



Unmanaged stress, especially stress-related anger and hostility, can affect your health. It may cause:

- high blood pressure
- irregular heart rhythms
- damage to your arteries.
- higher cholesterol levels
- the development and progression of coronary artery disease (atherosclerosis)
- a weakened immune system.

In times of stress, people often turn to harmful habits to reduce their stress, such as cigarette smoking, overeating, use of drugs or over-use of alcohol. All of these factors put you at additional risk for heart disease and stroke.

See page 3 sidebar for a short quiz you can take to see if you are stressed.



Wellness Corner Connection

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Stress Can Affect Your Heart Health

As much as you may try to ignore it, you cannot separate your wellness from your emotions. Every feeling you have affects some part of your body, and stress can wreak havoc on your physical health even if you're doing everything else "right." The classic definition of stress is "any real or imagined threat, and your body's response to it." Celebrations and tragedies alike can cause a stress response in your body.

All of your feelings, positive or negative, create physiological changes. Your skin, heart rate, digestion, joints, muscle energy levels, the hair on your head, and countless cells and systems you don't even know about change with every emotion.

Stress plays a major role in your immune system, and can impact your blood pressure, cholesterol levels, brain chemistry, blood sugar levels, and hormonal balance. It can even "break" your heart, and is increasingly being viewed as a cardiovascular risk marker.

The body's stress-response system is usually self-limiting. Once a perceived threat has passed, hormone levels return to normal. As adrenaline and cortisol levels drop, your heart rate and blood pressure return to baseline levels, and other systems resume their regular activities. **But** when stressors are always present and you constantly feel under "attack", that fight-or-flight reaction stays turned on. The long-term activation of the stress-response system, and the subsequent overexposure to cortisol and other stress hormones, can disrupt almost all your body's processes. This puts you at increased risk of numerous health problems.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--|----------------------|
| Anxiety | Depression | Digestive problems | Heart Disease |
| Sleep problems | Weight gain | Memory and concentration impairment | |

That's why it's so important to learn healthy ways to cope with the stressors in your life. Your reaction to a potentially stressful event is different from anyone else's. How you react to stressors in your life is affected by such factors as:

Genetics: The genes that control the stress response keep most people on a fairly even keel, only occasionally priming the body for fight or flight. Overactive or underactive stress responses may stem from slight differences in these genes.

Life Experiences: Strong stress reactions sometimes can be traced to traumatic events. People who suffered neglect or abuse as children tend to be particularly vulnerable to stress. The same is true of victims of violent crime, airplane crash survivors, military personnel, police officers and firefighters.

Stressful events are a fact of life. And you may not be able to change your current situation. But you can take steps to manage the impact these events have on you. You can learn to identify what stresses you and how to take care of yourself physically and emotionally in the face of stressful situations.

Stress management strategies include:

- Eating a healthy diet and getting regular exercise and plenty of sleep
- Begin to take note of things making you feel stressed
- Practicing relaxation techniques or learning to mediate (don't laugh it's easier than you think and it really does help!)
- Fostering healthy friendships
- Having a sense of humor
- Seeking professional counseling when needed



The payoff for learning to manage stress is peace of mind and a longer, healthier life!

For more information check out www.mayoclinic.com



National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a chance to raise awareness about the importance of screening and the early detection of breast cancer. About 1 in 8 women (12%) born today in the United States will get breast cancer at some point during her life. After skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common kind of cancer in women. The good news? Many women can survive breast cancer if it's found and treated early. A mammogram – the screening test for breast cancer – can help find breast cancer early. Make a difference! Spread the word about mammograms and encourage your communities, organizations, families, and employees to get involved.

How can National Breast Cancer Awareness Month make a difference?

We can use this opportunity to spread the word about important steps women can take to stay healthy. Here are just a few ideas:

- Ask doctors and nurses to speak to women about the importance of getting screened for breast cancer.
- Encourage women age 40 and older to talk with their doctors about when to start getting mammograms.
- Talk with women ages 50 to 74 in your community about getting mammograms every 2 years.

**Early detection
and treatment is
key to survival!**

Risk Factors That Cannot Be Changed

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Family History
- ✓ Personal Menstruation
- ✓ Early Menstruation
- ✓ Late Meno-

What are the Stats?

60-70% of people with breast cancer have no connection to these risk factors at all, and other people with risk factors will never develop cancer.

Facts about Breast Cancer in the United States

- One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime.
- Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women in U.S.
- Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death among women.
- In 2017, an estimated 252,710 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected.
- 85% of breast cancers occur in women who have no family history but due to genetic mutations that happen as a result of the aging process.
- Although breast cancer in men is rare, an estimated 2,470 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in men. A man's lifetime risk of breast cancer is about 1 in 1,000.

Risk Factors You Can Control

- ✓ Lack of Physical Activity
- ✓ Poor Diet
- ✓ Being Overweight or Obese
- ✓ Drinking Alcohol
- ✓ Radiation to the Chest
- ✓ Smoking
- ✓ Combined Hormone Replacement Therapy

Other Risk Factors:

Radiation to Chest or Face Before Age 30

If you had radiation to the chest to treat another cancer (not breast cancer), such as Hodgkin's disease or non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, you have a higher-than-average risk of breast cancer. If you had radiation to the face at an adolescent to treat acne (something that's no longer done), you are at higher risk of developing breast cancer later in life.

Having Dense Breasts

Breasts with less fatty tissue may be 6 times more likely to develop cancer and can make it more difficult for mammograms to detect any signs of breast cancer. However digital mammograms are better than film in women with dense breasts regardless of age. Talk to your doctor about developing a screening plan that is right for you. Early detection is still the best detection!

BPA and Related Chemicals

Studies show that bisphenol A (called BPA) can act like a weak form of estrogen and turn on breast cell growth and trigger other unhealthy activities in the body. Significant exposure to BPA has been linked to many illnesses including heart disease, diabetes, immune- and nervous-system disorders, and brain, prostate and breast cancer. It can also affect fertility.

Manufacturers have started using alternatives (BPF or BPB or have labeled products as "BPA-free"). These are similar chemicals and have a limited safety profile, affecting the body in a similar way. Best thing to do?

- Use glass or stainless steel containers for foods and drinks.
- Never put plastic containers in the microwave.
- Choose foods that are fresh, frozen, or sold in glass containers. Avoid canned food and plastic packages.
- Reuse glass jars for food storage and carrying drinks.
- Remove household dust by wet mopping, wiping with microfiber cloths and vacuuming with a machine that has strong suction and multilayered bag.
- Avoid touching receipts. Refuse them if offered. If you need them for records, just wash your hands after touching them.

**When you visit the
dentist, ask for
composite fillings
that are free of all
bisphenols and
phthalates.**

Keeping a Positive Attitude

Virtually everyone at some point or another has been faced with a situation that leads to feelings of discouragement or pessimistic thoughts. If you are like most people, you may have experienced something bad in life. A breakup, chronic illness, or the loss of a job, we've all been through it.

In these and similar scenarios, it is important to understand that it is normal to feel a bit small. However, even if a lot of things have gone wrong and you feel like your life has bottomed out, there are many ways to counteract these negative feelings and work your way back to keeping a positive attitude. Whether its believing in yourself and chasing after your dreams, or doing what you love, it's always good to stay positive.

Here are nine great tips to help you accomplish this goal:

1

Take a step back from the situation or problem. One of the most effective ways to regain a positive outlook on life is to take a break from whatever it is that has allowed negativity to take over your daily thoughts. Regardless of the type of problem you are facing, reacting in a negative way usually intensifies the problem. Easier said than done, I know. But it can be accomplished with practice and some patience.

2

Focus on your goals. When life throws you a curve ball, losing sight of your goals is easy to do. If you find yourself discouraged or depressed about circumstances in your life, try to take a quiet moment to reconnect with your goals. Set them so they are obtainable and build from there. Accomplishments, no matter how large or small, builds self-esteem which fuels motivation to persevere.

3

Think about the solution not the problem. Don't have meetings with staff members or family about the current negative issues; instead, discuss how to plan for implementing solutions. Don't do this alone. Many times turning to colleagues or supportive family/friends can help to formulate a positive outcome knowing you have support and buy-in from others. Seek encouragement from positive people. Positive ideas can get your mind back on track. And a great place to start is with optimistic people.

4

Count your blessings. It has been proven that when we express gratitude we are not only happier but healthier. Try writing down 3 things you are grateful for each day for at least one week. By doing so, you will start to look for the good things in your life instead of dwelling on the problems. It's worth a try.

5

Time marches on. One way to look at a situation causing you problems or a mistake that was made, is to ask yourself "will this matter a week, year, 5 years from now?" Almost every bad circumstance eventually passes and many times will have no impact on the quality of our lives. Don't dwell on something that will not matter a short time from today. Time spent worry about something today is time lost thinking of positive things for tomorrow.

6

Strengthen your mind. To ensure that you are shaping your viewpoints rather than allowing negative thoughts to shape them for you, start to actively engage in things that will strengthen your mind. You can accomplish this by trying meditation (even 2 minutes a day can help), reading inspirational books or articles, learning something new, or even attending a new class like yoga or tai chi.

7

Focus on your strengths. What are you good at? Are you funny? Are you a team player? Do you enjoy sharing kindness and helping others? Build on your strengths by putting yourself in positive situations that allow them to shine through. With the holidays, perhaps practice your kindness by volunteering at a soup kitchen. Organize an event that brings your co-workers or family members together for some fun activity. Think outside the box!

Are you stressed?

Take this simple test to see if you have symptoms of too much stress:

1. Do you feel like you are not yourself?
2. Do you feel overwhelmed?
3. Do you feel unable to cope with the workload that you are usually able to handle?
4. Do you often feel anxious, angry, irritable or tense?
5. Do you get headaches or stiffness/tension in your muscles, jaw or back?
6. Do you feel unable to concentrate or to remember things as well?
7. Do you frequently have upset stomach, skin rashes, racing heartbeat, or sweaty palms?
8. Are you more tired or have a lower energy level than usual?
9. Do you lack interest in things that normally used to interest you?
10. Do you have trouble sleeping?
11. Are you using alcohol or drugs to escape problems you may have?

If you answered yes to more than one of these questions, you may be feeling signs of stress overload. When you have stress overload, you may become forgetful or have difficulty concentrating. The quality of your work may decline and you may feel alone or isolated from the people around you.

Positive Mind.
Positive Vibes.
Positive Life.

Flu Season

Once again the flu season is upon us and every year you may ask the same question, "should I get the flu shot?"

Who should get vaccinated this season?

While it is recommended that everyone get a flu vaccine this season, it's especially important for some people to get vaccinated. Those people include the following:

People who are at high risk of developing serious complications (like pneumonia) if they get sick with the flu.

- People who have certain medical conditions including asthma, diabetes, and chronic lung disease.
- Pregnant women.
- People younger than 5 years (and especially those younger than 2), and people 65 years and older.

People who live with or care for others who are at high risk of developing serious complications (see list above).

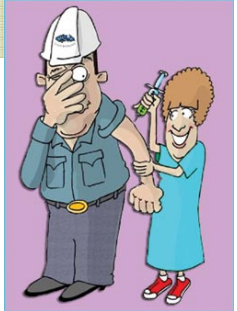
- Household contacts and caregivers of people with certain medical conditions including asthma, diabetes, and chronic lung disease.
- Household contacts and caregivers of infants less than 6 months old.
- Health care personnel.

When will flu activity begin and when will it peak?

The timing of flu is very unpredictable and can vary from season to season. Flu activity most commonly peaks in the U.S. in January or February. However, seasonal flu activity can begin as early as October and continue to occur as late as May.

What should I do to prepare for this flu season?

CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine is designed to protect against the three main flu strains that research indicates will cause the most illness during the flu season. Getting the flu vaccine as soon as it becomes available each year is always a good idea, and the protection you get from vaccination will last throughout the flu season.



Consult your physician if you have any questions as to whether the flu shot is necessary for you.

Go to [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) for more information on this year's flu season.



Don't Let All That Halloween Candy Scare You

Candy is one of the biggest draws of Halloween and when the party's over, there can be a lot of it left! There are many things that you can do with all that leftover candy and *it doesn't all involve eating it yourself.* But don't deprive yourself of your favorites. Just eat a little not the entire bag :-)

Whether you bought the candy yourself or want to use up the kids' trick or treat stash, you will find many of these ideas useful. Create and share delicious home baked goods or give the candy away to make someone else smile, candy is fun and discovering ways to get rid of it is no different.

Bake it! Halloween candy is a baker's delight! These miniature sweets are the perfect ingredients for baking unique cookies, cakes, pies and other delicious goods.

- Use M & M's, Reese's Pieces or chopped up chocolate bars in place of the chocolate chips in your favorite cookie recipe.
- Sprinkle crushed candy on top of cakes and pies for a unique finishing touch.

Donate it! Do you just want the temptation out of your house? Consider donating your extra Halloween candy to a cause that will use it to brighten someone's day. There are many charities that are willing to accept candy donations:

- Food pantries
- Homeless shelters
- [Operation Shoebox](#) - Sends care packages to military troops.

Trade it! Did you know that you can trade in unwanted Halloween candy for gift cards? It's true!

Many dentists have programs that will pay your kids for their candy stash the week following Halloween. It helps promote healthy teeth and may save you money during their next dentist visit, so it's a win-win for everyone.

Programs like HalloweenCandyBuyBack.com can help you find a participating dentist. Also, check with your personal dentist or keep an eye out for TV and newspaper ads leading up to and right after the holiday.



Fix-and-Forget White Chili

With the cool fresh air of autumn, who doesn't like a hot bowl of chili! And even better...everything can be tossed into a crock-pot and you can get outside and enjoy while it's cooking. Tip: Thicken this slow-cooker chicken chili by slightly mashing the beans. Preparation time is 25 minutes. Ready in 7h 25m.



Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 12 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breast halves, cubed
- 2 15 to 16-ounce cans Great Northern beans or navy beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (4 ounce) can diced green chiles, undrained
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2½ cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1½ teaspoons cumin seeds
- 1½ teaspoons bottled minced garlic (3 cloves)
- ¼ to ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- Light dairy sour cream (optional)
- Avocado slices (optional)
- Fresh thyme sprigs (optional)

Directions:

- In a large skillet, cook chicken in hot oil just until lightly browned. Place beans in a 3- ½- to 4-quart slow cooker; mash slightly with a potato masher.
- Add chicken to slow cooker. Stir undrained chile peppers, onion, chicken broth, cumin seeds, garlic, cayenne pepper, and black pepper into mixture in slow cooker. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high setting for 3- ½ to 4 hours.
- If desired, serve with sour cream and avocado. If desired, garnish with thyme sprigs.

Now for dessert! Greek yogurt, pecans, and sweet potatoes give a nutritious twist to this banana bread recipe—great for lunchboxes or a morning snack. Preparation time is 20 minutes. Cooking time is 50 minutes.

Sweet Potato Banana Bread

Ingredients

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 cup shredded sweet potato (4 ounces)
- ¾ cup mashed ripe bananas (about 2 medium)
- 1 (6 ounce) container plain fat-free Greek yogurt
- ½ cup packed brown sugar (see Tips)
- ½ cup refrigerated or frozen egg product, thawed
- ½ cup canola oil



Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat bottom and sides of a 9x5x3-inch loaf pan with cooking spray; set aside. In a large bowl combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon, salt, and cloves. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture; set aside.
- In a medium bowl stir together sweet potato, bananas, yogurt, brown sugar, eggs, and oil. Add egg mixture all at once to flour mixture; stir until evenly moistened. Fold in pecans. Spoon batter into prepared pan.
- Bake 50 to 55 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. If necessary to prevent overbrowning, cover loosely with foil for the last 15 minutes of baking. Cool in pan on a wire rack 10 minutes. Remove from pan; cool completely on wire rack. Wrap in plastic wrap or foil; store overnight before slicing.

Recipes taken from www.eatingwell.com

I don't have to chase extraordinary moments to find happiness. It's right in front of me if I'm paying attention and practicing gratitude.

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