

# MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

## WHY MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Some people think that only people with mental illnesses have to pay attention to their mental health. But the truth is that your emotions, thoughts and attitudes affect your energy, productivity and overall health. Good mental health strengthens your ability to cope with everyday hassles and more serious crises and challenges. Good mental health is essential to creating the life you want. Just as you brush your teeth or get a flu shot, you can take steps to promote your mental health. A great way to start is by learning to deal with stress.

## HOW STRESS HURTS

Stress can eat away at your well-being like acid eating away at your stomach. Actually, stress can contribute to stomach pains and lots of other problems, like:

- headaches
- insomnia
- overeating
- back pain
- high blood pressure
- irritability
- vulnerability to infection

Stress also can lead to serious mental health problems, like **depression** and **anxiety disorders**. If you think you have such a problem, you can **get help**. Of course you can't magically zap all sources of stress, but you can learn to deal with them in a way that promotes the well-being you want--and deserve.

## THE EVIDENCE

The concrete steps suggested are not based on guesses, fads or advice from grandma (though she probably got a lot right). They represent hundreds of research studies with thousands of participants, often conducted over decades and backed by major universities or government agencies.

This research shows that how good you feel is to a fairly large extent up to you. No matter how stressful your situation, you can take steps to promote your well-being.

# MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

We're not talking about huge changes to your lifestyle, either. We're talking about reasonable steps that if used consistently can increase your comfort and boost your ability to build a rewarding life. See the tools below that can help manage stress and improve your everyday mental health and well being!

## THE 10 TOOLS

These proven tools can help you feel stronger and more hopeful:

1. Stay positive
2. Connect with others
3. Get physically active
4. Help others
5. Get enough sleep
6. Create joy and satisfaction
7. Eat well
8. Take care of your spirit
9. Deal better with hard times
10. Get professional help if you need it

**PLEASE VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**[HTTP://WWW.MENTALHEALTHAMERICA.NET/](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/)**

**[HTTP://WWW.MENTALHEALTH.GOV/INDEX.HTML](http://www.mentalhealth.gov/index.html)**