

Wellness News

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“A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures in the doctor’s book.” — Irish Proverb



Anthem members: You can view and manage your benefits, access wellness tools and resources to improve your overall wellbeing. Simply scan this QR code with your smartphone’s camera to download the Sydney Health app.

Tip: Anthem.com and Sydney Health use the same username and password!

Physical Health and Sleep

How are they connected?

The relationship between sleep and overall physical health is complex and interconnected. Sleep allows both the body and brain to recover during the night, ensuring you feel refreshed and alert when you wake up in the morning. At the same time, your physical health and associated medical conditions can make it difficult to get the sleep you need.



How your health impacts your sleep

A person's physical health can impact whether they get enough high-quality sleep. Physical and mental illnesses can cause a person to fall short on sleep. Similarly, medications and supplements a person may take for health issues can negatively impact sleep duration and quality.

While people often become sleep-deprived because they do not get enough sleep, it can also stem from not getting enough quality sleep. Even a person who sleeps eight hours per night can become sleep-deprived if their sleep quality is poor.

Poor sleep quality usually results from a person waking up during the night, even if these awakenings are brief and not remembered. Sleep disorders, like obstructive sleep apnea and periodic limb movement disorder, can cause multiple awakenings during the night and reduce sleep quality. Hormonal fluctuations that occur during the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, and menopause can also interfere with getting quality sleep.

The effects of sleep deprivation on health

Sleep deprivation can have a significant impact on overall physical health, as adequate sleep is essential for various bodily functions. Over time, not getting enough sleep can negatively impact a person's physical health in multiple ways. When a person falls short on sleep, they face a higher risk of these issues:

- Weight gain and obesity
- Dementia
- Injury from car crashes and work accidents
- Heart attack and stroke
- High blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Obstructive sleep apnea
- Depression and anxiety
- Reduced immunity and risk of infection
- Cancer
- Early death

Are You Getting Enough Sleep? Here's How to Tell

Adults require at least 7 hours of sleep each night. When a person isn't getting enough sleep, they often feel tired during the day and like their physical and mental well-being is compromised. Symptoms of sleep deprivation include:

- Feeling extremely tired during the day
- Mood changes, including increased stress, anxiety, or irritability
- Impaired thinking, memory, and judgment
- Reduced attention span

The Benefits of Sleep

When a person who is falling short on sleep begins getting adequate sleep, the symptoms of sleep deprivation may be reversed.

Restoring adequate sleep after sleep deprivation may bring about an improved mood, an increase in energy and attention, and feelings of improved well-being. The risk of car crashes or work accidents may also be reduced.

Sometimes, sleep deprivation impacts a person's social and work life. They may cut back on enjoyable activities due to tiredness or find they are falling behind on their responsibilities at home or work. If adequate sleep is restored, a person may notice they have more energy to dedicate to their work, hobbies, and home life.

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/physical-health#how-your-physical-health>

TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP



“In addition to eating a nutritious diet, avoiding stress, and exercising, getting a good night’s rest is a major pillar of good health that a person has a large degree of ownership over.”

Dr. Dustin Cotliar
Sleep Medicine Physician, MD

Anthem members: Sydney Health connects you to the resources and information that can make a difference. With one app, you can manage stress and anxiety, sleep, pregnancy, diet and exercise, and many other wellness areas.

Smart Tips for Plant-Based Eating

March is **National Nutrition Month**®! In honor of this month, we wanted to share some tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, who established this annual campaign.

Although the popularity of eating “plant-based” has grown, this term currently lacks a formal definition in the US. In the past, plant-based was often used to describe a vegetarian or vegan diet. More recently, it has been used to describe an eating style that includes more foods that come from plants, like fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts and seeds. It also may be used in the marketing of a food, like dairy alternatives and meat substitutes.

Are there benefits to eating more plant-based foods?

People may choose to consume more plant-based foods for a variety of reasons, including:

- Health benefits associated with eating more fruits and vegetables.
- Concerns for the environment.
- A potential for lower grocery bills and food costs. For example, a meatless chili using dried beans is less expensive than a chili containing meat or a textured meat substitute.

Are plant-based foods more nutritious?

Just because a product is plant-based doesn't mean it is healthier. Premade plant-based foods and beverages can vary in the nutrition they provide. While a variety of nutrients can be obtained from plant-based foods, it may require some additional planning to make sure that you are getting all the vitamins, minerals, and protein you need. It will depend on your overall food intake and what foods are being replaced with plant-based sources.

How to Get Started

For a healthy eating style that includes more plant-based foods, focus on ways to add more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. For example:

- Designate a certain night or nights for meatless meals.
- Try substituting some or all of the meat in recipes with plant-based sources of protein, such as beans, tofu, tempeh or unsalted nuts and seeds.
- Include more vegetables and fruit without added sugars or salt in meals and snacks.



This year's **National Nutrition Month**® theme is "Beyond the Table," which addresses the farm-to-fork aspect of nutrition, from food production and distribution to navigating grocery stores and farmers markets — and even home food safety and storage practices. It also describes the various ways we eat — not only around a dinner table, but also on the go, in schools and restaurants, at games and events. This theme also includes sustainability, for instance, decreasing food waste from school and work to home and beyond.

For more resources, visit the [Campaign Resources](https://www.eatright.org/national-nutrition-month/resources) page at [eatright.org](https://www.eatright.org).

Lentil Vegetable Soup

This soup is a fan favorite and so easy to make!

Ingredients

- 2 small onions, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, finely chopped
- 6 small white potatoes, finely chopped
- 1 16-ounce bag brown lentils
- 1 15.5-ounce can diced fire-roasted tomatoes
- 8 cups vegetable broth or water
- 1-2 cups finely chopped fresh spinach
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Combine all ingredients except the spinach in a soup pot or Dutch oven. Cook over low heat for 2 hours.

Add the spinach and cook about 5 minutes more, until spinach is wilted. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

<https://www.forksoverknives.com/recipes/vegan-soups-stews/lentil-vegetable-soup/>



Anthem members: You can find additional information about fitness, nutrition and more via the Sydney app. Tap on menu from the home screen, “My Health Dashboard”, and scroll down to “My Health News”.