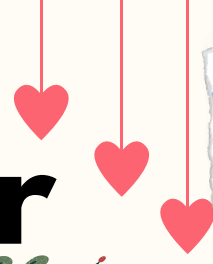


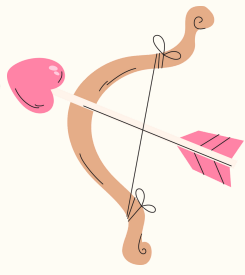
Wellness Newsletter



February 2024

LOVE Yourself

Valentine's Day is traditionally a time when we express love and affection for those around us, be it friends, family, or romantic partners. However, in the midst of celebrating love for others, we often forget the importance of self-love. It's crucial to recognize that loving oneself is just as vital as sharing love with others.



This Valentine's Day, let's not only celebrate external relationships but also turn our attention inward and focus on self-love. Here are some ways to cultivate a deeper appreciation and affection for ourselves:

- 1. Practice Self-Compassion:** Treat yourself with the same kindness and understanding that you would offer to a friend facing challenges. Embrace your flaws and imperfections with compassion.
- 2. Set Boundaries:** Learn to say no when necessary and establish healthy boundaries. Respecting your own needs and limits is an essential part of self-love.
- 3. Indulge in Self-Care:** Take the time to pamper yourself with activities that bring joy and relaxation. Whether it's a soothing bath, reading a favorite book, or enjoying a hobby, prioritize activities that nourish your well-being.
- 4. Reflect and Appreciate:** Reflect on your achievements, personal growth, and positive qualities. Acknowledge your strengths and the progress you've made on your journey.
- 5. Mindful Moments:** Practice mindfulness to stay present and appreciate the current moment. This can involve meditation, deep breathing exercises, or simply taking a moment to savor the sights and sounds around you.
- 6. Positive Affirmations:** Speak words of affirmation to yourself. Remind yourself of your worth, capabilities, and the positive impact you have on others.
- 7. Invest in Personal Growth:** Pursue activities and goals that contribute to your personal development. Whether it's learning a new skill, taking a class, or working towards a passion project, investing in yourself is a powerful form of self-love.
- 8. Surround Yourself with Positivity:** Choose to be in environments and relationships that uplift and support you. Distance yourself from negativity and cultivate a positive and supportive network.
- 9. Forgive Yourself:** Everyone makes mistakes; it's a part of being human. Forgive yourself for past shortcomings and focus on the lessons learned. Use these experiences as opportunities for growth.
- 10. Prioritize Your Well-being:** Make self-care a priority, not just on special occasions like Valentine's Day, but as a consistent practice. Your mental, emotional, and physical well-being should be at the forefront of your priorities.



This Valentine's Day, let's extend our celebration of love beyond external relationships and make a conscious effort to cultivate a deeper, more meaningful connection with ourselves. After all, a strong foundation of self-love enhances our ability to love and care for others.



FEBRUARY



Heart Health Awareness Month

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States. (CDC)
- Although heart disease is sometimes thought of as a “man’s disease,” around the same number of women and men die each year of heart disease in the United States. Despite increases in awareness over the past decade, only 54% of women recognize that heart disease is their number 1 killer. (CDC)
- While one in 31 American women dies from breast cancer each year, heart disease is the cause of one out of every three female deaths. That’s roughly one death each minute. (AHA)
- Fewer women than men survive their first heart attack. (AHA)
- 90% of women have one or more risk factors for developing heart disease or stroke.
- 80% of heart disease and stroke events may be prevented by lifestyle changes and education. (AHA)

Women and men are not the same when it comes to heart disease.

In fact, the symptoms of heart disease and heart attack can be different in women and men and are often misunderstood. To learn more, we invite you to check out the links below:

Learn the Signs

<https://theheartfoundation.org/2017/03/29/heart-attack-men-vs-women/>



For more information visit the HEART Foundation, link is down below



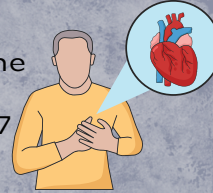
<https://theheartfoundation.org/heart-health-month/>

Did you know?

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for people of most racial/ethnic groups in the United States, including African Americans, Hispanics and whites. Nearly half of all African American men and women have some form of heart disease. For Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders and American Indians or Alaska Natives, heart disease is second only to cancer. (CDC)



Coronary Heart Disease (also known as atherosclerosis) is the most common type of heart disease and accounts for 1 in 7 deaths in the United States.



37.7% of US adults are obese, one of the risk factors for heart disease.

Nearly 1 of every 3 (about 33.3%) of American adults have high levels of LDL cholesterol (the “bad” kind).



How to reduce your risk

- Engage in regular moderate aerobic exercise for at least 30 minutes five days a week or more vigorous workouts at least 20 minutes three times a week.
- Adopt a diet low in salt, sugar, saturated and trans fats and high in unsaturated fats (fish, avocado, etc.) like the Mediterranean Diet.
- Maintain a normal body weight with caloric adjustment.
- Take fish oil supplements.
- Avoid smoking and recreational drug use.
- Imbibe no more than ½ to 1 alcoholic beverage per day. (One drink is either 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof spirits.)
- Know and review your risk factors with a trusted physician.

Why are Healthy Relationships important?



Establishing positive human connections is crucial for sustaining emotional and physical health, as well for our personal growth. Numerous studies indicate that cultivating positive relationships motivates us to actively seek and engage in opportunities that contribute to a meaningful and purposeful life. The support obtained from healthy relationships not only shields us from the negative impacts of stress during challenging times but also enables us to thrive despite hardships.



Healthy Relationships vs. Unhealthy Relationships

Healthy relationships allow the individuals in the relationship to feel supported and connected but still feel independent. They involve honesty, trust, respect and open communication between partners and take effort and compromise from both people.

Unhealthy relationships are relationships where one or more of the people involved exhibits behaviors that are not healthy and are not founded in mutual respect for the other person. Unhealthy relationships are not necessarily abusive relationships, but they can be. They also aren't limited to romantic relationships. Unhealthy relationships include but aren't limited to friendships and relationships with family members.

Recognizing the characteristics of unhealthy relationships and striving towards the characteristics of healthy relationships can help keep us safe and happy.



10 Signs of Healthy Relationship

Healthy relationships bring out the best in you and make you feel good about yourself. A healthy relationship does not mean a "perfect" relationship, and no one is healthy 100% of the time, but the signs below are behaviors you should strive for in all of your relationships.

Healthy relationships manifest themselves as healthy communication, but in order to have a healthy relationship, you need to love yourself first. Here are some characteristics and behaviors of a healthy relationship.



Comfortable Pace
The relationship moves at a speed that feels enjoyable for each person.



Trust
Confidence that your partner won't do anything to hurt you or ruin the relationship.



Honesty
You can be truthful and candid without fearing how the other person will respond.



Independence
You have space to be yourself outside of the relationship.



Respect
You value one another's beliefs and opinions, and love one another for who you are as a person.



Equality
The relationship feels balanced and everyone puts the same effort into the success of the relationship.



Kindness
You are caring and empathetic to one another, and provide comfort and support.



Taking Responsibility
Owning your own actions and words.



Healthy Conflict
Openly and respectfully discussing issues and confronting disagreements non-judgmentally.



Fun
You enjoy spending time together and bring out the best in each other.

Learn more at joinonelove.org



10 Signs of Unhealthy Relationship

While everyone does unhealthy things sometimes, we can all learn to love better by recognizing unhealthy signs and shifting to healthy behaviors. If you are seeing unhealthy signs in your relationship, it's important to not ignore them and understand they can escalate to abuse.

If you think you are in a dangerous situation, trust your gut and get help.



Intensity
When someone expresses very extreme feelings and over-the-top behavior that feels overwhelming.



Possessiveness
When someone is jealous to a point where they try to control who you spend time with and what you do.



Manipulation
When someone tries to control your decisions, actions or emotions.



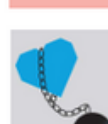
Isolation
When someone keeps you away from friends, family, or other people.



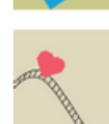
Sabotage
When someone purposely ruins your reputation, achievements, or success.



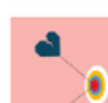
Belittling
When someone does and says things to make you feel bad about yourself.



Guilt
When someone makes you feel responsible for their actions or makes you feel like it's your job to keep them happy.



Volatility
When someone has a really strong, unpredictable reaction that makes you feel scared, confused or intimidated.



Deflecting Responsibility
When someone repeatedly makes excuses for their unhealthy behavior.



Betrayal
When someone is disloyal or acts in an intentionally dishonest way.

Learn more at joinonelove.org



DINING OUT Options

When dining out, you don't have to leave your healthy eating plan at home. Many restaurants offer delicious meals and menu items that are better for you. You can also order smart with these easy, healthy swaps.

| ORDER IT | 86 IT |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Lean meat, like skinless chicken or fish | Bacon, sausage, or fatty meats |
| Pico de gallo, or guacamole | Sour cream, or queso |
| Broth-based soup with lots of veggies | Cream-based or cheese soups |
| Baked potato or side salad | French fries |
| Black or pinto beans | Refried beans |
| Water, 100% juice, seltzer, or spritzers | Soda, sweet tea, or sugary cocktails |

"I was at this restaurant. The sign said 'Breakfast Anytime.' So I ordered French Toast in the Renaissance."

Steven Wright



HEALTHY FOOD HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



Trim THE FAT

It is recommended that consumption of unhealthy fats such as saturated fat and trans fat are limited. This type of fat is usually solid at room temperature. Foods like butter, palm and coconut oils, cheese, and red meat have high amounts of saturated fat. However, cutting down on these fats doesn't mean you have to sacrifice flavor. Refer the chart below for healthier options than foods with high unhealthy fat content.

| | HIGH IN SAT. FAT | LOW IN NUTR. | + CAL. SUGAR | TRY INSTEAD |
|--|------------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| Baked goods (cake, doughnuts, or cookies) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Fruits or vegetables |
| Fried foods (fried chicken and seafood, or French fries) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Grilled, baked, steamed, or sauteed |
| Processed meats (bacon, sausage, chicken with skin, cheeseburger, or steak) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Skinless chicken or fish |
| Whole-fat dairy products (butter, ice cream, pudding, cheese, or whole milk) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Low-fat or non-fat milk, yogurt, or cheese |
| Solid fats (coconut oil, palm, or palm kernel oils) | ✓ | ✓ | | Canola or olive oil |

It is okay to treat yourself to these foods once in a while, but best to limit how often and how much of it you eat.



HEART PUMPING Cardio

Aerobic exercise is any cardiovascular activity that raises your heart rate. Activities that make you break a sweat can help improve circulation and lower blood pressure. Some of the best exercises to keep your heart strong and reduce risk of heart disease and stroke include, walking, biking, swimming, and dancing.

"Every day brings a chance for you to draw in a breath, kick off your shoes, and dance."
Oprah Winfrey

Tips to Exercise Safely

Talk to your doctor first.

It is recommended to talk to your physician before starting any exercise program.

Stop if you don't feel well.

If you develop shortness of breath, tightness in chest, shoulder or jaw pain, dizziness or confusion, stop immediately and contact your physician.

Monitor heart rate.

Reference a table showing target heart rate zones for different ages. You can visit heart.org for a chart from the American Heart Association.

Warm up and cool down.

Every session of aerobic exercise should include a warm-up with a gradual increase in pace and a cool-down with the pace gradually decreasing.





6 Ways to Eat and Drink More Mindfully

Article by Kate Nave provided by **OPTUM**

[To read the full article click here](#)

We've all had days where we eat or drink too much. We inhale a whole bag of chips while we watch a movie. Or we pour one too many glasses of wine after a long day at work. In the summer, there are cookouts. In the winter, office parties and holiday meals. We often indulge without thinking. It can be out of habit. Or it can be driven by our emotions. And that can happen whether we're feeling happy. Or just checked out. Stress is a big spark for many people.

According to a recent poll, 33% of adults said their eating habits take a negative turn when they're stressed. In the last National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 59 million adults reported binge drinking in the month prior. But change is possible. And it's worth the effort. "These coping behaviors might feel good in the moment," says AbleTo Coach Advisor Carolyn Oldham. "But more mindful approaches will help you see long-term changes." Research backs this up. Treatments based in mindfulness have been shown to help with stress. Other research suggests that they may help curb cravings and reduce emotional eating. They may also help people who are at risk of overusing alcohol.

"There are compounds in food and drink that make our brains want more," says Oldham. A mindful approach works on breaking that loop. You can learn to swap in healthier actions. Or hobbies that move you toward a goal. Maybe it's walking your dog. Or seeing a friend. "The key is to figure out what need you're trying to fill," says Oldham. Then you can start to find other coping tools. The reason? It allows you to fill the same need but support healthier routines.

Reading this with a glass of merlot in hand? Try not to stress. This isn't meant to make you feel bad. We're here to help you take a look at your habits with kindness. We can all better understand how to make more mindful choices.

Here are 5 tips to help you be more aware around food and drink.

1. Get to the "why"

There are often a few reasons people fall into a pattern of eating or drinking too much. Some are physical. Some are mental. Food and alcohol can both trigger cravings. They can also be common coping tools when dealing with hard emotions.



2. Find other ways to cope

Alcohol can make you feel relaxed at first. But in the long run, it can take a toll on your health. Research shows it can increase the body's stress response. It can also hurt the immune system. And it can lead to poor sleep.

Instead of a drink, what else could give you comfort? Or relieve stress? Or bring joy?

3. Learn how to sit with the tough stuff

Relying on treats or alcohol to cope with tough emotions creates a temporary feel-good loop, but doesn't address the root problem. It suggests practicing self-awareness by observing and naming emotions without judgment, promoting resilience and reducing the temptation to cope in unhealthy ways.

4. Have a social plan

Being mindful about alcohol use in social settings can be tough. You don't want to feel like you're missing out. And it's easy to get swept up in the action.

Having a plan ahead of time helps, says Oldham. These days, fancy mocktails are often an option. You can also just ask for seltzer with lime. That way you still have a glass in your hand.

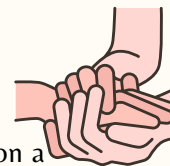
5. Give yourself a little self-love

I matter

If you're feeling sad, lonely, or a bit socially anxious, you're not alone. Everyone struggles from time to time. Instead of judgment, try to offer yourself grace and kindness. This can be a chance to get to know yourself better. Once you find your triggers, you can build better coping skills.

6. Get more support

Like many other issues, alcohol use falls on a spectrum. Responsible drinkers and people with alcohol-use disorder are not the only options. The same is true for eating habits. If you want to dial back in either area, paying attention to your habits is a good start. Self Care from AbleTo includes a habit tracking tool to help you stay accountable.



Featured Recipe of the Month



Ingredients

Prep Time:
20 Minutes

- 1 ripe avocado
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 small clove garlic, grated
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 pound large raw shrimp (16-20 count), peeled and deveined
- 2 tablespoons salt-free Cajun spice blend
- 8 corn tortillas, warmed
- 2 cups iceberg lettuce, chopped
- ½ cup fresh cilantro leaves
- ½ cup prepared pico de gallo

Directions

Step 1

Preheat grill to medium-high.

Step 2

Mash avocado with a fork in a small bowl. Add lime juice, garlic and salt and stir to combine.

Step 3

Pat shrimp dry. Toss the shrimp with Cajun seasoning in a medium bowl. Thread onto four 10- to 12-inch metal skewers. Grill, turning once, until the shrimp are just cooked through, about 4 minutes total.

Step 4

Serve the shrimp in tortillas, topped with the guacamole, lettuce, cilantro and pico de gallo.

Upcoming Webinars

Optum Webinar (Employee Assistance Program)

Monday & Tuesday, February 12 & 13 | 11AM to 1130AM

Taking Care of Your Heart

Tuesday, February 27, 2024 | 11AM to 12PM

Intergenerational Caregiving

Tuesday, March 19, 2024 | 11AM to 12PM

Congrats to Rosa Lopez from All Souls Cemetery for winning the Juicer!



Thank you for attending the Wellness Webinar!

Fitness Tip of the Day

Take a fitness break

Instead of hanging out in the lounge sitting and eating, you should opt for a fitness break. You can take that time to walk around the block, hike a few flights of stairs or stretch a bit. Also, if you'd like to get some cardio use a skipping rope as a form of light but effective cardio exercise. This will definitely get your blood flowing and body moving, making you more ready for the upcoming tasks of the day.

To sign up for the upcoming webinars, please visit the **NEW WELLNESS PORTAL** and click on the registration link.

Please click on the link down below:
<https://lacatholics.org/wellness/>

Quote of the Day

"The higher your energy level, the more efficient your body. The more efficient your body, the better you feel and the more you will use your talent to produce outstanding results."

Tony Robbins

Health Tip of the Day

Reduce your sit time

Sitting impacts your health in a variety of ways. With more of us working remotely, you may feel like all you do is sit all day long! Research shows sitting for five-plus hours daily is equivalent to smoking 1.25 packs of cigarettes. Another study showed a sedentary lifestyle may put you at risk for early death. When possible, get up, stretch, host a walking meeting, or do a mini-workout to get your heart rate up and circulation going.