

HEALTH

Tips for National Healthy Weight Week

If you are like many people, Jan. 1 marked the day that you and your family planned to begin eating better and to become more physically active. As you go forward, you may find that Valentine's Day, the changing weather, the "big game," and winter doldrums are just a few of the many bumps on the road to a healthier new year.

This is National Healthy Weight Week and the following information may be helpful for all of us to have a healthy weight. For many it is a time to celebrate the New Year, the new you and a healthy weight.

Healthy Weight Week focuses on making wellness a lifestyle by consuming nutritious foods, living actively and feeling positively about yourself and others. Join the cause and celebrate your health! During Healthy Weight Week, promoters of the



LEE HILLIARD

observance suggest that you hide your scale, do not peek at a height and weight chart, and avoid body mass index calculations. They stress that you focus on loving yourself and your body. If that is a good goal for you, you may want to try some of the following:

- Get a move on
- Drink plenty of water
- Catch some Zzzz's
- Take a deep breath
- Sign up for a race
- Chat with loved ones
- Step it up with stairs
- Focus on what you can

change

- Plan your meals
- Derail your stress
- Record goals
- Use a smaller plate
- Be conscientious
- Cut down on alcohol
- Eat fruits and veggies
- Read food labels
- Eat high-fiber foods
- Don't skip breakfast
- Be happy with where you are
- Reward yourself
- Cook nutritious meals
- Eat regular meals
- Just "be"

However, if you are looking to jumpstart your New Year's resolutions, the We Can!® (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition) program developed by the National Institutes of Health has some tips and tools for you and your family that may be helpful. The program provides parents, families, and communities with science-based activities and resources to help 8

to 13-year-olds stay at a healthy weight.

One of the first places to start is the grocery store. Knowing what to shop for can make bringing balanced nutrition home to your family easier. The program's Go, Slow, Whoa food chart can help you make healthier choices. By adding more "Go" foods—whole grain breads, fruits, vegetables, non-fat dairy products, and other foods that are low in calories and high in nutrients—to your grocery list, you can create family meals that are delicious and healthy. The chart can also help you identify "Slow" foods—those that are higher in fat and calories and should be eaten less often—and "Whoa" foods—those foods highest in fat and calories that should be eaten occasionally and in smaller portions.

Understanding the difference between portion

size and serving size is another way to help your family maintain a healthy weight. A portion is the amount of a food or drink that you decide to consume, while a serving is a measured amount. The program offers tips to help you better understand the Nutrition Label on food packaging, which shows you how many servings are in a particular container, so you can avoid having multiple servings in a single portion.

If the winter cold and weather have curtailed your plans to be more physically active, try moving indoors, including taking the stairs at work, walking briskly around any large store, or checking out the activity centers in the area. These are just a few of the tips you will find on the We Can! Web site.

You can learn more about the program and download free tip sheets

and other tools go to www.chcneo.com/education and click on the WE CAN link. A mouse click or two could help you and your family find ways to get those good intentions back on track, and keep you moving forward to a healthier lifestyle through 2019, and beyond.

Locally, Community Health Center of Northeast Oklahoma, Inc., dba Afton, Grove and Welch Community Health Centers continue to serve the area with the finest in personalized health care. For details or to schedule an appointment contact (918) 257-8029, (918) 801-7504 or (918) 788-3918 or check us out on the web at www.chcneo.com, like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, Digg, Tumblr, Google+, Pinterest and YouTube @chcneo. A sliding payment scale is available for patients based on family size and income.

Boosting your mood

When the winter months move in, and the cold or inclement weather keep us inside. When the days are shorter and the nights longer, many of us have mood changes. The national Institute of Health has some interesting insight on mood. Here is part of an article from their most recent newsletter:

Everyone feels grouchy or irritable some days. But a bad mood or major mood swings that go on too long may signal a bigger problem. The good news is that certain healthy habits can help you boost your mood.

"Some people are more moody than other people. Normal mood actually varies from person to person," explains Dr. Carlos Zarate, chief of NIH's mood disorders group.

That's because we all have different "temperaments," or combinations of personality traits that are biologically based. These are fairly stable over time. "Considerable research shows that people really differ in their basic temperament," says Dr. Maria Kovacs, an NIH-funded psychologist at the University of Pittsburgh. "There are some people who temperamentally are always in a 'good' mood. And there are people who are temperamentally always in a 'bad' mood."

For example, Zarate says, some people don't seem to be fazed no matter what happens. Others worry about minor things and tend to overblow them. People who have a more negative temperament tend to have a higher risk for mood and anxiety disorders.

Changing Moods It's not only temperament that affects how you feel each day. Daily habits that affect your ability to manage stress—like diet, exercise, sleep, or how much alcohol you drink—play an important role, too.

"If you address those factors—have good diet, good exercise, good sleep-wake habits, regular activities, routines, and try

to disconnect from work and other stressors—those do have beneficial effects on mood and keeping you healthy," Zarate says.

Other biological factors can affect your mood too, like hormones. Women may experience shifts in hormones during their menstrual cycles, pregnancy, and menopause that cause mood changes. Men can have decreases in testosterone as they age, which has been linked to depression.

Certain medical conditions, such as a vitamin deficiency, can make you feel "down" or lack energy. Mental health conditions like depression and bipolar disorder can also cause you to feel very sad and have low energy.

Other mental health conditions can cause mood issues as well—for example, anxiety disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, and personality disorders.

Zarate explains "Moods that fluctuate occasionally are a normal thing. It's when it's combined with other symptoms—like significant distress and/or impairment of function or relationships—that it becomes an issue."

People may not know when their mood has become a problem. "Friends and family members should be open and honest with each other and let them know what they're seeing," he says, "because it can lead to strain on family relationships, other relationships, or work issues."

Bouncing Back "Mood is a normal part of life, and having emotions is a normal part of life," Kovacs says. "Sometimes you feel more negative than other times. That's not necessarily bad."

Kovacs studies the strategies people use to repair their mood when feeling down. Her team and others have shown that what you do when feeling down can boost your mood or spiral you into feeling worse.

"One of the most common strategies that both children and adults use is what I call 'attention refocusing,'" she explains. "Meaning that they

stop paying attention to whatever is making them miserable or unhappy and they start putting their attention elsewhere."

For kids, this may mean finding a specific task to do when they're upset, like helping a parent with chores or finding someone to play with. For adults, it may mean having a conversation with a friend or going for a walk or to see a movie.

Kovacs has found that people with depression or other mental health conditions tend to turn to coping strategies that worsen their mood rather than lift it. For example, thinking about what's bothering them over and over again or avoiding or hiding their feelings. These strategies can make negative feelings stronger or last longer.

Her research has shown that people often use the same strategies that their parents or older siblings use. It can be hard to change the strategies to manage emotions because people are not always aware of them. For those with mood problems, talking with a mental health professional can help to identify negative patterns and choose healthier coping skills.

"If you come from a family that has a history of depression, it's incredibly important to try to create an environment for yourself that can maximize the likelihood that you're not going to get into a depression," Kovacs says. That means avoiding things that can trigger depression or anxiety, like not getting enough sleep or exercise.

If your mood is making it hard to cope with daily life, talk with your health care provider. If you're having suicidal thoughts, call your doctor immediately or the National

Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK.

A link to this and other information can be found at www.chcneo.com/education.

Diane Vinson, L.C.S.W., Behavioral Health Coordinator for the Community Health Center of Northeast Oklahoma, provides individual clinical therapy for adults and youth. She has decades of experience helping people with various behavioral health issues and is accepting new patients at our area clinics in Afton (918) 257-8029, Grove (918) 788-3918 and Welch (918) 801-7504.



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