



## Live Well, Work Well

May 2026

### Breaking Down Mental Health Stigma

May is Mental Health Month, a national health observance dedicated to shedding light on mental health conditions and fostering understanding and support for those experiencing them. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), more than 1 in 5 adults experience mental illness 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 roughly half (52%) of adults with a mental illness go without treatment.

It's imperative to raise awareness and educate others about mental health to combat stigma and create a more compassionate and supportive society. Stigma grows in silence, so here are some tips for helping break the silence:

- **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. Sharing personal experiences or listening without judgment can help create a safe space for others.
- **Choose words carefully.** Avoid stigmatizing words and use person-first language, emphasizing the individual rather than their condition.
- **Encourage equal treatment of physical and mental health conditions.** Mental illness is a medical condition, so it should be treated like any other medical condition.
- **Speak up.** If you suspect someone is struggling, send them messages of support or help them get on the path to treatment.

By taking proactive steps to reduce mental health stigma and break down barriers, you can help create an inclusive and supportive environment where everyone feels empowered to seek help.

# EWG Releases the 2026 Dirty Dozen List

Each year, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) releases the Dirty Dozen, ranking pesticide residue levels based on produce samples taken by federal agencies. Nearly 100% of all conventional fresh produce sampled this year tested positive for potentially harmful pesticides, with Dirty Dozen items accounting for 96% of those samples. Here's the 2026 Dirty Dozen list:

1. Spinach
2. Kale, collard and mustard greens
3. Strawberries
4. Grapes
5. Nectarines
6. Peaches
7. Cherries
8. Apples
9. Blackberries

10. Pears
11. Potatoes
12. Blueberries

The EWG also publishes the [Clean Fifteen](#) list. Pineapples, sweet corn and avocados continue to top the list. Nearly 60% of the Clean Fifteen produce had no detectable pesticide residues.

Whether organic or not, all properly handled fresh produce is considered safe to eat. The EWG stresses that the benefits of a diet rich in fruits and vegetables outweigh the risk of pesticide exposure. Do your best to get your daily dose of healthy produce while still being an informed shopper. If you're still uneasy about pesticides after scrubbing your produce, frozen or canned versions can be a great alternative. Ultimately, it comes down to what works best for your household and budget.

## Spring Clean Your Routine

Spring isn't just for cleaning out your closet. It's also a great time to refresh your mind and body. It's important to check in on yourself regularly; a routine refresh can help you avoid illness, reduce stress and feel in control. Consider the following ways to freshen up your daily routine this spring:

- **Assess your current routine.** The first step in spring cleaning your routine is to take stock of your current habits and activities. Are there tasks or commitments that no longer serve you? Are there areas where you feel overwhelmed or stressed?
- **Declutter your home.** No clothing, equipment or other belongings are off-limits, so get rid of items you don't use anymore.

- **Create space for self-care.** Prioritize self-care activities or take a few moments each day to relax and recharge.
- **Reset your recipes with seasonal produce.** Spring produce includes vegetables such as asparagus, artichokes, radishes, rhubarb and peas, as well as fruits like strawberries. In-season produce is picked at the peak of its freshness and nutritional value and is packed with essential vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that boost the immune system.
- **Establish healthy habits.** For example, you could commit to a regular sleep schedule or incorporate more movement into your day.

Start spring cleaning your routine today to create one that supports your mental health and enables you to thrive in spring and beyond.

# MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE



May 2026

## Recognizing Mental Health Month



Mental Health Month, observed each May, is an opportunity to recognize the importance of mental well-being, reduce stigma and encourage open, supportive conversations. This month invites reflection, education and action, reminding us that mental health is an essential part of overall health.

Mental Health Month also serves as a reminder of how common mental health challenges are and why awareness matters. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly 1 in 5 U.S. adults experiences a mental illness each year. Yet, research shows that only about half of those individuals receive treatment. These numbers highlight the importance of continued education, open dialogue and access to support. Recognizing Mental Health Month in May helps normalize conversations around mental well-being and reinforces the idea that seeking help is not only acceptable but essential to long-term health.

One meaningful way to recognize Mental Health Month is by prioritizing your own mental well-being. This may look like setting healthier boundaries, practicing mindfulness, moving your body in ways that feel good or allowing yourself adequate rest. Small, intentional habits, such as checking in with your emotions or taking breaks when you feel overwhelmed, can strengthen emotional resilience over time.

May is also an ideal time to expand awareness and understanding. Learning more about mental health conditions, stress management strategies and available resources helps dispel misconceptions and fosters empathy. Sharing reputable articles, personal reflections or workplace resources can encourage others to engage in conversations they might otherwise avoid.

You can also recognize the month through action and advocacy. Supporting mental health organizations through donating, volunteering or participating in community initiatives contributes to broader change and improved access to care.

Finally, Mental Health Month reinforces the message that seeking help is a strength. If you or someone you love is struggling, reaching out to a mental health professional is an important step toward healing.

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## Spring Into Self-care

Self-care, especially mental health care, is deeply personal. It involves intentionally choosing activities that support emotional balance, resilience and overall well-being. The National Institute of Mental Health defines self-care as taking time to do things that help you live well and improve both your mental and physical health. Spring, a season associated with renewal and growth, offers a natural opportunity to refresh your mental health routines as days grow longer and outdoor access increases.

Spring self-care is about building small, sustainable practices into daily life. Even simple actions, such as a 30-minute walk outdoors, can help reduce stress, improve mood and increase mental clarity. Exploring different self-care approaches during this season helps you discover what genuinely supports your emotional well-being, rather than relying on habits that no longer serve you.

Because self-care looks different for everyone, a bit of experimentation is often helpful. Consider these spring-inspired ideas:

- **Embrace outdoor movement.** Time in nature can calm the nervous system and boost mood, whether through walking, yoga or cycling.
- **Practice mindfulness or meditation.** Setting aside quiet moments to focus on your breath encourages emotional awareness and inner balance.
- **Declutter your space.** Clearing physical clutter can ease mental overwhelm and restore a sense of control.
- **Limit screen time.** Stepping back from constant notifications can help quiet racing thoughts and create space for rest and connection.
- **Express creativity.** Writing, painting, crafting or trying a new hobby fosters emotional expression and a sense of growth.

Spring self-care is a journey, not a checklist. Reach out to a trained mental health professional if you or someone you love is struggling.

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# – Take Charge of Your Health –



## Stay Hydrated



Staying well hydrated is one of the simplest and most powerful ways to support your overall health. Water helps regulate body temperature, support digestion, keep joints moving comfortably and maintain steady energy throughout the day.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recommends a daily fluid intake of about 11.5 cups (2.7 liters) for women and 15.5 cups (3.7 liters) for men. However, your personal hydration needs may vary depending on factors such as physical activity, climate, health conditions and life stage. These guidelines include fluids from water, other beverages and food. Try these tips to make hydration part of your everyday routine:

- **Track your intake.** Health and wellness apps, smartwatches and connected water bottles can help you monitor how much you drink and identify hydration patterns over time.
- **Set gentle reminders.** Phone alerts or wearables can prompt you to sip water throughout the day, helping you build consistency without overthinking it.
- **Make hydration fun.** Whether it's a bold color, built-in straw, LED reminders, temperature display or motivational time markers, a water bottle you enjoy using can make drinking water feel less like a chore and more like a habit you look forward to.
- **Keep water within reach.** Carrying a reusable water bottle makes it easier to drink when you're busy and serves as a visual cue to hydrate more often.
- **Add natural flavor.** Infuse water with fruits, vegetables or herbs, such as lemon, cucumber, berries, mint or ginger, to make it more appealing without added sugar.

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# Recipe of the Month

## 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