

Teen Newsletter – Spring 2015



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Build a Healthy Body and Mind

Feel good about yourself. Focus on building a healthy body and mind. Healthy habits for eating, sleeping and physical activity can have a positive impact on your mental health. They can also improve self-esteem and confidence.

Your body is your own, no matter what shape or size it is. Everyone is different. Accept who you are and appreciate what makes you unique. True beauty is on the inside.

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Depression

Are you feeling sad or angry?

Being healthy is about taking care of your body as well as your mind. The teen years can be tough. It is normal to feel sad or angry every now and then. If these feelings last two weeks or longer, you may have depression. The good news is that help is available. There are many things you can do to help yourself feel better.

What is depression?

Depression is a medical illness that affects mood, thought, behavior and general health. Depression involves feeling sad, discouraged or hopeless for weeks, months, or longer.

What are the symptoms of depression?

- The key symptoms of depression are feeling sad or irritable for most of the day, and losing interest in doing things that you once enjoyed. Other symptoms include:
- Changes in sleep: You sleep more or less than normal.
- Changes in eating habits: You eat more or less than normal. You may gain or lose weight.
- Poor focus: You cannot make decisions or finish reading a short article.
- Loss of energy: You cannot complete daily tasks.
- Low self-esteem: You dwell on past failures.
- Feeling guilty or hopeless: You think your life will never get better.
- Changes in movement: You move slowly or more rapidly than usual.
- Thoughts of death: You often think of death or of harming yourself.

What causes depression?

There is no single cause for depression. As your body and brain grow and change, you are more likely to experience mood changes. Neurotransmitters are chemicals in your brain that affect mood. Depression occurs when these chemicals are out of balance. Many factors can contribute to depression, such as:

- Genetics
- Difficult family life



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- Bullying or a tough social environment
- Stressful life events
- Certain medical conditions
- Changes in hormones
- A change in seasons or amount of sunlight

How to Help Yourself

If your depression symptoms are mild, there are many things you can do to start feeling better. Some simple, healthy lifestyle choices can have a powerful effect on mood and well-being.

Try to:

- **Exercise Daily** - When you exercise, your brain releases endorphins. Endorphins are chemicals that make you feel happier and more energetic. Exercise can improve your mood. Any activity, even a short walk, can be helpful!

Count your steps. It is a fun way to motivate you and track your activity. If you want a FREE pedometer, just email us at HealthEducation.MHC@Molinahealthcare.com with your Name, Date of Birth, Address & Member I.D. We will send you one in the mail.

- **Eat Healthy** - What you eat can affect your mood. A poor diet can make you feel lazy and tired. Keep your mind healthy by eating fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. These foods will provide all the vitamins and minerals that your body needs. Try the recipe below to help keep your mind healthy.
- **Sleep Well** - Get the right amount of sleep. A lack of sleep strongly affects your mood and your ability to think and learn. Teens who don't get enough sleep are more likely to develop mood disorders than those who sleep enough hours to feel rested.
- **Be Positive** - You may not feel like being social or staying active. However, being alone can make your depression worse. Spend time with friends and family who are caring and positive. Social support can help you feel better about yourself.
- **Avoid Drugs & Alcohol** - Drugs and alcohol can make your depression worse. Avoid hanging out with people who abuse drugs or alcohol, get you into trouble, or who make you feel insecure. Alcohol and drugs may contribute to your feeling depressed.

Remember, depression is not your fault. We are here to help you.



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Are You Being Bullied?

Is someone at school or in your life insulting you, sending you mean texts or messages, posting negative comments about you online or hurting you physically?

What are the types of bullying?

- Physical - kicking, hitting, pushing
- Sexual - making you feel uncomfortable about your body
- Verbal - name-calling
- Emotional - spreading false rumors

What can you do if you are bullied?

- Tell someone you trust. This can be a parent, teacher, principal or older friend.
- Tell the bully to stop. Use a calm, clear voice.
- Stay in areas of your school that can be seen by teachers.

You can help prevent bullying! Treat others with respect. Be kind to everyone. Stop and think before you say or do something that may hurt someone.

Where to Get Support

If your symptoms are more intense, talk to your parents or other adults you trust. You can start the conversation by saying, “I’ve been feeling really sad lately and I think I’m depressed.” Ask them to schedule an appointment with a therapist or doctor.

A therapist may ask you how you are feeling and what problems are on your mind. Therapists may schedule regular meetings with you to talk about your concerns and develop strategies for coping. This is called talk therapy. Your doctor might also suggest medicines for depression to help you feel better.

If you do not want to talk to your family or friends, talk to your school counselor, nurse, or a helpline for support. You can also use our resources at the end of this article. There are many helplines and support groups that can assist you. No matter what, talk to someone, especially if you are having thoughts of hurting yourself or others. Asking for help is the bravest thing you can do. It is the first step to feeling better.



Mental Health Resources for Teens

National Alliance on Mental Illness - Child & Adolescent Action Center's Internet Resource List – Get information on helplines and online resources dealing with teen mental health

Mental Health Apps



BoosterBuddy (Available for iPhone & Android)

BoosterBuddy is an app designed to help teens and young adults improve their mental health by managing their personal wellness journey and engaging in activities designed to establish and sustain positive habits.

Cost: Free



MindShift (Available for iPhone & Android)

MindShift is an app designed to help teens and young adults cope with anxiety and learn how to relax and develop new, helpful ways of thinking.

Cost: Free



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Recipe

Energy Boosting Granola Bars!

These delicious granola bars have ingredients that help your body and mind manage stress, like omega-3's found in flaxseed and antioxidants found in honey. Oats are a source of soluble fiber that help prevent mood swings. Dark chocolate can reduce stress!

Here's what you need:

| | |
|--|---|
| 1/4 cup unsalted butter or coconut oil | 2 tablespoons wheat germ or ground flaxseed |
| 1/2 cup peanut butter | 1/4 cup shredded coconut |
| 1/4 cup honey | 1/2 cup dark chocolate chips |
| 1 1/2 cups oats (not quick oats) | |

What to do:

1. Melt the butter or coconut oil, peanut butter and honey in a pot over medium to low heat, stirring constantly. Turn off the burner when melted.
2. Pour in the oats and the wheat germ or ground flaxseed. Stir till combined.
3. Wait until the mixture cools and stir in the coconut and chocolate chips.
4. Pour into foil-lined 8 X 8 pan and put in the fridge.
5. Once cooled, flip out onto cutting board and cut to the size you like.
6. Enjoy!



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Activity

True or False?

Test how much you know about mental health. For each of the following statements, select **True**, **False**, or **Do Not Know**.

| Questions | True | False | Do Not Know |
|---|------|-------|-------------|
| 1. Depression is a bad mood or a state of mind, not a medical illness. | | | |
| 2. The brain can affect the way the body functions but the body cannot affect the way the brain functions | | | |
| 3. A young person's brain continues to grow and develop until about the age of 25 years. | | | |
| 4. Every person's mood can fluctuate up and down naturally. | | | |
| 5. Teens need 7.5 hours of sleep a night. | | | |

Answers

1. False. Depression is more than just feeling sad or going through a rough patch. It's a serious mental health condition that requires understanding, treatment and a good recovery plan.
2. False. A person's food intake, physical activity and sleep patterns significantly affect mood, behavior, and brain function.
3. True.
4. True.
5. False. Teens actually need 9 to 9.5 hours of sleep a night yet most teens barely get 7 or 8!



MHI Corporate Health Communications
200 Oceangate, Suite 100
Long Beach, CA 90802

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Your Extended Family.