Dakota Wellness Program

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Join Sanford Health Plan Wellness team members for our monthly 15-minute wellness webinar.
CLICK HERE TO REGISTER TODAY!

NORTH DAKOTA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM

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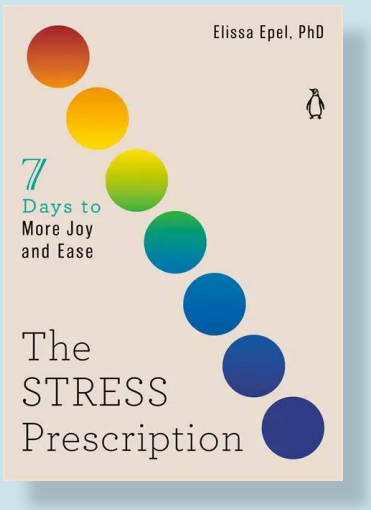
Bouncing back stronger: Building resilience through stress and adversity

Stress and adversity are a normal part of life, but how we respond can make a difference in our overall well-being. Work demands, financial concerns, family changes, illness or unexpected challenges can leave us feeling overwhelmed. Learning healthy ways to cope can help us manage stress and bounce back.

Start by focusing on what you can control. Take breaks, get regular physical activity, eat nourishing foods and aim for consistent sleep. Deep breathing, mindfulness and spending time outdoors can also calm the body and mind. Staying connected with supportive friends, family or coworkers can provide comfort and perspective.

Remember, resilience does not mean handling everything alone or pretending everything is fine. It means adapting, asking for help when needed and continuing forward one step at a time. If stress begins interfering with daily life, consider talking with a healthcare professional. Small, healthy choices can build strength for life's challenges.





Monthly book club

The Stress Prescription

by Elissa Epel, PhD

The Stress Prescription offers a practical, research-based approach to understanding and managing stress. Elissa Epel explains that stress is not always harmful; short bursts of stress can help us adapt, perform and become more resilient. The goal is not to eliminate stress but to change how we respond to it and recover from it. The book provides a simple seven-day approach with strategies such as focusing on what you can control, using short periods of healthy stress to build resilience, prioritizing recovery, connecting with nature and strengthening social connections. Epel also encourages readers to find meaning, purpose and joy in everyday life. The book reminds us that small, consistent changes can improve our ability to handle challenges and support long-term physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Discussion questions

- **What is one source of stress in your life that you can't control and how could you change the way you respond to it?**
- **Which healthy habit – movement, nutrition, sleep, mindfulness or connection – could you strengthen to better manage stress?**
- **When facing adversity, what is one small step you can take to build resilience and move forward?**

Ask the expert

How can I tell if a carbohydrate is ultra-processed, and are all processed carbs unhealthy? What are some healthier carb choices I can include in my everyday diet?

Carbohydrates are an important source of energy, but with so many foods labeled "ultra-processed," it can be hard to know what to choose. Not all carbohydrates are created equal, and processing does not automatically make a food unhealthy. Ultra-processed foods often contain ingredients not typically used in home cooking, such as artificial flavors, sweeteners, colors or preservatives. Examples may include sugary cereals, packaged snack cakes and some sweetened breads.

When choosing carbohydrates, focus on foods that are minimally processed and provide fiber, vitamins and minerals. Good choices include fruits, vegetables, beans, lentils, oats, brown rice, quinoa and whole-grain breads or pastas. Check the nutrition facts and ingredient list and look for foods with whole grains and little or no added sugar.

Remember, you do not have to avoid every processed food. Instead, aim for balance and make nutrient-rich, minimally processed carbohydrates the foundation of your meals most of the time.



Breathe, pause, relax: The stress-relieving power of meditation

Meditation is a simple practice that can help calm the mind and reduce stress. When we feel stressed, our bodies may respond with a faster heartbeat, tense muscles and racing thoughts. Meditation encourages slow, focused breathing and helps the body shift into a more relaxed state. It can also help us become more aware of our thoughts without becoming overwhelmed by them. With regular practice, meditation may improve emotional balance, focus, sleep and our ability to handle everyday challenges. You do not need special equipment or a lot of time to get started. Even five to ten minutes a day can make a difference. Find a quiet place, sit comfortably, close your eyes, breathe slowly and gently bring your attention back to your breath when your mind wanders.

Arms out, sleeves up – it's vaccination time

PROTECT YOURSELF & OTHERS

Getting vaccinated is your best defense against flu, COVID-19 and RSV. It's time to help protect you and your loved ones from illness.

ANNUAL FLU VACCINE:

Recommended annually for everyone ages 6 months and older.

COVID-19 VACCINE:

Recommended for everyone ages 6 months and older based on shared decision-making with their provider.

RSV VACCINE:

Recommended for all adults ages 75 years and older, and for adults ages 50–74 years who are at increased risk of severe RSV.

Flu and COVID-19 vaccinations are covered benefits with NO COST to you.*

*Exceptions apply when using out-of-network providers.

Preventive health

Musculoskeletal health

November is a great time to focus on musculoskeletal health. The musculoskeletal system is essential for day-to-day functioning. It is comprised of ligaments, joints, tendons, bones and muscles. This system becomes weaker with aging and can create problems with muscles and bones. Skeletal muscle and bone health are essential for being active and maintaining independence. Participating in regular exercise and strength training activities improves coordination and balance, prevents muscle loss and improves overall mobility. Recommended activity for adults is 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity weekly and can include weight-bearing activities like walking and running. Adding strength training activities such as lifting weights, squats and lunges will help build muscle and bone and improve coordination and balance. If you would like to begin strength training exercises, you could consider doing activities using body weight only such as planks, push-ups, squats or lunges. Begin slowly and add resistance or weight as you begin to get stronger. Talk with your physician about any concerns you have and if you need a referral to a physical therapist.

Lentil enchiladas recipe



These vegetarian lentil enchiladas are the perfect weeknight dinner - packed with nutrients and flavor, and ideal for meal prep and freezing! Servings: 6 - 8 enchiladas

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon oil
2 cups cooked brown or black lentils
1 red onion diced
1 red pepper diced
1 yellow pepper diced
2 garlic cloves minced
50 g sweet corn
3 tablespoon sliced jalapenos diced
2.5 cups enchilada sauce
1 teaspoon paprika
0.5 teaspoon garlic powder
0.5 teaspoon cumin powder
0.5 teaspoon oregano
Salt to taste
6-8 regular flour tortilla wraps
100 g mozzarella and cheddar cheese mix shredded
100 g sour cream

Instructions:

Heat the oil in a pan on medium heat and then add the diced onion and peppers. Sauté for six to seven minutes, stirring often, until the vegetables have begun to soften and then add the minced garlic and cook for another minute. Add your seasonings, followed by the cooked lentils, diced jalapenos and sweetcorn. Cook for three to four minutes, stirring, until warmed through. Pour one cup of enchilada sauce and 50g sour cream into the pan, stirring both into the lentil mixture. Taste the mixture and adjust any seasonings according to your preferences. Preheat your oven to 180C | 356F. Arrange your tortilla wraps on a flat surface with your baking dish next to you. Line the baking dish with 2 tablespoon of enchilada sauce. Spoon some of your lentil mixture into the middle of the tortilla wrap (aiming for an even amount across the six-eight wraps, depending on how much you're using), then fold in the top and bottom of the wrap before rolling it up. Place the wrap with the seam side down in your baking dish and repeat for the remaining tortillas. Pour the remaining enchilada sauce over the top of the wraps, followed by the cheese. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the cheese is melted and golden. Serve with the remaining sour cream on top and a scattering of fresh chopped cilantro.

Nutrition Facts: Calories per serving: 384 | Protein: 15g | Carbohydrates: 52g | Fat: 13g | Fiber: 7g | Sugar: 4g

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The information in this newsletter should not be considered medical advice and is not a substitute for individual patient care and treatment decisions.

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Monthly Observances

American national diabetes month

Lung cancer awareness month

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SET-UP A
MyChart
ONLINE ACCOUNT
sanfordhealthplan.com/memberlogin

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NDPERSwellness@sanfordhealth.org
(800) 499-3416 (TTY: 711)

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