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# Wellness Matters

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Stay Healthy

## Your Mental Well-Being

### What is Mental Well-being?

Your mental well-being includes how you think, act, and feel. It also helps you cope with stress, relate well to others, and make good decisions. The [WHO](#) (World Health Organization), advises there is no specific definition of mental well-being; however, studies agree that achieving a state of mental well-being includes being able to:

- Realize your full potential
- Work productively
- Cope with normal life stresses
- Contribute meaningfully to your community

Mental well-being includes mental health, but goes far beyond treating mental illness. For example, you could go through a period of poor mental health but not necessarily have a diagnosable mental illness. And your mental health can change over time, depending on factors such as your workload, stress, and work-life balance.

**What is Mental Illness?** Mental illness refers to a variety of

conditions that affect your mood, behavior, feelings, or thinking. Mental illnesses can occur occasionally, while others are chronic and long-lasting. Common examples include schizophrenia, anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder.



Mental illness is more prevalent than you might think. According to the [CDC](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), 1 in 5 U.S. adults will experience a mental illness in any given year; more than 50% will face mental illness at some point in their life.

### Why Mental Well-being Is Important

Your mental well-being is tied directly to physical health. Those with poor mental

health or untreated mental illness are at risk of chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and obesity. Plus, poor mental health negatively affects your work, home, and social life.

### Improve Your Mental Well-being

As a crucial part of overall health, it's important to maintain or improve your mental state; try these three simple ways to do so daily:

1. **Express gratitude:** Take five minutes to write down all you are grateful for; this is proven to lower stress levels and change from a negative to positive mindset.
2. **Get exercise:** It's true that exercise can improve brain function, reduce anxiety, and improve your overall self-image.
3. **Get enough sleep:** 7-8 hours each night improves your physical and mental health.

For more information, talk with your doctor.

## Get a Good Start to 2021

Like many other people, you may be thinking about what you would like to accomplish in 2021 or what life changes you could make. Common New Year's resolutions include losing weight, exercising, getting organized, learning new skills, and saving money. To reach your resolutions, try the following strategies:

- Set a goal that motivates you.
- Set a goal that is specific.
- Set a goal that is manageable or attainable.
- Write down your goals to establish intention.
- Share goals with others to increase accountability.

### Ready, Set, Go!

2020 may have given you time to reflect and think about what you'd like to change about your lifestyle. Now is a good time to make positive life changes and strive for an overall healthier self. Consider the following five tips to start the new year off right:

- 1) **Check in on your mental health.** Mental health is just as important as physical health in building a healthy lifestyle. Reach out to your doctor or a professional if you need help.
- 2) **Be social.** Isolating during the COVID-19 pandemic doesn't have to mean loneliness. Reconnect with others virtually or while practicing social distancing.
- 3) **Get regular checkups.** Stay up to date with your annual physicals and health tests. Screenings can help identify health issues to be addressed.
- 4) **Drink more water.** Consuming sugary drinks, like juice or soda, can cause liver damage, premature aging, and anxiety. Avoid excessive alcohol consumption as well.
- 5) **Count nutrients, not calories.** Focus on the overall quality of your diet. Achieve this by adding more fiber, protein, and probiotics to your diet.

If you're considering even just one 2021 resolution, decide to make time for yourself. Identify the activities that make you happy or fulfilled and prioritize them.



## Healthy & Nutritious Caffeine and Your Body

Classified as a drug, caffeine is a bitter substance found in coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate, some nuts, and certain medicines. 85-90 percent of Americans consume some sort of caffeine regularly; for most, the amount in two to four cups of coffee daily (200-400mg) is not harmful. But too much can make one feel restless, anxious, and irritable. It can also prevent good sleep, cause headaches, and abnormal heart rhythms.

Caffeine can be habit-forming, so check if you should reduce the amount you consume:

- Do you consume unhealthy amounts, more than 500-600 mg a day?
- Are you sleeping well? Caffeine interferes with the ability to get a good night's sleep.
- Are you taking medications? Some can negatively interact with caffeine. Check with your doctor to be sure.

If you need to cut back, be aware a sudden decrease can cause withdrawal symptoms like headache, fatigue, and irritability. Start by noting how much caffeine is in the foods and beverages you consume. Gradually reduce your daily amount of caffeine. Finally, swap caffeinated for decaffeinated choices.