can refer you to a qualified mental health professional. Your health insurance company can also provide a list of available providers in your plan.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, remember that Americans can call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Spring Cleaning Your Mindset

Spring isn't just for cleaning out your closet. It's also a great time to refresh your mind. It's important to check in on yourself regularly; a routine refresh can help you reduce stress and feel in control.

Consider the following tips to freshen up your daily routine and promote a healthy mindset this spring:

- **Declutter your space.** A cluttered home or working environment can cause stress and anxiety, so a purge of items could help clear your mind and improve your mood.
- **Let go of negative thinking patterns.** Letting go of negative thoughts or beliefs can help make space for healthier ideas and behaviors.
- **Practice gratitude.** To change your perspective for the better, consider ways to be intentional about choosing a positive outlook. For example, you could start a gratitude journal or meditate.

- **Make time for hobbies.** Just like you'd honor a work meeting or personal appointment, participate in activities and hobbies that fulfill you and bring joy.
- **Spend time outdoors.** Spring is a great time to reconnect with nature. You could try walking around the neighborhood, enjoying your coffee or tea outside or moving a regular workout outdoors.
- **Connect with others.** Many people enter hibernation mode during the winter. Leverage the change of the seasons to reconnect with loved ones and engage in meaningful conversations.

Spring is a time of new beginnings and growth, so use this seasonal change to reset your mind and commit to healthy practices and behaviors. Determine where your mental energy is best spent this season, prioritizing what matters most.



May 2024

In the Loop

CDC Drops 5-day Isolation Guidance for COVID-19

On March 1, 2024, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released new guidance for individuals who test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).

For the first time since 2021, the agency loosened its COVID-19 isolation guidance to better reflect the virus's evolving risk as hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19 dropped.

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 no longer need to stay home from work and school for five days. Isolation is no longer necessary if the individual has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication and overall symptoms are improving. Once people resume normal activities, they are encouraged to take preventive measures—such as washing their hands often and cleaning frequently touched surfaces—for the next five days to curb the spread of disease.

The CDC further noted that this change streamlines its guidance for respiratory viruses. That means Americans can manage COVID-19 like they do for influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). While every respiratory virus is different, a common approach to limiting the spread of disease makes the CDC's recommendations easier to follow and more likely to be adopted. Other countries, including Britain, Australia, France and Canada, have implemented similar guidance and found no significant change in the spread of COVID-19.

Staying Healthy

The latest CDC guidance changes reflect the progress made in protecting Americans against severe illness from COVID-19. Regardless, the CDC offers the following tips for reducing the spread of COVID-19:

- Get vaccinated with the latest version of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces.
- Increase ventilation by opening windows and using air purifiers.

People at higher risk for severe complications from COVID-19, such as those who are pregnant or have a weakened immune system, may need to take additional precautions. The CDC recommends that adults 65 and older get a COVID-19 booster shot this spring in anticipation of an uptick in the virus later this summer. Talk to your primary care physician if you have any vaccination questions or concerns.



Over 70 Million AT&T Customers' Data Exposed in Data Breach

On March 30, 2024, telecommunications giant AT&T released a statement saying current and former customer data was exposed on the dark web. Based on a preliminary analysis, the data set appears to be from 2019 and earlier, impacting roughly 7.6 million current AT&T account holders and 65.4 million former account holders.

AT&T account numbers, Social Security numbers, email addresses, names, phone numbers and birth dates may all have been among the compromised data.

Was I Affected?

The company should have notified affected AT&T customers by email or letter.

AT&T reset customer passwords, and individuals were prompted to change them. The company will also cover credit-monitoring costs for applicable parties affected by this latest data breach.

Will This Happen Again?

AT&T is currently investigating the situation. Specifically, the company is trying to determine if the compromised data originated from AT&T or one of its vendors.

Regarding future potential data exposure, some risks will always be present. In fact, AT&T, T-Mobile and other companies experienced data breaches just last year. In today's connected world, there is always some possibility that data provided online could be compromised. That's why avoiding reusing passwords and other login details across accounts is critical.

How Can I Protect My Data?

Unfortunately, there's nothing people can do to prevent organizations from having data exposed. However, there are some steps individuals can take that may better protect their information, such as the following:

- Utilize credit-monitoring services.
- Use unique, strong passwords across accounts.
- Enable multifactor authentication to make it harder for unauthorized logins.
- Check bank and account activity regularly for suspicious transactions.
- Consider a [credit freeze](#) as necessary.

If you've been notified about a data breach from a company, follow all recommended guidance, especially regarding password resets. In addition, be especially vigilant for phishing scams or similar tricks, which may be tailored using your personal information.

Baked Lentils Casserole

May 2024 Recipe

Makes: 5 servings



Ingredients

- 1 cup lentils (rinsed)
- ¾ cup water
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. ground black pepper (optional)
- ½ cup onion (chopped)
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder (optional)
- 14.5 oz. low-sodium tomatoes
- 2 carrots (thinly sliced)
- ½ cup cheddar cheese (shredded)

Nutritional information for 1 serving

Calories	201
Total fat	4 g
Saturated fat	2 g
Cholesterol	12 mg
Sodium	332 mg
Carbohydrate	29 g
Dietary fiber	10 g
Total sugars	6 g
Added sugars included	0 g
Protein	14 g

Directions

1. Combine lentils, water, seasonings, onion and tomatoes.
2. Place in 2-quart casserole dish.
3. Cover tightly with lid or foil.
4. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes.
5. Remove from oven and add carrots. Stir.
6. Cover and bake 30 minutes longer.
7. Remove the cover and sprinkle cheese on top.
8. Bake, uncovered, for 5 minutes until cheese melts.