

Healthy Mind and Wellness

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Taking Care of Yourself



To be able to care for the people you love, you must first take care of yourself. It's like the advice we're given on airplanes: put on your own oxygen mask before trying to help someone else with theirs. Taking care of yourself is a valid goal on its own, and it helps you support the people you love.

Caregivers who pay attention to their own physical and emotional health are better able to handle the challenges of supporting someone with mental illness. They adapt to changes, build strong relationships and recover from setbacks. The ups and downs in your family member's illness can have a huge impact on you. Improving your relationship with yourself by maintaining your physical and mental health makes you more resilient, helping you weather hard times and enjoy good ones. Here are some suggestions for personalizing your self-care strategy.

Understand How Stress Affects You

Stress affects your entire body, physically as well as mentally. Some common physical signs of stress include:

- Headaches
- Low energy
- Upset stomach, including diarrhea, constipation and nausea
- Aches, pains, and tense muscles
- Insomnia

Begin by identifying how stress feels to you. Then identify what events or situations cause you to feel that way. You may feel stressed by grocery shopping with your spouse when they're symptomatic, or going to school events with other parents who don't know your child's medical history. Once you know which situations cause you stress, you'll be prepared to avoid it and to cope with it when it happens.

Protect Your Physical Health

Improving your physical wellbeing is one of the most comprehensive ways you can support your mental health. You'll have an easier time maintaining good mental habits when your body is a strong, resilient foundation.

- **Exercise daily.** Exercise can take many forms, such as taking the stairs whenever possible, walking up escalators, and running and biking rather than driving. Joining a class may help you commit to a schedule, if that works best for you. Daily exercise naturally produces stress-relieving hormones in your body and improves your overall health.
- **Eat well.** Eating mainly unprocessed foods like whole grains, vegetables and fresh fruit is key to a healthy body. Eating this way can help lower your risk for chronic diseases, and help stabilize your energy levels and mood.
- **Get enough sleep.** Adults generally need between seven and nine hours of sleep. A brief nap—up to 30 minutes—can help you feel alert again during the day. Even 15 minutes of daytime sleep is helpful. To make your nighttime sleep count more, practice good “sleep hygiene,” like avoiding using computers, TV and smartphones before bed.
- **Avoid alcohol and drugs.** They don't actually reduce stress and often worsen it.

- **Practice relaxation exercises.** Deep breathing, meditation and progressive muscle relaxation are easy, quick ways to reduce stress. When conflicts come up between you and your family member, these tools can help you feel less controlled by turbulent feelings and give you the space you need to think clearly about what to do next.

Recharge Yourself

When you're a caregiver of someone with a condition like mental illness, it can be incredibly hard to find time for yourself, and even when you do, you may feel distracted by thinking about what you "should" be doing instead. But learning to make time for yourself without feeling you're neglecting others—the person with the illness as well as the rest of your family—is critical.

Any amount of time you take for yourself is important. Being out of "caregiver mode" for as little as five minutes in the middle of a day packed with obligations can be a meaningful reminder of who you are in a larger sense. It can help keep you from becoming consumed by your responsibilities. Start small: think about activities you enjoyed before becoming a caregiver and try to work them back into your life. If you used to enjoy days out with friends, try to schedule a standing monthly lunch with them. It becomes part of your routine and no one has to work extra to make it happen each month.

The point is not what you do or how often you do it, but that you do take the time to care for yourself. It's impossible to take good care of anyone else if you're not taking care of yourself first.

Practice Good Mental Habits

Avoid Guilt

Try not to feel bad about experiencing negative emotions. You may resent having to remind your spouse to take his medication, then feel guilty. It's natural to think things like "a better person wouldn't be annoyed with their spouse," but that kind of guilt is both untrue and unproductive. When you allow yourself to notice your feelings without judging them as good or bad, you dial down the stress and feel more in control. When you feel less stressed, you're better able to thoughtfully choose how to act.

Notice the Positive

When you take the time to notice positive moments in your day, your experience of that day becomes better. Try writing down one thing each day or week that was good. Even if the positive thing is tiny ("It was a sunny day"), it's real, it counts and it can start to change your experience of life.

Gather Strength from Others

NAMI support groups exist to reassure you that countless other people have faced similar challenges and understand your concerns. Talking about your experiences can help. The idea that you can, or should be able to, "solve" things by yourself is false. Often the people who seem like they know how to do everything are actually frequently asking for help; being willing to accept help is a great life skill. If you're having trouble keeping track of your sister's Medicaid documents and you've noticed your coworker is well-organized, ask them for tips about managing paperwork.

You may feel you don't have the time to stay in touch with friends or start new friendships. Focus on the long-term. If you can meet up with a friend once a month, or go to a community event at your local library once every two months, it still helps keep you connected. It also gives you the chance to connect with people on multiple levels. Being a caregiver is an important part of your life, but it's not the whole story.

Source: <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Family-Members-and-Caregivers/Taking-Care-of-Yourself>



TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH:

Tips for Talking With Your Health Care Provider



Don't wait for your health care provider to ask about your mental health. Start the conversation. Here are five tips to help prepare and guide you on how to talk to your health care provider about your mental health and get the most out of your visit.



1. Don't know where to start for help? Talk to your primary care provider.

If you're going to your primary care provider for other health concerns, remember to bring up your mental health concerns. Mental health is an integral part of health. Often, people with mental disorders can be [at risk for other medical conditions](#), such as heart disease or diabetes. In many primary care settings now, you may be asked if you're feeling anxious or depressed, or if you have had thoughts of suicide. Take this opportunity to talk to your primary care provider, who can help refer you to a mental health specialist. You also can visit the [NIMH Find Help for Mental Illnesses](#) webpage for help finding a health care provider or treatment.



2. Prepare ahead of your visit.

Health care providers have a limited amount of time for each appointment. Think of your questions or concerns beforehand, and write them down.

- **Prepare your questions.** Make a list of what you want to discuss and any questions or concerns you might have. This [worksheet can help you prepare your questions](#).

- **Prepare a list of your medications.** It's important to tell your health care provider about all the medications you're taking, including over-the-counter (nonprescription) drugs, herbal remedies, vitamins, and supplements. This [worksheet can help you track your medications](#).
- **Review your family history.** Certain mental illnesses tend to run in families, and having a close relative with a mental disorder could mean you're at a higher risk. Knowing your [family mental health history](#) can help you determine whether you are at a higher risk for certain disorders. It also can help your health care provider recommend actions for reducing your risk and enable both you and your provider to look for early warning signs.



3. Consider bringing a friend or relative.

Sometimes it's helpful to bring a close friend or relative to your appointment. It can be difficult to absorb all the information your health care provider shares, especially if you are not feeling well. Your companion can be there for support, help you take notes, and remember what you and the provider discussed. They also might be able to offer input to your provider about how they think you are doing.



4. Be honest.

Your health care provider can help you get better only if you have clear and honest communication. It is important to remember that communications between you and a health care provider are private and confidential and cannot be shared with anyone without your expressed permission. Describe



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all your symptoms with your provider, and be specific about when they started, how severe they are, and how often they occur. You also should share any major stresses or recent life changes that could be triggering symptoms.



Examples of symptoms include:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Irritability
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Moving or talking more slowly
- Feeling restless or having trouble sitting still
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite or weight changes (or both)
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause and/or that do not ease even with treatment



5. Ask questions.

If you have questions or even doubts about a diagnosis or treatment your health care provider gives, ask for more information. If

your provider suggests a treatment you’re not comfortable or familiar with, express your concerns and ask if there are other options. It’s okay to disagree with your provider on what treatment to try. You may decide to try a combination of approaches. You also may want to get another opinion from a different health care provider. It’s important to remember that there is no “one-size-fits-all” treatment. You may need to try a few different health care providers and several different treatments, or a combination of treatments, before finding one that works best for you.

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For More Information

NIMH website

www.nimh.nih.gov

MedlinePlus (National Library of Medicine)

<https://medlineplus.gov>

(En español: <https://medlineplus.gov/spanish>)

ClinicalTrials.gov

www.clinicaltrials.gov

(En español: <https://salud.nih.gov/investigacion-clinica>)

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TOME CONTROL DE
SU SALUD MENTAL:

Consejos para hablar con su proveedor de atención médica



No espere a que su médico u otro proveedor de atención médica le pregunte sobre su salud mental. Comience usted la conversación. Aquí le damos cinco consejos que le ayudarán a prepararse y le guiarán sobre cómo hablar con su proveedor de atención médica acerca de su salud mental para que aproveche al máximo su consulta.



1. ¿No sabe por dónde empezar para obtener ayuda? Hable con su médico de atención primaria.

Si va a consultar con su proveedor de atención primaria por otros problemas de salud, recuerde mencionar sus problemas de salud mental. La salud mental forma parte integral de la salud. A menudo, las personas con trastornos mentales pueden estar [en riesgo de presentar otros problemas médicos](#), como enfermedades del corazón o diabetes. En muchos entornos actuales de atención primaria es posible que le pregunten si siente ansiedad o depresión, o si ha tenido pensamientos suicidas. Aproveche esta oportunidad para hablar con su proveedor de atención primaria, quien puede referirlo a un especialista en salud mental. También puede visitar nuestra página de

[ayuda para las enfermedades mentales](#) (en inglés) para obtener información sobre cómo encontrar un proveedor de atención médica o tratamientos.



2. Prepárese antes de su visita.

Los proveedores de atención médica tienen un tiempo limitado para cada consulta. Piense de antemano en sus preguntas o inquietudes y anótelas.

- **Prepare sus preguntas.** Haga una lista de lo que desea consultar y cualquier pregunta o inquietud que pueda tener. Es posible que esta [hoja de trabajo le ayude a elaborar su lista de preguntas](#) (en inglés).
- **Haga una lista de sus medicamentos.** Es importante informar a su proveedor de atención médica sobre todos los medicamentos que está tomando. Esto incluye los medicamentos de venta libre (sin receta), las hierbas medicinales, las vitaminas y los suplementos. Es posible que esta [hoja de trabajo le ayude a llevar un control de sus medicamentos](#) (en inglés).
- **Revise su historial familiar.** Ciertas enfermedades mentales tienden a ser hereditarias y tener un pariente cercano con un trastorno mental podría significar que corre un mayor riesgo de presentar ese trastorno. Conocer su [historial familiar de salud mental](#) puede



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ayudarle a determinar si tiene un mayor riesgo de presentar ciertos trastornos. Esto también puede ayudar a su proveedor de atención médica a recomendar acciones para reducir su riesgo y permitir que tanto usted como su proveedor busquen los primeros indicios de alerta.



3. Considere pedirle a un amigo o a un familiar que le acompañe.

A veces es útil llevar a un amigo cercano o a un familiar a su cita. Puede ser difícil asimilar toda la información que le comparte su proveedor de atención médica, sobre todo si no se siente bien. Su acompañante puede darle apoyo, ayudarle a tomar notas y recordar lo que usted y el proveedor dijeron. Esta persona también podría ofrecer información a su proveedor sobre cómo cree que está usted.



4. Hable con sinceridad.

Su proveedor de atención médica solo puede ayudarle a mejorar si usted se comunica de forma clara y honesta. Es importante recordar que las comunicaciones entre usted y un proveedor de atención médica son privadas y confidenciales y no se pueden compartir con nadie sin su permiso expreso. Describa todos sus síntomas a su proveedor y sea específico sobre cuándo comenzaron, qué tan graves son

y con qué frecuencia ocurren. También debe compartir cualquier situación de estrés importante o cambios recientes en su vida que puedan estar desencadenando los síntomas.

Algunos ejemplos de los síntomas incluyen:

- tristeza continua o una sensación de ansiedad o de “vacío”;
- sentimientos de desesperanza o pesimismo;
- irritabilidad;
- sentimientos de culpa, impotencia o que no vale nada;
- pérdida del interés o de la satisfacción de dedicarse a pasatiempos y actividades;
- disminución de energía o fatiga;
- moverse o hablar más despacio;
- sentirse inquieto o tener problemas para quedarse quieto;
- dificultad para concentrarse, recordar o tomar decisiones;
- dificultad para dormir, despertarse temprano por la mañana o dormir demasiado;
- cambios en el apetito o en el peso (o ambos);
- pensamientos sobre la muerte o el suicidio, o intentos de suicidarse;
- dolores o molestias, dolores de cabeza, calambres o problemas digestivos sin una causa física clara o que no se alivian incluso con tratamiento.



5. Haga preguntas.

Si tiene preguntas o incluso dudas sobre el diagnóstico o el tratamiento que le brinda su proveedor de atención médica, pídale más información. Si su proveedor sugiere un tratamiento con el que usted no se siente cómodo o con el que no está familiarizado, comuníquese sus inquietudes y pregunte si hay otras opciones. Está bien si no está de acuerdo con su proveedor sobre qué tratamiento intentar. Puede decidir intentar una combinación de enfoques. También es posible que desee obtener la opinión de otro proveedor de atención médica. Es importante recordar que no existe un tratamiento único para todos los pacientes. Es posible que deba acudir a varios proveedores de atención médica e intentar tratamientos diferentes, o una combinación de estos, antes de encontrar el que le funcione mejor.

Para más información

Sitio web del NIMH

www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/espanol (español)

www.nimh.nih.gov (inglés)

MedlinePlus de la Biblioteca Nacional de Medicina

<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish> (español)

<https://medlineplus.gov> (inglés)

Ensayos clínicos

<https://salud.nih.gov/investigacion-clinica>

(Información general en español)

www.clinicaltrials.gov (inglés)

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*Las llamadas a los números telefónicos que empiezan con 866 son gratuitas para quienes viven en los Estados Unidos.



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I'M SO STRESSED OUT!

From the **NATIONAL INSTITUTE of MENTAL HEALTH**

Feeling overwhelmed? Read this fact sheet to learn whether it's stress or anxiety, and what you can do to cope.

Is it stress or anxiety?

Life can be stressful—you may feel stressed about performance at school, traumatic events (such as a pandemic, natural disaster, or act of violence), or a life change. Everyone feels stress from time to time.

What is stress? Stress is the physical or mental response to an external cause, such as having a lot of homework or having an illness. A stressor may be a one-time or short-term occurrence, or it can happen repeatedly over a long time.

What is anxiety? Anxiety is your body's reaction to stress and can occur even if there is no current threat.

If that anxiety doesn't go away and begins to interfere with your life, it could affect your health. You could experience problems with sleeping, or with your immune, digestive, cardiovascular, and reproductive systems. You also may be at higher risk for developing a mental illness such as an anxiety disorder or depression. More information about anxiety disorders is available at www.nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders.

So, how do you know when to seek help?

Stress vs. Anxiety

Stress

- Generally is a response to an *external* cause, such as taking a big test or arguing with a friend.
- Goes away once the situation is resolved.
- Can be positive or negative. For example, it may inspire you to meet a deadline, or it may cause you to lose sleep.

Both Stress and Anxiety

Both stress and anxiety can affect your mind and body. You may experience symptoms such as:

- Excessive worry
- Uneasiness
- Tension
- Headaches or body pain
- High blood pressure
- Loss of sleep

Anxiety

- Generally is *internal*, meaning it's your reaction to stress.
- Usually involves a persistent feeling of apprehension or dread that doesn't go away, and that interferes with how you live your life.
- Is constant, even if there is no immediate threat.



It's important to manage your stress.

Everyone experiences stress, and sometimes that stress can feel overwhelming. You may be at risk for an anxiety disorder if it feels like you can't manage the stress and if the symptoms of your stress:

- Interfere with your everyday life.
- Cause you to avoid doing things.
- Seem to be always present.



Coping With Stress and Anxiety

Learning what causes or triggers your stress and what coping techniques work for you can help reduce your anxiety and improve your daily life. It may take trial and error to discover what works best for you. Here are some activities you can try when you start to feel overwhelmed:

- Keep a journal.
- Download an app that provides relaxation exercises (such as deep breathing or visualization) or tips for practicing mindfulness, which is a psychological process of actively paying attention to the present moment.
- Exercise, and make sure you are eating healthy, regular meals.
- Stick to a sleep routine, and make sure you are getting enough sleep.
- Avoid drinking excess caffeine such as soft drinks or coffee.
- Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.
- Reach out to your friends or family members who help you cope in a positive way.

For more information about stress, visit www.nimh.nih.gov/stress.

Recognize When You Need More Help

If you are struggling to cope, or the symptoms of your stress or anxiety won't go away, it may be time to talk to a professional. Psychotherapy (also called "talk therapy") and medication are the two main treatments for anxiety, and many people benefit from a combination of the two.

If you or someone you know has a mental illness, is struggling emotionally, or has concerns about their mental health, there are ways to get help. Find more information on the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) website at www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp.

If you are in immediate distress or are thinking about hurting yourself, call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** toll-free at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or the toll-free TTY number at 1-800-799-4TTY (4889). You also can text the **Crisis Text Line** (HELLO to 741741) or go to the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** website at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.

More Resources

- NIMH: Child and Adolescent Mental Health (www.nimh.nih.gov/children)
- NIMH: Anxiety Disorders (www.nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders)
- NIMH: Taking Control of Your Mental Health: Tips for Talking With Your Health Care Provider (www.nimh.nih.gov/talkingtips)
- NIMH: 5 Things You Should Know About Stress (www.nimh.nih.gov/stress)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Anxiety and Depression in Children (www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/depression.html)



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¡ESTOY TAN ESTRESADO!

Del INSTITUTO NACIONAL *de la* SALUD MENTAL

¿Te sientes abrumado? Lee esta hoja informativa para saber si se trata de estrés o ansiedad y qué puedes hacer para sobrellevar este sentimiento.

¿Es estrés o ansiedad?

La vida puede ser estresante. Puedes sentirte estresado por tu rendimiento en la escuela, eventos traumáticos (como una pandemia, una catástrofe natural o un acto de violencia), o bien, un cambio importante en tu vida. Todas las personas se sienten estresadas de vez en cuando.

¿Qué es estrés? El estrés es la respuesta física o mental a una causa externa, como tener muchas tareas o padecer una enfermedad. Un estresor o factor estresante puede ser algo que ocurre una sola vez o a corto plazo, o puede suceder repetidamente durante mucho tiempo.

¿Qué es la ansiedad? La ansiedad es la reacción del cuerpo al estrés y puede ocurrir incluso si no existe una amenaza real.

Si esa ansiedad no desaparece y comienza a interferir en tu vida, podría afectar tu salud. Podrías tener problemas para dormir o con tus sistemas corporales incluyendo inmunitario, digestivo, cardiovascular y reproductivo. También puedes correr un mayor riesgo de desarrollar una enfermedad mental, como un trastorno de ansiedad o depresión. Hay más información disponible sobre los trastornos de ansiedad en www.nimh.nih.gov/trastornosdeansiedad.

Entonces, ¿cómo sabes cuándo buscar ayuda?

El estrés en comparación con la ansiedad

El estrés

- Generalmente es una respuesta a una causa **externa**, como tomar una prueba importante o discutir con un amigo.
- Desaparece una vez que se resuelve la situación.
- Puede ser positivo o negativo. Por ejemplo, puede motivarte a cumplir con un plazo o puede hacerte perder el sueño.

El estrés y la ansiedad

Tanto el estrés como la ansiedad pueden afectar la mente y el cuerpo. Puedes tener síntomas como:

- preocupación excesiva,
- inquietud,
- tensión,
- dolores de cabeza o de cuerpo,
- presión arterial alta,
- pérdida de sueño.

La ansiedad

- Generalmente es **interna**, lo que significa que es tu reacción al estrés.
- Con frecuencia incluye un sentimiento persistente de aprensión o temor que no desaparece y que interfiere en la forma en que llevas tu vida.
- Es constante, incluso si no hay una amenaza inmediata.



Es importante controlar tu estrés

Todas las personas experimentan estrés y a veces puede ser abrumador. Tú puedes correr el riesgo de desarrollar un trastorno de ansiedad si sientes que no puedes controlar el estrés y si sus síntomas:

- interfieren en tu vida diaria,
- no te permiten hacer cosas,
- parecen estar siempre presentes.



Cómo sobrellevar el estrés y la ansiedad

Aprender qué causa o desencadena el estrés y qué técnicas de afrontamiento funcionan para ti puede ayudarte a reducir tu ansiedad y a mejorar tu vida diaria. Puede ser necesario intentar diferentes cosas hasta descubrir qué funciona mejor para ti. A continuación mencionamos algunas actividades que puedes intentar cuando empieces a sentirte abrumado:

- Mantén un diario.
- Descarga una aplicación que tenga ejercicios de relajación (como respiración profunda o visualización) o consejos para practicar la atención consciente (conocida en inglés como *mindfulness*), que es un proceso psicológico para prestar atención activamente al momento presente.
- Haz ejercicios y asegúrate de comer alimentos saludables y con regularidad.
- Mantén la misma rutina de sueño y asegúrate de dormir lo suficiente.
- Evita consumir cafeína en exceso, como refrescos o café.
- Identifica tus pensamientos negativos e inútiles y ponte como meta superarlos.
- Comunícate con tus amigos o familiares para que te ayuden a sobrellevar esto de manera positiva.

Para más información sobre el estrés, visita www.nimh.nih.gov/estres.

Reconoce cuando necesitas más ayuda

Si tienes dificultades para sobrellevar el estrés o la ansiedad, o si tus síntomas no desaparecen, puede ser el momento de hablar con un profesional. La psicoterapia (también llamada “terapia de diálogo”) y los medicamentos son los dos tratamientos principales para la ansiedad, y muchas personas se benefician al combinarlos.

Si tú o alguien que conoces tiene una enfermedad mental, problemas emocionales o inquietudes sobre la salud mental, existen formas de obtener ayuda. Encuentra más información en el sitio web del Instituto Nacional de la Salud Mental (NIMH, por sus siglas en inglés) en www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp (en inglés).

Si estás en crisis o peligro inmediato o estás pensando en lastimarte, llama al número gratuito de la **línea directa de ayuda para la prevención de suicidios** al 1-888-628-9454 o al número gratuito de TTY al 1-800-799-4889. También puedes enviar un mensaje de texto a la **línea de crisis para mensajes de texto** (envíe la palabra HELLO al 741741) o visita el sitio web de la **Red Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio** en: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/en-espanol> (español) o <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org> (inglés).

Recursos adicionales

- NIMH: Publicaciones acerca de niños y adolescentes (www.nimh.nih.gov/ninosyadolescentes)
- NIMH: Trastornos de la ansiedad (www.nimh.nih.gov/trastornosdeansiedad)
- NIMH: Tome control de su salud mental: Consejos para hablar con su proveedor de atención médica (www.nimh.nih.gov/consejosparahablar)
- NIMH: 5 cosas que usted debe saber sobre el estrés (www.nimh.nih.gov/estres)
- Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades: Ansiedad y depresión en los niños (www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/spanish/anxiety.html)



National Institute
of Mental Health



5 Things You Should Know About Stress

From the **NATIONAL INSTITUTE of MENTAL HEALTH**

Everyone feels stressed from time to time, but what is stress? How does it affect your overall health? And what can you do to manage your stress?

Stress is how the brain and body respond to any demand. Any type of challenge—such as performance at work or school, a significant life change, or a traumatic event—can be stressful.

Stress can affect your health. It is important to pay attention to how you deal with minor and major stressors, so you know when to seek help.

Here are five things you should know about stress.

1. Stress affects everyone.

Everyone experiences stress from time to time. There are different types of stress—all of which carry physical and mental health risks. A stressor may be a one-time or short-term occurrence, or it can happen repeatedly over a long time. Some people may cope with stress more effectively and recover from stressful events more quickly than others.

Examples of stress include:

- Routine stress related to the pressures of school, work, family, and other daily responsibilities.
- Stress brought about by a sudden negative change, such as losing a job, divorce, or illness.
- Traumatic stress experienced during an event such as a major accident, war, assault, or natural disaster where people may be in danger of being seriously hurt or killed. People who experience traumatic stress may have very distressing temporary emotional and physical symptoms, but most recover naturally soon after. Read more about Coping With Traumatic Events (www.nimh.nih.gov/copingwithtrauma).

2. Not all stress is bad.

In a dangerous situation, stress signals the body to prepare to face a threat or flee to safety. In these situations, your pulse quickens, you breathe faster, your muscles tense, and your brain uses more oxygen and increases activity—all functions aimed at survival and in response to stress. In non-life-threatening situations, stress can motivate people, such as when they need to take a test or interview for a new job.



3. Long-term stress can harm your health.

Coping with the impact of chronic stress can be challenging. Because the source of long-term stress is more constant than acute stress, the body never receives a clear signal to return to normal functioning. With chronic stress, those same lifesaving reactions in the body can disturb the immune, digestive, cardiovascular, sleep, and reproductive systems. Some people may experience mainly digestive symptoms, while others may have headaches, sleeplessness, sadness, anger, or irritability.

Over time, continued strain on your body from stress may contribute to serious health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other illnesses, including mental disorders such as depression (www.nimh.nih.gov/depression) or anxiety (www.nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders).

4. There are ways to manage stress.

If you take practical steps to manage your stress, you may reduce the risk of negative health effects. Here are some tips that may help you cope with stress:

- **Be observant.** Recognize the signs of your body's response to stress, such as difficulty sleeping, increased alcohol and other substance use, being easily angered, feeling depressed, and having low energy.
- **Talk to your health care provider or a health professional.** Don't wait for your health care provider to ask about your stress. Start the conversation and get proper health care for existing or new health problems. Effective treatments can help if your stress is affecting your relationships or ability to work. Don't know where to start? Read our Tips for Talking With Your Health Care Provider (www.nimh.nih.gov/talkingtips).
- **Get regular exercise.** Just 30 minutes per day of walking can help boost your mood and improve your health.
- **Try a relaxing activity.** Explore relaxation or wellness programs, which may incorporate meditation, muscle relaxation, or breathing exercises. Schedule regular times for these and other healthy and relaxing activities.
- **Set goals and priorities.** Decide what must get done now and what can wait. Learn to say "no" to new tasks if you start to feel like you're taking on too much. Try to be mindful of what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do.
- **Stay connected.** You are not alone. Keep in touch with people who can provide emotional support and practical help. To reduce stress, ask for help from friends, family, and community or religious organizations.
- **Consider a clinical trial.** Researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and other research facilities across the country are studying the causes and effects of psychological stress as well as stress management techniques. You can learn more about studies that are recruiting by visiting www.nimh.nih.gov/joinastudy or www.clinicaltrials.gov (keyword: stress).

5. If you feel overwhelmed by stress, ask for help from a health professional.

You should seek help right away if you have suicidal thoughts, are overwhelmed, feel you cannot cope, or are using drugs or alcohol more frequently as a result of stress. Your doctor may be able to provide a recommendation. You can find resources to help you find a mental health provider by visiting www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp.



Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Anyone can become overwhelmed. If you or a loved one is having thoughts of suicide, call the confidential toll-free National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Lifeline chat is available at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.

The service is available to everyone.



National Institute
of Mental Health

www.nimh.nih.gov

NIH Publication No. 19-MH-8109



5 cosas que usted debe saber sobre el estrés

Del INSTITUTO NACIONAL de la SALUD MENTAL

Todo el mundo se siente estresado de vez en cuando, pero, ¿qué es el estrés? ¿Cómo afecta su salud en general? ¿Qué puede hacer para controlar el estrés?

El estrés es la forma cómo el cerebro y el cuerpo responden a cualquier demanda. Cualquier tipo de desafío—como el rendimiento en el trabajo o la escuela, un cambio importante en la vida o acontecimientos traumáticos—puede causar estrés.

El estrés puede afectar su salud. Es importante que preste atención a la forma en que enfrenta a los acontecimientos estresantes de menor y de mayor importancia para que sepa cuándo debe buscar ayuda.

A continuación, le indicamos cinco cosas que debe saber sobre el estrés.

1. El estrés afecta a todos.

Todo el mundo se siente estresado de vez en cuando. Hay diferentes tipos de estrés y todos originan riesgos para la salud física y mental. Un factor estresante puede ser un acontecimiento que suceda una sola vez o que dure poco tiempo, o puede ocurrir reiteradamente y durante un largo período de tiempo. Algunas personas pueden lidiar con el estrés más eficazmente o recuperarse de los acontecimientos estresantes más rápido que otras.

Algunos ejemplos de estrés incluyen:

- El estrés de rutina relacionado con las presiones del trabajo, la escuela, la familia y otras responsabilidades diarias.
- El estrés provocado por un cambio negativo repentino, como la pérdida del trabajo, el divorcio o una enfermedad.
- El estrés traumático que se experimenta en un acontecimiento como un accidente grave, la guerra, un asalto o una catástrofe natural en el que las personas pueden estar en peligro de sufrir heridas graves o morir. Las personas que tienen estrés traumático pueden mostrar síntomas emocionales y físicos temporales muy angustiantes, pero la mayoría se recupera naturalmente poco después. Lea más en inglés sobre cómo afrontar eventos traumáticos (www.nimh.nih.gov/copingwithtrauma).

2. No todo estrés es malo.

Como respuesta al peligro, el estrés le indica al cuerpo que se prepare para enfrentar una amenaza o huir a un lugar seguro. En estas situaciones, el pulso y la respiración se aceleran, los músculos se ponen tensos y el cerebro consume más oxígeno y aumenta la actividad. El propósito de todas estas funciones es la supervivencia y surgen como respuesta al estrés. En situaciones en que la vida no está en peligro, el estrés puede motivar a las personas, como cuando necesitan tomar un examen o entrevistarse para un trabajo nuevo.



3. El estrés a largo plazo puede perjudicar su salud.

Hacer frente al impacto del estrés crónico puede ser todo un reto. Debido a que la fuente del estrés a largo plazo es más constante que en los casos del estrés agudo, el cuerpo nunca recibe una señal clara para volver a funcionar normalmente. Con el estrés crónico, esas mismas reacciones del cuerpo que salvan vidas pueden alterar los sistemas inmunológico, digestivo, cardiovascular, del sueño y reproductivo. Algunas personas experimentan principalmente síntomas digestivos, mientras que otras pueden tener dolores de cabeza e insomnio, sentir tristeza o enojo, o mostrar irritabilidad.

Con el tiempo, la tensión continua que produce el estrés en el cuerpo puede contribuir a problemas graves de salud, como enfermedades cardíacas, presión arterial alta, diabetes y otras enfermedades incluidos trastornos mentales como la depresión (www.nimh.nih.gov/depression [en inglés]) o la ansiedad (www.nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders [en inglés]).

4. Hay maneras de manejar el estrés.

Si toma medidas prácticas para controlar su estrés, puede reducir el riesgo de los efectos negativos para la salud. Los siguientes son algunos consejos que pueden ayudarle a sobrellevar el estrés:

- **Sea observador.** Sepa reconocer las señales sobre cómo usted responde al estrés, como dificultad para dormir, aumento del consumo de alcohol y otras sustancias ilícitas, enfadarse fácilmente, sentirse deprimido y tener poca energía.
- **Hable con su médico o con otro proveedor de atención médica.** No espere a que su médico le pregunte si está estresado. Inicie la conversación y obtenga una atención adecuada para los problemas de salud existentes o nuevos. Los tratamientos eficaces pueden ayudar si el estrés está afectando sus relaciones o su capacidad para trabajar. ¿No sabe por dónde empezar? Consulte nuestros consejos para hablar con su proveedor de atención médica (www.nimh.nih.gov/consejosparahablar).
- **Haga ejercicio de manera regular.** Una caminata diaria de tan solo 30 minutos pueden ayudarle a mejorar su estado de ánimo y su salud.
- **Pruebe una actividad relajante.** Averigüe sobre programas de relajación o bienestar que talvez incorporen meditación, relajación muscular o ejercicios de respiración. Programe horarios regulares para estas y otras actividades saludables y relajantes.
- **Establezca objetivos y prioridades.** Decida qué debe hacer y qué puede esperar hasta más tarde, y aprenda a decir no a las tareas nuevas si le están imponiendo una sobrecarga de trabajo. Tenga en cuenta lo que ha logrado al final del día, no lo que no ha podido hacer.
- **Manténgase conectado.** Usted no está solo. Manténgase en contacto con personas que pueden ofrecerle apoyo emocional y ayuda práctica. Para reducir el estrés, pida ayuda a amigos, familiares y organizaciones comunitarias o religiosas.
- **Considere participar en un ensayo clínico.** Los investigadores del Instituto Nacional de la Salud Mental (NIMH, por sus siglas en inglés) y otros centros de investigación en todo el país están estudiando las causas y los efectos del estrés psicológico y las técnicas de manejo del estrés. Puede obtener más información en inglés sobre los estudios que están reclutando participantes en www.nimh.nih.gov/joinastudy o www.clinicaltrials.gov (palabra clave: “stress”).

5. Si se siente abrumado por el estrés, pida ayuda a un profesional de la salud.

Debe buscar ayuda de inmediato si tiene pensamientos suicidas, está abrumado, siente que no puede lidiar con sus problemas o está usando drogas o alcohol con más frecuencia como resultado del estrés. Su médico puede remitirlo a un especialista. También puede encontrar recursos que le ayudarán a encontrar un profesional de la salud mental en la página en inglés del NIMH de ayuda para las enfermedades mentales: www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp.



Llame a la línea directa de la Red Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio

Cualquier persona puede llegar a sentirse abrumada. Si usted o un ser querido está contemplando suicidarse, llame a la línea confidencial gratuita de la Red Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio al 1-888-628-9454 (español) o al 1-800-273-TALK (8255) (inglés). Las líneas telefónicas están disponibles 24 horas al día, 7 días a la semana. El chat de la red “Lifeline” está disponible en <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org> (en inglés).

Este servicio está disponible para cualquier persona.



National Institute
of Mental Health

www.nimh.nih.gov

NIH Publication No. 20-MH-8109S

Stress busting activities for young children

Stress is often thought of as a grown-up condition, but children can also experience stress. Stress in children can result from school, homework, friends, family disruptions, changes in routines, and many other situations. Stress can

be observed as an obvious physical reaction such as crying or a headache, or it can be an emotional or behavioral reaction such as worrying or shyness. Reactions to stress can vary with the child's age and stage of development.

If early childhood practitioners can identify stress in young children, they can intervene with stress-relief strategies before little pressures turn into big problems. There are several strategies children can be taught to help them cope with stress.

Exercise

This is one of the best stress relief activities for children (and adults too!). Children can participate in an organized sport, be part of a team, or just spend time outside playing with friends. Regular exercise can help children feel less stressed, and if children experience a particularly stressful day, a few hours of active play can reduce their stress.

Deep breathing

Any child old enough to count to four can learn to how to do deep breathing exercises to lower stress. Children, with the help of adults, slowly count to four as they inhale, and then count to four as they exhale. This exercise should be done for several minutes until the child is calm.

Muscle relaxation

Children can relieve stress by using muscle relaxation exercises. Children, with the help of adults, can easily learn to tense and relax each muscle group while they are lying down. The activity starts at the top of the head; each child works his way down to the tips of his toes. The child simply tenses up each muscle group, then releases it and continues on to the next group until he has gone through his whole body.

Visual imagery

This is a way for children to create positive and relaxing images and thoughts that can be used to block out upsetting ones. Children identify a favorite place, a relaxing point in time, or a special happy memory. Then the children close their eyes and imagine that they are at that favorite place.

Sensory activities

These can have a calming effect on children when they experience stress. Play dough is a popular childhood material that provides a wonderful sensory experience. When children feel stress, give them play dough to squeeze, pound, and manipulate. A stress ball offers a similar experience for children because they can squeeze the squishy ball. Finger painting and playing with water or sand are other sensory activities that can be used to reduce stress.

Journaling

Journaling offers a place for older children to release their feelings about a stressful situation. A journal can be as simple as a plain notebook decorated by the child. Encourage children to write about their thoughts and feelings. Younger children can draw pictures. A journal may help children figure out how to handle a particular stressful situation.

Hobbies

These can be any activity that the child enjoys doing. Encourage the child to participate on a regular basis. Engaging in a favorite hobby brings children enjoyment, gives them a break from the stressful situation, and may provide a fresh look at the situation. Offer children different activities to try if they don't have a favorite hobby. Providers may plan experiences in art, music, board games, reading, puzzles, or science for the children to try.

Music

Some children are able to reduce stress and boost feelings by listening, exercising, or dancing to music. Practitioners can work with children to experiment with different types and styles of music to help encourage relaxation.

Healthy lifestyles

Children should eat nutritious regular meals and snacks throughout the day to give them the energy they need to tackle the day. Foods filled with sugar and caffeine provide energy for a short time, but once it wears off children feel sluggish and tired. Getting the correct amount of sleep is important to help children think clearly and face the challenges of the day ahead.

Talking about stress

Caregivers can be good listeners when children come with even the slightest "problem." The caregiver can listen to them and help them with advice if they want it, but some children just want to talk things out with a trusted adult.

Use books and stories to talk about stressful and everyday events.

Stories can help young children relate to characters that are in stressful situations and learn how to work out their problems. Some suggested books for young children include:

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst

Stress Can Really Get on Your Nerves by Trevor Romain and Elizabeth Verdick

A Boy and a Turtle by Lori Lite

Early educators teach children valuable life skills such as sharing, critical thinking, and independence. Teaching children how to cope with stressful situations is another very valuable skill that supports children's growth into successful adults.

Additional Resources:

Galinsky, Ellen. 2010. *Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Honig, Alice Sterling. 2009. *Little Kids, Big Worries: Stress-Busting Tips for Early Childhood Classrooms*. Baltimore: Brooks Publishing Company.

Youngs, Bettie B. 1995. *Stress and Your Child: Helping Kids Cope with the Strains and Pressures of Life*. New York: Ballentine Books.

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5 WAYS EXERCISE CAN IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

ARE YOU TIRED, ANXIOUS, OR FEELING A BIT DOWN?

Consider exercising instead of turning on your favorite television show or delving into the latest book you bought. Over the past decade scientists have been studying the impact exercise can have on improving your mental health. **Below are five ways that exercise may be able to help lift your mood:**



1. It relieves stress.

Exercise can reduce fatigue, improve alertness, and enhance overall cognitive function.



2. It releases endorphins.

Endorphins are often known as your body's natural pain relievers. These neurotransmitters reduce pain and increase your feelings of euphoria and well-being.



3. It can reduce anxiety.

Researchers have found that individuals who are physically active have lower rates of anxiety and depression than those with a sedentary lifestyle.

A brisk walk can deliver several hours of relief.



4. It helps control addiction.

Exercise sparks dopamine production in your brain, which improves mood, motivation, and feelings of wellness and attention.

It rebuilds toxic damage to the brain while also reducing anxiety and depression, and enhancing self-esteem.



5. It inspires creativity.

One great workout can boost creativity for up to two full hours.

Although studies have shown that exercise can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, it should never take the place of consultation with a mental health professional. If you are experiencing symptoms of major depression or generalized anxiety, consider talking with your counselor about adding exercise to your treatment plan.

SLEEP HYGIENE

HELPFUL TIPS TO HELP YOU SLEEP

What is sleep hygiene? "Sleep hygiene" is used to describe good sleep habits. Many of us don't pay attention to our sleeping habits but they are essential.

YOUR PERSONAL HABITS



FIX A BEDTIME AND AN AWAKENING TIME
The body "gets used" to falling asleep at a certain time, but only if this is relatively fixed.

AVOID NAPPING DURING THE DAY
Or make sure you limit the nap to 20-30 minutes.



AVOID CAFFEINE & ALCOHOL 4-6 HOURS BEFORE BED

EXERCISE, BUT NOT BEFORE BED
Strenuous exercise within two hours before bedtime can interfere with your ability to fall asleep.



YOUR SLEEPING ENVIRONMENT



USE COMFORTABLE BEDDING
Find comfortable bedding and a good temperature to keep the room well ventilated.

BLOCK OUT ALL DISTRACTING NOISE
Also eliminate as much light as possible.



RESERVE THE BED FOR THE THREE S's: SLEEP, SEX, AND SICKNESS
Don't use the bed as an office. Let your body "know" that the bed is associated only with the Three S's.

GETTING READY FOR BED



TRY A LIGHT SNACK BEFORE BED
Warm milk and foods high in the amino acid tryptophan, such as bananas, may help you sleep.

USE RELAXATION TECHNIQUES AND DON'T TAKE YOUR WORRIES TO BED



GET INTO YOUR FAVORITE SLEEPING POSITION
Don't toss and turn in bed. If you think it's been more than 30 minutes, get up, and do a relaxing activity (try light reading)



A WORD ABOUT ELECTRONICS

Using electronics before bedtime is often a bad idea. They are engaging objects that tend to keep people awake. Some people find that listening to music helps them fall asleep since it is a less engaging activity.



OTHER FACTORS

Several physical factors are known to upset sleep. These include sleep apnea, pain, arthritis, acid reflux with heartburn, menstruation, headaches and hot flashes. Many medications can cause sleeplessness as a side effect. Psychological and mental health problems like depression, anxiety and stress are often associated with sleeping difficulty.

THE GOAL IS TO REDISCOVER HOW TO SLEEP NATURALLY.

"Pass the Pumpkin Pie!"

Enjoying a Low-Carb Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a time filled with family, friends, gratitude, and, of course, food! Mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie, and cranberry sauce- all these delicious foods are staples to a Thanksgiving meal. Whether you are managing your diabetes or following a low carbohydrate diet, eating a delicious Thanksgiving meal can feel overwhelming- but it does not have to! All it takes is a little bit of planning and preparation.

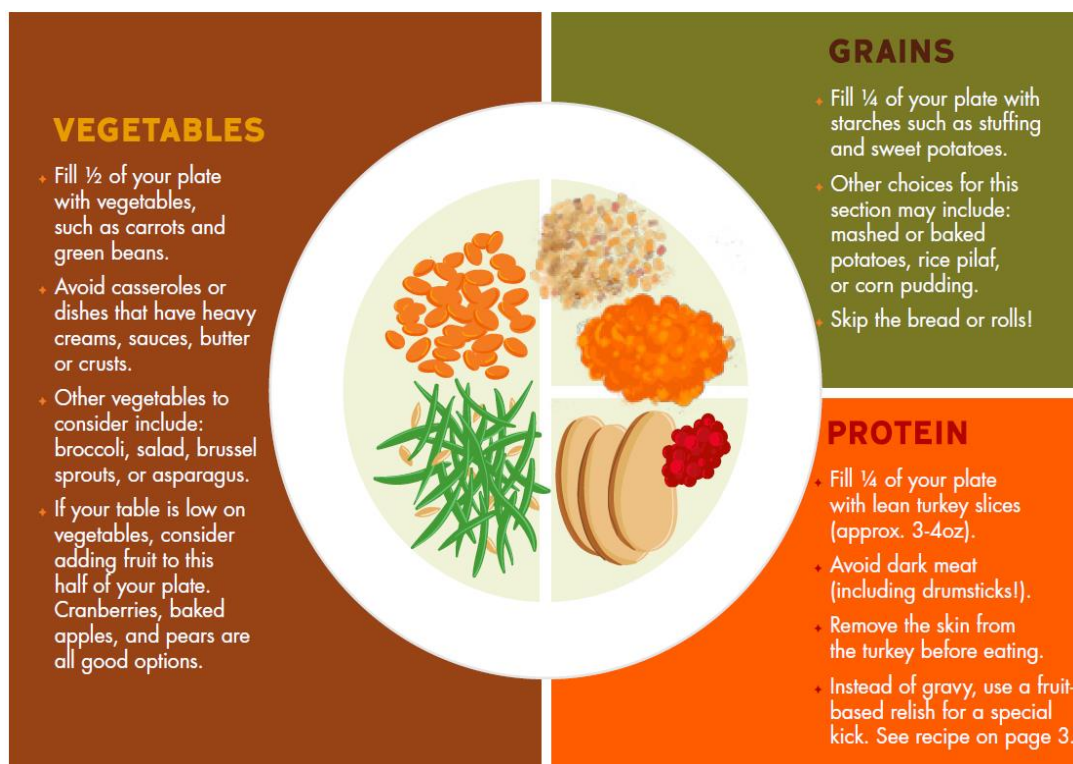


Image from: American Association of Diabetes Educators

Tips for a Terrific Thanksgiving

Get Cooking! It is difficult to know the exact carbohydrate content in foods prepared by other people. One of the easiest ways to avoid any confusion is to take control and try cooking some of your favorite dishes yourself. Try the Low Carb-Friendly Pumpkin pie recipe on the next page!

Negotiate With Yourself: Since many foods at the table may be high in carbohydrates, make a list of which foods are a “must”. Sometimes our eyes are bigger than our stomach, so thinking through what you really want from your meal can prevent overeating carbohydrate-rich foods. Using the Plate Method above, you then can have a well-balanced, delicious meal.

Sweet Swaps: Look for ways to swap higher carbohydrate foods for lower ones. For example, ask whoever is bringing the green bean casserole to put some steamed green beans aside for you. See if your family is willing to use Splenda in one of the pies instead of cane sugar.

Woah, Go Slow! Practice eating mindfully. Enjoy each of the foods on your plate- the smell, texture, and taste. Take small bites and chew thoroughly before swallowing. Doing this can allow you to recognize your fullness sooner and prevent overeating.

Get Moving: After you enjoy your delicious meal, go for a walk. If you have diabetes, walking can help regulate blood sugars and is an effective way to help prevent blood sugar spikes.



Delicious Carbohydrate-Friendly Pumpkin Pie

Ingredients

- 4 large eggs
- 1, 28-ounce can of pumpkin puree
- ½ cup granulated stevia
- ¼ cup of Splenda brown sugar
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground cardamom
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- ¼ tsp sea salt
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 refrigerated pie crust



Directions

- Preheat the oven to 400°F and place the pie crust in a 10" pie pan, crimping the edges.
- In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the stevia and Splenda brown sugar with the eggs for one minute until the mixture is light and frothy.
- Add the spices and salt to the egg mixture and whisk for another minute.
- Add the milk to the mixture and combine for about 30 seconds.
- Add the filling mixture into the pie pan.
- Once the oven is preheated, bake the pie for 10 minutes. Then reduce the heat from 400°F to 325°F and bake for 60 minutes.
- Remove the pie from the oven, allow to cool and enjoy!

Recipe Source: <http://aws.org/KOBU5A>

Nutrition Facts

Servings: 8

Amount per serving

Calories **171**

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 9g **12%**

Saturated Fat 3.2g **16%**

Cholesterol 96mg **32%**

Sodium 228mg **10%**

Total Carbohydrate 18g **7%**

Dietary Fiber 3.4g **12%**

Total Sugars 5.8g

Protein 5.9g

Vitamin D 21mcg **105%**

Calcium 83mg **6%**

Iron 2mg **13%**

Potassium 303mg **6%**

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a food serving contributes to a daily diet. [2,000 calorie a day](#) is used for general nutrition advice.

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