

STAYIN' ALIVE

Talking about safety isn't enough.



HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWSLETTER MARCH 2022

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HIGHLIGHTS for the March 2022 Newsletter

Bottom's Up: Do THIS to Beat the COVID Blues

Got the COVID blues? If you're feeling tired and fatigued more often, you're not alone. Research suggests there's one primary factor for this. Fortunately, there's an easy fix that only takes a few minutes a day.

This is Your Brain on Stress...Any Questions?

Are you stressed out, worried, or anxious? Stress is a normal part of life. Even good things can be stressful. But if you're always in a state of chronic stress, something happens to your brain. Here's what you need to know...

Trying to Eat Healthier? Beware of Restaurant Meals

You hungry? Before you head to a fast-food drive-thru or sit-down restaurant, there's something you need to know about dining out...

Y-Axis: Tune Into This

If you like to end your workday with food, snacks and drinks in front of the TV, put down the remote, sit up, and tune into this...

Recipe: Breakfast Burrito

Hungry for a healthy breakfast that's packed with protein and tastes great? Give this recipe a try:

Take the March Health Challenge!

Read Food Labels: Take time to learn about what you're eating

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question: Can exercise help treat depression?

NEWSLETTER

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THE Y AXIS



Tune Into This

Attention all reality-TV baking junkies, streaming-service binge-watchers, and sit-in-front-of-a-screen-after-work people...



Too much screen time can tip the scale in the wrong direction.

Your choice of snacks and drinks are only part of the problem when you're in couch-potato mode.

Grab the remote and tune in to this.

You burn more calories standing or even reading and sitting in a chair than you do in front of a screen, according to a recent study.⁴

Do yourself a favor. Stand up more. Read a book. Or turn off the screen and go for a walk.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:

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Bottom's Up: Do THIS to Beat the COVID Blues

Physical activity dropped by 32 percent during pandemic

You've had a long day. You're tired. And it seems like no matter what you do, you're in a perpetual state of unhappiness.

That ever happen? Mild depression can show up in many different ways, including:

- Feelings of sadness
- Changes in appetite (eating too much or not enough)
- Trouble sleeping
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating, and more.

Here's a quick fix to improve your mood: Bottom's up.

No. It's not what you think. You don't need to head to the bar or pour yourself a drink.

If you've been feeling depressed during the global pandemic, your bottom may have a lot to do with it, according to a recent study.¹

Researchers found that since the start of the pandemic, sedentary behaviors have increased with:

- Work-from-home arrangements
- Less commute time
- Virtual meetings
- Less physical activity
- More screen time

They found that during the peak of the pandemic, physical activity dropped by 32 percent for many adults.

Lack of exercise took a toll on mental health and happiness, leading to an increase in depression, anxiety, and loneliness.

Bottom's up to improve your mood

In the study, participants who reported feeling depressed were invited to participate in an 8-week challenge to be more active. And something interesting happened...

"We found that, on average, people saw their mental health improve over the eight-week period," says lead researcher Dr. Jacob Meyer, a kinesiology professor at Iowa State University. "...But for people whose sitting times stayed high, their depressive symptoms, on average, didn't recover in the same way as everyone else's."

Here's the quick fix to improve your mood:

- Get up and go for a walk. Do something active. And make physical activity a regular part of your day.

Want to improve your mood? Bottom's up.

MORE

30 ways to be more active
<https://tinyurl.com/brm4fsyy>

This is Your Brain on Stress...Any Questions?

Chronic stress impairs memory and brain function

Remember the anti-drug commercial from the 80s? It could have been about stress.

Actor John Roselius holds up an uncooked egg in an empty-looking kitchen. "This is your brain." Then he points to a sizzling pat of butter in a hot frying pan.

"This is drugs." He cracks the egg and drops it into the frying pan.

It sizzles and pops, and then Roselius delivers the message in dramatic fashion.

"This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?" (Watch the video: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8a5ndx>)

It's no secret illegal drugs are bad for your brain.



But if you let chronic stress simmer on the back burner for weeks, months, or years, it can be just as bad.

Too much stress is a brain drain

New research suggests that chronic stress can impair memory, reduce brain function, and lead to cognitive decline over time.³

Researchers found that people living with chronic stress tend to have higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol.



Breakfast Burrito

Hungry for a healthy breakfast that's packed with protein and tastes great? Give this recipe a try:⁵

Ingredients

- 1 can vegetarian refried beans
- 4 tortillas, corn
- 2 T red onion (chopped)
- 1/2 C tomatoes (chopped)
- 1/2 C salsa, low-sodium
- 4 T yogurt, non-fat plain
- 2 T cilantro (chopped)

Directions

1. Mix beans with onion and tomatoes.
2. Microwave tortillas between two sheets of damp white paper towels on high for 15 seconds.
3. Divide bean mixture between the tortillas.
4. Fold each tortilla to enclose filling.
5. Place on microwave-safe dish, and spoon salsa over each burrito.
6. Microwave on high for 15 seconds.
7. Serve topped with yogurt and cilantro.

Serves: 4.
146 calories per serving.

Trying to Eat Healthier? Beware of Restaurant Meals

Study: 70% of all restaurant meals aren't healthy

When your stomach tells you it's feeding time, how do you respond?

- Grab your healthy brown-bag lunch and bottle of water.
- Whip up a meal in the kitchen made from fresh ingredients.
- Hit the nearest restaurant or drive-thru and munch your way through an entrée, sides, and a drink.

If your diet looks anything like the typical American's (fast food, burgers, fries, pizza, fried chicken, soda, etc.) **1 out of every 5 calories you eat** comes from restaurant food.²

Yes. It's possible to order healthy food from the menu. You know...

- The leafy-green salad
- The soup of the day
- Sans-bun with burger + lettuce wrap
- Vegetables instead of fries
- The fruit parfait, or...
- Water instead of soda, milkshakes, or sugary coffee drinks



But guess what? Most people don't. In the study, researchers found that:

- **70% of all fast-food meals** are of poor dietary quality
- **50% of all full-service restaurant meals** ordered are of poor nutritional quality
- **The typical fast food or restaurant entree** contains 1,200 to 1,500 calories. And that doesn't include drinks, sides, or desserts!

Dining out? 6 ways to eat healthier

Pay attention to your food choices and calories, and you can still eat healthy at a restaurant. Here's how:

1. Find out how many calories are in a meal, before you order.
2. Place half your meal in a to-go box before you start eating.
3. Split a meal with someone else.
4. Order from the kid's or senior's menu.
5. Pick a side dish as your main course.
6. Ask the restaurant staff to make you a smaller portion.

MORE

How to make restaurant meals healthier
<https://tinyurl.com/2amijzf7>

This is Your Brain on Stress...Any Questions? (continued from page 1)

"The faster pace of life today probably means more stress," says lead researcher Dr. Sudha Seshadri. "When we are afraid, when we are threatened in any way, our cortisol levels go up ... It's never too early to be mindful of reducing stress."

Feeling stressed out? Take a deep breath. Go for a walk. Talk things out with someone you trust. Laugh more. And get professional help if you need to. You'll feel better and live longer.

MORE

7 ways to reduce stress
<https://tinyurl.com/2p8dj53p>

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Take the March Health Labels Challenge!

Read Food Labels: Take time to learn about what you're eating

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question:
Can exercise help treat depression?

WELLNESS CHALLENGE

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Read Food Labels

CHALLENGE

Take time to learn about what you're eating

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Read Food Labels"
2. Create a plan to read food labels when you go shopping, cook at home or dine out.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When California resident Raul Robles was hungry, he grabbed fast food. And not just burgers and fries. He also drank two liters of soda a day. He didn't think much about how many calories he was taking in. The food was quick and cheap.

But it wasn't sustainable, and his health was going downhill fast.

"I weighed 344 pounds," says Raul.¹ "I was diabetic, dealing with high blood pressure issues, and, in general, unhappy with my life."

Something had to change. After working with his doctor and taking a nutrition class, Raul started reading food labels. And then he had a lightbulb moment...

"I discovered that I was eating between 5,000 to 7,000 calories on a daily basis," says Raul.

After taking a closer look at food labels and his diet, Raul made some changes.

Food-Label Fun

How much do you know about food labels? Take this quiz to find out.



T F

1. One small package of food is usually just one serving.
2. You should avoid or limit foods high in saturated fat, added sugar, and sodium.
3. Food labels recommend adults eat about 3,000 calories a day.
4. Ingredients on a food label are listed by amount from largest to smallest.
5. Fresh fruits and vegetables don't come with a food label, but they're low in calories and high in nutrients.

How did you do? If you answered any of these statements incorrectly, you could benefit from learning more about how to read food labels. Food labels recommend 2,000 calories per day for the average adult. Just because a drink or package of food is small, doesn't mean it's a single serving.

Answers: 1. False. 2. True. 3. False. 4. True. 5. True.

He:

- Quit drinking diet soda and eating fast food
- Began eating a lot more fruits and vegetables
- Added regular exercise to his daily routine
- Read food labels for everything

Little by little, he started to tip the scale in the right direction. For two years, he read food labels, tracked everything in his diet, and exercised regularly.

"I have lost over 150 pounds," says Raul.

"I continue to count my calories, exercise on a regular basis, and truly enjoy my life now."

Want to improve your diet and your health? Take the month-long health challenge to Read Food Labels.

Video: How to read a food label
<https://tinyurl.com/4f8f9eky>

Read Food Labels: 10 Things to Look For

Pick up a package of food at the grocery store, and chances are pretty good it includes a food label. Restaurants with more than 20 locations must publish nutrition information too.³ If you want to improve your diet and your health, read food labels.



Here's what to look for:

1 Serving Size

Most people aren't very good at guessing serving sizes. So they eat more than they should. Check the food label to see how much a serving size really is.

Tip: You might be surprised that a small bag or package of food actually contains two or three servings.

2 Calories

If you're watching your weight, you should know how many calories you're consuming per day.

Do this: Look for calories per serving on the food label. Keep track using a food diary or mobile app.

3 Sugar

Limit sugar to no more than:

- 36 grams per day for men
- 20 grams per day for women

Sugary drinks, cereals, and sweets are all high in added sugar. The problem with too much sugar: It can lead to weight gain and other chronic diseases.

Sugar rush: A typical 20-ounce bottle of soda contains 65g of sugar...a lot more than the daily limit.

4 Sodium

The American Heart Association recommends eating less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day. If you have high blood pressure, your daily sodium intake should be 1,500 mg or less.⁴

Check sodium content: Many frozen and packaged microwave meals contain 600 to 1,200 mg of sodium per meal. Fast foods like burgers, fries, and pizza are high in sodium, too.

5 Fiber

Did you know the average adult in the U.S. only eats about 16g of fiber per day?⁵ And it's not enough.

- Women need 25 grams of fiber per day.
- Men need 38 grams per day.

Eating foods high in fiber control weight, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels, and improves digestion. Whole-grains, fruits, and vegetables are the best fiber sources.

6 Good fats vs. bad fats

Avoid or limit foods with saturated fats (like cheese and red meats) and trans fats (like desserts, margarine, crackers, and fast food). Aim to eat more foods with healthy fats like fish, nuts and seeds, and olive oil.

7 Cholesterol

Foods like meat and dairy products are high in LDL (bad) cholesterol. They can raise your risk for heart disease and other

Food Labels & The 5-Second Rule



If you already eat well and exercise at least 30 minutes a day, keep it up. But what if your diet needs a makeover? What does it take to change the way you eat?

Start reading food labels. It only takes a few seconds to read a food label, look for specific information, and then make a decision.

In a recent study, researchers found that reading food labels helped people, eat:²

- -6.6% fewer calories
- -10.6% less fat
- -13% less junk food
- +13.5% more vegetables



Train your brain: Reading food labels helps you be more aware of what you're eating. Get the skinny on things like serving size, calories, sodium, sugar, fat, and ingredients, and then make a choice.

health problems. Fortunately, eating more fiber-rich foods can raise HDL (good) cholesterol levels and protect your heart.

8 Protein

Protein needs vary based on things like age, weight, and activity level. Your body needs protein for bones, muscle, hair, blood, and more. How much protein do you need?⁶

Do the math: (Weight) x (0.36) = Minimum daily protein needs

9 Percent Daily Value

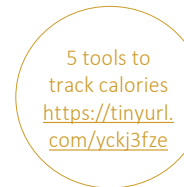
The right column on the food label shows you the recommended Percent Daily Value for each nutrient. Each value is based on 2,000 calories a day. You may need less.

10 Ingredients

What's in your food? Check the list of ingredients on the food label. They're listed in order by amount from largest to smallest.

- **Made with whole grains or refined grains?** Check the ingredients.
- **Highly processed?** Check the ingredients for chemicals, food colorings, and additives.

Tip: Less processed + fewer ingredients = healthier food



Want to improve your diet and your health? Read food labels.

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Read Food Labels

CHALLENGE

Take time to learn about what you're eating

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Create a plan to read food labels when you go shopping, cook at home or dine out.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to read food labels for everything you eat.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH: _____							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	
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_____ Number of days this month I read food labels
 _____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____

ASK THE DOCTOR

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Q. Can exercise help treat depression?

A. Yes. Your brain responds to exercise in positive ways that can boost your mood.¹

Ever have one of those days where you're feeling down?

- You know something isn't right.
- You're sad or anxious.
- You're not sleeping well.
- Maybe you don't have any energy.
- Your appetite has changed, or...
- You've lost interest in things you used to enjoy.

A day or two of feeling down doesn't mean you're depressed. But if you feel down for more than two weeks, you might be suffering from depression.

An estimated 11.5 percent of adults in the U.S. have experienced mild to severe depression in the last two weeks.²

Maybe it's the daily grind that's getting to you. Or maybe it's something bigger like the death of a loved one, job loss, family matters, financial issues, or serious illness. You can even feel depressed for no apparent reason.

Common factors linked to depression include:

- Genetics
- Personal problems
- Social isolation
- Substance abuse



Get Moving to Beat the Blues

If you're feeling depressed, the two most common forms of treatment include:

- **Counseling.** A trained professional can help you change negative thought patterns. Counseling can help you learn skills to train your brain to think differently, too.
- **Medication:** About 1 in 8 adults in the United States take antidepressants.³ Antidepressants alter chemicals in your brain to improve your mood and reduce feelings of sadness and hopelessness.

Exercise is medicine for your mood

Besides counseling and medication, there's at least one other way to treat depression and boost your mood: Exercise.

In a recent study, researchers looked at the connection between exercise and depression in 33,908 adults over an 11-year period.⁴ They found that:

- **No exercise** increases the risk for developing depression by 44 percent, compared to people who exercise at least 1 hour per week.

ASK THE Wellness DOCTOR

- **Regular exercise** can help treat and prevent depression.
- **Just one hour of physical activity a week** (less than 10 minutes a day) can improve mood and reduce depression.

Need a dose of something to improve your mood?

- **Here's your prescription:** Stop reading this right now. Go for a walk. And make it a daily habit.
- **Side effects:** You'll feel better, burn extra calories, and improve your physical and mental health. Exercise is medicine.

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