

HEALTHY *You!*

Your Source for a Happy and Healthy Lifestyle

May 2023

THIS EDITION FEATURES:

**MORE
EXERCISE
LESS
STRESS**

**EAT HEALTHIER,
FEEL HAPPIER**

**CURB THE
CRAVINGS**

**LOSE YOURSELF
IN THE MOMENT**

**BUILDING A
STRONG FOUNDATION**

**RIDING THE
ECONOMIC
ROLLERCOASTER**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY


AmeriHealth
Administrators



MORE EXERCISE LESS STRESS

We all get stressed, and sometimes it's not easy to manage. But studies show there's a strong connection between physical activity and stress relief. What's good for the body is often good for the mind. Any exercise, from aerobics to yoga, can relieve stress. Even a brisk, 10-minute walk can boost your energy and mood.

Exercise can help manage stress by:

- Releasing feel-good chemicals (called endorphins) in the body
- Providing a healthy distraction from stressors
- Improving self-confidence, mood, and sleep
- Lowering symptoms of mild depression and anxiety

Almost any physical activity can increase your fitness level and help reduce stress. So, get moving and start feeling better.

Sources:

health.gov/news/202112/physical-activity-good-mind-and-body

mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/exercise-and-stress/art-20044469



EAT HEALTHIER, FEEL HAPPIER

When we eat, food travels to our gut so our body can be nourished. But what we eat can also affect our mind.

The gut and the brain communicate through complex chemical processes that impact moods, emotions, and thoughts. For example, studies confirm that people who eat lots of fruits and vegetables have lower rates of depression, but scientists don't exactly understand why.

The following foods can have positive effects on your mental health:

- **Oats** are whole grains that can fill you up and help control your blood sugar.
- **Bananas** provide natural sugar, vitamin B6, and prebiotic fiber, which helps stabilize blood sugar and mood.
- **Nuts and seeds** are high in mood-boosting, plant-based proteins.
- **Fermented foods** like yogurt, kefir, kimchi, kombucha, and sauerkraut are significant sources of probiotics that regulate mood.
- **Fatty fish** like salmon and tuna are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which may lower the risk of depression.
- **Beans and lentils** are full of feel-good nutrients.

Make healthy food choices, from breakfast to dinner, to feel good all day.

Sources:

ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6170050/

healthline.com/nutrition/mood-food

hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/the-brain-gut-connection

nccih.nih.gov/news/events/4-fast-facts-about-the-gutbrain-connection



CURB THE CRAVINGS

Most of us have experienced intense urges to eat certain foods, particularly when we're bored, tired, or stressed. These cravings, usually for sugary, salty, or fatty foods, can be hard to ignore. They can also come with feelings of guilt if we eat too much.

Frequently giving in to cravings can lead to unhealthy eating patterns and unhealthy feelings about food in general.

Here are tips for curbing cravings:

- **Eat a balanced diet.** Foods high in healthy proteins, healthy fats, and fiber make you feel fuller longer.
- **Drink plenty of water.** Sometimes thirst can be mistaken for hunger.
- **Get enough sleep.** Lack of sleep can increase hunger hormones. Aim for 7 to 9 hours of rest each night.
- **Practice stress management.** Stress is a big trigger for unhealthy eating. Yoga, meditation, deep breathing, or brisk walking can help reduce anxiety or stress.
- **Keep healthy snacks handy.** Fresh fruit, raw veggies, or unsalted nuts are convenient and can help minimize cravings.
- **Exercise.** Regular physical activity distracts from cravings, lowers stress, and reduces hunger hormones.

Sources:
[healthline.com/nutrition/11-ways-to-stop-food-cravings](https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/11-ways-to-stop-food-cravings)
hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/cravings
[eatingwell.com/recipe/263832/banana-energy-bites/](https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/263832/banana-energy-bites/)

Banana Breakfast Bites

- 1 overripe banana
- 1 cup dry quick-cooking rolled oats
- 1/2 cup roasted pumpkin seeds
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup natural peanut butter

In a medium bowl, mash banana with a fork until smooth. Stir in remaining ingredients. Scoop by tablespoon, shape into a ball, and flatten slightly on a plate or cookie sheet. Chill until ready to serve.
Makes 32.

LOSE YOURSELF IN THE MOMENT

Have you ever been so focused on an activity that you lost track of time while you were “in the zone?” This is called a flow state.

A flow state requires intense concentration, followed by a high level of pride or sense of accomplishment with the outcome. Activities like music, arts, games, puzzles, and sports easily generate flow states. But anything, even work, can put you in a flow state.

Here are some tips for getting into and maintaining a flow state:

- Choose activities you enjoy, are passionate about, or challenge you, but are within your capabilities.
- Set clear goals for what you want to accomplish.
- Focus on the present by concentrating only on the task at hand.
- Limit distractions by removing things that may disrupt your focus.

See how adopting a flow-state mindset can help you overcome your next challenge with increased positivity and productivity.

Sources:
positivepsychology.com/flow-activities/
medicalnewstoday.com/articles/flow-state



BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION

Managing a healthy weight is about more than what you eat and how much you exercise. Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is an ongoing process with many opportunities to practice.

There are six pillars for building a strong foundation for a healthy weight.

Healthy habits in one pillar contribute to success and stability in the other pillars. Evaluate your current strengths and weaknesses by rating each pillar on a scale from 0 to 10 (where 0 is the weakest, and 10 is the strongest).

1. Mindful eating

- Eating a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives.
- Controlling portions and choosing nutritious options.
- Planning and preparing healthy meals and snacks.

2. Movement

- Participating in 150 minutes of physical activity each week.
- Incorporating resistance training into your exercise routine.

3. Quality sleep

- Getting at least 7 hours of restful, restorative sleep each night.
- Making your room comfy, dark, and free of distractions.
- Turning off electronics at least a half hour before bedtime.

4. Stress

- Rating your average stress level as less than overwhelming.
- Developing healthy coping skills to manage stress.
- Using relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation.

5. Healthy mind and feelings

- Having a positive attitude.
- Practicing encouraging self-talk.
- Monitoring and managing your mood.

6. Empowerment and planning

- Planning for success.
- Feeling deserving.
- Believing in yourself and your abilities.

Now, look at your score for each pillar and think about things you can do to help improve your overall score. Even small changes can lead to big results.

Sources:

ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK232454/
obesitymedicine.org/omas-four-pillars-the-bedrock-of-obesity-management-and-treatment/



RIDING THE ECONOMIC ROLLERCOASTER

The economy was down more than 20 percent in 2022. If this trend makes you nervous about your money and investments, you're not alone. It's easy to get caught up in waves of fear when your retirement account dips.

Here is some advice from investment experts to help weather financial storms:

- **Don't bail on your investments.** No one can predict the market's future. Focus on the big picture.
- **Keep investing.** Historically, the stock market has always reversed its losses. Sometimes, it just takes a while.
- **Prioritize facts over feelings.** Talk to an investment professional before making impulsive decisions about money.

Sources:
ramseysolutions.com/retirement/how-to-avoid-costly-mistakes-when-market-is-down

MONTHLY QUIZ

1. Which exercise can increase your fitness level and reduce stress?

- A. Aerobics
- B. Strength training
- C. Yoga
- D. All forms of exercise and movement

2. The brain and the gut communicate with each other through which of the following?

- A. Electric pulses
- B. Chemicals
- C. Genes

3. Which activity is most likely to generate a flow state?

- A. Listening to music
- B. Grocery shopping
- C. Paying bills

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



1. D, 2. B, 3. A

© 2023 AmeriHealth
AmeriHealth Administrators, Inc.