Anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions are real diseases.

Take good care of your mental health

One in five American adults experienced some type of mental health condition in 2013.

Mental health involves emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act, including how we handle stress and make choices. People who are mentally healthy are also better able to cope with other health challenges.

It’s common for people to feel down once in a while and worry about family, work and other matters. But you may have a mental health condition if you have had these symptoms for more than a few days:

- Too little or too much eating or sleeping.
- Withdrawing from people and usual activities.
- Low or no energy.
- Persistent bad thoughts, memories.
- Intensified fears.
- Unexplained aches.
- Increased use of tobacco or alcohol.
- Mood swings that cause relationship problems.

If you’ve been experiencing these symptoms, there is help. Consider seeing your health care provider. He or she will first identify your specific factors and conditions, and then create a treatment plan.

Treatment choices may include:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Check with your employer to see if EAP is offered.
- Therapy with trained mental health professionals.
- Support-group participation that is completely confidential.
- Peer support from those who have suffered from similar conditions.
- Medications to help manage symptoms. If your doctor thinks prescriptions will help, there are Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved options that improve certain chemical brain messengers.

Most people recover with a combination of therapy and medication, and achieve stronger overall health. This dual approach also gives people proven coping tools to continue thriving.

May is Mental Health Month. Remember, anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions are real diseases. Please do not hesitate to seek help.
Redeem your HealthyBlue points by June 30!

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota has been honored to serve NDPERS for 37 years!

We will do our best to provide excellent customer service as we support the transition of NDPERS members to a new carrier.

Please encourage employees to redeem their HealthyBlue points by June 30.

To log into your NDPERS healthyblue account, visit: www.ndpershealthyblue.com

Healthy recipes

Looking for a new recipe that’s heart-friendly? Try the American Heart Association’s recipe for pan-seared chicken breasts with creamy mushroom sauce.

Ingredients

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 4 ounces each), all visible fat discarded
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour and 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour, divided use
- 1 1/2 teaspoons olive oil and 1 tablespoon olive oil, divided use
- 12 ounces button mushrooms, sliced
- 1 medium shallot, minced
- 2 medium garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme, crumbled
- 1 cup dry white wine (regular or nonalcoholic)
- 1/2 cup fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth
- 1/4 cup fat-free sour cream
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley

Preparation

1. Put the chicken on a large plate. Sprinkle both sides with the salt and pepper. Using your fingertips, gently press the seasonings so they adhere to the chicken.

2. Put 1/4 cup flour in a shallow dish. Dip one piece of chicken at a time in the flour, turning to coat and shaking off the excess.

3. In a large nonstick skillet, heat 1 1/2 teaspoons oil over medium-high heat, swirling to coat the bottom. Cook the chicken for 4 minutes, or until golden brown on the bottom. Turn over and cook for 2 to 4 minutes, or until no longer pink in the center. Transfer to a separate large plate. Cover to keep warm.

4. Pour the remaining 1 tablespoon oil into the hot skillet, swirling to coat the bottom. Reduce the heat to medium. Cook the mushrooms and shallot for 5 minutes, or until the mushrooms are golden brown, stirring frequently.
5. Stir in the garlic and thyme. Cook for 1 minute. Sprinkle the remaining 1 tablespoon flour over the mushroom mixture. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Gradually pour in the wine. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly to prevent lumps.

6. Stir in the broth. Bring to a simmer and simmer for 2 minutes, or until the sauce is thickened, stirring frequently. Reduce the heat to low.

7. Stir in the sour cream. Don’t let the mixture come to a boil, or the sour cream will curdle. Stir in the parsley. Remove from the heat and set aside.

8. Cut the chicken diagonally. Pour the sauce over the chicken.

**Nutrition facts**

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<tr>
<th>Nutrient</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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Dietary Exchanges: 1 starch, 3 lean meat