

1ST QUARTER | 2023

Live Well, Work Well

A photograph of two office workers in a modern office setting. A man on the left, wearing a blue button-down shirt and a black face mask, is looking towards a woman on the right. The woman has curly hair, is wearing a light blue striped button-down shirt and a white face mask, and is holding a black office chair. In the background, there are office desks, chairs, and a window with a small potted plant. A red vertical bar is on the right side of the image, featuring three white horizontal lines.

Understanding This Winter's Tripledemic Threat

Presented by
Liberty ISD



In the News



Catch up on the latest developments of the most significant health care news from the past three months.



Understanding This Winter's Tripledemic Threat

Experts warn of a “tripledemic” threat that will affect Americans this winter. Hospitals nationwide are under threat of severe respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), influenza (flu) and COVID-19.

In the last couple of years, both the flu and COVID-19 have been prominent in the United States, but with the addition of RSV’s prevalence this year, there are new risks when catching any of these illnesses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) surveillance has shown an increase in RSV detections and RSV-associated emergency department visits and hospitalizations in multiple U.S. regions.

Is It RSV, the Flu or COVID-19?

With several viruses circulating this winter, you may worry about every cough or sneeze and wonder what you have. Since these illnesses are all caused by viruses that affect your respiratory system, they also share some symptoms. That can make it challenging to know what you may be sick with when you’re feeling under the weather.

Here are some differences between the illnesses:

- **RSV**—Symptoms are similar to those of a cold and can appear within four to six days after getting infected. Common symptoms include fever, a runny nose and a cough. RSV tends to spread via surface droplets on places such as high-touch areas.
- **Flu**—Symptoms usually come on suddenly and vigorously and are more severe than a cold. Common symptoms include high-grade fever, headache, muscle or body aches, and fatigue.
- **COVID-19**—Symptoms can appear two to 14 days following exposure to COVID-19. Common symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, congestion and a sore throat.

Because there is some overlap between symptoms, it may be difficult to determine whether you have RSV, the flu or COVID-19 without being tested. As such, if you’re not feeling well, stay home and call your doctor to explain your symptoms or take an at-home COVID-19 test, if available to you.

KFF Survey Explores America's Mental Health Crisis

A new survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) and CNN found that mental health is a serious concern for most American adults. The findings revealed that an alarming 90% of adults feel the nation is experiencing a mental health crisis. Furthermore, 1 in 5 adults rated their own mental health as “only fair” or “poor.”

KFF surveyed individual and family experiences with mental health, polling more than 2,000 adults. Respondents ranked six specific mental health-related issues contributing to the crisis:

- 1| The opioid epidemic
- 2| Mental health issues in children and teenagers
- 3| Severe mental health issues in children and teenagers
- 4| Anxiety or depression in adults
- 5| Anxiety or stress caused by political events
- 6| Loneliness

The survey further revealed the following key findings:

- **Young adults reported more mental health troubles.** More than one-third of adults under age 30 said their mental health has interfered with their ability to work and engage in other activities.
- **Mental health issues impact an entire family.** A family member's mental health impacts other members' mental health, family relationships and family finances.
- **Most adults are unaware of the new 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline).** Americans can dial 988—similar to how 911 is used—to be directly connected to mental health services.

Getting Help Today

The 988 dialing code is a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care for anyone experiencing mental health-related distress, including thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crises, or other emotional struggles. People can also call the Lifeline if they're worried about a loved one needing emergency support. Additionally, individuals can always reach out to a doctor or mental health professional with concerns.





New Recommendations for Routine Anxiety Screening

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) recommends that adults under the age of 65 get regularly screened for anxiety. The draft recommendation applies to adults 19 and older who don't have a diagnosed mental health disorder. It's meant to help primary care clinicians identify early signs of anxiety, which can go undetected for years. This is the first time the Task Force has recommended anxiety screening in adult primary care without symptoms.

The Task Force, a group of independent disease prevention and medical experts, defines anxiety disorders as "characterized by greater duration or intensity of a stress response over everyday events." Recognized types include generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder and agoraphobia.

The draft recommendation noted that the lifetime prevalence of anxiety disorders in adults in the United States is 40.4% for women and 26.4% for men. The recommendation was prioritized due to anxiety's public health influence and the country's increased focus on mental health in recent years.

The guidance stops short of recommending anxiety screening for people 65 and older since many common symptoms of aging—such as trouble sleeping, pain and fatigue—can also be symptoms of anxiety. The Task Force said there wasn't enough evidence to determine the accuracy of screening tools for older adults to distinguish between anxiety symptoms and conditions of aging.

The Task Force advised clinicians to use their judgment in discussing anxiety with older patients. It also reiterated an earlier recommendation that adults of all ages undergo routine screening for depression.

Screening for Children

The proposed [recommendation](#) for anxiety screening in adult primary care is not final and is still in progress. In the meantime, the Task Force recommended expanding mental health screening for pre-adolescent children. It now recommends primary care screening for anxiety in children as young as 8 years old. The group noted that this decision was made to err on the side of caution as the pervasiveness of mental health conditions, as well as suicide attempts in teens and preteen children, rises.

What Can You Do?

The Task Force emphasizes that if you or a loved one already show signs or symptoms of anxiety, you should be assessed and connected to care. Anxiety screening tools, including questionnaires and scales, have been developed and are available in primary care. If you have concerns about anxiety, contact your doctor.



NHO



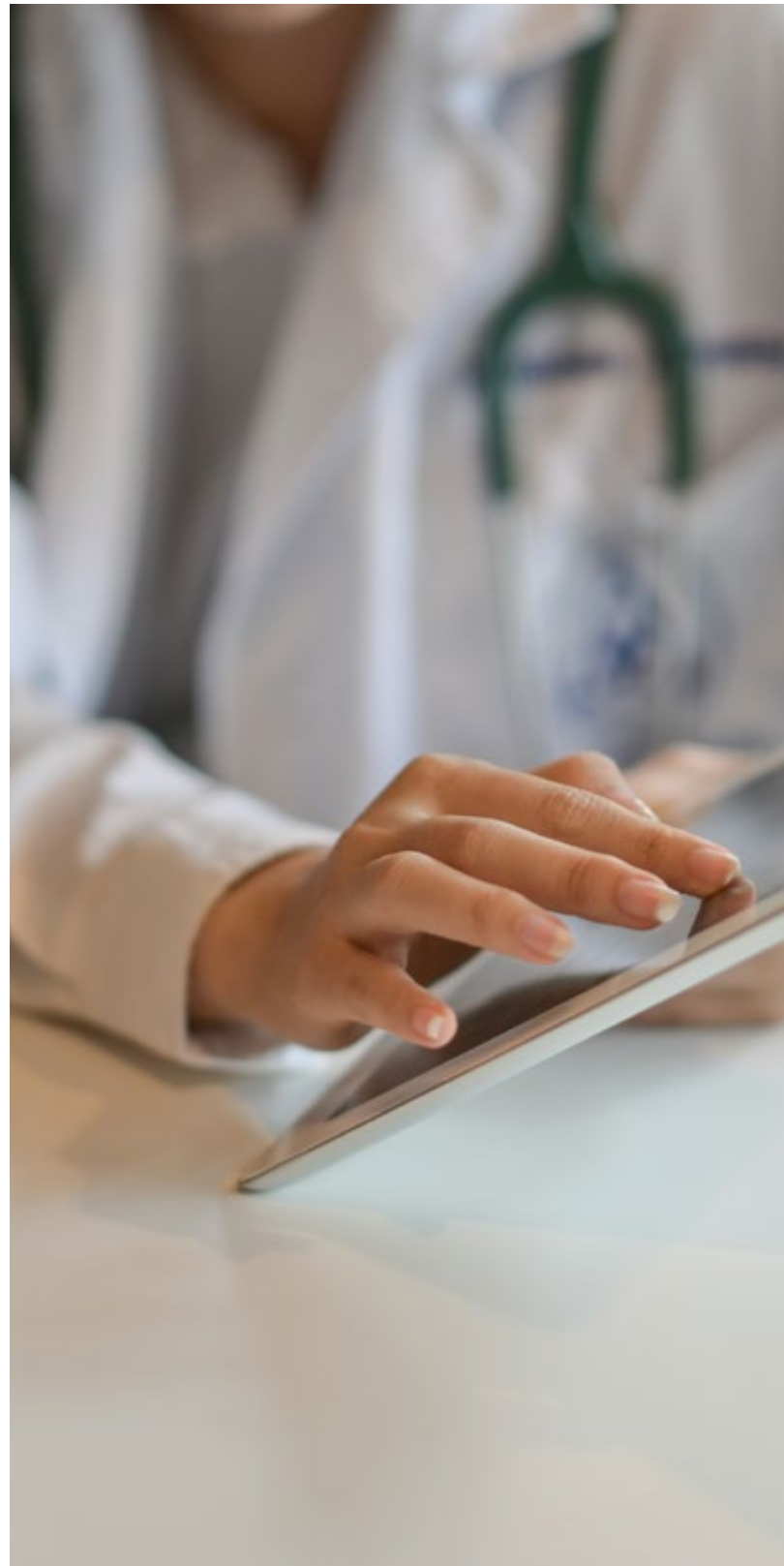
Learn more about the three upcoming national health observances (NHOs) in this section.

January: Thyroid Awareness Month

More than 12% of the U.S. population will develop a thyroid condition during their lifetime, according to the American Thyroid Association. Your thyroid has an important job within your body. It's in charge of releasing and controlling hormones that regulate your metabolism, growth and many other vital bodily functions.

January is Thyroid Awareness Month. Due to the prevalence of thyroid conditions, it's important to learn about the prevention and treatments of thyroid-related diseases and thyroid cancer.

Check out thyroid.org to learn more about thyroid health and the warning signs of a thyroid-related disease.





February: American Heart Month

According to the CDC, heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, responsible for every 1 out of 5 deaths. Cardiovascular disease and the conditions that lead to it can happen at any age. Some types of heart disease include arrhythmia, heart failure, heart attack and stroke.

February is American Heart Month, a good time to check in on your cardiovascular health. While heart disease can be deadly for adults, it's also preventable in most people. Risk factors include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, obesity, an unhealthy diet and physical inactivity.

To learn more about heart health and early warning signs and symptoms of heart disease, visit heart.org.



March: National Nutrition Month

The latest dietary guidelines for Americans emphasize balance; it's not all or nothing. As such, eating right doesn't need to be complicated. Healthy eating starts with nutritional food choices, which include plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein and dairy. A balanced diet also leaves room for personal preferences.

March is National Nutrition Month. This is a good time to assess your eating habits while educating yourself about the best ways to fuel your body. It comes down to making informed food choices and developing healthy eating and physical activity habits that are sustainable.

Visit myplate.gov for healthy recipes.

Looking Ahead...

April

National Autism
Awareness Month

May

Mental Health
Awareness Month

June

Alzheimer's and Brain
Awareness Month



Health and Wellness



Remain on top of the latest trends in health and wellness with the three articles in this section.



5 Ways to Start Your Year Off Right

The new year is an excellent time to make positive life changes and strive for an overall healthier self. Consider the following five tips to start the new year off right:

- 1| Check in on your mental health.** Mental health is just as important as physical health when building a healthy lifestyle. Reach out to a professional if you need help.
- 2| Be social.** Social relationships can provide you with a sense of connection, purpose and support—all good for your physical and mental health.
- 3| Get regular checkups.** Stay up to date on your annual physicals, necessary health tests and vaccinations. Screenings can help identify health issues to be addressed.

4| Drink more water. Consuming sugary drinks, like juice or soda, can cause liver damage, premature aging and anxiety. Avoid excessive alcohol consumption as well.

5| Count nutrients, not calories. Focus on improving the overall quality of your diet and not getting hung up on calories. Achieve this by adding more fiber, protein and probiotics to your diet.

If you do just one thing in 2023, consider making time for yourself. Identify the activities that make you happy or fulfilled and prioritize them. Talk to your doctor or mental health professional for guidance and support with lifestyle changes.



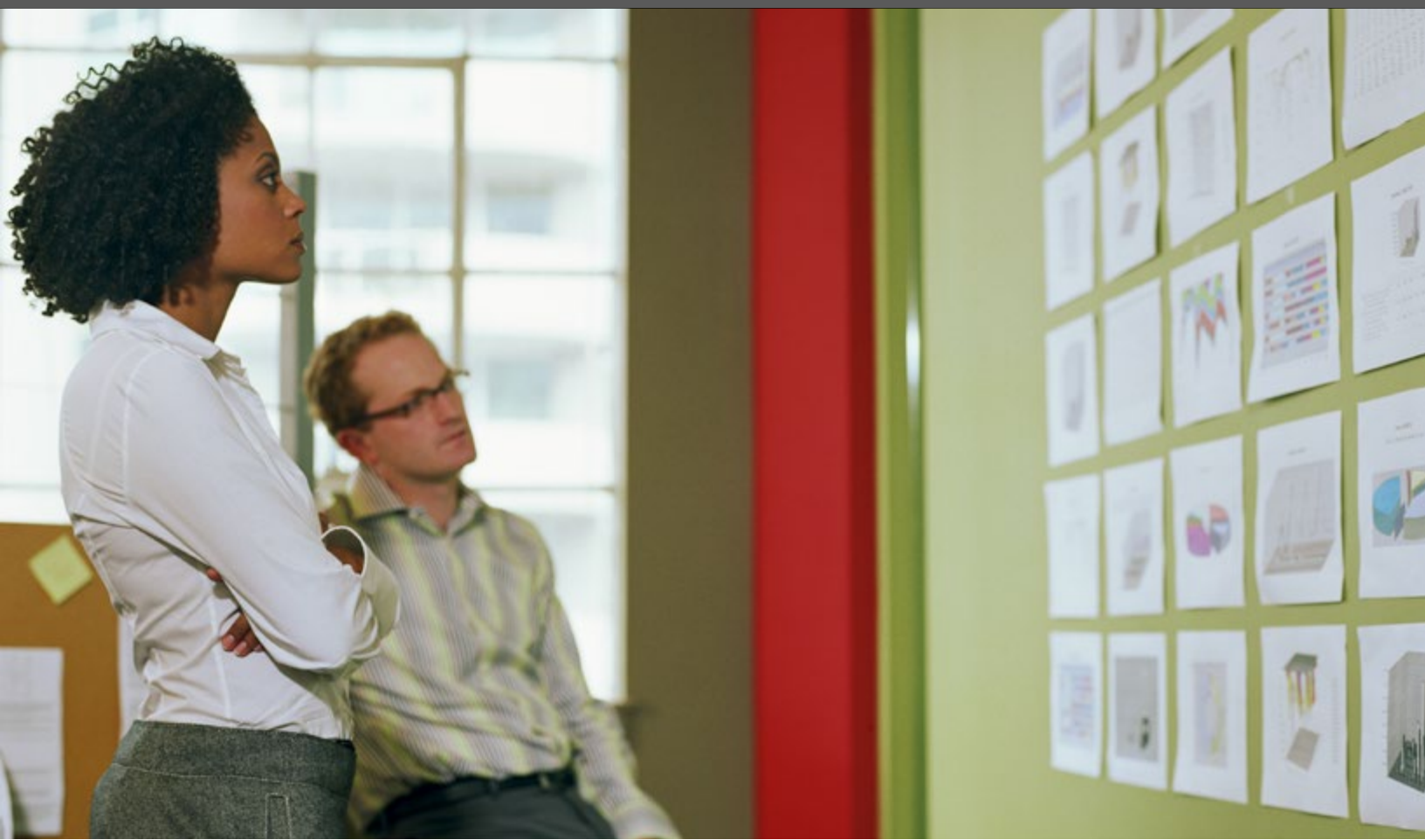
Beat the Winter Blues

As the winter days get shorter, your mood may become as dark as the late afternoon. These feelings are often referred to as the “winter blues.” Alternatively, the medical name for this winter depression is seasonal affective disorder (SAD). On top of the weather, the current state of the economy has been causing stress, anxiety and growing mental health disorders.

Try one of the following strategies to help you relax, unwind and make the long winter months more manageable:

- **Change your mindset.** Refocus your thoughts on wintertime pleasures by making a list of things that you enjoy about winter. Some ideas include getting cozy with a book, making traditional recipes, enjoying the smell of fresh snow and listening to wood crackle in a fireplace.
- **Get outside.** Make it a point to get outside every day for fresh air or a quick 15-minute walk, especially before the sun sets. Ensure you have the proper clothing, boots and cold-weather accessories on so you stay warm.
- **Increase the amount of light in your home.** If you cannot go outside, open the blinds to allow more sunlight into your space.
- **Declutter or organize.** It can be draining to clear clutter, so commit to doing a little bit at a time. The rule of thumb is that if it takes less than a minute, you should do it right away. It could be as simple as putting your dirty coffee cup in the sink or dishwasher instead of leaving it in another room. Organizing and getting rid of clutter can be energizing.
- **Exercise regularly.** Physical exercise helps relieve stress and anxiety, which can worsen SAD.

If you're feeling blue this winter, and if the feelings last for several weeks, talk to a health care provider.



The Health Benefits of Being Organized

The new year can signal a fresh start for many. As such, January is dubbed Get Organized Month, as many people are eager to tackle their homes' organization. Decluttering can do more for your health than you may realize. Consider the following health benefits of being organized:

- **Boost your energy and productivity.** A messy area may make you feel confused or scattered. When your space is clutter-free, you can focus more on meaningful activities.
- **Reduce your stress and anxiety.** By eliminating clutter, you'll feel more in control and able to handle challenges that come your way.
- **Sleep better.** When you keep up with the organization, you can rest easily at night, knowing everything is cleaned up and in its place.
- **Eat healthier.** Not only does snack and food organization reduce clutter, but it can also help you quickly grab healthy options and control portions.

This month is a great time to get organized and set yourself up for a clutter-free year to feel more balanced.



Recipes

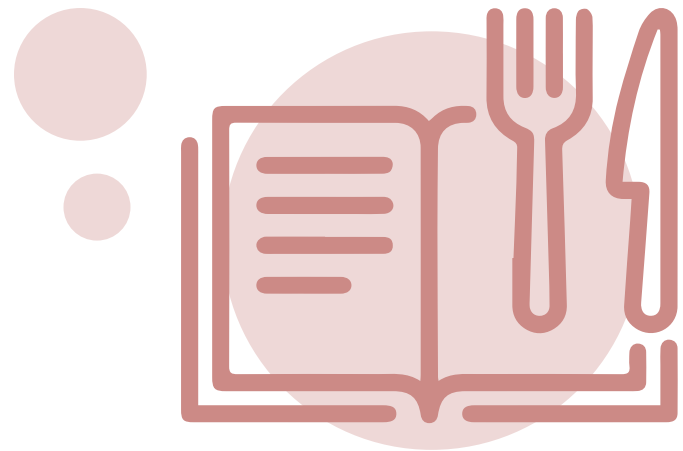


Try out these two healthy recipes from the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) MyPlate Kitchen website.



Three-can Chili

Makes 6 servings



Ingredients

15-ounce can low-sodium pinto, kidney, red or black beans (undrained)

15-ounce can corn (drained)

15-ounce can crushed tomatoes (undrained)

Chili powder (to taste)

Directions

- 1 | Place the contents of all three cans into a pan.
- 2 | Add chili powder to taste.
- 3 | Stir to mix.
- 4 | Continue to stir over medium heat until heated thoroughly.

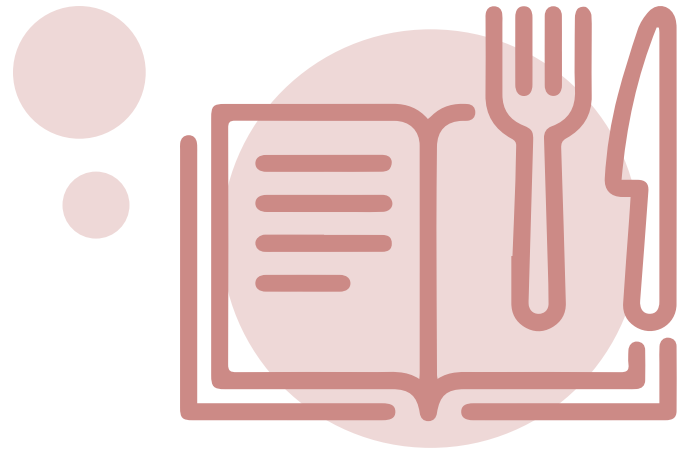
Nutritional information for 1 serving

Calories:	129
Total fat:	1 g
Saturated fat:	0 g
Cholesterol:	0 mg
Sodium:	418 mg
Total carbohydrate:	27 g
Dietary fiber:	6 g
Total sugars:	4 g
Added sugars included:	0 g
Protein:	6 g
Vitamin D:	0 mcg
Calcium:	61 mg
Iron:	2 mg
Potassium:	473 mg



Easy Stuffed Pasta Shells

Makes 8 servings



Ingredients

10-ounce package frozen chopped spinach (thawed)
12 ounces low-fat cottage cheese
1 ½ cups part-skim shredded mozzarella cheese
1 ½ tsp. dried oregano
¼ tsp. ground black pepper
26-ounce jar low-sodium tomato basil pasta sauce
1 cup water
6 ounces large pasta shells (uncooked)

Nutritional information for 1 serving

Calories:	250
Total fat:	7 g
Saturated fat:	3 g
Cholesterol:	18 mg
Sodium:	334 mg
Total carbohydrate:	29 g
Dietary fiber:	4 g
Total sugars:	7 g
Added sugars included:	1 g
Protein:	16 g
Vitamin D:	0 mcg
Calcium:	268 mg
Iron:	2 mg
Potassium:	461 mg

Directions

- 1| Preheat oven to 375 F. Lightly coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Set aside.
- 2| Drain spinach by placing it in a colander over the sink or in a bowl, and press it with a spoon to remove as much liquid as possible. Alternatively, you can squeeze out the liquid with clean hands. Place the spinach in a medium bowl.
- 3| Add the cottage cheese, 1 cup of mozzarella cheese, oregano and black pepper to the spinach. Stir to mix thoroughly.
- 4| Pour half of the spaghetti sauce into the prepared baking dish. Add water and stir into the mix.
- 5| Spoon about 3 tablespoons of the cheese mixture into each uncooked pasta shell and arrange in a single layer over the top.
- 6| Sprinkle with the remaining ½ cup mozzarella cheese evenly over the sauce.
- 7| Cover tightly with foil. Bake for 1 hour or until the shells are tender. Let it stand for 10 minutes before serving.