



SEPTEMBER 2024

Is National Recovery Month

Substance use disorder (SUD) is a treatable mental disorder that impacts an individual's brain and behavior, causing an inability to control the use of certain substances, such as drugs or alcohol. Millions of people struggle with SUDs and co-occurring mental disorders every year.

September is National Recovery Month. Recovering from addiction is a process of change that can improve wellness, increase control and help you reach your full potential. Use this month to reflect on your health and the goals you want to accomplish.

Contact us for more information about SUD and how to support individuals in your community.

Live Well,
Work Well



September 2024

Cholesterol and You



Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in your blood that your body needs to build cells; however, too much can pose a problem. Cholesterol travels through the blood on proteins called lipoproteins. There are two types of lipoproteins:

1. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL), known as **bad cholesterol**, makes up most of your body's cholesterol. High levels of LDL cholesterol can increase your risk for heart disease and stroke.
2. High-density lipoprotein (HDL), known as **good cholesterol**, absorbs cholesterol and carries it back to the liver to be flushed from the body.

More than 40% of U.S. adults with high cholesterol don't know they have it, according to a study published in JAMA Cardiology.

High cholesterol usually has no symptoms, so the American Heart Association (AHA) recommends that adults age 20 or older have their cholesterol checked every four to six years. Bad cholesterol can be elevated by age, family history, certain health conditions (e.g., Type 2 diabetes and obesity) and lifestyle factors. While you can't control all those risk factors, you can take steps to lower your risk for high cholesterol with the following lifestyle changes:

- **Eat a heart-healthy, balanced diet.** Saturated and trans fats can increase your cholesterol, so focus on monounsaturated fats (e.g., olive oil, nuts and avocados) and polyunsaturated fats (e.g., salmon, herring and margarine). Also, limit red meat, fried foods, processed meats and baked goods.
- **Exercise regularly.** The AHA recommends individuals get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise each week. Adding resistance exercises to your routine at least twice a week can further help.
- **Avoid or quit smoking.** Smoking tobacco increases LDL cholesterol, decreases HDL cholesterol and can result in cholesterol buildup in one's arteries.
- **Limit alcohol use.** If you consume alcohol, do so in moderation. For men, this typically means up to two drinks per day, and for women, one drink per day.
- **Maintain a weight that is healthy for you.** Having excess weight or obesity can increase your risk of developing high cholesterol levels. A doctor can help determine a sustainable weight management plan.

The only way to know whether you have high cholesterol is to check your levels. Visit your doctor for a cholesterol screening and to discuss lifestyle risks.

Are You Prepped for a Disaster?

Disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes can strike with little or no warning. September is National Preparedness Month, making it a good time for you and your household to make a plan if you need to evacuate your home or get trapped inside for days. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends discussing the following questions when creating an emergency plan:

- How will I receive emergency alerts and warnings?
- What is my shelter plan?
- What is my evacuation route?
- What is my household communication plan?
- Do I need to update my emergency preparedness kit?

You'll also need to consider your household's specific needs, make an [emergency plan](#) and practice it with your family members. These tips pertain to your home, but remember that emergencies can happen anywhere. Visit FEMA's website, [Ready.gov](#), to learn more about preparing for emergencies at home, at work and on the road.

Emergency Supply Kit Checklist

- Water
 - Nonperishable food
 - Flashlight
 - Whistle
 - Dust mask
 - Local maps
 - Manual can opener
 - Battery-powered radio
 - First-aid kit
 - Pet supplies
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Don't Forget About the 988 Mental Health Crisis Hotline

The [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) (988) was launched nationwide in July 2022. Like dialing 911 for medical emergencies, people in emotional distress or suicidal crisis can call or text 988 to connect with counselors who will listen, provide support and connect them to resources. Since 988's launch, counselors have answered over 10 million calls, texts and chats. Despite the volume, a new poll revealed that only 23% of Americans are at least somewhat familiar with 988.

988 provides immediate and accessible care to anyone experiencing mental health-related distress, including thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis, or other emotional struggles. It's vital to continue spreading the word about 988. People can also call if they are worried about a loved one who may need immediate support.

Rice Bowl Breakfast With Fruit and Nuts

Makes: 2 servings

Ingredients

- 1 cup cooked brown rice
- ½ cup nonfat milk
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- 1 cup chopped fruit (e.g., apples, bananas, raisins, berries and peaches)

- 2 Tbsp. chopped nuts (e.g., walnuts and almonds)

Preparations

1. Combine cooked rice, milk and cinnamon in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on high for 45 seconds. Stir and heat for another 45-60 seconds or until the rice mixture is heated.
2. Divide the rice mixture between two bowls. Top with fruit and nuts. Serve warm.
3. Refrigerate any leftovers within two hours.

Nutritional Information (per serving)

- Total calories: 203
- Total fat: 5 g
- Protein: 6 g
- Sodium: 31 mg
- Carbohydrate: 35 g
- Dietary fiber: 4 g
- Saturated fat: 1 g
- Total sugars: 10 g

Source: MyPlate

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MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

SEPTEMBER 2024



Many Americans Remain Unfamiliar With 988

The [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) (988 Lifeline) was launched nationwide in July 2022. The three-digit dialing code replaced the original 1-800 number to make it easier to remember and access. Like dialing 911 for medical emergencies, people in emotional distress or suicidal crisis can call or text 988 to connect with counselors who will listen, provide support and connect them to resources.

Since 988 Lifeline's launch two years ago, counselors have answered over 10 million calls, texts and chats. Despite the volume, a new poll by the National Alliance on Mental Illness revealed that most Americans remain unfamiliar with 988. Two-thirds (67%) of Americans said they are aware of 988, meaning they've at least heard of it, but only one-quarter (23%) are at least somewhat familiar with 988. Additionally, nearly half of Americans (45%) say they wouldn't feel safe calling 911 for help if their loved one was having a mental health crisis, emphasizing the importance of having a separate dialing code specific for mental health concerns.

Spread the Word About 988

Now in its second year, the 988 Lifeline continues to help millions of Americans. According to the poll, people who are familiar show stronger trust in and the likelihood of using the 988 Lifeline. This highlights the need for increased public awareness and education.

The easy-to-remember dialing code provides immediate and accessible care to anyone experiencing mental health-related distress, including thoughts of suicide, mental health and substance use crises, and other emotional struggles. An online chat is also available. 988 Lifeline voice, text and chat options are offered in English and Spanish.

It's vital to continue spreading the word about 988. Keep in mind that people can also call, text or chat if they are worried about a loved one who may need immediate support.

A High-fat Diet May Increase Anxiety

When feeling stressed, you may instinctively reach for junk food, which is often high in fat. However, a new study at the University of Colorado Boulder revealed that consuming high-fat foods might actually worsen anxiety symptoms. Researchers believe this is happening due to the connection between gut bacteria and brain chemicals that regulate anxiety levels.

Experts recommend supporting the gut microbiome and signaling pathways through healthy eating and reducing high-fat and overly processed food intake. Consider incorporating the following foods into your daily diet:

- **Foods with omega-3 fatty acids:** Fatty fish, flaxseeds, chia seeds, walnuts and avocado
- **Foods rich in fiber:** Beans, lentils, sweet potato and whole grains
- **Fermented foods:** Kimchi, miso, tempeh, kombucha, kefir and yogurt
- **Prebiotic foods:** Garlic, onions, asparagus, bananas and oats

- **Dark leafy greens:** Spinach, kale, arugula, Swiss chard and collard greens
- **Berries:** Raspberries, strawberries and blueberries

Not all fats are bad; they can actually be good for your brain, so try to prioritize the consumption of healthy fats. Consider these food swaps:

- Replace full-fat dairy products with low-fat or nondairy alternatives.
- Choose whole grains instead of refined grains.
- Swap high-sugar desserts for a small piece of dark chocolate with at least 70% cocoa content.
- Substitute butter with olive or avocado oil.

These findings about the mind-body connection emphasize the need to consider dietary choices beyond weight management. For guidance on nutrition and mental health, contact a qualified medical provider.





September 2024

In the Loop

Consumer Prices Dropped in June For the First Time in 4 Years

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [reported](#) that the consumer price index (CPI) rose 3% year over year in June, declining from 3.3% in May. This is the first time since May 2020 that the monthly rate has shown a decrease.

The "core" CPI, which strips out the unpredictable food and energy components, increased 0.1% in June from May and 3.3% annually, which closely matched projections of 0.2% and 3.4%, respectively. This is the lowest the core CPI has been since April 2021.

June prices were driven by falling gas prices and a drop in new and used car prices. Prices have also deflated for a range of items like physical goods, airfare, gasoline and some groceries. While Fed policymakers target inflation at 2% annually, the June CPI report further proves that the price trend is headed in the right direction.

The real average hourly earnings increased 0.4% in June when adjusted for inflation and increased just 0.8% over the past year. The Federal Reserve (Fed) wants labor demand to drop faster to reduce the upward pressure on wages that contribute to high inflation.

Recent reports show that inflation has been cooling in recent months, and, in turn, the Fed has indicated that rate cuts may occur in the near future.

What Does This Mean?

The monthly inflation rate dipped in June for the first time in more than four years, further supporting the Fed's decision to start lowering interest rates later this year. Depending on how much the rates are cut, lower interest rates could provide relief to consumers through better mortgage rates and cheaper loans for vehicles and home improvements.

Consumers may have found mild relief in recent months, but inflation continues to apply financial pressures on most U.S. households. Individuals should continue to monitor the economy and associated inflation trends, adjusting their financial habits accordingly. Additionally, employees should check with their managers for financial and mental wellness benefits and related resources.



The Importance of Routine Vaccinations

When you think of vaccines, your mind may turn to childhood immunizations. However, vaccines are equally vital for adults. Protection from some childhood vaccines can wear off over time, and as you age, your ability to fight infections may weaken, resulting in new health risks.

The World Health Organization reports that vaccinations prevent between 3.5 million and 5 million deaths each year from diseases like diphtheria, influenza (flu), measles and tetanus. By staying updated with recommended vaccines, adults can significantly lower their chances of contracting preventable diseases and stay healthier for longer.

Why Vaccines Matter

Vaccinations are essential to protect against new health risks and shield vulnerable populations. Here are more reasons why routine vaccinations matter:

- **Vaccines have a lifesaving history.** For over 100 years, vaccines have prevented serious diseases that once harmed or killed people of all ages. While some diseases are less common now, they still pose a threat, so staying up to date on vaccines is crucial.
- **Vaccines protect you and your community.** Vaccination is a convenient and safe preventive health care option. By getting vaccinated, you protect your health and prevent the spread of diseases to others in your community. This is essential for those who cannot receive certain vaccines due to age or health conditions.
- **Vaccines prevent serious illness.** Vaccination can prevent severe complications and later illnesses. For instance, annual flu shots reduce infection risk, hospitalization and death from the flu, and hepatitis B vaccines prevent liver damage and cancer caused by the hepatitis B virus.
- **Vaccines are good for travel.** Getting sick while away can disrupt plans and be costly. Staying

current on vaccinations helps you stay healthy during your adventures.

Best Practices for Vaccinations

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [recommends](#) that adults be up to date on routine vaccines, including those for COVID-19 and the flu as well as tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough (known as Tdap), or tetanus and diphtheria (known as Td). Keep in mind that protection from some childhood vaccines can wear off over time. Furthermore, adults may be more at risk for diseases due to age, job, lifestyle, travel and health conditions.

Take the following steps to stay on top of your vaccinations and preventive care:

- Educate yourself about vaccines, their benefits and common misconceptions. Reliable sources like the CDC provide accessible information.
- Regularly check with health care providers or public health authorities for recommended vaccines based on your age, health conditions and lifestyle.
- Keep a personal immunization record to track vaccinations and ensure timely boosters.
- Include vaccinations in your routine health checkups to address gaps in immunization and enhance your overall health.

Your immune system weakens as you age, making you more susceptible to infections and diseases. Therefore, routine vaccinations are critical for your health and well-being. Prioritizing immunizations and integrating them into your health care routine can help you prevent complications and lead an active life.

For more detailed information on specific vaccines and recommendations, consult a health care professional. They can determine whether you have missed any vaccines or need a booster.

Banana Walnut Oatmeal

September 2024 Recipe

Makes: 4 servings



Ingredients

- ⅓ cup nonfat dry milk
- 1 dash salt
- 2 ¾ cups water
- 2 cups quick-cooking oats
- 2 very ripe bananas (mashed)
- 2 Tbsp. 100% maple syrup
- 2 Tbsp. walnuts (chopped)

Nutritional information for 1 serving

Calories	293
Total fat	5 g
Saturated fat	1 g
Cholesterol	2 mg
Sodium	112 mg
Carbohydrate	54 g
Dietary fiber	6 g
Total sugars	20 g
Added sugars included	6 g
Protein	10 g

Directions

- 1.** In a small saucepan, combine reconstituted nonfat dry milk, salt and additional water. Heat over medium heat until steaming hot but not boiling.
- 2.** Add oats and cook, stirring until creamy, 1 to 2 minutes.
- 3.** Remove the pan from heat and stir in mashed banana and maple syrup. Divide between 4 bowls, garnish with walnuts and serve.