



Everyday we have patients in our clinics asking for medications for their "stress" or sometimes what they describe as "anxiety". Life it seems has only gotten faster and harder. There is no time to relax and recharge. With many people working from home this past year and vacations being cancelled we have seen an increase of stress and anxiety in our society. We are plugged in and amped up almost twenty-four seven. We are burning out in record numbers. This stress can increase performance, give you an edge, and help meet deadlines. However, after a while it can decrease performance, create dysfunction in your life, and even begin to affect your health in a negative way. The greatest question today is how can we manage our stress and anxiety levels potentially without the use of medications.

Exercise is also an important way to help you feel less anxious. A recent study showed an optical illusion of a man walking in the distance. People that had just exercised saw the man walking away, but those who had not exercised saw the man walking to them. This is our natural "fight or flight" response to a stressful situation. Exercise helps the body release natural "feel good" hormones within minutes of exercise and these hormones can stick with us long after we are finished exercising. One hundred and fifty minutes of brisk walking per week will do the trick.

Relaxation techniques are bountiful. Anything from Yoga at your gym or Tai Chi at the local park can be a wonderful way to reduce stress. During Covid-19 when many of us have not been able to get our monthly massages, we have had to find other ways to obtain our relaxation. For some that has included guided/self meditation methods, which can be found for free on youtube and even on different Wellness sites. Deep breathing techniques have been shown to reduce blood pressure and heart rate over the long term, if practiced regularly. Others have found Prayer to be a beneficial in reducing their stress and anxiety. There are natural supplements available like St. John's Wart and Kava, but studies are limited and have yet to show a significant benefit.

Lastly, find pleasure everyday in something you like to do. Make time to connect with others via Zoom or the phone as we continue to work through Covid-19. If we do hang out with family and friends in person and everyone has not received the vaccine, please maintain your social distancing, wash hands regularly, and wear your masks. Be kind to yourself. Be positive when you reflect on who you are. Set your clock ahead 10 minutes so you are never late. Remember, if you feel your stress is causing dysfunction in your life, see your primary care physician. Sometimes it is more than stress and may require medications and proper counseling to get you back on track.



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HealthTexas Corner

Aetna® Behavioral Health AbleTo support Here for you when you need it

Manage life's changes

Some life events can be overwhelming. Like having a baby. Or finding out you have diabetes or heart disease.

You may also feel emotions like:

- Worry
- Depression
- Confusion
- Anger

All of these feelings are normal. But they can make it harder for you to take control and make healthy changes.

And it's important to feel that you can control the health condition or life change, instead of it controlling you.

Real help that fits your schedule

The AbleTo program can help you:

- Work through these normal emotions
- Understand and stick with your treatment plan
- Know the types of changes you need to make
- Feel like you are in control of your health and your life

AbleTo is part of your Aetna membership. But it's not like traditional programs. It makes it easy to get the help you need.



Convenient eight-week program
with counseling and coaching by video or phone.
Just call AbleTo at **1-844-330-3648**.

It's easy to get started

If your claims data shows you would benefit from this program, an Aetna or AbleTo representative will call you to explain how it works and how it can help you. In most cases, there is no cost to you.*

You'll be asked to confirm some information for privacy purposes.

95%

95% of AbleTo graduates recommend the program to others.¹

Or you can let us know you're interested in participating by calling AbleTo at **1-844-330-3648**, Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET. You can ask questions, and an AbleTo staff member will ask you some screening questions.

You can also tell your Aetna case manager that you'd like to participate.

Choose AbleTo support and get real help that fits your schedule. Just call **1-844-330-3648** or contact your Aetna case manager.

Other resources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>



Healthy Corner Recipe

Overnight Chocolate Chia Seed Pudding

<https://minimalistbaker.com/overnight-chocolate-chia-seed-pudding/#wprm-recipe-container-35641>

Minimalist Baker

Prep: 3 hours 10 min, 4 Services (1/2 cup)

Ingredients:

- ¼ c. cacao powder or unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3-5 Tbsp maple syrup
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon (optional)
- 1 pinch sea salt
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 ½ c.. Almond Breeze Almond milk Original Unsweetened (or light coconut milk for creamier texture)
- ½ c. chia seeds



Directions:

1. To a small mixing bowl add cacao powder (sift first to reduce clumps), maple syrup, ground cinnamon, salt, and vanilla and whisk to combine. Then add a little dairy-free milk at a time and whisk until a paste forms. Then add remaining dairy-free milk and whisk until smooth.
2. Add chia seeds and whisk once more to combine. Then cover and refrigerate overnight, or at least 3-5 hours (until it's achieved a pudding-like consistency). It may also be helpful to give the mixture an extra whisk/stir once it has been in the refrigerator for 30-45 minutes.
3. Leftovers keep covered in the fridge for 4-5 days, though best when fresh. Serve chilled with desired toppings, such as fruit, granola, or coconut whipped cream.

From: [Minimalistbaker.com](https://minimalistbaker.com) 12/05/2018

Nutrition (1 of 4 servings)

Serving: 1 serving Calories: 172 Carbohydrates: 22.1g Protein: 4.7g Fat: 7.8g Saturated Fat: 0.8g Polyunsaturated Fat: 4.74g Monounsaturated Fat: 0.45g Trans Fat: 0g Cholesterol: 0 mg, Sodium: 91 mg, Potassium: 272mg, Fiber: 8.3g, Sugar: 9.2g, Vitamin A: 200 IU, Vitamin C: 0.8 mg, Calcium: 220 mg, Iron: 4.1 mg