

Live Well, Work Well

October 2020



Combating Pandemic Fatigue

An unintentional phenomenon is on the rise—pandemic fatigue. People are tired of staying at home. People want to be the social creatures they inherently are. People want their “normal” back.

This collective fatigue is making some people—consciously or unconsciously—disregard pandemic guidance such as social distancing and mask wearing. Others may be reaching a mental health breaking point.

One-third of Americans are showing signs of depression or anxiety.



Alarming data from a U.S. Census Bureau survey revealed the psychological toll taken by the pandemic. American adults were asked typical mental health screening questions. Twenty-four percent showed clinically significant symptoms of major depressive disorder, and 30% showed symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder. Those rates were higher among younger adults (ages 18 to 29), women and people making less than \$25,000 a year.

If you feel like you’re battling pandemic fatigue and losing self-discipline, stay the course with these coping tips:

- **Try a new exercise.** If you’ve been finding it harder to stay active, experiment with something new like walking, yoga or cycling.
- **Try meditation.** Mindful activities can help lower your stress levels and improve your mood.
- **Try saying it out loud.** Sometimes you just need to talk to someone about how you’re feeling, especially if you’re stressed, frustrated or anxious. Ignoring those strong feelings won’t make them go away.
- **Try new recipes.** You’ve likely already mastered the pandemic sourdough or banana bread, so roll up your sleeves and whip up something else. This is a good time to prepare healthier meals and use that time as a fun daily activity for you and your family.

Consider how you relaxed pre-pandemic, and try to get back to that lifestyle. If you find cooking, reading or listening to music relaxing, make time to keep that a part of your routine.

If you’re worried about your mental well-being, please contact your doctor.



Cranberry Pumpkin Muffins

Makes: 12 servings

Ingredients

- 2 cups flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cups sugar
- 3 tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cinnamon
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. allspice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegetable oil
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pumpkin puree
- 2 cups cranberries (chopped)

Preparations

- 1) Preheat oven to 400 F.
- 2) Sift dry ingredients together.
- 3) In a separate bowl, beat oil, eggs and pumpkin together until well blended.
- 4) Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients. Stir until moistened.
- 5) Fold in chopped cranberries.
- 6) Spoon into paper-lined muffin cups.
- 7) Bake for 15 to 30 minutes.

Nutritional Information

(per serving)

Total calories	204
Total fat	7 g
Protein	3 g
Sodium	255 mg
Carbohydrates	32 g
Dietary fiber	2 g
Saturated fat	1 g
Total sugars	14 g

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture
(USDA)

Benefits of Buying Seasonal Produce

In today's market, it's normal to see the same produce available year-round. However, that doesn't mean the quality's the same throughout the seasons. Eating seasonally means you are simply taking advantage of the harvest schedule and enjoying produce at its peak. For this time of year, that includes foods with rich fall colors like burnt orange, deep burgundy and hunter green.

Shop for seasonal produce and reap the following benefits:

- **Fresher food**—Seasonal produce likely is recently picked and hasn't been sitting on a truck or in a warehouse for weeks.
- **Better taste**—In-season produce retains its nutritional value and tastes better, sweeter and perfectly ripe. If the produce is tasty, you'll likely eat more of it. That's a healthy win-win.
- **Lower costs**—When produce is in season, farmers harvest larger crops. The increased supply may mean lower prices for you.
- **Reduced carbon footprint**—Out-of-season produce is typically imported or takes more energy to grow due to the need for greenhouses.

It's called harvest season for a reason, so there should be plenty of fresh produce options available at your local farmers market or grocery store.

What's Growing?

This month, consider buying fruits and veggies that are in season.



How to Stay Physically Active

Due to social distancing and gym closures, it may be tougher to be active. People are home more and likely indulging in sedentary activities—like sitting, watching TV or spending time in front of other electronic devices.

Instead of binge-watching your favorite show, consider these tips for staying active:

- **Get moving.** Anything counts! Don't focus on running or working out in a gym. Grocery shopping and cleaning the house count as exercise.
- **Go at your own pace.** Ease into exercise and slowly increase as you build up your stamina.
- **Listen to your body.** You know yourself best. If you start to feel dizzy or experience pain, stop and take a break.

MENTAL HEALTH



Pandemics Can be Stressful

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. However, these actions are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19. **Coping with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.**

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can sometimes cause the following:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support services you rely on.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of tobacco, and/or alcohol and other substances.

Take Care of Your Mental Health

Mental health is an important part of overall health and wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It may also affect how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices during an emergency.

People with pre-existing mental health conditions or substance use disorders may be particularly vulnerable in an emergency. Mental health conditions (such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia) affect a person's thinking, feeling, mood or behavior in a way that influences their ability to relate to others and function each day. These conditions may be situational (short-term) or long-lasting (chronic). People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. If you think you have new or worse symptoms, call your healthcare provider.

A free and confidential resource now available from the **Aim Medical Trust** for employees on the health plan to connect with a virtual mental health professional.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov>



What is Preventia?

Preventia is a remote healthcare solution that provides several behavioral health services, including:

- 5 Virtual visits per year with mental health professionals such as licensed counselors and social workers
- Unlimited access to a COVID-19/Anxiety hotline

The Preventia Client App can be downloaded for **FREE** on the iTunes® App StoreSM, or the Google Play™. Search "**Preventia**" in the app store.

- Once you have downloaded the app to your smart phone, then you will need to set up your personal account.
- Fill out registration form, choose "AIM" as the Organization. You will need a registration code, which can be obtained from your Key Benefits Administrator.
- These services are available to employees who are enrolled in the Aim medical plan.

Please note: On your first login you will be immediately prompted to fill out your lifestyle questionnaire. This information is only used by providers to help them provide the best care possible.