

Completely Well

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Wellness
BOX
INC.
INSPIRING HEALTH

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Managing Stress When Making Healthy Changes

Investing in your health by making healthy changes is always rewarding but it doesn't mean it is always easy. Change is hard and we are human so we may slip now and again. To help increase our chance of success, we can take steps to prevent stress, and more importantly, consider how we can respond to stress in a healthy way.

A major source of stress when adopting a healthy lifestyle is slips. Slips happen when we do not follow our plans for healthy eating or being active. Slips are normal and are to be expected. Slips do not always hurt our progress, in fact, they can help us learn what to do differently. What hurts our process is the way we react or respond to slips.

Slips can lead to negative thoughts that fuel unhealthy behaviors that bring us further away from our goals. We can break this chain of negative thoughts and unhealthy actions simply by starting over. Realize that you are human, give yourself permission not to be perfect, take a deep breath, and start again. You're worth it!

We can reduce stress by taking time to plan, prepare, and problem solve so we can overcome barriers and establish healthy habits that make life easier. We can also lower stress and make it easier to reach our goals by finding meaning and enjoyment in the healthy actions we take each day.

To set yourself up for a success it is best to set small, manageable goals that are realistic for you. If a goal is unrealistic or too difficult to attain, this sets us up for feelings of guilt or shame because we couldn't measure up. Remember that building new habits takes time. We need to be kind to ourselves if we do slip and remember our purpose so we get up and try again!



Get Back on Track with these 5 Simple Steps

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| 1. Talk back to negative thoughts with positive thoughts. | Negative thoughts are your worst enemy. Talk back. "I am not a failure because I slipped. I am back on my feet again." |
| 2. Ask yourself how the slip happened. | Learn from your slip. In the future can you avoid the situation that may have triggered the slip? What could you do to handle the situation differently? |
| 3. Regain control immediately. | Make your very next meal a healthy one. Get back on schedule with your activity plan right away. |
| 4. Talk to someone supportive. | Reach out to a friend or health coach and discuss your new plan for handling slips. Commit yourself to a new effort. |
| 5. Focus on all the positive changes you have made. | You are making important lifelong changes and slips are just part of the process. |



Cervical Cancer

In the United States, approximately 14,000 women will be diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer this year. While this number seems high, cervical cancer rates have actually dropped by 54% since the early 1970s. In fact, because of regular screenings cervical cancer has gone from one of the most common causes of cancer deaths to one that can be diagnosed early and treated more effectively. Here are some facts about cervical cancer that you should know.

- Cervical cancer is caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), which is transmitted through sexual contact. However, HPV does not always result in cervical cancer and most women who have HPV will not get cervical cancer.
- Additional risk factors play a role in the development of cervical cancer, including smoking, sexual activity at a young age or with multiple partners, past or current chlamydia infection, and having a weakened immune system.
- Cervical cancer is diagnosed through a PAP test. A doctor brushes or scrapes cells from the cervix and the cells are sent to a lab where they are looked at for abnormalities. If abnormal cells are found and cancer is diagnosed further testing will be done to determine the stage of the cancer.

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Produce of the Month Tangelos

The bright flavors of citrus are a welcome taste in January, especially as a contrast to many creamy comfort foods of the season. One lesser known citrus is the tangelo, a hybrid of a tangerine and a grapefruit. A tangelo has a sweet-tangy taste, is usually about the size of an orange, has a loose, easy to remove peel, and features a “neck” on the stem end. The most common variety of tangelo, the minneola, is in season January through March.

The Basics: Choose tangelos that are heavy for their size and without noticeable soft spots or blemishes. You can store tangelos on the counter, but if you wish to keep them longer than a few days, store in your refrigerator. When ready to eat or use, just peel and enjoy!

Try This: Tangelos can often be substituted for other citrus fruits. You can put peeled slices of tangelos on top of yogurt and add some fresh mint for a delicious breakfast or snack. Add tangelos to your salad or on top of veggies or fish before baking. Tangelos can also elevate your stir fry recipe, just be sure to add near the end of cooking to maintain the structure of the fruit.

The Facts: A medium tangelo has about 70 calories, 2 grams of fiber, and 100% of your daily vitamin C requirement.

Enjoy Food *and* See Results with Mindful Eating

It's estimated that about 45 million Americans are on a diet at any given time. That means that 45 million people are focused on what to eat, how much to eat, and when to eat each day. But the larger question many health-conscious eaters are missing is WHY are we eating?

Yes, we need to eat to nourish our bodies, but too many times, we choose to eat for a number of other reasons, especially when it comes to comfort. Working to understand our own food habits and practicing mindful eating strategies can be the key to eating well more often.



- Emotional eating during times of stress, discomfort, or boredom often leads to less healthy food choices and overeating. In fact, certain foods (primarily those that contain higher amounts of sugar and fat) act on the body in a way to decrease stress for the short term. It's no wonder many people reach for comfort foods when sad or stressed.
- Distracted eating is another common cause for overeating. Activities like watching television, checking email, driving, scrolling through social media, or playing a game on a phone or tablet while we eat takes our attention off what and how much we are eating. According to the *American Journal of Nutrition*, eating while distracted by other activities often causes people to eat more, resulting in an increase of calories and a lowered awareness of hunger and satiety.

The answer to distracted and emotional eating is mindful eating.

Mindful eating is about practicing food awareness and can include reducing or eliminating distractions while you eat, helping you focus on how you are feeling and why you are eating, making thoughtful food choices, and paying attention to how you are enjoying the food and whether or not you are full.

Mindful eating doesn't restrict the type of food you choose. This allows for each person to consider what it is that they really want to eat. In fact, the first question is usually *what do I want to eat?* This question can then be followed by *how am I feeling?* Am I hungry, anxious, thirsty, sad, stressed? If you are hungry, then eat! If you aren't hungry, consider *why do I want to eat?* By considering your hunger and your emotions, you can quickly decide what is truly the best thing to support your body. In times of stress, you can find ways to ease feelings using something other than food. Try listening to music, reading a book, getting outside, taking a walk, or talking to a friend. Even a short nap can help!

Avoiding other activities while you eat is another way to help you focus on your food choices, eat more slowly and savor your food. Creating a habit of enjoying meals without distractions or sharing more meals around the family table can help. Pay attention to your hunger level, choosing to stop eating when full but before you feel "stuffed." Consider how the food tastes after the first bite. The third. The tenth. Food often tastes less delicious when we are no longer hungry. Notice temperature, texture, and flavor.

If trying to stick to a diet hasn't worked for you, try mindful eating. With practice, we can learn to stay in tune with our hunger and our emotions and match our food choices with our health goals. This can help alleviate the guilt we feel when we eat a food considered "bad," since no food is off limits and all foods can be enjoyed mindfully and in moderation. Whether your goal is to improve your health, lose weight, or heal your relationship with food, mindful eating could work for you.

Move More, Stress Less

Feeling stressed? While we can't always avoid stress, we can do something to help: exercise. Exercise improves our resilience to stress by improving our brain's hormonal response, helping 'blow off steam' to manage our mood, and improving sleep.

Ever hear of a runner's high? Exercise creates chemical changes in our brain that help counteract the effects of stress. Endorphins, or feel-good hormones, released during exercise help to reduce the sensation of pain and are associated with the feeling of well-being. Exercise

also increases levels of dopamine and serotonin, known to help reduce depression and improve mood.

Physical activity challenges your body physically and asks your heart, lungs, and muscles to work harder. Surprisingly this physical stress is a great way to put ourselves in the present moment to help reduce rumination thoughts and feelings of frustration. The benefits of exercise can also help you gain more quality sleep which is key for hormone health and mood support.

Your sense of accomplishment and pride after a workout can also help to reduce stress. While we can't control everything, choosing to make your health a priority and follow through on your commitment is a powerful way to improve your sense of self-worth and our response to stressful situations.

Making time to move for better physical and mental health could help you feel your best no matter what your day brings. As always, be sure to consult with your doctor before beginning a new exercise program.



Cervical Cancer *Continued from page 3*

- Treatment of cervical cancer will depend on the stage. The most common treatment for an early diagnosis is surgery to remove the cancer. Other treatments include radiation, chemotherapy, immunotherapy, or hysterectomy. Approximately 85-90% of those with stage I cervical cancer are cured following the appropriate treatment.

It's important for women to have yearly wellness appointments and be screened for cervical cancer every three years. This recommendation is for most women, ages 21-65, without increased risk factors. Women ages 30-65 may extend their screening to every 5 years if no risk factors are present. All women should discuss their risk factors and need for screenings with their doctor as early diagnosis is critical to successful treatment.

Want to Know More?

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WellnessBoxInc.com

888.244.6090

Thompson@wellnessboxinc.com