

## Don't Forget Flu Season



With all the attention on COVID-19, don't overlook getting a flu shot. Flu season usually starts around October and can run until the following May. It peaks in December and January.

Fact: 35.5 million people got sick with influenza in 2019 and 34,200 died. 188 were children. You can discover locations and organizations that offer free flu shots by visiting [www.health.com](http://www.health.com) and searching "free flu shot." Source: CDC.gov [search "the flu season"]

## Hidden Stress Hazards of Remote Workers



If you work remotely, reach out for help before you begin "adapting" to potential stressors of your

position in unhealthy ways. Don't let frustrations drag on. Research shows remote workers can face many unique challenges, including loneliness, inability to process stress with peers, irritability from interruptions at home, go-it-alone technology issues, worrying about completing tasks correctly, resentment from being unable to "switch off" from work to non-work, feeling frustrated at being unable to relax because of unfinished work only steps away, and parenting conflicts with guilt at being unable to attend to child needs.

Source: [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu) [Search "psychological, teleworking"]

## Should You Lend Money to a Coworker?



Should you lend money to a coworker? The question has many considerations, but the most cited axiom is, "Don't lend money to a friend unless you expect it not to be repaid." A request may indicate a more

serious personal problem. If so, loaning money then equates to enabling. Does your friend need other help? Consider these steps: 1) Show empathy. 2) Don't be judgmental. Eliciting defensiveness will shut down willingness to accept help. 3) Discuss concern for your friend. Use "I" statements: "I'd like to help, but I'm just not in a position to lend. Can we talk about the situation?" 4) Have a source of help/number available, and offer it. 5) Offer to accompany your friend to the source of help. (Note: If your friend does not accept help, you will increase the likelihood of doing so in the future with this supportive strategy.)

## Boredom and the Pandemic



Boredom may be the least discussed experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. The international response has

affected where we go and what we can do, who we can be with or even hug. Restaurants are closed or stark and bare, and more movie theaters shutter every day. Boredom is normal, but pandemic-related boredom is a bit different. Research shows it can have health effects, as it did during the 1918 Spanish flu. These can include behavioral issues, relapse of health conditions, worsening of compulsive-behavior disorders, negative thinking, depression, and even suicide. (Suicide rates increased during the 1918 Spanish flu.) Source (1): [www.news.columbia.edu](http://www.news.columbia.edu) [search "why being bored"]; Source (2): [www.academic.oup.com](http://www.academic.oup.com) [search "covid suicide"]

## National Caregivers Month



November is *National Caregivers Month*. It's a time to recognize, support, and empower family caregivers. One of the most comprehensive sources of help is [www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org), the website of the

Family Caregiver Alliance. It is an online service that provides quality information, support, and resources for family caregivers of adults with chronic physical or cognitive conditions such as Alzheimer's, stroke, Parkinson's, and other illnesses. Sixty-eight percent of caregivers are women (aarp.org) who spend an average of 20 hours per week caring for a loved one. Whether you are a caregiver or in a relationship with a caregiver, do you know the signs and symptoms of caregiver distress? These symptoms may include feeling overwhelmed or constantly worried, feeling tired often, getting too much sleep or not enough sleep, gaining or losing weight, becoming easily irritated or angry, losing interest in activities you used to enjoy, feeling sad, having frequent headaches, bodily pain, or other physical problems. These symptoms can also give way to burnout. Caregivers need physical help with tasks, decisions, meal prep, errands, and chores. They especially need emotional support to help them deal with the stress of caring for an elderly person or other loved one with special needs. Most people do not know that caregiving is one of the toughest and most stressful jobs. This is because it is characterized by high levels of "job strain." Job strain includes having high levels of stress with low levels of control over how much, how often, and when caregiving will next be required. Source: [www.unhealthywork.org/job-strain/definitions-and-formulations-of-job-strain/](http://www.unhealthywork.org/job-strain/definitions-and-formulations-of-job-strain/)

## Alcohol and Prescription Drugs Don't Mix



Do you take medication for a medical condition like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, migraines, anxiety, arthritis, sleep problems, or a heart condition? The Centers for Disease Control is

growing more concerned about the risk associated with drinking alcohol while taking prescription medications. More people are aging, many are taking more medications, and thousands of the new drugs have adverse effects if you use them in combination with alcohol, even a little bit. Pay attention to warning labels about alcohol. Hundreds of medications do not mix with alcohol. Over 22 medications for high cholesterol may cause liver damage if combined with alcohol. Discover whether the medication you are taking has a side effect with alcohol at [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov). [Search "harmful interactions pdf"]

## Leading a Meeting with Impact



Lead a meeting with these proven but unfortunately forgotten tips so you get more done, stay on topic, wander less, get more participation, reduce confusion, end on time, and have participants walking away with a "thumbs up." Before any meeting, mentally rehearse what the meeting is about, why it's needed, what should be accomplished, and who the vital attendees are. Double the impact by telling/reminding everyone the purpose of the meeting, what the results should be, and what time you are ending. Many meetings grow sluggish with discussions between two or three members not relevant to other participants. Intervene by maintaining awareness so your meeting marches forward, while directing these smaller discussions to outside the group. Don't end a meeting without a plan of action for any unfinished business. These tips will make you a leader who raises productivity.

## Thanksgiving Safety—Yes, It Is Possible



Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, you can still have a meaningful Thanksgiving celebration with family and friends. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has released some suggested guidelines and social interaction ideas. They've also created a "degrees of risk" section so you can determine whether activities you've planned are low, medium, or high risk. Even better, they give you some workarounds for how to engage, yet still create memories rather than sour your event with boredom or the tragedy of a loved one becoming ill. Examples: Celebrate at the home of the person least likely to have been exposed to the coronavirus at work or within the community. Host your gathering outdoors, and if not, make sure the room or space is well-ventilated (for example, open a window). Discover more at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). [Search "holiday celebrations" and "social gatherings"]

---

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach. Your EAP is here to help with family, work, health, & legal issues.

To access your EAP services  
1-800-343-3822 | TDD 1-800-448-1823  
[www.AWPnow.com](http://www.AWPnow.com)

*Here for you as life happens ...*

# BalancedLiving

November 2020



## LOOKING AT HAPPINESS AS A CHOICE

Are you a person who can act on tough questions? Questions like: What am I grateful for? What choices do I have? What actions can I take to improve my life? What are my primary strengths? How can I live a more balanced life?

People who can act on these questions likely also describe themselves as happy.

“Happiness is neither a mood nor an emotion. Mood is a biochemical condition, and emotions are transitory feelings,” says Dan Baker, Ph.D., director of the Life Enhancement Program at Canyon Ranch in Tucson, Ariz., and author of *What Happy People Know*. “Happiness is a way of life, an overriding outlook composed of qualities like love, optimism, courage, and a sense of freedom. It’s not something that changes every time your situation changes.”



People often think happiness is something you’re born with, but you can learn the qualities of happiness by mastering Dr. Baker’s happiness tools described here.

### Appreciation

This is the most fundamental tool. It is a form of love that asks for nothing and gives everything. “Taking time each day to appreciate what you have, to think about people who have made a difference, to acknowledge the love you have or have had. Each of these things can turn your attention to the good in your life,” says Dr. Baker. “This process shifts your attention away from fear, which is often the basis of unhappiness.”

### Choice

Feeling as though you have no choices or options in life is like being in jail. It leads to depression, anxiety, and learned helplessness. “Unhappy people make the mistake of giving in to fear, which limits their perception of the choices they have,” says Dr. Baker. “Happy people turn away from fear and find they have an array of choices they can make in almost every situation.”

### Personal Power

Personal power has two components: taking responsibility and taking action. It means realizing your life belongs to you and then doing something about it. “When you’re secure in your personal power, it keeps you from becoming a victim,” says Dr. Baker. “When you have it, you know you can handle whatever life dishes out.”

### Leading with Your Strengths

Focusing on your weaknesses reinforces unhappiness. By focusing on your strengths, you can solve problems and improve situations. “Building and broadening your talents and positive qualities feels good and improves your rate of success in every endeavor,” says Dr. Baker. “People get energy from building on their successes, not fighting their failures.”

### Power of Language

You think in words, and those words have the power to limit you or set you free. Similarly, the stories you tell yourself about your life eventually become your life. “Self-talk is powerful, so it’s important to choose your words carefully,” says Dr. Baker. “If you use destructive or critical language, you’ll push yourself deeper into fear. Even something as simple as calling an unexpected situation a possibility instead of a problem can change the way you look at it.” A good rule to follow in self-talk is to talk to yourself the way you want others to talk to you.

### Multidimensional Living

There are three primary components of life: relationships, health and purpose, and work. Many people, though, put all their energy into just one area. “But doing so never works,” says Dr. Baker. “Happiness comes from living a full life.”

The StayWell Company © 2020



## MANAGE RISK TO STAY SAFE FOR COVID THANKSGIVING



Most years, Paula Emde's Thanksgiving plans involve sharing a meal with at least a dozen family members, either at her home in Dunwoody, GA, or at a relative's lakeside picnic pavilion about 80 miles south of the Atlanta suburb. Her favorite dishes include glazed ham, sweet potatoes, and her mother-in-law's squash casserole.

She's planning for the holiday to be a little different in 2020.

"Our main concern this year is to avoid travel, to avoid having anyone travel to our house, and to enjoy the

meal safely, which means eating outside," Emde says.

When people usually think of Thanksgiving, they might envision an iconic Norman Rockwell image of a family gathered around a single table, beaming while a turkey's served on a platter. For 2020, people may want to prepare for something more like Charlie Brown and his friends sitting outdoors at folding tables.

Held this year on Thursday, Nov. 26, Thanksgiving will be another holiday impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the CDC and other experts recommending either significantly scaled-down, socially distanced activities or replacing the usual traditions with virtual ones to avoid exposure to the airborne illness.

"The most important thing is trying to assess and minimize the associated risks that are going to occur," says Mark Rupp, MD, chief of the Infectious Diseases Division at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. "The risks aren't going to be completely eliminated without eliminating that event. If you have an event with people not in your immediate family bubble, there's going to be risk involved."

The CDC's official holiday guidelines identify lower-risk Thanksgiving activities as having a small dinner party with people in your household or preparing traditional recipes for family and neighbors, but sharing them in ways that avoid in-person contact.

The CDC classifies small, outdoor dinners with friends or family as moderately risky and large, indoor gatherings with people from outside your household as higher-risk.

Rupp finds that outdoor feasts offer a chance to lessen some risk, as long as the late November weather cooperates. "In some parts of the country, you can potentially have this out of doors, with plenty of fresh air and some distance between seating."

Emde says that she, her husband, and their two teenage sons practice safe habits like wearing masks and social distancing. But given her sons' extracurricular activities, like marching band practice, she considers her family potentially risky for others. She's planning a small outdoor Thanksgiving Day meal for immediate family.

"We have an ample outdoor area, thanks to a broad driveway," she explains. "We've already successfully had people over, seating them separately by households. We've had a total of four tables, with the adults at two of them and two tables for the kids, 10 feet apart and facing each other. Our sons can eat shoulder to shoulder at one table, facing their friends across the divide."

She's also considering using their yard's firepit, their kerosene heater, or borrowing a shade tent, depending on the weather. "In the event of inclement weather, we would shift the tables into the carport," she says. "We did this already once when it started raining when we had my mother-in-law over."

If indoor gatherings are the only option, Rupp suggests ways to reduce the risks. "Wear masks during socializing, and have one person serve the food instead of everyone passing around the dishes," he says. "You may be able to minimize the number of people present or minimize the duration of the event, so you may have a shorter Thanksgiving than you're accustomed to."



Rupp says people should not only be safe during the gathering, but observe safe practices ahead of time to avoid exposure. “For 2 weeks prior, you need to be extra careful,” he says. “If you’re able to do testing around the event, that will add an additional layer of security and reassurance.”

“Also, I would not be an infectious disease specialist if I didn’t include a plea for food safety in general, so make sure that the turkey is cooked all the way through and the stuffing is cooked all the way through,” he says.

### **Turkey Day Travel**

Travel during the pandemic can further complicate matters, particularly at Thanksgiving, often the busiest time of the year for travel.

Driving with family in a private vehicle is the safest option, offering the most control of your interactions with others. “If you have to get out of the car to pump gas, wear a mask in case other people are around, and clean your hands afterward,” Rupp says.

You can make meals ahead of time and eat in the car, rather than going to restaurants en route, but some stops are unavoidable. “When using a restroom, wear a mask and practice good hygiene,” he says. “If it’s a larger rest stop, potentially scope out the situation. If there’s a crowd, wait until it has thinned out before going in, or go down the road a little ways to somewhere else.”

Taking an airline flight with multiple stops at crowded airports runs a greater risk of exposure. Rupp points out that during air travel, the time on the plane may be less risky than other parts of the trip. “The air is highly filtered, not recirculated, and some airlines usually leave the middle seat open. When you take your seat, turn on the air jet above you to help circulate air. Use hand sanitizer and wipes.”

But before you book a flight, consider that being on the plane is only part of the journey. “Things like mass transit at the airport, security lines, and crowded concourses might be more risky than the flight itself,” he says.

But whether you travel 10 miles or 1,000 to see people at Thanksgiving, remember that you need to maintain the same precautions with anyone outside your household or bubble, especially relatives in at-risk groups. “You can visit in-person for maybe a short period, but not stay overnight [under the same roof],” Rupp says. “You can diminish the viral load by wearing masks where possible and increase the dilution factor by opening windows.”

For people who decide against having Thanksgiving in person, think of creative ways to share the experience remotely. If you have friends and family in different locations, try to prepare the same recipes and serve them at the same time. “For virtual dinners, consider things like saying grace together, or the tradition of everyone going around the table saying what they’re thankful for,” he says.

Ultimately, Rupp encourages people to be prepared to make a difficult choice in the name of safety when making Thanksgiving plans. “Ask yourself if there are folks involved who are high-risk, like Grandma or Grandpa, or someone with a high-risk condition, and think long and hard about whether it’s worth it. I would say it is not.”

Staying safe during Thanksgiving 2020 can mean that you’ll be all the more grateful to share turkey and squash casserole in 2021.

[www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)



... Visit Your EAP Website Today

[awpnow.com](http://awpnow.com)

*Optimized for all devices including: desktops, laptops, tablets, smart phones and more.*

It is now easier than ever to access the online resources provided by your EAP, Alliance Work Partners.

Contact your Account Manager for log-in instructions

[AM@alliancewp.com](mailto:AM@alliancewp.com) | 888-327-4636

## EASY HACKS FOR HEALTHIER BAKING

### Find Figs to Cut Fat and Sugar

They're more than the stuff of the Newton and that figgy pudding demanded for in the Christmas carol. The fig packs more fiber and more minerals than any other domesticated fruit, including calcium, iron, and potassium. Soak 8 ounces of fresh figs in water to soften. Puree with 1/4 to 1/3 cup of water until smooth. Substitute for up to half the fat in your recipe to cut down -- or replace -- the sugar.

### Sugar Stand-In 2: Dates

Dates bring many of the same perks as figs, plus a natural sugar shot. Puree 1 cup of pitted dates with 1/2 to 1 cup of hot water to make a thick paste. You can replace up to half of the sugar asked for in your recipe with this mix. Because it's not sugar, you might have to experiment to get the right texture. Dates also pair great with scones and muffins. Chop them into your batter for added zing. You can even add them to salads.



### Slash Fat With Avocado

Creamy avocado puree is a smooth stand-in for fatty butter, and it's far better for you. This vegan cholesterol-buster can make your bakes less crumbly, too. Peel, pit, and mash them to make a puree. To keep them from browning, add 2 teaspoons of lemon juice for every cup. Swap 3/4 to 1 cup per cup of fat in your recipe. Avocados have more water than butter, so you may need to cut your oven temp by 25% and bake a little longer.

### Cocoa Nibs: The Pre-Chocolate Chip

Cacao nibs are crushed bits of cocoa beans that have been fermented, dried, and roasted. They quash cravings without the sugar. Even better, they come already chipped. They pack lots of antioxidants and a rush of flavonoids to boot. Sprinkle them freely in your batter and add crunch to your cake, cookies, and other baked goods.

### How to Pick a Flour

Few dispute that whole-grain and bean flours are better choices than refined white flour. The refining process strips most of the fiber and nutrients. The nutrients are added back, but not the healthy fiber. But don't throw it away just yet. Different flour types will yield varied outcomes. Try a quarter-cup of whole-grain flour to 3/4 cup white instead of the whole cup of white. Tinker until you get the right ratio.

### Hold the Gluten: Use Oat Flour

For a gluten-free or low-gluten choice, pick oat flour. It adds more sweetness and flavor to your cookies, muffins, and crusts, too. It's not an easy substitute for recipes that need gluten, such as yeast breads. And it might make the texture a bit crumbly or chewy. But there's a gluten hack: Use oat flour for about 1/4 of the flour in your recipe. Add in a little more yeast to help your bread rise.

### Black Beans for Better Brownies

Switch out part of your recipe fat for pureed black beans, and your taste buds will be none the wiser. This surprise ingredient also brings fiber, potassium, and protein to your brownies and chocolate cakes. For lighter-colored foods, try cannellini beans or chickpeas (garbanzo beans).

### Peanut Butter Powder

Bring the yummy peanut butter taste minus lots of the fat with peanut butter powder. It's made by pressing out most of the oils in roasted peanuts and grinding them fine. Check out the difference:

Creamy peanut butter (2 tablespoons): 190 calories, 16 g fat (2.5 g sat), 7 g protein

Peanut butter powder (2 tablespoons): 50 calories, 1.5 g fat (0 g sat), 6 g protein

It's a simple substitute for your baked goods. Sub the powder for 1/3 of the flour.

### Seedy Egg Substitutes

Want to cut cholesterol or eat more plant-based foods? Use chia seeds or flaxseed meal instead of eggs. For baking, these stand-ins won't bring the leavening (volume and puff) that eggs do. To fix this, add 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoons of baking powder or soda to the recipe. It may take some trial and error to get just the right combo, but start with:

1 egg = about 2 teaspoons chia seeds + 1/4 cup water (let sit for 5 minutes)

1 egg = about 1 tablespoon brown or golden flaxseed meal + 3 tablespoons water (let sit for 5 minutes)

### Go Greek (Yogurt, That Is)

Stir in thick, creamy plain Greek yogurt instead of greasy oil in muffins and quick breads. Whole-milk or full-fat tastes best and is still better for you. It packs protein and less sugar than regular yogurt. But you can use 2% to cut back on fat if you want. (Stay away from nonfat. The texture and taste won't sit right). Swap equal amounts for your fat. Then add 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda per cup of yogurt.

### Simmer Down the Sugar With Evaporated Milk

The evaporated vs. condensed milk debate rages when pumpkin pie time rolls around. One thing's certain: Evaporated milk offers the rich texture without the too-sweet sugar. Most evaporated milk is made with 2%, but you can use any fat content. To DIY, heat up 2 1/4 cups of milk, and gently boil it to reduce to 1 cup. You can even go dairy-free with almond, oat, or soy milk.

### Pump Up the Spice

Cut the sugar your recipe calls for in half (or 1/3 if you don't want to go that far). Just double up the spices. If your recipe calls for 1 teaspoon of cinnamon, add 2. Do the same with vanilla extract. Have fun and play with other spices, like allspice, cloves, or nutmeg, and extracts such as almond. All of them amp up sweetness.

[www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)







# The Wellness News

Tips and resources for living well

November 2020

## Five Science-Backed Strategies to Build Resilience

When the road gets rocky, what do you do? Resilience practices to help you confront emotional pain more skillfully.

### 1. Change the narrative

When something bad happens, we often relive the event over and over in our heads, rehashing the pain. This process is called rumination; it's like a cognitive spinning of the wheels, and it doesn't move us forward toward healing and growth.

The practice of Expressive Writing can move us forward by helping us gain new insights on the challenges in our lives. It involves free writing continuously for 20 minutes about an issue, exploring your deepest thoughts and feelings around it. The goal is to get something down on paper, not to create a memoir-like masterpiece.

Once we've explored the dark side of an experience, we might choose to contemplate some of its upsides. Finding Silver Linings invites you to call to mind an upsetting experience and try to list three positive things about it. For example, you might reflect on how fighting with a friend brought some important issues out into the open, and allowed you to learn something about their point of view.

### 2. Face your fears

The practices above are helpful for past struggles, ones that we've gained enough distance from to be able to get some perspective. But what about knee-shaking fears that we're experiencing in the here and now?

The Overcoming a Fear practice is designed to help with everyday fears that get in the way of life, such as the fear of public speaking, heights, or flying. We can't talk ourselves out of such fears; instead, we have to tackle the emotions directly.

The first step is to slowly, and repeatedly, expose yourself to the thing that scares you—in small doses. For example, people with a fear of public speaking might try talking more in meetings, then perhaps giving a toast at a small wedding. Over time, you can incrementally increase the challenge until you're ready to nail that big speech or TV interview.

In effect, this kind of "exposure therapy" helps us change the associations we have with a particular stimulus. If we've flown 100 times and the plane has never crashed, for example, our brain (and body) start to learn that it's safe. Though the fear may never be fully extinguished, we'll likely have greater courage to confront it.



### 3. Practice self-compassion

Self-compassion involves offering compassion to ourselves: confronting our own suffering with an attitude of warmth and kindness, without judgment. In one study, participants in an eight-week Mindful Self-Compassion program reported more mindfulness and life satisfaction, with lower depression, anxiety, and stress afterward compared to people who didn't participate—and the benefits lasted up to a year.

One practice, the Self-Compassion Break, is something you can do any time you start to feel overwhelmed by pain or stress. It has three steps, which correspond to the three aspects of self-compassion:

- **Be mindful:** Without judgment or analysis, notice what you're feeling. Say, "This is a moment of suffering" or "This hurts" or "This is stress."
- **Remember that you're not alone:** Everyone experiences these deep and painful human emotions, although the causes might be different. Say to yourself, "Suffering is a part of life" or "We all feel this way" or "We all struggle in our lives."
- **Be kind to yourself:** Put your hands on your heart and say something like "May I give myself compassion" or "May I accept myself as I am" or "May I be patient."

If being kind to yourself is a challenge, an exercise called How Would You Treat a Friend? could help. Here, you compare how you respond to your own struggles—and the tone you use—with how you respond to a friend's. Often, this comparison unearths some surprising differences and valuable reflections: *Why am I so harsh on myself, and what would happen if I weren't?*

Once we start to develop a kinder attitude toward ourselves, we can crystallize that gentle voice in a Self-Compassionate Letter. This practice asks you to spend 15 minutes writing words of understanding, acceptance, and compassion toward yourself about a specific struggle that you feel ashamed of—say, being shy or not spending enough time with your kids. In the letter, you might remind yourself that everyone struggles, and that you aren't solely responsible for this shortcoming; if possible, you could also consider constructive ways to improve in the future.

#### 4. Meditate

Practicing mindfulness brings us more and more into the present, and it offers techniques for dealing with negative

emotions when they arise. That way, instead of getting carried away into fear, anger, or despair, we can work through them more deliberately.

One meditation that might be particularly effective at calming our negative thoughts is the [Body Scan](#). Here, you focus on each body part in turn—head to toe—and can choose to let go of any areas of tension you discover. Strong feelings tend to manifest physically, as tight chests or knotted stomachs, and relaxing the body is one way to begin dislodging them.

When stress creeps in, good habits often creep out—and one of those is healthy eating. When we're emotional, many of us reach for the sweets; when we're short on time, fast food seems like the only option. So in addition to helping us cultivate mindfulness, the [Raisin Meditation](#) could help change our relationship to food.

This exercise invites you to eat a raisin mindfully—but wait, not so fast. First, examine its wrinkles and color; see how it feels between your fingers, and then take a sniff. Slowly place it on your tongue, and roll it around in your mouth before chewing one bite at a time. Notice the urge to swallow, and whether you can sense it moving down your throat into your stomach. Not only will you have practiced mindfulness, but you may never look at food the same way again.

One final meditation that we can sprinkle throughout our day—or practice on its own—is [Mindful Breathing](#). It involves bringing attention to the physical sensations of the breath: the air moving through the nostrils, the expansion of the chest, the rise and fall of the stomach. If the mind wanders away, you bring attention back. This can be done during a full 15-minute meditation, or during a moment of stress with just a few breaths.

In one study, participants who did a Mindful Breathing exercise before looking at disturbing images—like spiders or car crashes—experienced less negative emotion than people who hadn't done the exercise. Negative thoughts can pull us along into their frantic stream, but the breath is an anchor we can hold onto at any time.



#### 5. Cultivate forgiveness

If holding a grudge is holding you back, research suggests that cultivating forgiveness could be beneficial to your mental and physical health. If you feel ready to begin, it can be a powerful practice.

Both [Nine Steps to Forgiveness](#) and [Eight Essentials When Forgiving](#) offer a list of guidelines to follow. In both cases, you begin by clearly acknowledging what happened, including how it feels and how it's affecting your life right now. Then, you make a commitment to forgive, which means letting go of resentment and ill will *for your own sake*; forgiveness doesn't mean letting the offender off the hook or even reconciling with them. Ultimately, you can try to find a positive opportunity for growth in the experience: Perhaps it alerted you to something you need, which you may have to look for elsewhere, or perhaps you can now understand other people's suffering better.

If you're having trouble forgiving, [Letting Go of Anger through Compassion](#) is a five-minute forgiveness exercise that could help you get unstuck. Here, you spend a few minutes generating feelings of compassion toward your offender; she, too, is a human being who makes mistakes; he, too, has room for growth and healing. Be mindfully aware of your thoughts and feelings during this process, and notice any areas of resistance.

Stress and struggles come in many forms in life: adversity and trauma, fear and shame, betrayals of trust. The practices above can help you cope with difficulties when they arise, but also prepare you for challenges in the future. With enough practice, you'll have a toolbox of techniques that come naturally—a rainy-day fund for the mind, that will help keep you afloat when times get tough. Just knowing that you've built up your skills of resilience can be a great comfort, and even a happiness booster.



source: [greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five\\_science\\_backed\\_strategies\\_to\\_build\\_resilience](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_science_backed_strategies_to_build_resilience)



# Great American Smokeout

According to the American Cancer Society, it is estimated that 32.4 million American adults still smoke cigarettes, and smoking remains the single largest preventable cause of death and illness in the world. The Great American Smokeout is an event that draws attention to preventing the deaths and chronic illnesses caused by smoking.

Throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, many state and local governments responded by banning smoking in workplaces and restaurants, raising taxes on cigarettes, limiting cigarette promotions, discouraging teen cigarette use, and taking further action to counter smoking.



In 1970 at an event in Randolph, Massachusetts, the idea for the Great American Smokeout grew. Arthur P. Mullaney asked people to give up cigarettes for a day and donate the money they would have spent on cigarettes to a high school scholarship fund. On November 18, 1976, the California Division of the American Cancer Society got nearly 1 million people who smoke to quit for the day, making it the first official Smokeout and leading to the American Cancer Society taking it nationwide in 1977. Since then, there have been dramatic changes in the way the public views tobacco advertising and tobacco use. Many public places and work areas are now smoke-free – this protects non-smokers and supports people who smoke and want to quit.

For more than 40 years, the American Cancer Society has hosted the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November. It is an opportunity for people who smoke to commit to healthy, smoke-free lives and an opportunity for community groups, businesses, health care providers, and others to encourage people to use the date to make a plan to quit or initiate a smoking cessation plan.

The Great American Smokeout event has helped change Americans' attitudes about smoking. These changes have led to community programs and smoke-free laws that are now saving lives across the country.

# Roasted Cauliflower Mash

## Ingredients

- 2 medium heads of cauliflower, broken into florets
- 1/4 cup of olive oil
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons of Greek seasoning
- 1 cup of shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 2/3 cup of sour cream
- 1/2 cup of crumbled cooked bacon
- 1/3 cup of butter, cubed

## Directions

- In a large bowl, combine the cauliflower, oil, garlic and Greek seasoning. Transfer to a greased 15x10x1-in. baking pan. Bake, uncovered, at 425° for 15-20 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally.
- Transfer cauliflower to a large bowl. Mash cauliflower with cheese, sour cream, bacon and butter. Transfer to a greased 8-in. square baking dish. Bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until heated through.



## *Health Tip:*

## Smoke Free is the way to be

Smoking is the leading cause of heart attacks and heart disease. You can reverse many of these heart risks when you stop smoking. Are you ready to quit? It is important to be prepared and have a plan in place for success. Below are some tips to help you on this journey:

- Track your current smoking habits - how many per day, time or place
- Evaluate your triggers and habits - change up your normal routine
- Devise a plan to overcome - keep your mind and body busy

**Action:** *Get help! Talk to your doctor today.*

# National Diabetes – Heart Health Connection Day



November 9<sup>th</sup> has been declared “National Diabetes Heart Health Awareness Day” coinciding with American Diabetes Month.

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the U.S. People with diabetes are more likely to have conditions that are risk factors for heart disease, such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol. In fact, people with diabetes are twice as likely to have a heart attack or a stroke as people without diabetes. Among people with diabetes over age 65, approximately 68% die from heart disease and 15% die from stroke.

Regarding cardiovascular health, it’s important to know that you can protect your heart and health by managing your

*blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol.*

The co-occurrence of diabetes and cardiovascular disease contributes to reduced life expectancy of 5 to 15 years, depending on the age at diabetes diagnosis. Yet, less than half of people with diabetes are aware that they are at a much higher risk for cardiovascular disease complications. Bringing awareness to this connection is the first action you can take to addressing these chronic illnesses.

5 simple steps you can take to address heart disease:

- Know your chance of developing heart disease or having a heart attack or stroke in the next 10 years. Understanding and identifying your risk allows you to identify steps to reduce that risk.
- Identify your self-care behaviors to develop strategies that minimize or prevent the risk for heart disease. Even small changes in adjusting your diet or activity can help reduce your risk.
- Incorporate goals for blood pressure, cholesterol, physical activity and weight in addition to glucose management. Just as you should balance your nutrition, your wellness plan should be balanced as well. Address all aspects of care involving both your heart health and diabetes health.
- Continue the conversation of preventing or managing heart disease with your doctor, health coach, or other members of your care team. Anytime you have a question, just ask! Being involved and active in your care is empowering to your health.
- Keep up to date with vaccines. Complications from some vaccine-preventable diseases can include increased risk of heart attack, hospitalization, or even death. The CDC reports that people with diabetes or heart disease and people who have had a stroke have an increased risk of developing serious complications from flu or having a serious flu outcome like a stay in the hospital or even being admitted to the intensive care unit.

Practicing this awareness promotes the interconnectedness of metabolic and cardiovascular conditions by incorporating the multitude of approaches of nutrition, activity, and coping for people with diabetes. Recognize that healthy lifestyles are beneficial for managing both diabetes and related conditions, such as cardiac or vascular disease. What better time to formally blend diabetes and cardiovascular health?

---

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach. Your EAP is here to help with family, work, health, well-being & legal issues.

**1-800-343-3822 | TDD 1-800-448-1823 | [www.AWPnow.com](http://www.AWPnow.com)**

*Here for you as life happens ...*