



# HEALTHY TODAY

[www.communityhealthdayton.org](http://www.communityhealthdayton.org)

May 2022

## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a national movement to raise awareness about mental health. Mental health refers to our emotional and social well-being and impacts how we think, feel, and behave. It plays a role in connecting with others, making decisions, handling stress, and many other aspects of daily life.

Everyone has mental health, and it deserves your attention just as much as your physical health does.

- ⇒ **Why should I care about mental health?** Mental health is important for all of us. Taking care of yourself is critical to prevent your mental health from worsening – factors like nutrition and gut health, stress, sleep, relationships, trauma, and more can contribute to poor mental health. If your mental health is in a good spot, it is a great time to practice coping skills – ways to help you deal with hard feelings – so that you're better able to handle tough times when they happen.
- ⇒ **Is poor mental health the same as having a mental health condition?** You can have times of poor mental health without having a diagnosable condition – just like you can be physically unhealthy without having a particular illness. A mental health concern is anything that causes a person to believe their mental health may be suffering. Many people struggle with not feeling “sick enough” to seek help early on in their mental health journey. The average delay between symptom onset and treatment is 11 years, meaning a lot of people spend months or years facing mental health challenges before getting a diagnosis. It is never too early to seek treatment – if you want help for your mental health, you deserve to get it.

<https://mhanational.org/starting-think-about-mental-health>



Healthy Today is Community Health Centers of Greater Dayton's informational newsletter on healthy living, created with the goal of helping you and your family stay healthy and thriving every day!

To read more Healthy Today articles, please visit the archives on our website:

[www.communityhealthdayton.org/healthyat80](http://www.communityhealthdayton.org/healthyat80)

### IN THIS ISSUE

- Mental Health Awareness
- 5-4-3-2-1-Calm
- Habit Stacking
- Your Coping Toolbox
- Easy Does It
- Delicious & Nutritious: Snap Pea Succotash

## 5-4-3-2-1-CALM

Anxiety is something most of us have experienced at least once in our life. This five-step exercise can be very helpful during periods of anxiety or panic by helping to ground you in the present when your mind is bouncing around between various anxious thoughts.

Before starting this exercise, pay attention to your breathing. Slow, deep, long breaths can help you maintain a sense of calm or help you return to a calmer state.

Once you find your breath, go through the following steps to help ground yourself:

- ⇒ **5:** Acknowledge FIVE things you see around you. It could be a pen, a spot on the ceiling, anything in your surroundings.
- ⇒ **4:** Acknowledge FOUR things you can touch around you. It could be your hair, a pillow, or the ground under your feet.
- ⇒ **3:** Acknowledge THREE things you hear. This could be any external sound. If you can hear your belly rumbling that counts! Focus on things you can hear outside of your body.
- ⇒ **2:** Acknowledge TWO things you can smell. Maybe you are in your office and smell pencil, or maybe you are in your bedroom and smell a pillow. If you need to take a brief walk to find a scent you could smell soap in your bathroom, or nature outside.
- ⇒ **1:** Acknowledge ONE thing you can taste. What does the inside of your mouth taste like—gum, coffee, or the sandwich from lunch?

## Anxiety Busting!

The next time your mind is stuck on anxiety and worry, try the following simple exercise!

Look around you and notice:

-  **5 things you can see:** Your hands, the sky, a plant.
-  **4 things you can feel:** Feet on the ground, the chair.
-  **3 things you can hear:** Birds chirping, your breath.
-  **2 things you can smell:** Coffee, your lunch, clothes.
-  **1 thing you can taste:** A mint, gum, the fresh air.

<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/behavioral-health-partners/bhp-blog/april-2018/5-4-3-2-1-coping-technique-for-anxiety.aspx>

## HABIT STACKING

Every journey, including your own journey to better health and well-being, begins with just one step.

Although getting and staying healthy can feel like a big challenge, it doesn't have to be.

Working small, positive steps into your daily life can help you build a healthier life routine.

But just putting them on your mental to-do list might not be enough.

Tying those positive steps to other things you already do regularly – a practice called "habit stacking," or "habit chaining" – can help turn them into iron-clad habits. For instance, you could take a daily habit, like brushing your teeth, and add in a little movement, like doing five squats.

Here are a few more ideas.  
Taking a walk → Focus mindfully on the sights and sounds of your walk (instead of daily stressors at work or home).  
Writing a to-do list → Start by listing one or two things you are grateful for every day.  
Making coffee or tea → Wash and slice up a vegetable for snacking while you wait for water to heat or tea to steep.

## YOUR COPING TOOLBOX

Everyone goes through periods of hardship and stress, and it's important to take care of yourself. You should have tools on standby to use when times get tough.

A coping toolbox is a collection of skills, techniques, items, and other suggestions that you can turn to as soon as you start to feel anxious or distressed. No one thing works for everyone, and it may take some trial and error, but building a coping toolbox is a great way to be prepared for those times when your mental well-being starts to slip – think of it as a safety net.

Creating your toolbox can be as simple as writing a list (on your phone or on paper) of what helps, like breathing exercises or going for a run – this way, when you start struggling with your mental health, you don't have to remember what to do or search for tips. You can also have a physical toolbox and fill it with things like a stress ball, written notes to yourself, and photos that make you happy.

<https://www.mhanational.org/building-your-coping-toolbox>

## EASY DOES IT

Not many of us have the time or money to attend a spa weekend. But we can still find our inner peace one piece at a time. That's what a practice called habit stacking is about – building a healthier lifestyle by incrementally adding positive habits to your daily routine. If the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown you out of step, habit stacking might help you regain your rhythm with modest, stress-busting practices. Look for opportunities throughout your day to slip in some serenity. For instance, every time you go to your mailbox, you could make it a point to pause, take in the sights around you and slowly breathe in the outside air. Here are some other ideas for stacking habits to relax and inspire you:

When you ...	Try this ...
Wash up in the morning	Smile at yourself in the mirror. Add in positive self-talk, focusing on your personal strengths and how you'll best address the day's challenges.
Eat breakfast	Savor the first mouthful of food. Chew slowly and note the food's temperature, taste and texture. Later, take time to smell (and swish) the coffee (or tea), too!
Check your daily schedule	Write down something or someone you're grateful for — and why. Then get in the habit of expressing your gratitude to that person.
Get behind the wheel of your car	After you put on your seat belt, take several slow, deep breaths before you start the car, and again when you arrive at your destination.
Prepare for a meeting	Roll your shoulders to release stress. Add in some neck and then some hand stretches.
End a meeting	List the three most important things you have to do next, personally or professionally.
Finish dinner	Take a moment to pet a dog or cat or hug a loved one. Then connect with a friend or family member online.
Go to bed	Tuck your phone away at least 30 minutes before you go to sleep. Read a book or magazine, then pray or meditate for relaxation.

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/habits/easy-does-it>

# Delicious & Nutritious

## SNAP PEA SUCCOTASH

Crunchy snap peas and radishes and sweet roasted corn star in this vibrant warm-weather salad.

1/2 pound snap peas  
1 bunch radishes  
1 bunch cilantro  
3 ears corn  
2 teaspoons dried oregano  
Juice of 1 lime  
1 teaspoon salt  
a drizzle of olive oil  
Freshly ground black pepper



- ⇒ Pre-heat your oven broiler or prepare a hot grill. Shuck the corn ears and clean, removing silk.
- ⇒ Roast till they have a dark char. The amount of time will depend on your oven's particular broiler, but it should be about six to eight minutes. Check after three minutes and flip the ears over carefully with tongs.
- ⇒ Once charred, remove the corn and set aside to cool.
- ⇒ Slice the snap pea pods on a bias to make thin 'rings' and put in a large bowl.
- ⇒ Thinly slice radishes using a mandolin or sharp knife and combine with peas.
- ⇒ Once the corn has had time to cool so that you can handle it comfortably, place each cob vertically on a cutting board and run a knife along the side to shave the kernels off. Rotate and repeat until you've collected all the kernels. Add to the peas and radishes.
- ⇒ Roughly chop cilantro leaving fairly large sprigs and crumble oregano between your fingers. Add to the other ingredients.
- ⇒ Add salt, lime juice, and a drizzle of olive oil to the salad and toss together to coat and combine.
- ⇒ Grind fresh black pepper onto salad just before serving.

<https://www.vegetariantimes.com/recipes/snap-pea-succotash/>

## Community Health Centers of Greater Dayton

Give us a call to discuss your health with our caring doctors and nurse practitioners!

### Our Health Centers

**Appointment Line:**

**937-461-6869**

**Hours: Mon-Fri 7:30am-5:30pm**

#### LOCATIONS

**ALEX CENTRAL HEALTH CENTER**  
5 S. Alexandersville Rd. Miamisburg, 45342  
937-247-0304

**CHAMBERSBURG HEALTH CENTER**  
6255 Chambersburg Rd. Huber Heights, 45424  
937-963-9505

**CHARLES DREW HEALTH CENTER**  
1323 W. Third St. Dayton, 45402  
937-461-4336

**CORWIN NIXON HEALTH CENTER**  
2351 Stanley Ave. Dayton, 45404  
937-228-0990

**EAST DAYTON HEALTH & DENTAL CENTER**  
2132 E. Third St. Dayton, 45403  
937-528-6850 - Health Center  
937-528-6830 - Dental Center

**PATTERSON PARK HEALTH CENTER**  
1074 Patterson Rd. Dayton, 45420  
937-258-6330

[www.communityhealthdayton.org](http://www.communityhealthdayton.org)

**Community Health Centers of Greater Dayton—Your Medical Home**