

CMMHC WELLNESS BULLETIN

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WHAT IS WORLD AIDS DAY?

World AIDS Day takes place on December 1st each year. It's an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day.

WHY IS WORLD AIDS DAY IMPORTANT?

Approximately 1.1 million people in the U.S. are living with HIV today. Globally, there are an estimated 36.7 million people who have the virus. Despite the virus only being identified in 1984, more than 35 million people have died of HIV or AIDS, making it one of the most destructive pandemics in history.

Today, scientific advances have been made in HIV treatment, there are laws to protect people living with HIV and we understand so much more about the condition. Despite this, each year thousands of people are diagnosed with HIV, people do not know the facts about how to protect themselves and others, and stigma and discrimination remain a reality for many people living with the condition.

World AIDS Day is important because it reminds the public and government that HIV has not gone away – there is still a vital need to raise money, increase awareness, fight prejudice and improve education.

More information can be found at: <https://www.avert.org/> and <https://www.worldaidsday.org>

6 Tips for Holiday Self Care

Easy ways to plan for a happier, less-stressful holiday season

by Charles Schaeffer, PhD, MA <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/women-s-mental-health-matters/201512/6-tips-holiday-self-care>

Another holiday season is upon us. And along with gifts and nonstop seasonal soundtracks, it can also bring stress, disappointment, emotional eating, and overindulgence. Between event planning, shopping, cooking, managing relatives, and trying to complete the 300 other tasks "necessary" for a good holiday, it's no wonder many people lose sight of what keeps them physically healthy and mentally grounded throughout the rest of the year. But it doesn't have to be that way. With just a little thought and planning, you can survive – and even thrive – this holiday season.

1. Keep exercise essential. Physical activity is the number one thing I recommend to everyone I work with because it reduces stress, improves mood and concentration, and combats depression. Decades of research shows that even just ten minutes of challenging exercise daily triggers the same hormones in your brain (serotonin and dopamine) targeted by anti-anxiety and antidepressant medications. Regular exercise builds up levels of these important mood regulators, becoming a buffer for stress, anxiety, and depression. When it comes to improving how you feel, getting regular exercise can be as effective as taking antidepressants.

During the holidays, most people skip their workout to make room for more seasonal activities. That's a double whammy: You add potentially stressful situations and lose your stress reliever in one blow. Instead, do what you can to maintain your exercise schedule. If you don't have time to go to the gym or take a long run, simply scale back. Go for a 10-minute walk or do some light stretching, rather than skipping your workout entirely.

2. Get in touch with gratitude. Guess what else protects your brain from stress and depression? Gratitude. Recent neuroscience research shows that simply pondering the question, "What am I grateful for?" increases dopamine and serotonin, even if you can't actually think of an answer. Just searching for things to be grateful about builds stronger positive emotional pathways in your brain.

3. Protect your sleep. Few things consistently mess with people's emotional and physical health like chronic sleeplessness and poor sleep. It leads to weight gain, additional stress, and irritability. Most of us sleep less well this time of year whether from staying out late drinking at parties or leaving all the gift-wrapping until the last minute. Losing sleep over the perfect meal or present will not make you or your family happier or healthier over the holidays. But you know what will? Consistent quality sleep.

Cut back on caffeine (and eliminate it entirely after 2 PM), and lay off the eggnog before bed. Skipping naps, especially the ones that find you sprawled on the couch after a big meal, will improve your ability to fall asleep at night. And though it's tempting, take a pass on the goodies in the cabinet or leftovers in the fridge for at least three hours before bed. That way, heartburn, indigestion, or a sugar headache won't keep you awake.

4. Feel (don't eat or drink) your feelings. The holidays often bring up strong feelings for people around everything from family losses, new relationships, to meeting the high expectations of visiting family. And most of us would rather avoid those difficult emotions – through the time-honored holiday traditions of eating or drinking – rather than just accepting that it is natural to feel them this time of year.

In the short run, emotional eating and drinking can be an effective way to distract or disorient you from strong and sometimes painful emotions. But it doesn't work in the long run, leaving you with the same anxiety about difficult emotions, a potential dependence on alcohol or food to self-soothe, and (all too often) 5 or 10 extra pounds that won't be easy to lose.

If you notice yourself reaching for something to eat or drink in response to a difficult feeling, try to make sense of what's going on instead. Are you angry with your partner? Are you grieving a departed relative or friend? Are you sad about a recent break up? The more you try to make sense of your emotions, the less scary and dangerous they become. And the easier it gets to sit with them rather than attempt to numb them.

5. Give yourself the present. One of the top killers of holiday enjoyment is becoming so wrapped up in planning the best holiday experience that you lose the ability to experience the good moments that happen in the present. While you worry about whether everyone is happy with the meal, if anyone is fighting about politics, or if the kids are eating too much sugar, you miss the powerful, gratifying moments that make the holidays magical.

One great way to start embracing the present moment is by taking a few minutes to find one thing you feel good about right now, and then lingering on that thought for as long as you can. When you stop trying to make your holiday fit an ideal, you open up space to savor the holiday as it is.



Cream of Turkey & Wild Rice Soup

Cook: 35 m, Ready In: 35 m

Recipe By: EatingWell Test Kitchen, "Got leftover cooked chicken or turkey? Cook up a pot of soup! This recipe is a healthier twist on a classic creamy turkey and wild rice soup that hails from Minnesota. Serve with a crisp romaine salad and whole-grain bread."

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms, (about 4 ounces)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped celery
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped carrots
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped shallots
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 4 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup quick-cooking or instant wild rice, (see Ingredient Note)
- 3 cups shredded cooked chicken, or turkey (12 ounces; see Tip)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Directions

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add mushrooms, celery, carrots and shallots and cook, stirring, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add flour, salt and pepper and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes more.

Add broth and bring to a boil, scraping up any browned bits. Add rice and reduce heat to a simmer. Cover and cook until the rice is tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in turkey (or chicken), sour cream and parsley and cook until heated through, about 2 minutes more.

Ingredient note: Quick-cooking or instant wild rice has been parboiled to reduce the cooking time. Conventional wild rice takes 40 to 50 minutes to cook. Be sure to check the cooking directions when selecting your rice—some brands labeled "quick" take about 30 minutes to cook. If you can't find the quick-cooking variety, just add cooked conventional wild rice along with the turkey at the end of Step 2.

Tip: To poach chicken breasts, place boneless, skinless chicken breasts in a medium skillet or saucepan. Add lightly salted water to cover and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to low and simmer gently until chicken is cooked through and no longer pink in the middle, 10 to 12 minutes.



