

Healthy Living Newsletter

A MedWatch publication to keep you healthy and informed.

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Nutrition Corner

Boost Your Mood With Food

If you're feeling blue—or want to ward off feeling that way—studies suggest that adding the following foods may help reduce stress, ease anxiety and fight depression.

Fish. Eating oily, fatty fish (salmon, tuna, sardines, rainbow trout) and mussels will give you omega-3s—a key mood-boosting nutrient and one our bodies don't produce on their own.

Greek Yogurt. This dairy pick is packed with more calcium than you'll find in milk or regular yogurt, which is good news for your mood. Calcium gives your body the "Go!" command, alerting your brain to release feel-good neurotransmitters.

Eggs. Eggs are loaded with mood-promoting omega-3 fatty acids, zinc, B vitamins, and iodide, and because they're packed with protein, they'll also keep you full and energized long after you eat them.

Coconut. The presence of potassium in coconut is the main reason for the feel good factor. Drink your coconut or sprinkle some coconut flakes into your recipe.

Green Tea. Green tea helps in a variety of ways, and can act as a mood improver when you are feeling anxious or angry.

Taking Control of Your Health

Happiness and Emotional Wellbeing

By now we all know the factors for maintaining good physical health: eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, getting plenty of sleep, avoiding tobacco and limiting alcohol. But there is *another* significant factor affecting our health that is often overlooked. Our emotional health – or **Emotional Wellness** – has a profound impact on our overall physical well-being.

Emotional wellness is the ability to be aware of and accept our feelings, to have an optimistic approach to life, and enjoy life despite its occasional disappointments and frustrations. It also involves being attentive to your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, whether positive or negative. Being emotionally well allows you to express feelings without any constraints. You will be able to enjoy emotional expression and be capable of forming supportive and interdependent relationships with others.

The term "emotional intelligence" describes the capacity to recognize their own and other people's emotions. The term encompasses the following five characteristics and abilities:

- ◇ **Self-awareness** – recognizing feelings as they occur.
- ◇ **Mood management** – handling feelings and you reacting appropriately.
- ◇ **Self-motivation** – directing yourself towards a goal, despite self-doubt.
- ◇ **Empathy** – tuning into verbal and nonverbal cues.
- ◇ **Managing relationships** – conflict resolution, and negotiations.

Achieving Emotional Wellness. Emotional wellness is based on your ability to be optimistic. Optimism allows you to greet all emotions with a confident attitude that allows you to learn from your mistakes. Once you have mastered emotional wellness, your life will be more balanced and you will develop a deep sense of awareness. Below are some strategies to boost your emotional wellness

- ◇ Remind yourself to stay positive, always.
- ◇ Smile.
- ◇ Seek or accept help and support from others when needed.
- ◇ Employ gratitude to your life in order to strengthen relationships with family and friends.
- ◇ Practice being mindful and increase your awareness. This can be done through various forms of meditation.
- ◇ Accept mistakes and learn from them for next time. Mistakes are not terrible experiences; they are learning experiences.

For many people, the pursuit of a healthy work-life balance seems like an impossible goal. With so many of us torn between juggling heavy workloads, managing relationships and family responsibilities, and squeezing in outside interests, it's no surprise that more than one in four Americans describe themselves as "super stressed."

While we all need a certain amount of stress to spur us on and help us perform at our best, the key to managing stress lies in that one magic word: *balance*. Here are a few practical steps we can all take to loosen the grip of stress and win back the balance in our lives.



Work-Life Balance



At Work

- **Set manageable goals each day.** Being able to meet priorities helps us feel a sense of accomplishment and control. Make a "to do" list, and take care of important tasks first and eliminate unessential ones.
- **Be efficient with your time at work.** When you face a big project at work or home, start by dividing it into smaller tasks. Complete the first one before moving on to the next. Give yourself small rewards upon each completion.
- **Ask for flexibility.** Flex time and telecommuting are quickly becoming established as necessities in today's business world, and many companies are drafting work-life policies. Explore these options with your employer.
- **Take five.** Taking a break at work isn't only acceptable, it's often encouraged by many employers. Small breaks at work, or on any project, will help clear your head, and improve your ability to deal with stress and make good decisions.

At Home

- **Unplug.** The same technology that makes it so easy for workers to do their jobs flexibly can also burn us out if we use them 24/7. Make yourself available but recognize the need for personal time, too.
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP).** Many organizations offer resources through an EAP, which can provide guidance on issues like where to find a daycare center and caretaking for an elderly parent, as well as referrals to mental health and other services.
- **Treat your body right.** Being in good shape physically increases your tolerance to stress and reduces sick days. Eat right, exercise and get adequate rest.
- **Get help if you need it.** Don't let stress stand in the way of your health and happiness. If you are persistently overwhelmed, it may be time to seek help from a mental health professional. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness; taking care of yourself is a sign of strength.

Your Total Lifestyle Coach (TLC) is your 'health advocate' – a GPS to help you navigate the complex healthcare map. Contact your TLC at (800) 386-5475 for personalized tools and resources to help you maintain your good health.