



CARE FOR SELF



Caring for Yourself to Care for Others

Taking care of yourself makes it easier to care, share, and connect with your partner and your family. Individual wellness is more than not being sick. Wellness involves making choices about eating right, exercising often, thinking positive thoughts, and sharing intimacy.

Healthy Eating

In order to properly nourish your body, feel good, and have the energy to love your partner well, it is important to make healthy food choices.

Consider these tips to make healthier choices about what you put into your body:

- Increase intake of fruits and vegetables (especially dark green and orange colored) each day.
- Try to increase the amount of whole grains you eat – choose whole grain breads and pastas instead of white.
- Keep food safe – keep meat and dairy properly refrigerated. Make sure to cook meat until it has reached the right temperature.
- Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and limit the overall fat that you eat. Choose low-fat options.
- Decrease your intake of foods that have a lot of sugar and salt in them. Choose foods labeled “no added sugar” or “low sodium” or ones that do not list sugar as one of the first 3 ingredients.

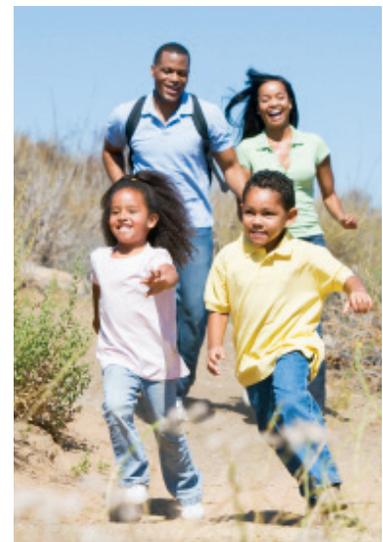


Physical Activity

Move your body! Adding physical activity to your daily routine not only reduces health problems, but also improves your mental health and relationships.

These guidelines can help you add more physical activity into your day:

- Exercise with a partner so that you can support and motivate each other.
- Doctors recommend 30 minutes of moderate activity 5 days per week. Try walking at a brisk pace, housework, pushing a lawnmower, or dancing.
- Do at least 10 minutes of exercise at a time. Include some aerobic exercise that makes your heart beat faster and also strength building exercises.



Regulating Your Emotions

Regulating your emotions involves controlling how you feel and how you react to stressful situations. Sometimes it seems we have no control over how we feel, but it is possible to manage emotions and how we express them.

Try these tips:

- Humor – learning to be lighthearted in the midst of highly emotional times can help ease the tension and can help you to calm down when necessary.
- Positive self-talk – learn to be the positive voice inside of your head instead of the negative one. For example, instead of saying “Oh, I can’t believe I did that” try saying, “I know I can do better next time.”
- Think logically about the meaning behind the emotion – ask yourself – Why am I feeling like this? Where is this coming from? How would I like to react?
- Be willing to change. Learning to compromise can solve a lot of problems.



Sexual Health and Intimacy

Did you know most people report that the quality of their sexual relationship with their partner is more important than how much they have sex? Sexual satisfaction is clearly linked to the physical and emotional wellness of each partner.

In order to have a healthy sexual relationship as a couple, there are key things to focus on:

- Openness about sexual desires. This requires knowing yourself and your wants enough to talk freely about them with your partner.
- Set the mood early. Foreplay happens way before you make it to the bedroom; being kind and having fun sets a better mood for romance.
- Sharing power. A healthy balance of influence in the relationship is crucial for creating intimacy. Think about ways that you and your partner can share.
- Medical issues. Side effects of some medications can impact sexual desire. Talk with your doctor about any possible side effects that may occur and be patient with your partner.
- Emotional issues. There are countless other influences that affect your sexual relationship, including sexual history and mental health. Learn to be mindful about how these things might be affecting your sexual relationship.

Think Positive!

Learning to think positively about life can have dramatic effects on your well-being and on your relationships with others. Optimism involves being hopeful and confident about the future and the successful outcome of a situation. It also involves viewing obstacles as opportunities to learn and grow.



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