



APRIL 2020

# Wellness Matters

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Your Healthy Body

## Overcoming Loneliness

*Social distancing and self-quarantining, while necessary to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), can cause feelings of intense loneliness. How can you tackle these negative stressors?*

### What is loneliness?

While the words may sound alike, loneliness and being alone are not the same thing. Prolonged loneliness can lead to an increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, and dementia. According to the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, loneliness and social isolation can be as damaging as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

### Overcoming loneliness now

If you're feeling lonely in these uncertain times, you're not alone; many Americans are feeling the same. But there are many things you can do fight loneliness and maintain mental well-being during this pandemic.



**Stick to a schedule** Maintain as much normalcy as possible with your daily routine to help

lift your mood and prevent boredom and distress from setting in. This helps make days

feel structured rather than long and endless: for instance, if you normally go to the gym before work, try an at-home workout before you begin your day.

### Use technology to connect

Today's technology makes it easier to connect with others without actual physical contact. Reach out to loved ones with technology to reduce feelings of loneliness and anxiety: use video technologies and social media to stay in touch.

**Get plenty of exercise** Exercise is a great way to boost your

mood, ease stress, and feel productive. Physical and mental health are connected, so it's essential to focus on both while staying at home. If safe to do so, get outside as much as possible: exercise in your backyard, garden, or just enjoy the sun.

### Be informed but not

**Obsessed** COVID-19 is a rapidly evolving situation; it seems there is new information daily. Being informed is key, but it's detrimental to obsess over the news: instead of checking the news all day, get updates once in the morning and once at night.

**Practice mindfulness** Take five minutes a day to jot down what you are grateful for: this has been proven to lower stress and can change your mindset from negative to positive. Build time into each day to boost your mood with positivity and gratitude.

## April: Alcohol Awareness Month

Consuming too much of anything is bad for you—this is especially true when it comes to alcohol. Excessive consumption of alcohol can cause many negative health effects. “Excessive consumption” means more than two drinks per day for a man under 65 and more than one drink per day for a woman under 65.

In the short-term, alcohol depresses the central nervous system, lowers inhibitions, impairs speech, and reduces muscle coordination. In extreme amounts, alcohol can significantly depress the vital centers of the brain and can cause a coma. Other adverse effects include:

**Liver disorders** Heavy drinking can cause alcoholic hepatitis (inflammation of the liver) and can lead to cirrhosis (scarring of the liver).

**Gastrointestinal problems** Excessive alcohol consumption can damage the pancreas, which regulates metabolism and produces enzymes to help digestion, and can inflame the stomach lining, interfering with the absorption of B vitamins.

**Cardiovascular issues** Heavy drinking can lead to high blood pressure and risk of a heart attack.

**Diabetes complications** Alcohol can increase the risk of low blood sugar since it prevents the release of glucose from the liver.

**Bone loss** Consumption can interfere with bone growth and increase the risk of fractures.

**Birth defects** Drinking alcohol while pregnant may cause fetal alcohol syndrome. This condition can cause birth problems such as developmental disabilities, heart defects, and more.

Avoid these risks by limiting your alcohol intake. Learn more at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).



## Healthy & Delicious Getting Enough Calcium?

Calcium is the most abundant mineral in your body. Ample calcium is critical to keep your bones and teeth strong and to maintain the function of your nerves, heart, and muscles. The current recommended dietary allowance (RDA) by age group is as follows:

- 1-3 years: 700 mg daily
- 4-8 years: 1,000 mg daily
- 9-18 years: 1,300 mg daily
- 19-50 years: 1,000 mg daily
- 51-70 years: 1,000 mg daily (men) and 1,200 mg daily (women)

Note that these RDAs reflect suggestions from the [Office of Dietary Supplements](https://ods.od.nih.gov) at the National Institutes of Health. Consult your doctor to determine your dietary needs.

### Top 5 Calcium-rich Foods

