

Health and Wellness Tips

Warning Signs of Depression

Symptoms of depression vary from person to person, but they commonly include:

1. Feeling sad or empty for extended periods of time—mood change
2. Feeling hopeless or helpless
3. Feeling worthless or as though life has no meaning
4. Feeling excessively guilty for no reason or over events that occurred long ago
5. Taking no interest in or pleasure in things or activities that used to be enjoyable
6. Anger and irritability that becomes more intense or frequent than typical
7. Tiredness and a lack of energy. Finding it hard to get out of bed and do everyday tasks.
8. Insomnia or sleep disturbances
9. Difficulty concentrating remembering, and making decisions, even about minor things
10. Lack of appetite OR
11. Overeating and weight gain
12. Aches, pains, and other physical symptoms such as headaches or digestive disorders
13. Trouble “switching off” the brain
14. Thoughts of death and dying, including thoughts of suicide.

If you or someone else has multiple symptoms, especially if they persist, it is wise to consult a counselor, therapist, or doctor to discuss mental health concerns.

Hug Therapy *(It's a real thing!)*

Hug therapy is the intentional use of embraces and touch to promote physical healing and emotional well-being. Human touch can trigger a cascade of physiological responses in our bodies that have profound effects on health due to a complex interplay of neurochemical reactions. When released during a hug, hormones and neurotransmitters such as oxytocin, dopamine, and serotonin lower stress levels, reduce anxiety, boost the immune system, and leave us feeling happier, more relaxed, and better equipped to face life's challenges!

Learn to recognize the signs of a stroke

In a [stroke](#), the brain suddenly stops getting the blood and oxygen it needs. The earliest signs of stroke depend on which parts of the brain are affected and how bad the initial damage is. While one person might just feel a little weak on one side of the body, another might suddenly have trouble talking, walking, and seeing. If you see the following warning signs of a stroke, in yourself or someone else, it's important to get treatment right away. Every minute could make a difference how well someone recovers.

The BE FAST Test

B is for Balance. Loss of balance is a possible stroke symptom.

E is for Eyes. Someone having a stroke may experience loss of vision or blurry vision in one or both eyes.

F is for Face. Smile and see if one side of the face droops. Muscle weakness or paralysis may show up on just one side of the body.

A is for Arms. Raise both arms. Does one arm drop down?

S is for Speech. Ask the person to repeat a short phrase and check for slurred or strange speech. A stroke can make it hard to speak clearly or to choose words.

T is for Time. If the person exhibits any of these symptoms, call 911 right away. Try to write down the time when you first saw any of these stroke warning signs.

Is there Sugar in your Food?

If you are looking to reduce sugar in your diet, here are just a few of the many names it goes by on ingredient labels:

agave, buttered syrup, cane juice, caramel, carob syrup, castor sugar, coconut sugar, corn syrup, date syrup, demerara sugar, dextrose, drimol, ethyl maltol, evaporated cane juice, Flo malt, Florida crystals, fructose, fruit juice concentrate, glucose, golden syrup, grape sugar, honeybake, high fructose corn syrup, invert sugar, isoglucose, isomaltulose, kona-ame, maltodextrin, maltose, maple, molasses, mizu-ame, muscovado sugar, nulomoline, panela sugar, refiner's syrup, rice syrup, sorghum, starch sweetener, sucanat, sucrovert, sugar beet, treacle, turbinado sugar, yellow sugar

How to be your own Best Advocate with your Doctor

1. Take a list of all medications and/or vitamins/supplements that you are taking with you to your doctor's appointment.

2. Ask lots of questions! Consider the following:

** If I were to tackle this problem with diet or exercise, what would be the best approach?*

** What other alternatives to your recommended medication / treatment do I have?*

** What will happen if I do not follow your recommended plan?*

** What is the number of people needed to treat for the specific medication / treatment you recommend? (This is the estimated number of people who need to be treated this way in order for one person to be helped.)*

** What are the side effects of the medication you are recommending?*

** How long after beginning this medication / treatment should I begin to notice a difference in the way I feel?*

** How long will I need to be on this medication / treatment?*

** How many people do you see with my particular medical problem? What is the rate of recovery?*

** Are there other symptoms that I should be on the lookout for with my condition?*

3. Read the package insert that comes with any medication that you are prescribed, Be aware of any side effects that could develop. Your doctor may not be aware of all possible side effects.

4. Ask for a copy of any lab or imaging results and keep them in a file for yourself. Keep track of when you have been given any vaccinations, started any new medications, developed any new or unusual health symptoms, had any surgeries, etc.

5. Learn to take your own blood pressure and / or blood sugar readings.

6. Consider exploring doctors and treatments outside the traditional mainstream for some issues.

7. Remember that your doctor works for you! Seek a second opinion before surgery or if you are uncertain of a recommended treatment. Don't be afraid to change doctors if you are not satisfied with the quality of care being provided.

Signs of Heat Exhaustion

Signs of heat exhaustion may start rapidly or come on slowly. You may first get a *red heat rash* or *painful heat cramps, often in your arms and legs*. Other symptoms include:

- * *Body temperature over 100 F (although you can have heat exhaustion with a normal temperature)*
- * *Dizziness or faintness*
- * *Blurred vision*
- * *Cool, moist skin with goosebumps*
- *Fatigue*
- *Headache*
- *Nausea and vomiting*
- *Heavy sweating*
- *Rapid heartbeat*
- *Rapid shallow breathing*
- *Swollen ankles, feet, or hands (heat edema)*
- *A drop in blood pressure when you stand (may result in dizziness or lightheadedness)*

Babies and young children are at especially high risk of heat exhaustion because they sweat less, making it harder for them to cool off. They may show no clear early signs other than *seeming fussy and unwell*. Signs of heat exhaustion in a baby might include:

- *Pale skin, most noticeable on the palms of hands, nails, eyes, gums, or tongue*
- *Cooler than usual skin*
- *Increased thirst and other signs of dehydration such as peeing or crying less*
- *A rise in body temperature*

If you have symptoms of heat exhaustion, it's vital to get out of the heat and rest in an air-conditioned room. If you can't get inside, find a cool and shady place to rest. You should also:

**Drink water or sports drinks, taking small sips over about an hour. Avoid caffeine / alcohol*

**Remove unnecessary or tight clothing*

**Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath or apply cold compresses and/or sit in front of a fan*

If you don't feel better within an hour, seek medical help. Untreated heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke, a serious condition that can result in damage to the brain and other vital organs.