



Fuel Your Brain with Foods That Support Mental Health

What you eat and drink makes a difference in your mental state. Certain foods can help protect your brain and help you stay strong when you are feeling stressed, nervous or sad.

Your body will also tell you if what you are eating is good for you or not. You may feel energized after a healthy meal or drinking a tall glass of water. But you may feel sluggish if you eat too much or are uncomfortable when you eat spicy foods.

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LifeTimes is published for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas STAR Kids members. Each issue brings you news about your health plan and staying healthy, along with important phone numbers for you to keep. If you have questions or need help, call the Customer Advocate Department. Articles in *LifeTimes* are meant to educate. They are not meant as medical advice. Please check with your doctor for any advice about your health.

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Having a balanced diet, drinking enough water, and curbing or avoiding alcohol and caffeine are important parts of managing anxiety. Eating complex carbs can help keep an even blood sugar level, which can make you feel calm. Eating meals regularly helps too, since skipping them may make you feel jumpy and anxious.

Foods that may help lower anxiety are:

- Leafy greens like spinach and Swiss chard.
- Foods high in zinc like cashews, beef and egg yolks.
- Fatty fish like wild Alaskan salmon, which have omega-3 fatty acids.
- Probiotic-rich foods like pickles and sauerkraut.
- Asparagus and other foods rich in B vitamins, like avocado and almonds.
- Antioxidants like beans, fruits, berries, nuts and veggies.
- Spices like turmeric and ginger.

Make Better Food Choices

While some foods can help mental health, others can make you feel worse. You can often substitute a healthier choice to boost your mental health. Try these easy changes.

Drinks

Avoid calories from sugary drinks and those with a lot of caffeine. Caffeine can cause panic attacks in people who have anxiety issues.

Aim to drink at least eight glasses of water a day, about 2 liters to fight dehydration. Studies show even mild dehydration can make you feel tired and cause mood changes. It can also affect your focus. If you need a bit of caffeine, try tea, which is lower in caffeine than coffee. Tea has lots of antioxidants that may help stop cell damage.

Breakfast

Avoid skipping breakfast. Without early fuel, you may feel tired and have brain fog.

Aim to build a healthy breakfast into your routine. Even a whole grain breakfast bar, fruit or yogurt can help start your day right.

Lunch or Dinner

Avoid filling up on fried, refined and sugary foods. They can hurt your health through weight gain and diabetes. Studies show they may raise the risk of depression.

Aim for meals with whole grains, fish, fruits and veggies, nuts, and unsaturated fats like olive oil.

■ Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians, 2022; Healthy Diet; Eating with Mental Health In Mind; Mental Health America; Harvard Medical School



Living with Allergies

Allergies are awful. Though seasonal allergies peak in the spring and fall, they can also be triggered by things in your home, not just the great outdoors. With some smart housekeeping, you can reduce irritants and breathe easier.

Bust the dust. Wipe down all furnishings, windowsills, door frames and other surfaces often. Dust is home sweet home to millions of tiny mites that cause allergies.

Refresh your bed. Wash sheets, pillowcases and blankets at least once a week in hot water. Protect pillows, mattress and box springs with dust mite-proof covers.

Trade plush for less lush. Choose hard flooring such as tile, linoleum or hardwood when possible. If carpet is a must, chose a low-pile style and vacuum weekly.

Button up. Keep windows closed during allergy season. If you use air conditioning, use HEPA filters and change them often to keep air clean.

Control furry friends. Give pets their own place to sleep away from your bedroom. A weekly bath also helps reduce allergens in the dander shed by pets.

Make your home an allergy-free zone.

Source: Allergy Proof Your Home. Mayo Clinic. 2018.
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/allergies/in-depth/allergy/art-20049365>

Helpful Toll-Free Phone Numbers

Service Coordination	1-877-301-4394	(TTY: 711)
Mental Health Services Hotline	1-877-688-1711	(TTY: 711)
Member Advocate		
in the Central service area	1-855-497-0857	(TTY: 711)
in the Travis service area	1-877-375-9097	(TTY: 711)
Medicaid Managed Care Helpline	1-866-566-8989	(TTY: 711)
HHSC MDCP or Deaf Blind Multiple Disabilities Services Helpline		1-844-999-9543

STAR Kids Customer Advocate **1-877-688-1811** (TTY: **711**)

24/7 Nurseline **1-855-802-4614** (TTY: **711**)



Tips for Parents with Teens

As your children grow older, the way they think, feel and relate with others changes. During puberty, their bodies physically mature and their personalities, views and independence develop. It is important to stay in tune and connected with your teen to help during this time of growth. These positive parenting tips should help.

- Talk with your teen about their concerns and take note of any changes in their actions. Ask if they have had suicidal thoughts, feel sad or depressed. Asking about suicidal thoughts will not cause them to have these thoughts, but it will let them know that you care about how they feel. Seek help if needed.
- Show interest in your teen's school and extracurricular life.
- Support your teen to make healthy choices.
- Compliment your teen and celebrate their efforts and accomplishments.
- Show affection for your teen. Spend time together doing things you enjoy.
- Respect your teen's point of view. Listen to them without playing down their concerns.
- Encourage your teen to find solutions to problems or conflicts. Help your teen learn to make good choices. Make opportunities for them to use their own judgment, and be there for advice and support.
- Learn about who your teen hangs out with and set expectations.
- If your teen engages in interactive video games, chat rooms, and instant messaging, encourage them to make good decisions about what they post and the amount of time they spend on these activities.
- Talk with your teen and help them plan for hard or uncomfortable times. Talk about what they can do if they are in a group, and someone is using drugs or under pressure to have sex or is offered a ride by someone who has been drinking.
- Respect your teen's need for privacy.

■ Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

What is an Advanced Directive?

An advanced directive, also known as a living will, is a legal document that tells others how you want to be treated if you cannot talk or make decisions about your own health care. It helps your family, friends and health care providers understand the choices you have made about the kind of care you want. Living wills are for adults or people 18 years or older.

You can learn more about living wills and download forms from the Texas Health and Human Services Department website at <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/formas/advance-directives>. You should give a copy of your completed form to your primary care provider, lawyer, and trusted friend or relative.

Kid's Activity



Cloud in a Jar

This homemade rainstorm project from Curious Jane teaches about weather and precipitation.

What You Will Need:

- Jar
- Water
- Shaving cream
- Food coloring
- Medicine dropper

What To Do:

1. Fill the jar with water until it is almost full.
2. Squirt foam shaving cream over the top, so it fully covers the surface.
3. Fill a small cup with water and add plenty of blue food coloring.
4. Using a medicine dropper, have your child dribble blue water on top of the shaving-cream cloud, and watch the rainstorm form.

■ Source: Parents.com

Family Food Favorites



Easy Turkey Meatballs

These easy turkey meatballs can be enjoyed warm or cold, making them perfect for make-ahead lunches. Pack them along with a dipping sauce, slice them up for a sandwich filling or crumble them up as a topper for salad or tacos.

Ingredients:

- 12 ounces ground turkey
- ¼ cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- ½ teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons water

Directions:

1. Place turkey, panko, Worcestershire, Italian seasoning, onion powder and salt in a medium bowl; mix gently until just combined. (Do not over mix.) Roll the mixture into nine meatballs (about two heaping tablespoons each).
2. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the meatballs and cook, turning occasionally, until browned on all sides, about six minutes. Reduce heat to medium. Add water, cover and cook until an instant-read thermometer placed in the center registers 165°F, then cook about five minutes more.

■ Source: Eatingwell.com

Tell Us What You Think!

Member Advisory Group – now online or by phone

Every three months, STAR Kids members are invited to attend a Member Advisory Group (MAG) meeting to give feedback on member education materials and Value Added Services, and get health plan program updates. One \$25 gift card per member family will be given for each meeting attended. A member family can get up to four gift cards each year, for a total of \$100 worth of gift cards. MAG meetings are now offered by phone and online.

Visit www.bcbstx.com/starkids to see a schedule of MAG meetings or call a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas Member Advocate in the Central service area at **1-855-497-0857** (TTY: **711**) for details and to register for a meeting. For a Member Advocate in the Travis service area, call **1-877-375-9097** (TTY: **711**).

STAR Kids Customer Advocate **1-877-688-1811** (TTY: **711**)

24/7 Nurseline **1-855-802-4614** (TTY: **711**)



Care For Your Mental Health During Pregnancy

Getting good health care is important before, during and after pregnancy. This means caring for your mind as well as your body. You might need mental health support if you have issues getting pregnant and if you are stressed.

While you are pregnant, you might face challenges caring for yourself and your baby. After the baby comes, women face a range of new feelings and challenges. Your family might also struggle with all the changes.

One in seven women experience depression during and after pregnancy. Although treatable, depression is a serious mood disorder that can last for weeks or months, and it can affect your daily life. Depression is different for everyone and can happen at any time. If you think you have depression, talk to your doctor.

If you would like to learn more, call the phone number on the back of your ID card. The next page lists resources in your area or you can go to <https://communityservices.bcbstx.com>.



We Want to See You!

Outreach staff hosts member meetings and community events that provide important health information and resources for our members.

Go to <https://www.bcbstx.com/starkids/pdf/starkids-community-calendar-tx.pdf> to view a list of upcoming events near you. If you need help completing your STAR renewal packet, come out and see us. We can help!

Mental Health Community Resources

Austin Al-Anon & Al-Ateen

Phone: 1-512-441-8591 Website: <http://austinalanon.org>

Services: Support for families and friends of alcoholics

Lifeworks

Phone: 1-512-735-2100 Website: <https://www.lifeworksaustin.org>

Services: Housing, counseling, education and workforce programs for youth and their families

Cost: Sliding scale for clients who are uninsured

Medical Access Program (MAP)

Phone: 1-512-978-8130 Website: <https://www.centralhealth.net/map>

Services: Health coverage program for uninsured Travis County residents with low income

NAMI Central Texas

Phone: 1-512-420-9810 Website: <https://namicentraltx.org/schools>

Services: Programs and resources designed for teachers and schools; online family support groups.

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Phone: 988 Website: Chat options available at <https://988lifeline.org>

Lifeline is free and confidential support is available 24/7 if someone is struggling or is in crisis.

Texas Parent to Parent

Phone: 1-512-458-6001 Website: <https://www.txp2p.org>

Services: Provides support, information, and education for families of children with disabilities, chronic and mental health conditions, and other health care needs.

Texas Health and Human Services: Turn To Campaign

Website: <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/youth-helpline>

Services: Support resources for adolescents, parents, family members or friend

Texas Youth Helpline

Phone: 1-800-989-6884 Website: <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/youth-helpline>

Services: Free and confidential services for youth, their parents, and other family members of youth in crisis who need help finding a counselor, safe shelter, legal information, other local referral information.

United Way for Greater Austin

Phone: 1-833-512-2289 Website: <https://connectatx.unitedwayaustin.org>

Services: Local mental health/substance use resources available by ZIP code

■ Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

To get auxiliary aids and services, or to get written or oral interpretation to understand the information given to you, including materials in alternative formats such as large print, braille or other languages, please call the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas STAR Kids Customer Advocate Department at 1-877-688-1811 (TTY: 711).

Health care coverage is important for everyone.

We provide free communication aids and services for anyone with a disability or who needs language assistance. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, health status or disability.

To receive language or communication assistance free of charge, please call us at 1-855-710-6984.

If you believe we have failed to provide a service, or think we have discriminated in another way, contact us to file a grievance.

Office of Civil Rights Coordinator
300 E. Randolph St., 35th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Phone: 1-855-664-7270 (voicemail)
TTY/TDD: 1-855-661-6965
Fax: 1-855-661-6960

You may file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, at:

U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Room 509F, HHH Building 1019
Washington, DC 20201

Phone: 1-800-368-1019
TTY/TDD: 1-800-537-7697
Complaint Portal: <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf>
Complaint Forms: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr-cr-complaint-form-package.pdf>

Para solicitar ayuda y servicios auxiliares o servicios de interpretación oral o escrita para entender la información que se le brinda, incluidos los documentos en formatos alternativos como los impresos en letra grande, braille u otros idiomas, llame al departamento de especialistas en Servicio al Cliente de STAR Kids de Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas al 1-877-688-1811 (TTY: 711).

Tener cobertura médica es importante para todos.

Ofrecemos comunicación y servicios gratuitos para cualquier persona con impedimentos o que requiera asistencia lingüística. No discriminamos por motivos de raza, color, país de origen, sexo, identidad de género, edad, orientación sexual, estado de salud o discapacidad.

Para recibir asistencia lingüística o comunicativa de manera gratuita, llámenos al 1-855-710-6984.

Si cree que no hemos proporcionado un servicio, o si cree que ha sido discriminado de cualquier otra manera, comuníquese con nosotros para presentar una inconformidad.

Office of Civil Rights Coordinator
300 E. Randolph St., 35th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Teléfono: 1-855-664-7270 (correo de voz)
TTY/TDD: 1-855-661-6965
Fax: 1-855-661-6960

Tiene el derecho de presentar una queja por derechos civiles en la Oficina de Derechos Civiles del Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos de EE. UU. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights) por estos medios:

U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Room 509F, HHH Building 1019
Washington, DC 20201

Teléfono: 1-800-368-1019
TTY/TDD: 1-800-537-7697
Portal de quejas: <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf>
Formulario de quejas: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/civilrights/resources/factsheets/spanish/cmpltfrmspanish.pdf>

If you, or someone you are helping, have questions, you have the right to get help and information in your language at no cost. To talk to an interpreter, call 855-710-6984.

Español Spanish	Si usted o alguien a quien usted está ayudando tiene preguntas, tiene derecho a obtener ayuda e información en su idioma sin costo alguno. Para hablar con un intérprete, llame al 855-710-6984.
العربية Arabic	إن كان لديك أو لدى شخص تساعدك أسئلة، ف لديك الحق في الحصول على المساعدة والمعلومات الضرورية بلغتك من دون أية تكلفة. للتحدث مع مترجم فوري، اتصل على الرقم 855-710-6984.
繁體中文 Chinese	如果您，或您正在協助的對象，對此有疑問，您有權利免費以您的母語獲得幫助和訊息。洽詢一位翻譯員，請撥電話號碼 855-710-6984。
Français French	Si vous, ou quelqu'un que vous êtes en train d'aider, avez des questions, vous avez le droit d'obtenir de l'aide et l'information dans votre langue à aucun coût. Pour parler à un interprète, appelez 855-710-6984.
Deutsch German	Falls Sie oder jemand, dem Sie helfen, Fragen haben, haben Sie das Recht, kostenlose Hilfe und Informationen in Ihrer Sprache zu erhalten. Um mit einem Dolmetscher zu sprechen, rufen Sie bitte die Nummer 855-710-6984 an.
ગુજરાતી Gujarati	જો તમને અથવા તમે મદદ કરી રહ્યા હોય એવા કોઈ બીજા વ્યક્તિને એસ.બી.એમ. કાયદમ બાબતે પ્રશ્નો હોય, તો તમને વિના ખર્ચે, તમારી ભાષામાં મદદ અને માહિતી મેળવવાનો હક્ક છે. દુભાષિયા સાથે વાત કરવા માટે આ નંબર 855-710-6984 પર કોલ કરો.
हिंदी Hindi	यदि आपके, या आप जिसकी सहायता कर रहे हैं उसके, प्रश्न हैं, तो आपको अपनी भाषा में नि:शुल्क सहायता और जानकारी प्राप्त करने का अधिकार है। किसी अनुवादक से बात करने के लिए 855-710-6984 पर कॉल करें।
Italiano Italian	Se tu o qualcuno che stai aiutando avete domande, hai il diritto di ottenere aiuto e informazioni nella tua lingua gratuitamente. Per parlare con un interprete, puoi chiamare il numero 855-710-6984.
한국어 Korean	만약 귀하 또는 귀하가 돕는 사람이 질문이 있다면 귀하는 무료로 그러한 도움과 정보를 귀하의 언어로 받을 수 있는 권리가 있습니다. 통역사가 필요하시면 855-710-6984 로 전화하십시오.
Diné Navajo	T'áá ni, éí doodago ła'da bıká anánłwo'ígíí, na'ídíłkidgo, ts'ídá bee ná ahóótí'i' t'áá níłk'e níká a'doolwoł dóó bína'ídíłkídígíí bee níł h odoonih. Ata'dahalne'ígíí bich'í' hodíłłnih kwe'e 855-710-6984.
فارسی Persian	اگر شما، یا کسی که شما به او کمک می کنید، سوالی داشته باشید، حق این را دارید که به زبان خود، به طور رایگان کمک و اطلاعات دریافت نمایید. جهت گفتگو با یک مترجم شفاهی، با شماره 855-710-6984 تماس حاصل نمایید.
Polski Polish	Jeśli Ty lub osoba, której pomagasz, macie jakiegokolwiek pytania, macie prawo do uzyskania bezpłatnej informacji i pomocy we własnym języku. Aby porozmawiać z tłumaczem, zadzwoń pod numer 855-710-6984.
Русский Russian	Если у вас или человека, которому вы помогаете, возникли вопросы, у вас есть право на бесплатную помощь и информацию, предоставленную на вашем языке. Чтобы связаться с переводчиком, позвоните по телефону 855-710-6984.
Tagalog Tagalog	Kung ikaw, o ang isang taong iyong tinutulungan ay may mga tanong, may karapatan kang makakuha ng tulong at impormasyon sa iyong wika nang walang bayad. Upang makipag-usap sa isang tagasalin-wika, tumawag sa 855-710-6984.
اردو Urdu	اگر آپ کو، یا کسی ایسے فرد کو جس کی آپ مدد کر رہے ہیں، کوئی سوال درپیش ہے تو، آپ کو اپنی زبان میں مفت مدد اور معلومات حاصل کرنے کا حق ہے۔ مترجم سے بات کرنے کے لیے، 855-710-6984 پر کال کریں۔
Tiếng Việt Vietnamese	Nêu quý vị, hoặc người mà quý vị giúp đỡ, có câu hỏi, thì quý vị có quyền được giúp đỡ và nhận thông tin bằng ngôn ngữ của mình miễn phí. Để nói chuyện với một thông dịch viên, gọi 855-710-6984.