



March

# Member Newsletter



## Creative ways to nourish yourself

If you're like many people, March's gray skies can make you feel gloomy and sluggish. To turn things around, start taking some small actions each day that can help re-invigorate you, nourishing your spirits and sparking your energy. Try these simple ideas:

**Limit your intake of news and social media.** Taking a break from worrying about troubling events can allow for more self-reflection and activities that make you feel optimistic.

**Jump-start spring cleaning.** Refreshing your space can help you feel more comfortable and relaxed. Clean out the dust and dirt built up over winter, and clear out the clutter. Let in some fresh air. Switch vases, pictures, lamps, etc. to a different room to see your living space in a fresh way.

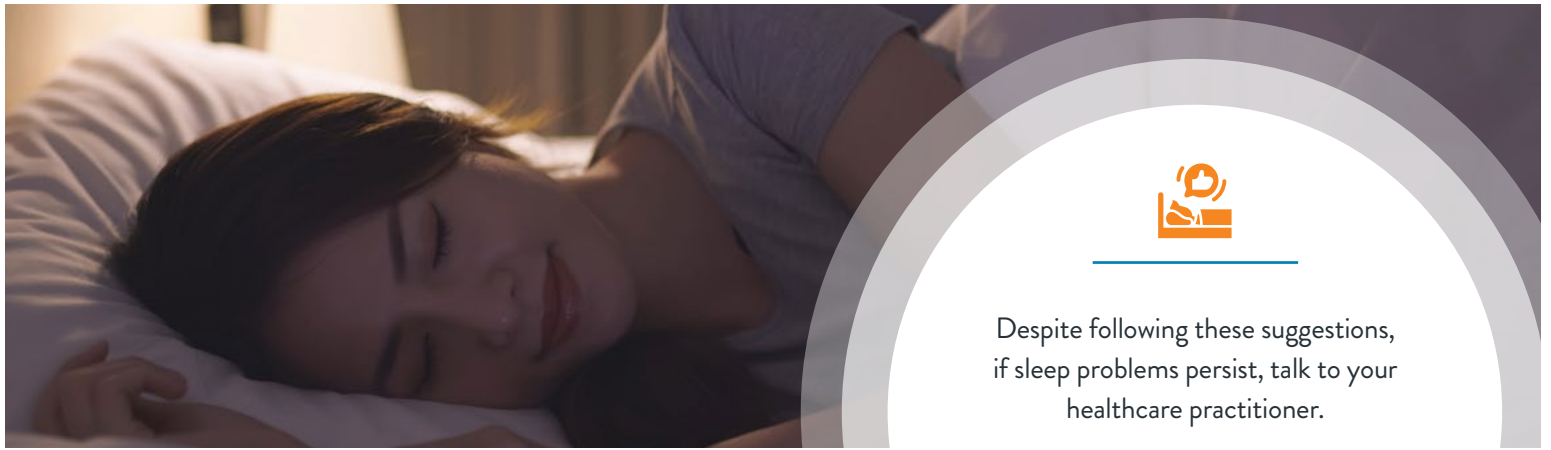
**Get a dose of the outdoors.** Grab an umbrella and take a stroll down the street, beside a local stream, or even around your own backyard. Observing the glimpses of reviving nature—the green grass peeking through the mud, for instance—can nourish your soul!

**Feed your dreams.** Take a mini vacation day centered around activities that you'd like to do on a dream destination. Yearning to visit Paris? Pick up some French pastries at a bakery. View a French film, listen to Parisian music, read a novel set in France, or go on a virtual tour of the Louvre. It's likely that you'll feel a shift in energy!

**Turn to something that tickles your funny bone.** Having a good laugh can help stoke your feel-good endorphins, reviving your outlook. Watch a funny sitcom or video, book tickets for a standup comedy show, or talk with a friend who cracks you up!

### Continually feeling down and unmotivated?

Ask your doctor for a referral to a qualified counselor or contact a counselor yourself.



Despite following these suggestions, if sleep problems persist, talk to your healthcare practitioner.

## Sleep: The best tonic for well-being

Sleeping too little, too much, or barely at all? Sleep problems have surged thanks to disrupted routines, too much screen time, and dissolving boundaries between work and home life. Whatever the reason, not getting the recommended 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep can set you up for obesity, diabetes, heart disease, depression and other physical and mental problems. The good news: You can start regulating your sleep now to reap the benefits of solid sleep for better well-being. Try these tips:

**Stick to a daytime routine** that includes exercise, regular mealtimes, and exposure to sunlight—all help regulate your body’s circadian rhythm.

**Establish a good sleep/wake cycle.** Go to bed around the same time each night, but not until you feel sleepy. Wake up at the same time each day, even on weekends and vacations.

**If you don’t fall asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed.** Turn to a quiet activity without a lot of light exposure, but be sure to avoid using light-emitting electronic devices, such as smartphones, that can delay sleep onset.

**If possible, avoid associating your bedroom with wakefulness.** Don’t work, watch TV or use other digital entertainment in bed.

**Reserve your bedroom for sleep and sex only.** If this is not feasible because your bedroom has become a multipurpose activity center during these challenging times, aim to leave it for extended periods when possible.

**Keep the bedroom on the cool side, dark and quiet.** Use a white noise machine and room-darkening shades or a light-blocking eye mask.

**Start a worry journal.** If ruminating thoughts keep you up, write them down before bed so they are kept “in their place” and not in your head. If possible, jot down a solution to what’s concerning you.

**Sleep with your neck in a neutral position.** Bending it in any way, such as from lying on a too soft or too firm pillow, can be uncomfortable, awakening you or producing pain.



## Get help on the go with the Health Advocate app!

- **Learn** more about your Health Advocate services
- **Access** trustworthy health information and helpful tips
- **Connect** with a Health Advocate expert

To download our app, scan the QR code to the left or visit the app store on your mobile device and search “Health Advocate.”

## The only nutrition rule you need

While healthy eating is often considered complicated or challenging, it is actually very simple! Read on to learn about one simple rule to help you eat healthy at every meal. We also outlined several basic nutrition tips to assist you on your path toward better eating habits.



**Here is the only rule you need: At each meal, strive to make half your plate fruits and vegetables, one-quarter protein, and one-quarter grains.**

- A diet rich in fruits and vegetables is key to maintaining a healthy body because these foods are high in fiber, full of vitamins and healthy sources of carbohydrates.
- Make half of your grains whole grains for added nutritional benefit. Limit refined grain products such as white bread, baked goods or other sweets.
- Choose proteins wisely. Seafood, lean meats, poultry, eggs, nuts and beans are all excellent sources of protein. Limit certain proteins like fatty cuts of beef, pork and high-fat dairy products.

**Be smart about beverages** so that you reduce unnecessary calories, fat and sugar.

**Don't forget about healthy fats!** While fats often get a bad reputation, there are certain types that are essential components of a healthy diet. Eat foods high in healthy monounsaturated fats, polyunsaturated fats, and omega-3 fatty acids like nuts, fish and oils such as olive and canola oil.

**If you're not doing so already,** now is a great time to start thinking about what foods go on your plate and whether your meals are comprised of foods from all the major food groups.

**For more help,** talk to Health Advocate, your health practitioner or a licensed counselor.

### National Nutrition Month

During this month, the CDC's standard dietary recommendations for better nutrition come to the forefront: Eat fewer foods with added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium; eat a variety of fruits and vegetables; limit alcoholic beverages; and control your portions. Yet many people continue to make poor choices that can contribute to chronic diseases: 75 percent don't eat enough vegetables, fruits, and dairy; 63 percent exceed the limit for added sugars; 77 percent exceed the limit for saturated fat, and 90 percent exceed the limit for sodium. The bottom line: Start making healthy choices today, making every bite count! **For more information, visit:**

<https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/resources/consumer-resources>

