



May

Member Newsletter



Mental Health Awareness Month Make mental health a priority

Many people may handle their work, family duties and other day-to-day activities “okay”, yet inside they are feeling anxious, sad, stuck and lonely. It’s easy to dismiss these feelings as just “life stress.” Instead, tuning in to—not out of—these feelings and making your mental health a priority can help you achieve total well-being to function at your best. Keep the following in mind to move from “just getting by” to feeling happier, hopeful, and connected.



You're not alone.

1 in 6 people will have depression sometime in their life. *CDC*

The stigma of mental illness is fading, and help is more accessible. Don't suffer in silence—letting others know how you're feeling is the first step to getting the help you need to feel better.

Know that anxiety, depression and other mental health problems are treatable. Counseling, medication and/or lifestyle changes could make all the difference in your life.

It's vital to follow healthy self-care habits! Regular exercise, proper sleep, a nutritious diet, social connections, and relaxation are a few ways to counter stress that can affect your mental and physical health. Meanwhile, limit or avoid things that can affect your moods such as negative news coverage, alcohol and other substances.

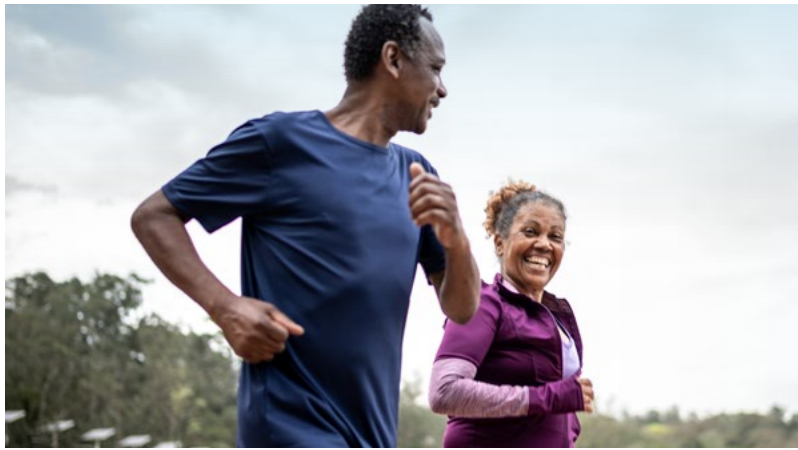
Pay close attention to symptoms. Consistently feeling sad, irritable or hopeless could be depression. The difference between depression and feeling down is how severe the symptoms are and how long they last.

Ask yourself these questions:

- **Do you often or usually feel sad,** anxious or “empty”?
- **Do you sleep too little** or too much?
- **Has your appetite shrunk,** and have you lost weight? Or do you have a bigger appetite, and have you gained weight?
- **Have you lost interest in activities** you once enjoyed?
- **Are you restless** or irritable?
- **Do you have persistent headaches,** chronic pain or constipation that doesn't respond to treatment?
- **Do you have difficulty concentrating,** remembering things, or making decisions?
- **Do you often feel tired** or lack energy?
- **Do you feel guilty,** hopeless or worthless?

If you have any of these symptoms for longer than two weeks or if they are interfering with your daily life, talk to a qualified counselor. The earlier you get treatment for any mental health issue, the better!

www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db444.htm



Over 60 percent of employers offer wellness programs. Only about 40 percent of employees take advantage of them.

Take advantage of workplace health and well-being programs!

May is Global Employee Health and Fitness Month, an opportunity to explore what benefits your workplace may offer to help you improve your health and well-being and reach your wellness goals. Read on for some examples of benefits that may be available to you!

Workplace health screenings. Biometric screenings administered by licensed healthcare providers typically measure body composition, blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose levels and other possible risk factors for chronic diseases. This information can help you make lifestyle changes and avoid developing serious health issues.

Wellness programs. These programs provide free professional support and resources to help you reach your goals, learn about your personal health, track your progress and earn employee rewards for participating.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). An EAP offers free or discounted short-term help for mental illness, stress, anxiety, substance abuse/addiction, work and/or family-related problems and more to help you reduce stress and be more productive. Referrals are made for long-term counseling and other care, when appropriate.

Chronic condition management programs. Health coaches and clinical experts offer support to help people with chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma, heart disease, and hypertension better manage their condition.

Onsite fitness opportunities. Many larger employers have onsite facilities with workout equipment and fitness classes, paths around the building for exercising, or company-sponsored softball, or volleyball teams. These activities allow you to get to know your coworkers out the office while fitting in exercise.

Gym discounts and fitness devices. Your employer may offer a subsidized membership or discount to join a gym, or provide free or discounted fitness devices like wristbands, watches, or pedometers –all to help you easily track your progress as you work toward your goals.

Ready to take advantage of workplace programs like these? Review your benefits information or contact your HR department to discover what's available.



Get help on the go with the Health Advocate app!

- **Learn** more about your Health Advocate services
- **Access** trustworthy health information and helpful tips
- **Connect** with a Health Advocate expert

To download our app, scan the QR code to the left or visit the app store on your mobile device and search “Health Advocate.”

Top tips for women's health

Keeping up with regular preventive screenings and making simple lifestyle changes can help you stay healthy and feel good. Here are the top tips for women, which can help you improve and maintain your health:



Learn your family history. It can be a risk factor for diabetes, cancer and other diseases.

Schedule regular check-ups. Your primary care doctor can help monitor general health changes and your gynecologist can help monitor breast and pelvic changes.

Stay on top of preventive care. Talk to your doctor about when and how often to have screenings such as a Pap smear for cervical cancer, mammogram for breast cancer and bone density screening for osteoporosis based on your specific risk factors, family history and age. Learn more about important screenings for your age group: medlineplus.gov/womenshealthcheckup.html

Perform breast self-exams. Beginning in their 20s, women should perform self-examinations. Just [follow these steps](https://mayoclinic.org/2020/06/01/breast-self-exam-steps) (<https://mayoclinic.org/2020/06/01/breast-self-exam-steps>).

Take care of your heart. Every 80 seconds a woman dies from heart disease, but about 80 percent of these deaths are preventable through education and action. Your doctor can help you monitor your blood pressure, cholesterol, and other risk factors, and discuss heart-healthy lifestyle habits.

Exercise regularly. Strive for both resistance training at least 2 days per week and cardio activities, at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity weekly.

Eat balanced meals. Follow this simple rule: Make half your plate fruits and vegetables, one-quarter protein, and one quarter grains at each meal.

Limit alcohol and quit tobacco. Women who have more than one drink daily are at higher risk for certain diseases, such as cancer. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States.

Protect your skin from the sun. Using sunscreen should be a daily part of your routine to protect your skin from the sun's harsh rays while spending time outside.

Practice self-care—find ways to reduce exhaustion. Find simple tips in [this blog post](https://bit.ly/3UAltQU) (<https://bit.ly/3UAltQU>).

Strive for good sleep. Aim to get at least 7 hours per night.

For more help, talk to Health Advocate, your health practitioner or a qualified counselor.

The Science of Happiness

Visit HealthAdvocate.com/members to log onto your member website and access the EAP+Work/Life homepage. [Click on Webinar.](#)

Mental Health Awareness Month

This month, Health Advocate joins the national movement to raise awareness about mental health, and the importance of making it a priority. Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being, and is essential to your overall health and quality of life. Self-care—things like exercise, eating nutritious meals, getting proper sleep and relaxing activities—plays a vital role in maintaining your mental health. Self-care helps you manage stress, increases energy and supports your treatment and recovery if you have a mental illness like anxiety or depression.

To learn more about self-care for better mental health, visit: www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health

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