

# You FIRST

*Your Month of Well-being*

May 2024

## Mind Your Health: May is Mental Health Awareness Month

May is recognized as National Mental Health Awareness Month. Our mental health is an incredibly important aspect of our overall well-being because it affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps us determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy decisions. This month is all about raising awareness, reducing the stigma surrounding mental health and providing tools to those in need to help them identify mental health issues and receive treatment.

### Why Mental Health Matters

- Mental and physical health are **equally important to overall health**. For example, depression increases the risk for many physical health problems, especially chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.
- Mental health empowers us to **navigate challenges, build meaningful relationships and make informed decisions**.
- Focusing on our mental health care can help **increase productivity, enhance our self-image, and improve our relationships**.
- Having a **solid foundation** when it comes to mental health means you can cope with daily stress in life, establish a positive sense of self, stay motivated, stay physically active and healthy, make meaningful connections, and work towards achieving your full potential.

### Daily Habits to Improve Mental Health

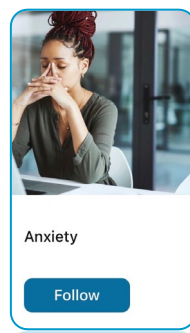
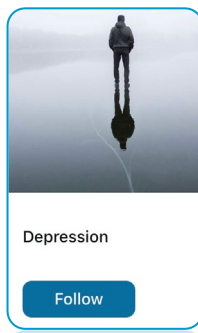
- **Limit screen time, especially social media**. Studies show there is a correlation between screen time and increased levels of anxiety and depression. By limiting this time and reallocating it to doing something healthy for yourself like exercising or reading, you may experience improved mental health and well-being.
- **Take time to be mindful**. Mindfulness has become extremely popular in recent years and is a key component in yoga and meditation. Many people who practice mindfulness report an increased ability to relax and improved self-esteem.
- **Exercise regularly**. Some benefits of physical activity on brain health happen right after a session of moderate-to-vigorous exercise! Regular physical activity can help reduce your risk of depression and anxiety; plus, can help you sleep better.

Scan the QR code to test your mental health knowledge and see if you can separate the myths from the facts.



## The Relationship between Mood and Food

- **Drinks:** Try to drink at least 8 glasses of water each day (about 2 liters) to prevent dehydration, which can cause fatigue, difficulty concentrating and mood changes. Avoid sugary drinks and those with excessive amounts of caffeine, as this can damage tooth enamel. In excess, caffeine can trigger panic attacks in people who have anxiety disorders.
- **Breakfast:** Incorporate a healthy, nutrient-dense breakfast into your routine! Breakfast is needed to fuel both your mind and body after going without food during sleep. Skipping meals can lead to fatigue and brain fog.
- **Lunch and Dinner:** Eat a diet that is heavy on fruits and vegetables, nuts, whole grains, fish, and unsaturated fats (like olive oil). Avoid high-fat dairy and fried, refined and sugary foods that have little nutritional value. Research shows that these can contribute to increased risk of depression.



Looking for more information on common mental health conditions? [Log in to or create your CareFirst WellBeing<sup>SM</sup> account!](#)

Navigate to the *Discover* tab and click on *Health Topics* and follow the applicable condition (*Anxiety, Depression, etc.*) to get up to date information on your timeline.

## Resources available through CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

- **Inspirations and Unwinding:** Find help to reduce daily worry and stress. Program features include videos and audio for relaxation, mindfulness and better sleep behaviors. Get started at [CareFirst WellBeing](#).
- **Behavioral Health Digital Resource:** It's normal to face difficult times, we all do. Remember you are not alone. If you need someone to talk to, our [Behavioral Health Digital Resource](#) can help.
- **CloseKnit:** A virtual-first primary care practice offering care 24/7/365. Download the easy-to-use app and get started today [Virtual-First Primary Care | CloseKnit \(closeknithealth.com\)](#).
- The CareFirst support team can help you find a mental health provider that meets your specific individual needs. [Visit our Programs for Your Health](#) page for more information.

## Join Blue365 and Start Saving Today!

One great way to **Achieve a Healthier You** is to take advantage of the Blue365 Health and Wellness discount program provided to insured CareFirst members (includes those with medical, dental, vision and disability coverage). To take advantage of Blue365, register now at [carefirst.com/wellnessdiscounts](https://carefirst.com/wellnessdiscounts). In just a couple of minutes, you will be ready to shop!