

# Wellness Works

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## Your Emotional Health: Keep it Top of Mind



When you are emotionally healthy, you're in control of your thoughts, feelings and the way you act. But even emotionally healthy people can sometimes have problems.

About 1 in 5 families in the U.S. have dealt with a mental illness. While it's normal to feel worried, sad or stressed at times, see your doctor if you have any of these warning signs:

- Personality changes
- Not able to cope with daily life
- Worrying too much
- Sadness that doesn't go away
- Great highs and lows

When you are aware of your mental health, you can live life to the fullest.

Sources: American Psychiatric Association; National Institute of Health; American Academy of Family Physicians.

## Recipe for a Strong Mind — Basic Ingredients

Food doesn't just feed the body, it also feeds the mind. Poor eating habits can change how your brain works. Boost your overall wellness with a healthy diet.

Healthy eating can give you many rewards, including:

- Boosting your energy
- Giving fuel for your mind
- Positively influencing mood-linked body chemicals
- Acting against the impact of stress on your body
- Lowering your chances of getting certain diseases

Sources: National Alliance on Mental Illness; Mental Health America

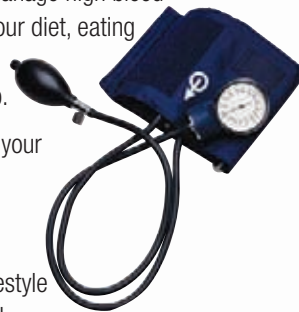


## Are You in a High-pressure Situation?

You are if you're among the 1 in 4 U.S. adults who suffer from hypertension, or high blood pressure. Left uncontrolled, high blood pressure can lead to diseases like stroke, heart attack, heart failure and kidney disease. There are ways to prevent or manage high blood pressure. Reducing the fat in your diet, eating less salt, losing weight and getting more exercise may help.

Quitting smoking and reducing your alcohol intake can also help. Ask your doctor whether you need blood pressure-lowering drugs as well as dietary and lifestyle changes. If you have high blood pressure, you can take control of the situation. When you do, you'll lower your chance of serious disease.

Source: American Heart Association



**BlueCross BlueShield.**



## Get Your Laugh on with the Newest eCards for Health

What medicine is good for your health, has no negative side effects, is free and doesn't require a prescription? Believe it or not, the answer is laughter. A good laugh is no joke when it comes to stress and your health. In fact, you can reap many health benefits if you laugh more and stress less. Check out the new Laughter eCard and get your laugh on!

The Laughter eCard is just the newest available on the eCards for Health<sup>SM</sup> website. The site is designed to encourage people to commit to small, healthy behavior changes and share their commitments with those they care about. Visit [ecardsforhealth.com](http://ecardsforhealth.com) to view the free, animated eCards about a variety of healthy behavior changes such as getting a checkup, healthy eating and trimming diet soda consumption.



## Check Your Measurements

Metabolic syndrome is a group of three or more measurements that are at unhealthy levels. About 50 million people in the U.S. have metabolic syndrome. It can raise your chance for heart disease and diabetes (high blood sugar). Exercise and weight loss can help.

Doctors use measurements to see if a person has metabolic syndrome. They look at waist size and body mass index. A person's triglycerides, good cholesterol and fasting blood sugar levels are also factors. Age, race and family history also play a role.

Your doctor may prescribe drugs to control cholesterol, blood pressure or glucose. Medicine isn't always needed. The things you can do on your own are:

- Include 30 minutes of a simple daily activity, such as brisk walking.
- Cut your fat, sugar, and salt intake
- Stop smoking or chewing tobacco. If you smoke, quitting tobacco is the most important thing you can do for your health.

Source: The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)

## What is a Healthy Diet?

The word diet does not mean boring, or hard. A good diet should include food you enjoy. The key is eating all kinds of food, serving smaller portions and cooking food in a healthy way. A few changes can mean a big reward in both physical and emotional health. Your daily food should include fruits, veggies, whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk products, lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also suggests a diet low in saturated fats, trans fat, cholesterol, salt and sugars.

Sources: National Alliance on Mental Illness; Mental Health America

