



TRICARE Healthy Living Tips
Mental Health Awareness Month
May 2018



What is Mental Health?



- [Mental health](#), or psychological health, encompasses the well-being of mind, body and spirit, and contributes to overall health and resilience.
- Mental health is as critical as physical health to mission readiness.
- Similar to physical health, [mental health requires regular care](#).
- You can maintain your mental health with:
 - Regular exercise
 - Nutritious foods
 - Good sleep
 - Social connections
 - Healthy coping skills

Tip #1: Exercise Regularly



- [Aerobic exercise](#) reduces anxiety and depression, creates new brain cells and sharpens memory.
- Aerobic exercise includes:
 - Jogging
 - Swimming
 - Cycling
 - Walking
 - Gardening
 - Dancing



Source: National Center for Biotechnology Information. U.S. National Library of Medicine. "Exercise for Mental Health." Accessed April 18, 2018.
www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1470658

Tip #2: Eat Nutritious Foods



- Studies link unhealthy diets and lack of exercise with depression.
- A diet rich in nutrients and healthy fats can aid in brain development, helping you think clearly and stay alert.
- Try [eating more](#):
 - Fruits and vegetables in a variety of colors
 - Whole grains (at least half of your grains)
 - Fat-free or low-fat dairy
 - Variety of proteins (seafood, lean meat and poultry, eggs, beans, nuts and seeds)
- Try [eating less](#):
 - Sodium
 - Cholesterol
 - Saturated fats
 - Sugary drinks
 - Refined grains

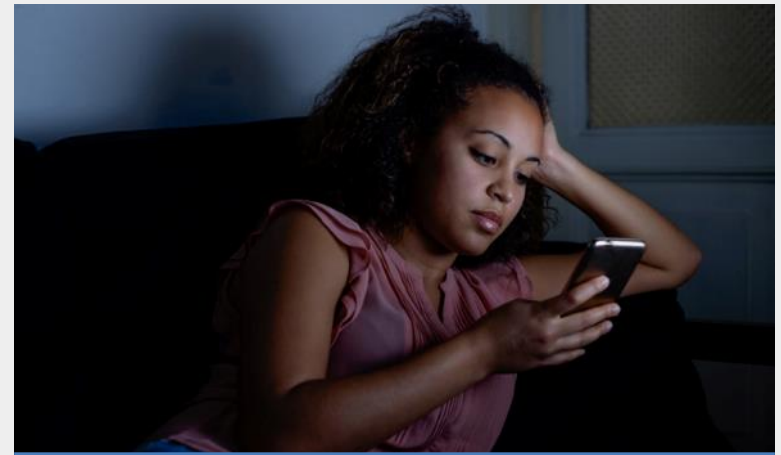


Source: National Center for Biotechnology Information. U.S. National Library of Medicine. "Understanding Nutrition, Depression and Mental Illnesses." Accessed April 18, 2018. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2738337

Tip #3: Make Sleep a Priority



- A [third of U.S. adults](#) report that they usually get less than the recommended amount of sleep.
- Not getting enough sleep is linked with depression.
- Some [habits that can improve your sleep](#) include:
 - Keep a consistent sleep schedule. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
 - Make your bedroom quiet, dark, relaxing and at a comfortable temperature.
 - Remove electronic devices (TVs, computers, smartphones) from the bedroom, or turn off devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
 - Avoid a large meal, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.
 - Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy diet.



Tip #4: Reach Out



- Building and maintaining healthy social connections with family members, friends and others is important for maintaining your mental health.
 - Tell your friends and family if you're feeling stressed. They may be able to help.
 - Seek help from mental health professionals.
- To help build and strengthen relationships with friends and family:
 - Get involved with activities in your community.
 - Stay connected with people who can provide emotional and other support.
 - Volunteer for a charity, mentoring program, or other community organization.



Source: National Center for Biotechnology Information. U.S. National Library of Medicine. "Social Support and Resilience to Stress." Accessed April 18, 2018. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2921311

Tip #5: Make Time to Destress



- Try a [relaxing activity](#) to cope with stress. Research shows that practicing mindfulness and yoga can help improve mental well-being.
- Practicing [meditation](#) may reduce blood pressure, anxiety, depression and insomnia.
- Relaxation techniques are recommended as a part of treatment approaches for acute stress disorder or posttraumatic stress disorder.



Source: National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. "Meditation: In Depth." Accessed April 18, 2018.
<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/meditation/overview.htm>

Resources



- TRICARE [mental health services](#) are available for you and your family during times of stress, depression, grief, anxiety and mental health crisis.
 - TRICARE covers medically and psychologically necessary mental health and substance use disorder care. This includes both inpatient and outpatient care. The variety of services include psychotherapy, prescription medication, psychiatric treatment and more.
 - Learn about the TRICARE mental health coverage at www.tricare.mil/mentalhealth.
 - Download the “Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services” fact sheet at www.tricare.mil/publications.
- Seek help if mental health concerns start to interfere with daily life.
 - Pursuing mental health support shows strength, not weakness.
 - Getting help will not end your career.
 - Mental health treatment works; recovery is possible.

If you or someone you know has suicidal thoughts, call the [Military Crisis Line](#) at **1-800-273-8255** and press 1, text **838255**, or confidentially [chat online](#) with a Military Crisis Line counselor.



For more tips on healthy living, visit
www.tricare.mil/healthwellness.

TRICARE HEALTHY LIVING TIPS

