

Keep Your Sunny Side Up

You know that eating healthy foods and exercising regularly are keys to feeling good and living longer. And good mental health is just as important as good physical health.

We face changes in life that can challenge our emotional well-being. For example, maybe you have moved and miss your old friends.

Whatever happens in your life, make your mental health a priority. You will feel better and deal with stress better.

Keeping Your Spirits Up

STAY IN TOUCH WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

Maintaining relationships is good for your mental health. Call and visit your children or grandchildren. If you do not have family or friends nearby, join a local church or a community organization.

GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO ADJUST TO MAJOR LIFE CHANGES.

If you are rearing or moving, be prepared to feel a loss. The same is true if your spouse or a friend dies. Grieving is natural and necessary.

KEEP BUSY WITH MENTALLY STIMULATING ACTIVITIES.

Consider volunteering or taking a class. Explore new interests, such as learning another language.

GET A PET.

A pet can be a wonderful companion. Pet owners exercise more and have more social contact than those without one.

EXERCISE.

Take a walk or ride a bike. Exercise improves how you feel mentally, as well as physically.

GET ENOUGH SLEEP.

Lack of sleep can contribute to depression. Try to get as much sleep as you need.

PRACTICE OPTIMISM AND GOOD HUMOR.

A positive attitude and laughter boost your mood. Spend time with people who make you laugh. Rent funny movies.

Keep this list handy and add ideas of your own. It is worth putting good mental health on the top of your "to do" list every day.

Do You Feel Down?

It is impossible to be cheerful all the time. Some days are harder than others. But if you just can not shake your sadness or you have mysterious aches and pains, you may be suffering from depression.

Like heart disease and diabetes, clinical depression is an illness. Depression may be the result of a chemical imbalance in the brain, heredity, a stressful life change. Therapy, medication, or a combination of therapy and medication may help improve your depressive symptoms.