

M E N T A L

H E A L T H

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January 2021

2020 will be one of the most memorable years of our lives. It has been a year that has challenged us in so many ways. So many facets of our lives have been affected in profound ways:

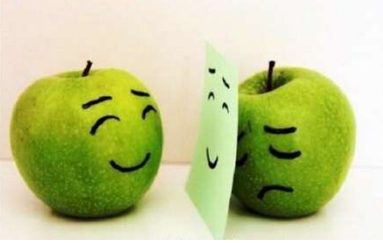
- Our physical health: We have found ourselves calculating our risk factors in regards to a virus that has affected all of us in one way or another.
- Our social health: We have been asked to distance ourselves from our friends and neighbors while at the same time our children and household members are constantly present.
- Our emotional health: We have been faced with racial and political tensions that have put us on an emotional roller coaster.
- Our financial health: We have been confronted with layoffs, furloughs and unemployment.

Each of these aspects of our lives have affected our mental health.



COVID-19
and Your
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As a primary care physician, I have seen the ramifications of these categories on the mental and overall health of every patient that I have had the privilege of caring for over the past year. The fear, uncertainty and isolation that we have experienced in 2020 have increased the incidence of anxiety and depression that we are seeing as primary care physicians. 40% of adults reported struggling with mental health or substance use issues in the end of June 2020 according to a CDC survey. This includes about a 3 times increased incidence of anxiety and 4 times increased incidence of depression versus 2019.*



What are the symptoms of depression?

- Sad or depressed mood
- Loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Loss of energy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Thoughts of death or suicide



What is self-medicating?

This term is often used to refer to the act of using a substance (alcohol or drugs) to help cope with the symptoms of anxiety or depression.

What can I do?

- **Exercise.** Regular exercise increases chemicals that help to decrease the symptoms of anxiety and depression. Exercising outside (even one short walk a day) will also help with feelings of isolation that we have felt this past year.
- **Avoid drugs and alcohol.** Although an extra drink may feel like it is helping for the moment with symptoms of anxiety or depression, it worsens those symptoms in the long run.
- **Get regular sleep.** Even though insomnia can be a symptom of anxiety/depression, allowing enough time for a full nights sleep (7-9 hours) can help.
- **Get help.** You can get help from your primary care doctor. We are here to help you without judgement. This can be a difficult and embarrassing topic to discuss, but you are not alone and we can help with diagnosis and treatment.

The symptoms of anxiety and depression can vary from mild to severe. Your primary care physician is skilled in assessing your symptoms and formulating a plan of treatment.

*<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm>

Exercise
TO BE FIT, NOT 'SKINNY'

Eat TO NOURISH
YOUR BODY

AND ALWAYS... **Ignore**
You ARE WORTH MORE
THAN YOU REALISE.

THE HATERS, DOUBTERS & UNHEALTHY EXAMPLES THAT WERE ONCE FEEDING YOU.

A fit body,
a calm mind,
a house full of love.
These things
cannot be bought -
they must be earned.
Naval Ravikant

"EDUCATE YOURSELF. UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH. THEN FIGURE OUT HOW TO FIGHT IT. THEN FIGURE OUT HOW TO RAISE MONEY FOR THAT FIGHT. IT'LL HELP YOU COPE. IT'LL HELP YOUR CHILD."

BOOMER ESJASON

© Lifehack Quotes

QPIC Corner

You have resources available

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



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



Consider AbleTo support if you have experienced one of these health conditions or life changes:

- Infertility
- Digestive health issues
- Postpartum depression
- Breast or prostate cancer recovery
- Pain management
- Caregiving stress (child, elder or autism)
- Heart issues
- Breathing problems
- Grief and loss
- Diabetes
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Military transitions
- Depression, anxiety or panic



Once a week with a therapist to address emotional challenges like depression, stress and anxiety that can come with a medical diagnosis



Once a week with a behavior coach to identify health goals and develop an action plan

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Healthy Corner Recipe

Winter Fruit Salad with Honey Lime Dressing

<https://tasty.co/recipe/winter-fruit-salad-with-honey-lime-dressing>

Crystal Hatch, Tasty Team

Prep Under 30 minutes & 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 pomegranate
- 1 red apple, cored and chopped
- 1 green apple, cored and chopped
- 2 pears, cored and chopped
- 3 clementine's, peeled and sliced
- 3 kiwis, peeled and sliced
- 3 tbs lime juice
- 2 tbs honey



Directions:

1. Slice the pomegranate in half crosswise. Hold the pomegranate cut side down over a medium bowl and tap the back with a wooden spoon to release the seeds. Rinse and drain.
2. Add the apples, pears, clementine's, kiwis, and pomegranate seeds to a large bowl.
3. In a small bowl or measuring cup, combine the lime juice and honey and stir until mixed.
4. Drizzle the dressing over fruit and gently toss until well coated.
5. Place in refrigerator and serve chilled

Nutritional Information: Calories: 256, Fat 1g, Carbs 66g, Fiber 10g, Sugar 49g, Protein 2g

From: *Featured in Healthier Holiday Sides*