Section 3: Managing Depression

How to Prepare for Your Health Care Appointment

A Roadmap to Wellness (NAMI Hearts & Minds brochure)

Healthy Eating Fact Sheet

Keeping Active Fact Sheet

Meditation & Mindfulness Training

Help for Sleep Problems

Depression Care Health Tracker

Relapse Prevention Plan
How to prepare for your health care appointment

The time you have with your doctor, nurse or therapist is very important to your health. Be sure to ask questions, explain any new symptoms or problems, and share your concerns.

Here are Help and Healing tips to help you get ready for your next appointment:

**Before your next visit**

Make a list of concerns and questions. List the most important questions and concerns first. A notebook can help you keep track of depression symptoms and questions in between visits.

Bring a list of all the medications you take. This includes drugs (prescription and non-prescription), vitamins, and other natural remedies such as herbal products.

Let the clinic know before your visit if you have special needs. Ask for an interpreter if you do not speak or understand English well.

Ask a friend or family member to come with you. This person can help listen, take notes and offer support.

**For future visits**

Use the PHQ-9 survey to compare any change in your score to your goal. Lower scores are a sign that your treatment plan is helping you get better.

Make goals for your treatment plan at each visit with your doctor, nurse or therapist. The Depression Health Tracker in Help and Healing can help you manage your goals. For example, you can write down your medications, the refill dates and any side effects.

Always follow up to get test results. Call your clinic and ask for results if you do not hear from your doctor, nurse or therapist when you expect to.
Schedule a follow-up appointment (if needed) before you leave the clinic. Don’t wait until you get home, since you might forget.

**Where to learn more about how to prepare for your clinic visit**

Here is a list of resources that may be useful for you or your family member. Our goal is to provide easy access to a list of resources and information that will help you seek out exactly what you or your family member needs to recover from depression.

### Preparing for your clinic visit

**Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality**  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
ahrq.gov/questions

**Here to Help**  
heretohelp.bc.ca/skills/managing-depression

**The Partnership for Healthcare Excellence**  
partnershipforhealthcare.org/patients_and_caregivers

### Where to learn more about treatment for depression

**MN Community Measurement**  
*Help and Healing: Depression resources for care and recovery*  
mnhealthscores.org

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**  
MN Chapter  
namihelps.org

**University of Michigan Depression Center**  
DepressionToolkit.org  
depressiontoolkit.org

MNHealthScores.org/helpandhealing
A Roadmap to Wellness for Individuals Living with Mental Illness
A Roadmap to Wellness for Individuals Living with Mental Illness
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The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness. NAMI has more than 1,100 affiliates in communities across the country who engage in advocacy, research, support and education. Members of NAMI are families, friends and people living with a mental illness such as major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and borderline personality disorder.

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NAMI Hearts & Minds is an online wellness initiative. This booklet contains much of the information available, but the most up-to-date content, as well as fact sheets on wellness issues, are available at www.nami.org/heartsandminds.

OptumHealth™ Public Sector

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A Roadmap to Wellness for Individuals Living with Mental Illness

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Intro

The NAMI Hearts & Minds program is an educational wellness initiative promoting the idea of wellness in both mind and body. Generally, wellness is an ongoing process of learning about, and making choices toward, a more successful life.

Engaging in a wellness effort can make a huge difference in the quality of our lives. One study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, showed that taking a wellness approach could result in a 17 percent decline in total medical visits and a 35 percent decline in medical visits for minor illness.

Wellness is about the individual; you can decide what parts of your life you would like to change and you can determine your own level of success.

Why Hearts & Minds Is Important
People who live with mental illness are often at higher risk for heart illness and much of that risk is preventable: knowledge is power. People who live with mental illness are more likely to have classic heart risk factors such as cigarette smoking, obesity, diabetes, elevated cholesterol and hypertension (high blood pressure)—all of which can be made worse by some antipsychotic medications.

Certainly, living with mental illness can be quite a challenge already. NAMI Hearts & Minds offers a wealth of information. You do not need to figure this all out at once—NAMI Hearts & Minds will show you how to take it one step at a time. You are worthy of a happy, healthy and long life. Knowing the risks will help you make informed choices that can make that happen. When you are ready to work on one of these areas, focus and get going.

Major preventable risks for people living with mental illness:

- Smoking
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Elevated cholesterol
- High blood pressure (also called hypertension)

These are risk factors that can be modified. With attention, you can live longer and enjoy a higher quality of life. Other risk factors, like age, gender, family history and even a history of psychological trauma, cannot be changed but need to be understood to assess your risk and the opportunities for prevention.
Medical Self Advocacy

Many people living with mental illness do not have access to quality medical care that meets all of their health care needs. Often, when someone tells a health care provider that he or she is taking antipsychotic medications or lives with a serious mental illness, a person will receive a lower quality of care or less attention. NAMI’s Schizophrenia Survey demonstrated that many people find that even informing a health care provider of an illness worsened their care. The survey, wherein participants shared their mental health diagnoses, showed that nearly half (49 percent) of those surveyed say that doctors took their medical problems less seriously once they learned of their diagnosis; an additional 39 percent of those who responded say that their diagnosis made it more difficult to get access to other medical care.

It is important for people who live with mental illness to advocate for their own health care. Think of your health care providers as partners in your care. Make sure that you are communicating your concerns regarding your mental illness, but don’t forget that think about the rest of your body and what you can be doing to prevent other medical conditions as well.

Engaging in Primary Health Care

Health care providers are a key part in improving and maintaining overall wellness. They have access to tests and information that can help identify issues and areas of need. Below are steps you can take to ensure the best from your primary health care visits.

• Be prepared. Before your health care appointment, make a list of concerns that you want to bring up with your provider and note which are the most important. Don’t be afraid to ask follow-up questions if you don’t completely understand your provider’s responses; your health care provider is there to help you understand how to be healthy. You may want to keep a medical notebook where
you can jot down questions or thoughts that come up in between visits, track side effects or keep a chart listing medication refill dates.

• **Do your research.** If you have been diagnosed with a specific medical condition, learn as much as you can about it before your next appointment, being careful to avoid self-diagnosis. Make sure that you are only reading information from credible sources. A good place to start is http://health.nih.gov/. Also, learn additional information on mental illness medications from the NAMI Web site and from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) at www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html.

• **Don't be embarrassed.** If you feel shy about addressing a problem with your health care provider, don't forget that you are not the first person to experience this; he or she has probably heard it all before. Just like any good relationship, trust and honesty are very important. The more open you are, the better the chance is that your health care provider will be able to partner with you on your road to health and offer you the best guidance.

**Heart Disease, Family History and Risks**

If you have a family history of heart health issues and smoking, you will need to adapt your lifestyle. You should learn what risks factors your family member had, what risks you yourself may face and what you can do to help prevent heart disease. Knowing your family history of heart disease is very important; it is a risk factor that cannot be controlled. Major risk factors that cannot be changed include:

**Increasing age:** About 82 percent of people who die of heart disease are age 65 or older.

**Gender:** Men have a greater risk of heart attack than women, and they have attacks earlier in life.

**Heredity (including race):** Those with a family history of heart disease are more likely to develop it themselves. African Americans can have more severe high blood pressure and a higher risk of heart disease. Heart disease risk is also higher among Latinos, American Indians, Pacific Islanders, Alaska Natives and some Asian Americans. This is partly due to higher rates of obesity and diabetes in these populations.

**History of trauma:** The Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study, which looks at long-term health and wellness of children who live with
psychological trauma, found that traumatic experiences are substantial risk factors for several chronic conditions including heart disease and tobacco use.

Major risk factors that can be changed include:

**Use of tobacco**: Smokers' risk of developing heart disease is two to four times that of nonsmokers. Cigarette smoking also acts with other risk factors to greatly increase the risk for heart disease. Exposure to other people's smoke increases the risk of heart disease even for nonsmokers.

**Obesity and weight**: People who have excess body fat, especially around the waist, are more likely to develop heart disease, even if they have no other risk factors. Excess weight increases the heart's work; thereby, potentially raising blood pressure, blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Being overweight may also lower HDL (good) cholesterol levels. It can also make diabetes more likely to develop.

**Diabetes mellitus**: Diabetes seriously increases the risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Even when glucose levels are under control, diabetes increases the risk of heart disease and stroke, but the risks are even greater if blood sugar is not controlled. At least 65 percent of people with diabetes die of some form of heart or blood vessel disease.

**High blood cholesterol**: As blood cholesterol rises, so does risk of coronary heart disease. Learn more about cholesterol by exploring the NAMI Hearts & Minds Web site further.

**High blood pressure**: When high blood pressure exists with other risk factors such as obesity, smoking, high blood cholesterol levels or diabetes, the risk of heart attack increases significantly.

**Physical inactivity**: An inactive lifestyle is a risk factor for heart disease. Physical activity can help control blood cholesterol, diabetes and obesity, as well as help lower blood pressure.

Along with family history and an assessment of these and other factors, a health care provider will be better equipped to determine and address cardiac risk.

**Integrated Treatment and Co-occurring Disorders**
Many people living with mental illness are also living with substance abuse disorders and other medical conditions. The need for integrated health
care is even more critical for individuals with these co-occurring, or dual-diagnosis, conditions. The mental health and substance abuse treatment systems historically have had different cultures and expectations and didn’t get too involved with each other. Now it is finally clear that in order to appropriately treat individuals, care should be integrated. The system of care for people with dual diagnosis is learning to get more integrated and more creative while improving the ability of mental health professionals to screen and intervene with substance abuse problems and vice versa.

There are many great resources available to help you understand this complex issue. A great place for information on this effort is U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Web site on Co-Occurring Center for Excellence at https://coce.samhsa.gov.

Culturally Competent Care

America’s population is rapidly becoming more diverse. The cultural competence of our health care providers is important to enhancing positive health care outcomes. Culturally competent care brings together a combination of attitudes, skills and knowledge that allows health care providers to better understand and take care of people whose cultural backgrounds, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or gender are different from their own.

Medical care that lacks cultural competence has caused well-documented disparities in access to services and in quality of care for many individuals and communities. State health care systems’ efforts to improve the cultural competence of services were graded in the NAMI Grading the States 2009 report. Some states demonstrated more sophisticated thinking about the issue than others. It is clear that the mental health care system has a long way to go to equip a workforce to be culturally competent. NAMI and other advocates must continue to press for a health care workforce that meets the needs of all who rely on the system for care. You should be open about any personal, cultural, spiritual or religious issues. You should inform your provider if you have certain cultural needs or preferences to support your own unique recovery.
People from diverse backgrounds face additional heart health challenges. For example, there is a higher rate of diabetes among Asian American, African American, American Indian and Latino individuals. This additional risk is important to know before planning to proactively manage weight through diet and exercise, especially if taking antipsychotic medications as a part of a treatment plan. Antipsychotic medications differ widely in how much they increase the risk of diabetes. See the chart on page 27 for an independent assessment of the risk by medication and visit the American Diabetes Association and American Psychiatric Association (ADA/APA) Guidelines at http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/27/2/596.full.

There is a great deal more to learn about how culture and biology relate to psychiatric medication dosages. The number of people from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds in research has been historically low, which hampers efforts to address this important issue. There is some evidence that Asians may require lower doses of antipsychotics. There is also evidence that African Americans have historically been given higher doses of antipsychotics. The right medicine dosage cannot yet be determined based on race or ethnicity. Diet and alternative treatments are also an area of interest with culturally competent health care, and there is a great deal more to learn. For example, Ginko Biloba, which is used often in Hispanic food, can have effects on the metabolism of other medicines such as anticonvulsants (seizure medicines), antidepressants and even blood thinners. You should be talk openly to your health care providers about your diet and medicines you are taking.

**Smoking Cessation**

People living with mental illness have a very high rate of smoking. A study by the Journal of the American Medical Association reported that 44.3 percent of all cigarettes in America are consumed by individuals who live with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders. This means that people living with mental
illness are about twice as likely to smoke as other persons. A positive note is that people who live with mental illness had substantial quit-rates, which were almost as high as the group without mental illness. NAMI has led many changes in our mental health system—getting access to the tools to quit smoking is a way to improve the quality and quantity of life. Improving lives is a new advocacy pursuit.

The Connection between Mental Illness and Smoking
There is no one single, certain reason why so many people who live with mental illness smoke. It may be a combination of brain effects, psychological effects and the social world in which we live. From a brain-based perspective, research is being done to determine if and how nicotine is involved in some of the brain’s memory functions. If nicotine is a factor, then this could explain why so many people living with an illness like schizophrenia or other illness involving cognitive deficits may smoke. Even though smoking is thought to enhance concentration and cognition, the effects are short in duration.

While we still have a lot to learn about why people smoke, there is plenty of information to support the serious health risks of smoking. So while there may be good reasons why you were attracted to smoking, the key is to figure out ways to increase rates of quitting. Nicotine isn’t a health problem on its own, but when smoked and combined with hundreds of other chemicals that are present in cigarettes, the practice of smoking is toxic.

The Reality
People die from smoking-related illnesses. Every year, smoking kills about 200,000 people who live with mental illness. Smoking harms nearly every organ of your body and diminishes your overall health. Smoking is a leading cause of cancer and of cancer-related death.

Inhaled cigarette smoke is made up of 4,000 chemicals, including cyanide, benzene, ammonia and carbon monoxide to name a few. There is no safe tobacco product, so switching to a smokeless or chew product will not eliminate your risk of smoking-related diseases.

Smoking also causes heart disease, stroke and lung disease. With the increased risk of heart disease from second-generation antipsychotic medications (SGAs), individuals living with mental illness must try to quit. For more information on cancer risks, visit www.cancer.gov.
The mental health community is finally waking up to the fact that smoking is a true health hazard, and people need to quit in order to live longer. More mental health care facilities are going smoke-free, and NAMI is advocating for access to smoking cessation programs.

Effects on Symptoms and Medications
Research shows that people living with mental illness do not have worse symptoms after they quit. If you are a smoker and you quit, you can usually get the same treatment results from lower doses of psychiatric medications. Smoking increases the breakdown of medicines in your body, so smokers need to take higher doses to get the same results as someone who does not smoke. Without cigarettes you may need to take less medication. An additional benefit is that a dose reduction will likely reduce side effects of medicines, such as weight gain and other side effects.

Smoking and Diabetes
It is very hard to live with more than one medical problem. Diabetes is a big issue for many people who live with mental illness and, like smoking, it increases the chances of early death. The two problems together are doubly dangerous. For instance, smoking and diabetes increases your chances of having a heart attack 11 times higher than the general population.

Benefits of Quitting
It often takes multiple attempts to quit smoking; don’t give up if your first try is unsuccessful. There are immediate and long-term benefits to quitting smoking. Several benefits you will notice right away include:
• your sense of taste will improve;
• your sense of smell returns to normal;
• your breath, hair and clothes will smell better;
• your teeth and fingernails stop yellowing;
• you will save a lot of money;
• you will have more energy and time for ordinary activities; and
• you will be more acceptable socially with nonsmokers.

Within minutes of smoking the last cigarette and beyond, the body begins to restore itself.
<table>
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<th>Time after quitting</th>
<th>Benefits to your Health</th>
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<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Your heart rate and blood pressure drop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 hours</td>
<td>Carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two weeks to three months</td>
<td>Your circulation improves and your lung function increases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to nine months</td>
<td>Coughing and shortness of breath decrease; lung function normalizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year</td>
<td>Excess risk of heart disease is cut in half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five years</td>
<td>Your stroke risk is that of a nonsmoker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>Lung cancer death rate is half of a smokers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>Risk of heart disease is that of a nonsmoker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tools for Success: Alternatives, Treatments and Medications**

To quit permanently, you may need to rely on more than one method at a time. Methods may include step-by-step manuals, phone support, self-help classes, counseling, nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) and/or prescription medications.

There are several products scientifically proven to help double or triple your odds of quitting for good. However, it is possible that you will feel some effects of nicotine withdrawal. Getting temporary nicotine in your system while quitting can help you feel more comfortable and in control as you start your tobacco-free life.

**Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT)**

NRT is a combined approach that includes a smoking-cessation product plus behavior change and support. If used properly, NRT can help double or triple your chances of quitting. All NRT products have side effects, so before deciding on an option, know the risks and benefits of each option. Use caution if you have heart disease or a history of heart disease and consult your doctor before taking medication.
<table>
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<td>Nicotine Gum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicotine Lozenges</td>
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<th>Prescription Options</th>
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<td>Nicotine Nasal Spray</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zyban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generic: Bupropion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chantix</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generic: Varenicline</td>
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Substance Abuse and Alcoholism

According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, approximately 50 percent of individuals living with severe mental illness are affected by substance abuse. About 37 percent of individuals with alcoholism and 53 percent of individuals with drug addictions have at least one serious mental illness.

More deaths, illnesses and disabilities stem from substance abuse than from any other preventable health condition. Today, one in four deaths is attributable to alcohol, tobacco and illicit drug use. People who live with under-treated or untreated mental illness and substance dependence have higher risk of all bad outcomes including injuries, medical problems, incarceration and death.

Alcohol dependence is what people think of when they think of alcoholism. Alcoholism is a disease that occurs when a person has a strong need or urge to drink, the inability to stop drinking and/or physical dependence on the alcohol, including withdrawal symptoms or the need to drink greater amounts of alcohol to experience a high.

Recovered, or sober, individuals report that the craving an alcoholic feels for alcohol can be as strong and the need for food or water. An active alcoholic will drink despite serious family, health or legal problems.

Drug abuse is the habitual use of illegal, prescription or over-the-counter drugs for purposes other than they were intended. Drug abuse may substantially injure the user and interfere with social, physical, emotional and job-related functioning.

Although initial drug use may be voluntary, drugs have been shown to alter brain chemistry, which interferes with an individual's ability to make decisions and can lead to compulsive craving, seeking and use. This then becomes a substance dependency.

The impact of drug abuse and dependence can be far reaching, affecting almost every organ in the human body.
Getting Help

There are many resources and supports available for conquering addiction. As you work to put a plan in place, educate yourself about pharmaceutical options, treatment facilities, outpatient behavioral treatment and community-based social support. There are many ways to get sober and no one right path. But recovery is a process that is often strengthened by self-help support.

The self-help recovery movement is strong in the substance-abuse community. Alcoholics Anonymous (www.aa.org) is a free, 12-step organization that has helped millions of individuals. Al-Anon (www.al-anon.alateen.org) is a program for families to help them learn detachment and to separate their responsibility from that of the addicted person. Al-Ateen (www.al-anon.alateen.org) is a program geared for adolescents who have addicted family members. Smart Recovery (www.smartrecovery.org) is also a sobriety support program that does not share the religious focus of AA, but is rooted in science. Double Trouble groups (www.doubletroubleinrecovery.org) offer self-help support for individuals living with both mental illness and addiction.

Some self-help groups are sophisticated enough to help people achieve sobriety while accepting a psychiatric condition and the need for psychiatric medications. However, some AA groups have historically discouraged dually diagnosed persons from taking psychiatric medications. It can be useful to shop the meetings in your area to find one that best meets your individual needs. If you are taking medications for a mental illness and utilize AA support, be sure that your sponsor understands and respects your medication choices.

Your best ally in identifying help may be your primary care provider. He or she can refer you to specialized care by recommending someone with additional addiction training or to a treatment facility. Medication and behavioral therapy are often included in a comprehensive treatment program. Publicly funded treatment centers are available. For more information on these facilities in your state, please call (800) 662-HELP or visit www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov.

Healthy Eating

When we refer to our diet, we are referring to what we eat. We all need nutrition to support our bodies. A poor diet equals poor health, contributing to obesity, metabolic syndrome and diabetes—conditions
that many people living with mental illness are at high risk of developing.

Food doesn’t just feed our bodies, it also nourishes our minds. Carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins and minerals in food are essential parts of any diet that provide specific benefits for the body. A lack of any of these nutritional components can lead to physical difficulties, increased mental-health problems and even changes in brain functioning.

Nutrition is important for everyone. If you are living with mental illness, eating well is especially important for you, because what you eat can affect your daily life, mood and energy level. Healthy eating is not about being thin or deprivation. Healthy eating is about feeling good, having more energy, participating in your recovery and mapping out your future. Simply put, healthy eating is one of the best things you can do to improve wellness.

Learn more about healthy eating and how you can choose foods that are right for you. Use the guidelines and tips in NAMI Hearts & Minds to create and maintain a satisfying, healthy diet.

The Pyramid

Dietary guidelines set by the USDA state that a healthy diet is one that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat free or low fat milk products. A healthy diet should include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts. Be sure to limit saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, sodium and added sugars. Learn more about the U.S. government’s guidelines by reviewing the food pyramid.

By following the guidelines above, you will ensure that you will be consuming the appropriate amounts of carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals to help your body works efficiently.
Calories and Weight Loss
A calorie is a unit of energy. Depriving the body of needed energy impairs your mood and your ability to think clearly. People who consistently eat less than their bodies need may begin to experience irritability, lethargy, a lack of concentration and may feel sad and hopeless as a result of a poor diet. In addition, people who consume more calories than they need will always gain weight.

Are you concerned about your weight? If so, it is important to know that your weight is determined by the number of calories you ingest minus the number of calories you burn—period. If you consume 2,500 calories a day but only burn 2,000 through your daily activities and exercise, you will gain weight.

To help figure out how many calories you burn a day, consult with your health care provider, a nutritionist or access an online calculator. Once you have this information, you can use it to help kick-start weight loss, especially if used along with a food journal, which you will read about later.

There are 3,500 calories in one pound of body fat. In order to lose weight, a person must cut calories from his or her daily diet. Cutting 500 calories a day will result in the loss of one pound per week. Never consume less than 1,200 calories a day. Always consult with your doctor before drastically changing your diet.

If you are overweight, you will benefit from even the smallest weight loss. Losing excess body weight can reverse or prevent diabetes, lower blood pressure, cholesterol and triglyceride levels and improve sleep apnea and other sleep problems.

Food Labels
Food labels are very important in determining what ingredients and nutrients are in your food. While they can be confusing (and sometimes even misleading), the NAMI Hearts & Minds program will help you inform yourself, resulting in better food choices and achieving any diet goals you set.
Visit the FDA Web site for additional information on food labeling and nutrition at www.fda.gov.

What’s a Serving Size?
Remember: One package does not necessarily equal one serving size. On this box of macaroni and cheese in the food label we have been using as an example, the label displays information for one serving even though the package contains two full servings.

Check the calories
Calories serve as a measurement of how much energy you are getting from a serving of food. It is common for people to consume more calories than they need in a day without eating enough healthy nutrients. Here’s a quick guide to calories:

- 40 calories = low
- 100 calories = moderate
- 400 or more calories = high

Remember that most people only need about 2,000 calories a day. Aim to eat three meals a day that fall around the 500- or 600-calorie range and a few snacks if you get hungry between meals while also maximizing your nutrient intake. Think about the poor choices out there, like a large fast-food burger. Some of them come in at close to 800 calories—without french fries. That is nearly half of your day’s calories! Eating too many calories on a daily basis will lead to obesity for most people.

Limit Fats, Sodium and Cholesterol
These three items are highlighted in yellow. Too much of any or all of these can result in chronic diseases. It is recommended to keep your intake of these nutrients to a minimum—check the footnote for the recommended daily value of each.

How Does Sodium Affect Lithium?
Lithium is a naturally occurring mineral with an electrical charge similar to salt. The level of salt in your body affects the action of lithium. Once lithium reaches therapeutic range, it can be altered by small changes in daily salt intake.

If you normally don’t eat much salt and then sit down one night and eat a bag of potato chips or a pizza or canned soup, your lithium level will likely decrease. If you’ve been diligent with your lithium medicine routine but
have changed your salt-eating pattern, it may significantly interrupt your medication treatment outcome. Keeping your sodium intake fairly consistent is very important for people who take lithium.

If you are very active and sweating a lot, or have diarrhea or are vomiting, you could lose a lot of sodium and then your body may end up with too much lithium. Never take salt tablets or go on a salt-restricted diet without talking to your doctor if you are taking lithium. Lithium has predictable blood levels, and to understand what is too high or too low, talk with your health care provider about adjusting your lithium dosage if you are lowering your sodium intake.

Choosing the Right Foods
Following is a list of healthful foods and suggested balances of varieties of foods that will help you learn more about healthy eating. It may be helpful to visit our section on vegetarian diets on page 21.

Whole grains
The benefits of a high-fiber diet are well-known. Besides fiber, whole grains provide B vitamins, folic acid, iron and magnesium. Look at the ingredient list on breads and other grain products. The first ingredient should say “whole wheat” or “100 percent whole grain.” Look at the nutrition facts panel for at least two grams of dietary fiber per slice of bread.

The more fiber in a product, the better! Fiber normalizes bowel movements, helps maintain bowel health, lowers cholesterol levels, controls blood sugar levels and helps with weight loss. Fiber keeps you feeling full longer, helping you avoid over-eating or snacking when trying to lose weight.

Fats (including saturated fat, trans fats and Omega-3 fats)
There are good fats and bad fats. Foods that are high in saturated fats can increase our cholesterol levels. It is important to limit foods such as fatty meats, whole milk, butter and tropical oils such as coconut and palm.

Trans fats should be eliminated, so look at the nutrition facts panel and avoid foods that contain partially hydrogenated oils. Foods such as margarine, shortening, commercial french fries and pastries are often high in trans fat. When choosing cooking oil, use canola or olive oil whenever possible.
Omega-3 fats, which have health benefits, are found in fatty, deep-water fish such as salmon, tuna, bluefish, sardines and herring. Some studies show that Omega-3 fats provide protection against heart disease, stroke and may also be useful for depression and other health issues. Omega-3 fatty acids are a source of ongoing research in psychiatric conditions.

The American Heart Association recommends two servings of fatty fish per week. If you are planning to get pregnant, review information on mercury and other contaminants that are found in fish. Before taking Omega-3 supplements, be sure to talk with your doctor. Omega-3 capsules may interact with other medications and have a blood-thinning effect. If you are vegetarian, flaxseed oil can offer Omega-3 fatty acids as well.

**Milk and Milk Products**

Milk products are our main source of calcium and vitamin D, both of which are essential for healthy bones and teeth. Milk and milk products are also a good source of riboflavin, potassium, protein and magnesium. Vitamin D is a hot topic in research prevention at this time.

The recommendation for calcium is 1,000-1,200 mg per day. One serving of milk contains about 300 mg. Other sources of calcium include yogurt, cheese, dark green vegetables and calcium-fortified orange juice. The USDA MyPyramid recommends three cups of milk or milk products per day based on a 2,000-calorie diet. If you cannot tolerate milk products, try lactose-reduced products. Also, talk with your doctor about using calcium/vitamin D supplements.

**Vegetables**

Everyone knows that they should eat plenty of vegetables. Vegetables are low in calories but high in fiber, potassium, vitamins A, C and E and phytonutrients. Vegetables that are dark in color have the most nutrients. Examples are broccoli, spinach, sweet potatoes and carrots. Benefits of eating vegetables include reduced cancer risk, reduced risk of heart disease, lower blood pressure, diabetes prevention and help with weight control. The USDA MyPyramid recommends five (one-half cup) servings of vegetables every day based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Choose a wide variety of colors when selecting your vegetables each day for the most health benefits.
Fruits
Apart from vegetables, fruits are the most colorful foods on the pyramid. They provide fiber, folic acid and a variety of other nutrients such as vitamin C, potassium and health-protective phytonutrients. Also, they are relatively low in calories and make a healthy, filling snack. Benefits of fruits are similar to those of vegetables. MyPyramid recommends four (one-half cup) servings of fruit every day based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Choose a wide variety of colors when selecting your fruits each day for the most health benefits.

Nuts and Seeds
Nuts can provide a powerhouse of nutrients. Each type of nut offers its own health benefits. For example, walnuts contain plant-based Omega-3 fatty acids, almonds are high in vitamin E and Brazil nuts are high in selenium (an antioxidant). Since nuts and seeds are high in calories, be sure to watch your portion size. MyPyramid recommends a small handful of nuts (about one oz., equal to 20 small nuts, or two tablespoons of peanut butter) every day based on a 2,000-calorie diet.

Beans
All beans are inexpensive, low-fat, nutrient powerhouses. They contain protein, fiber, B vitamins, iron, folic acid, potassium, magnesium and phytonutrients.

Protein
Meats are currently the main source of protein in the American diet. Reducing the amount of meats we eat and increasing our intake of vegetables, fruit and whole grains is essential to eating more healthfully. All red meat choices should be lean, and poultry should be skinless. Choosing white meats over red meats is a good general strategy. Fish should be eaten at least twice a week. Beans, tofu and nuts can substitute for meat in meals. This food group (meat, beans, seeds, nuts and fish) provides protein, B vitamins, iron, magnesium, zinc and vitamin E. MyPyramid recommends five to six oz. of meat protein a day based on a 2,000-calorie diet.
Special Diets

Dairy-free and Vegan Diets
A dairy-free and vegan diets contain absolutely no dairy products: no milk, butter, cheese, cream or yogurt. Those following a dairy-free or vegan diet are advised to make sure they get enough calcium, protein and vitamins from other food sources.

Dairy substitutes may include: almond milk, apple, pear or prune puree, cheese alternatives (soy, rice), multi-grain milk, nondairy frozen desserts, oat milk, rice milk or soy milk. When baking, milk may be substituted, in equal amounts, with water or fruit juice. In planning meals, make sure that each day's diet includes enough calcium. Many nondairy foods are high in calcium, such as green vegetables (broccoli, cabbage and kale) and fish, such as salmon and sardines. Incorporating tofu into meals also helps to ensure that you are getting calcium.

Vegetarian Diets
Some people choose vegetarian diets for environmental, cultural, religious and ethical factors, while some choose not to eat meat because they believe it’s a healthier choice. If you are or are thinking about embracing a vegetarian diet, you will need to take extra steps to ensure that you’re meeting your daily nutritional needs.

A healthy vegetarian diet consists primarily of plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. A vegetarian diet generally contains less fat and cholesterol and typically includes more fiber. You will want to make sure that you are eating foods to give you and adequate amounts of protein, calcium, vitamin B-12, iron and zinc.

The key to a healthy vegetarian diet—or any diet for that matter—is to enjoy a wide variety of foods. Since no single food provides all the nutrients your body needs, eating a wide variety helps to ensure that you’ll be getting the necessary nutrients that promote good health.

Dining Out
There is nothing wrong with asking restaurants may be able to make healthier versions of their dishes. Ask if you can get your food baked, roasted or steamed instead of fried. Ask for fat free milk rather than whole milk. Ask for salad dressing on the side. Part of the battle of eating healthy
is making minor decisions like these and you may not even notice the difference in taste.

Although buffets may give you the most food for the least amount of money, it can be pretty dangerous to have “all you can eat.” If you’re eating at a buffet, challenge yourself. Fill up one healthy-sized plate with everything you want and don’t go up for seconds! It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to tell your body that you’re full so take your time digesting before assuming that you need more food.

Eating Well on a Tight Budget
It’s easy to eat healthy, even if you’re on a budget.

Avoid temptations while shopping at the grocery store by making a list of healthy items you want to buy. By doing this, you are less likely to get what you want and more likely to get what you need. Consider planning a week’s worth of meals and buy all of the ingredients for them at once. That way, you can plan to eat healthy every night and won’t have to take multiple trips to the grocery store.

Impulse buys are very common in the grocery store and if you’re hungry, you are more likely to give in to buying what you’re craving and not what you should be eating. So go to the grocery store after a healthy meal when you are feeling satisfied and not famished.

Be aware that pre-packaged foods can contain unhealthy chemicals and preservatives and are often high in sodium, sugar and fat. They also tend to be expensive. If you make your own food with fresh and frozen ingredients, not only will you save money, but you also can control every last thing that goes into your food and into your body.

Shop the perimeter of the grocery store. That’s where the healthier foods often are! If you think about the layout of the grocery store, you will realize that the freshest produce, such as fruits and vegetables, are
stocked around the store's perimeter. Why even tempt yourself by walking through the aisles of junk food and sugary sodas?

And finally, shop sales, buy in bulk with a friend and split large quantities and check out discount grocery outlets who usually offer a selection of healthy and fresh foods at reasonable prices.

### Using Food Stamp Benefits

The goal of the U.S.D.A. food stamp program, now known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), is to help U.S. households enjoy healthy diets.

Food stamp benefits can buy any food intended to be eaten at home. This includes breads and grains, dairy products, fruits and vegetables, meat, fish and poultry, nonalcoholic beverages (juice, water), snack foods, etc.

Today, nearly 800 farmers' markets across the United States accept food stamps—it doesn’t get any healthier than that! Farmers’ markets offer the freshest produce, and often times dairy products such as cheeses, milk, eggs and even local meat products. To find a farmers’ market that accepts food stamps near you, visit [www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/ebt/ebt_farmers_markstatus.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/ebt/ebt_farmers_markstatus.htm).

To learn more about SNAP, find your state office contact information or to see if you are eligible for assistance, visit [www.fns.usda.gov/snap](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap) or call 1 (800) 552-3431.

### Exercise

Movement can be good for body, spirit and mind. As with the everyone, activity and exercise are very important for people with mental illness. Currently, there is strong scientific evidence that physical activity can lower the risk of the following in adults and older adults:

- Early death
- Heart disease and stroke
- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Poor lipid profile (cholesterol/triglycerides)
- Metabolic syndrome
- Colon and breast cancers
- Weight gain
- Symptoms of depression
- Falls

Exercise doesn’t have to be intimidating or expensive. Who needs a gym membership when you can walk with our without friends? As long as you
get up and do something, your body will thank you, and you may even surprise yourself and have some fun. Movement of most kinds can be very beneficial. Follow the steps below to form your own exercise routine:

**Warm-up:** This portion of the program helps your body adjust to an increased pace. Your warm up should last between five and 10 minutes.

**Strength Training:** This section of the program can be done in many different ways and will help protect your body from osteoporosis, help burn calories and increase lean muscle mass and well-being.

**Aerobic Exercise:** This part of the program includes exercise that makes your heart work harder and makes you breathe deeper and harder. This is the type of exercise best associated with reductions in depression and anxiety.

**Flexibility Exercises:** This portion of the program, more commonly known as stretching, can be done anywhere and anytime. Yoga, tai chi and Pilates are all ways to increase flexibility, build core strength and also reduce stress.

**Cool-down:** This last section of the program allows your body to slowly cool down. Once complete you should feel as though your heart rate and breathing rate are near normal.

**Your Heart Rate**
Your maximum heart rate is about 220 minus your age. For cardiovascular benefits you will want to exercise within 60-85 percent of your maximum heart rate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Average Maximum Heart Rate</th>
<th>Target Zone 60%-85% of Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>200bpm</td>
<td>120 to 170 bpm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>117 to 166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>114 to 162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>111 to 157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>108 to 153</td>
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<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>105 to 149</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>102 to 145</td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>99 to 140</td>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>96 to 136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>93 to 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>90 to 128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sticking to a regular exercise program can be challenging. For more resources, tips and information on exercise, visit www.nami.org/heartsandminds.

**Metabolic Syndrome and Type 2 Diabetes**

Unfortunately, the risk of diabetes is greater for people living with mental illness, especially those taking second-generation atypical antipsychotic medications (SGAs). In addition, another issue to be aware of is metabolic syndrome, a condition that can be a precursor to diabetes. Left untreated, these two issues can cause severe health problems and can shorten your life. NAMI Hearts & Minds can give you a start on the information you need to meet these problems head-on.

**High Risk Individuals and Factors**
Diabetes and the metabolic syndrome are found in higher numbers in these groups of individuals living with mental illness:
- People living with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder/mood disorders.
- African Americans, Latinos, American Indians and Asian Americans.
- People who smoke.
- People with a family history of diabetes and metabolic syndrome.
- People who take second-generation atypical antipsychotic medication (SGAs).

**Metabolic Syndrome**
Metabolic syndrome is a combination of medical risk issues. These issues include worsening sugar control, high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol and other problems. Metabolic syndrome raises the risk for diabetes and heart disease and can be thought of as a condition that precedes diabetes.

Waist circumference as well as glucose and lipid levels are key measures for metabolic syndrome. To say safe, it is recommended that waist circumference not exceed 40 inches in men and 35 inches in women.

There is evidence that this is a real issue for people living with mental illness—the syndrome equally affects both men and in women and is more common in people who take SGAs. The same strategies you would consider in managing diabetes are the same you should consider if you have indications of metabolic syndrome—walking (and other exercise), nutrition and working with your health care provider to monitor your progress on this issue are the keys to its prevention.
Type 2 Diabetes
Diabetes is a problem related to how your body uses sugar. It is a serious medical problem. There are several types of diabetes—we will focus on the adult-onset type, also called Type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes results from cells in person's body failing to use insulin properly. Insulin enables cells in the body to use glucose (a kind of sugar) to turn it into energy. In Type 2 diabetes, the rising glucose levels seen in the bloodstream are an indicator that the body is not using insulin well. Being overweight, especially around the middle/abdomen, is the most common underlying cause of adult-onset diabetes. Having a family history of adult-onset diabetes is another risk. By becoming more active and engaging in a weight-loss program, you may be able to halt and even reverse adult-onset diabetes. Talk with your health care provider before beginning an exercise or diet program.

SGAs and Diabetes Risk
All medications have side effects. Side effects may be rare or common, serious or merely annoying. A medicine with frequent mild side effects may be tolerated by a majority of people and be regarded as relatively safe. On the other hand, if a medicine has more serious side effects, it informs treatment decisions and indicates a need for risk-monitoring. You should review and discuss the risks of side effects versus the expected benefits of any medication with your health care provider. In many cases, especially when considering the options of nontreatment, even serious side effects may be worth the risk.

Some medications offer greater risks than others, and the same is true for SGAs. The chart on the opposite page offers information on how these various medicines are ranked in terms of risk. It is imperative that you understand this information as you choose a medication in partnership with your health care provider. Talk with your health care provider about the relationship between your medicine and diabetes or diabetes risks.

Be sure to engage in a conversation with your health care provider about what medicine could be the best fit for you. While initial awareness of increased SGA risk for weight gain, metabolic syndrome and diabetes was slow to evolve, it is now very clear to the FDA as well as to individuals, family members and health care providers.
Symptoms
Type 2 diabetes can exist in a person for years before it is identified. The most common symptoms of undetected diabetes are increased thirst and urination. Fatigue is also common. Other signs include dry and itchy skin, blurry vision and slowly healing wounds. If you notice any of these symptoms, it is important to get your sugar (glucose) level checked when you see your health care provider. A simple blood test will tell you if you are either at risk for, or if you have, Type 2 diabetes. A fasting blood sugar over 126 mg/dl (miligrams per deciliter) is one key diagnostic criteria.

Monitoring
The best practices for heart-risk prevention and diabetes monitoring in people who take SGAs are ever-evolving. One of the key documents in both of these fields is the 2004 ADA/APA Guidelines. These Guidelines have since been viewed as not aggressive enough in monitoring for lipids like triglycerides and cholesterol by many clinicians. The ADA, www.diabetes.org, offers the latest information and guidelines for diabetes generally, which include information on children and teens that are at increased risk for developing diabetes.

The ADA suggests that if your blood glucose levels are in the normal range, it is a good idea to get checked every three years. If you have pre-diabetes, you should be checked for Type 2 diabetes every one to two years after your diagnosis.

Heart Risks of SGAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SGAs and Diabetes Warning Signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drug</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clozapine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olanzapine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risperidone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quetiapine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aripipazole*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziprasidone*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = increase effect; - = no effect; D = discrepant results.

Source: Diabetes Care, February 2004

Note: This ADA chart was created in 2004. Newer SGAs such as Paliperidone (Invega) and Asenapine (Saphris), which are not included on this chart, do carry heart-related side effects. As these are newer medications, more will be learned about the details of their side effects over time. To keep up to date on the latest FDA-approved medicines, visit www.fda.gov.
Talk with your health care provider about your concerns. If you are taking SGAs, you should have or obtain a baseline of data that will help you monitor your risks. The chart below outlines a suggested schedule for you to discuss with your health care provider.

### Schedule for Monitoring Patients On Second Generation Antipsychotics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>4 wks</th>
<th>8 wks</th>
<th>12 wks</th>
<th>Quarterly</th>
<th>Annually</th>
<th>Every 5 yrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal/family history</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight (BMI)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Waist circumference</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood pressure</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fasting plasma glucose</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fasting lipid profile</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More frequent assessments may be warranted based on clinical status

Source: *Diabetes Care*, February 2004

### Treatment and Disease Management

If you have Type 2 diabetes, making exercise, such as walking, and a healthy diet part of your lifestyle are good first steps to treating your condition. There is no question that attention to exercise and diet is essential to managing and preventing these problems. In addition, there is increased interest in the use of antidiabetic medications such as metformin along with SGAs even before diabetes is identified.

If you have diabetes, ask your health care provider to get a longer-term measure of your sugar control, called an HgbA1c (pronounced hemoglobin AY one see). This can tell you how your diabetes has been controlled over the previous months and is a good way to get information about your current condition. This can help to inform your future efforts. In general, a reading of seven or lower is considered good.
**Remember**

A very troubling fact is that most people with these conditions who also live with mental illness are not getting good preventive or medical care for these problems.

Even though they are trained as medical doctors, sometimes psychiatrists don’t consider medical problems to be a core aspect of their responsibility. Conversely, some internists manage diabetes everyday but do not appreciate the increased risk of people living with mental illnesses or the risks associated with the use of SGAs. People can find themselves caught between the two systems with a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities, resulting in fragmented care. Remember to seek out and demand the best health care you can find and afford. Everyone deserves a high level of health care—something NAMI is striving to achieve for every person living with mental illness. For more resources, including fact sheets and videos, visit www.nami.org/heartsandminds.

For more information about the NAMI Hearts & Minds program visit
Healthy Eating

Nutrition is important for everyone, but if you are living with mental illness, eating well is especially important for you. The foods you eat can affect your daily life, mood and energy level.

Healthy eating is not about being thin or deprivation. The word “diet” refers to eating habits. A healthy diet is about feeling good, having more energy, participating in your recovery and mapping out your future. A poor diet equals poor health, contributing to obesity, metabolic syndrome and diabetes—conditions that many people living with mental illness are at high risk of developing.

What’s a Portion Size?

- Woman's fist or baseball = 1 serving of vegetables/fruit.
- A rounded handful = about 1/2 cup cooked or raw veggies or cut fruit, a piece of fruit or 1/2 cup of cooked rice or pasta. This is also a good measure for a snack serving, such as chips or pretzels.
- Deck of cards = 1 serving of meat, fish or poultry.
- Golf ball or large egg = 1/4 cup of dried fruit or nuts.
- Tennis ball = about 1/2 cup of ice cream.
- Computer mouse = 1 small baked potato.
- Compact disc = 1 serving of a pancake or small waffle.
- Thumb tip = about 1 teaspoon of peanut butter, butter or margarine.
- Six dice = 1 serving of cheese.
- Check book = 1 serving of fish (approximately 3 oz.).

What Is a Healthy Diet?

A healthy diet emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk products. A healthy diet should also include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts. Be sure to limit saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, sodium and added sugars.

Here is a list of healthy foods. Visit www.mypyramid.gov to see the recommended balance for a good diet as suggested by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Whole grains

The benefits of a high-fiber diet are well-known. Besides fiber, whole grains provide B vitamins, folic acid, iron and magnesium. Look at the nutrition facts panel for at least two grams of dietary fiber per slice of bread. The first ingredient should say “whole wheat” or “100 percent whole grain.”

Fats

Foods that are high in saturated fats can increase our cholesterol levels. It is important to limit foods such as fatty meats, whole milk, butter and tropical oils such as coconut and palm.

Trans fats should be eliminated, so look at the nutrition facts panel and avoid foods that contain partially hydrogenated oils. Foods such as margarine, shortening, commercial french fries and pastries are often high in trans fat. When choosing cooking oil, use canola or olive oil whenever possible.

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**Vegetables**

Vegetables are low in calories but high in fiber, potassium, vitamins A, C and E and phytonutrients. Benefits of eating vegetables include reduced cancer risk, reduced risk of heart disease, lower blood pressure, diabetes prevention and help with weight control. Choose a wide variety of colors when selecting your vegetables each day for the most health benefits.

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Apart from vegetables, fruits are the most colorful foods on the pyramid. They provide fiber, folic acid and a variety of other nutrients such as vitamin C, potassium and health-protective phytonutrients. Also, they are relatively low in calories and make a healthy, filling snack.

**Nuts and Seeds**

Nuts can provide a powerhouse of nutrients. Each type of nut offers its own health benefits. For example, walnuts contain plant-based Omega-3 fatty acids, almonds are high in vitamin E and Brazil nuts are high in selenium (an antioxidant). Since nuts and seeds are high in calories, be sure to watch your portion size.

**Beans**

All beans are inexpensive, low-fat, nutrient powerhouses. They contain protein, fiber, B vitamins, iron, folic acid, potassium, magnesium and phytonutrients.

**Protein**

All red meat choices should be lean, and poultry should be skinless. Choosing white meats over red meats is a good general strategy. Fish should be eaten at least twice a week. Beans, tofu and nuts can substitute for meat in meals.

### Tips for Eating Well on a Tight Budget

- Bring a list to the grocery store, and stick to it.
- Eat a light snack before you shop to reduce impulse buying—don’t shop hungry.
- Choose fruits, vegetables and meats that are on sale and use coupons. You can freeze anything extra that you pick up on sale.
- Buy produce in season because it is priced to sell.
- Consider buying generic store brands because they are generally the same quality as national brands but with a different label.

### Food Journals

Keeping a food journal will help you uncover patterns relating to what, when, why and how much you eat and aid you in deciding what changes to make. It is also a surefire way to determine whether you are deducting the correct amount of calories from your diet if you are trying to lose weight.

Get started on your journal today by using an old-fashioned paper and pencil or an online program like the [www.my-calorie-counter.com](http://www.my-calorie-counter.com), [www.fitday.com](http://www.fitday.com) or the [www.myfooddiary.com](http://www.myfooddiary.com).

### Dining Out

Restaurants may be able to make healthier versions of their dishes, and there’s nothing wrong with asking. Most restaurants just want to make customers happy. Ask if you can get your food baked, roasted or steamed instead of fried. Ask for fat-free milk rather than whole milk. Ask for salad dressing on the side. Part of eating healthy is making minor decisions like these, and you may not even notice the difference in taste.

NAMI Hearts & Minds program is an online, interactive, educational initiative promoting the idea of wellness for individuals living with mental illness. This Fact Sheet is offered for informational purposes only. It does not intend to recommend specific treatment or strategies. Individuals should always engage with their health care provider before addressing diet.

This project was made possible with support from Optum Health Public Sector and the Smoking Cessation Leadership Center–University of California. NAMI does not endorse or promote any specific medication, treatment, product or service.

For more information about healthy eating or the NAMI Hearts & Minds program, visit [nami.org](http://nami.org/HeartsAndMinds).
Mental Illness and Exercise

As with the general population, activity and exercise are very important for people living with mental illness because of a higher risk for heart disease. Exercise can have a huge impact on your health. Physical activity can lower the risk of early death, heart disease and stroke, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, weight gain and high cholesterol—all problems commonly found among people living with mental illness.

While exercise is extremely important, please engage with your health care provider before starting an exercise plan. He or she will confirm that you are putting together a safe and appropriate plan.

Tips for Exercising on a Budget

**Take advantage of everyday opportunities.** You don’t need special equipment for an aerobic workout. Take a brisk walk every day, whether it is a path through your neighborhood or laps in a local mall. Make a workout of household chores.

**Consider modest investments.** Some inexpensive products to consider include dumbbells, resistance tubing, balance balls, jump ropes and exercise videos or DVDs—some may even be available for free from your local library.

**Improvise.** Exercise doesn’t have to be intimidating or expensive. You don’t need a gym membership to go for a light jog or a walk with a friend. Canned goods can serve double duty as hand weights, milk or water jugs can be filled with water or sand and a common step stool can become exercise equipment if you use it for step training.

**Be a savvy shopper.** Check out your local recreational department or check into the fitness center of a local college or church for bargain access. Online classifieds or used exercise equipment stores often have deals on equipment. Sharing the expenses with a friend can both help defray costs as well as provide motivation and support for a new fitness routine.

Steps to Success

Follow the steps below to form your own exercise routine.

**Warm-up**

The warm-up will slowly increase your breathing, heart rate and body temperature. Your warm-up should last between five and 10 minutes.

**Strength Training**

This part of an exercise program can be done in many different ways and will help protect your body from osteoporosis, help burn calories and increase lean muscle mass.

Good examples:
- push-ups
- crunches
- pull-ups
- squats
- lunges
- dips

Strength training should be done twice a week when you are first starting out. Try building up as you progress to three or four times per week.

**Aerobic Exercise**

This part of an exercise program includes activity that raises your heart rate. This is the type of exercise best associated with reductions in depression and anxiety.

Basic aerobic exercises include but aren’t limited to jogging, swift walking, swimming, step or stair climbing, cycling and inline skating. Start with just 20 minutes a day, and eventually try working up to five hours of aerobic exercise into every week.

**Flexibility Exercises**

This portion of an exercise program, also known as stretching, can be done anywhere, anytime. Stretching can increase flexibility, your range of motion and the blood
flow to your muscles. Stretching also relieves stress, improves balance and helps relax tense muscles. Here are some important tips:

- Be sure to stretch major muscle groups including calves, thighs, hips, back and shoulders.
- Do not bounce as you stretch because this can cause slight tears in the muscles, making them tighter no matter how consistently you stretch.
- Stretching should not be painful, but expect to feel some tension. If you feel pain, you have stretched too far. Ease up and hold the stretch lightly.

**Cool-down**
Gradually decrease the intensity of the exercise over a five- to 10-minute period until your heart rate and breathing rate are near normal.

**How Hard Should I Work?**
There are several ways you can determine your exercise intensity level. The easiest way is known as the talk test. As a rule of thumb, if you can talk easily you aren’t at the high end of your exertion. If your goal is to exercise at a moderate intensity, you should be able to talk, but not sing, while performing your activity. If your goal is to be exercising at a vigorous intensity, you will not be able to say more than a few words without pausing to take a breath.

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**Tips for Staying Motivated**

**Barrier 1: “I don’t have time.”**
**Solution:** Squeeze in a few short walks throughout the day, get up a few minutes earlier, take the stairs or do housework at a fast pace, combine activities (e.g., instead of a meeting a friend for coffee, meet for a walk), put your exercise on your calendar, stretch and do strengthening exercises while you are watching television, get off one bus stop before your desired stop or park your car further from the store.

**Barrier 2: “Exercise is boring.”**
**Solution:** Choose activities you enjoy; vary your routine; get an exercise partner and/or check out exercise classes or sports leagues at your local recreation center.

**Barrier 3: “I worry about how I look during exercising.”**
**Solution:** Remind yourself that you are doing yourself a favor and focus on how you feel after a workout and praise yourself after your improvements and each time you keep your commitment to exercise.

**Barrier 4: “I can’t afford to join a gym.”**
**Solution:** Get a great workout by simply using the resources that surround you, take a walk, play basketball, go bowling, ride your bike, dance, go hiking, go roller or ice skating and/or spend some free time gardening.

**Barrier 5: “I am afraid that I will hurt myself.”**
**Solution:** Be sure to check with your health care provider before you start an exercise program. If you are new at this, begin your new program slowly so you do not get hurt or get such sore muscles that you won’t continue. Choose an activity that is appropriate for your age and ability level. If you decide to go to a local YMCA or recreation center, ask for assistance from the staff at the facility. Finally, remember to warm up and cool down before and after exercise.

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NAMI Hearts & Minds program is an online, interactive, educational initiative promoting the idea of wellness for individuals living with mental illness. This Fact Sheet is offered for informational purposes only. It does not intend to recommend specific treatment or strategies. Individuals should always engage with their health care provider before starting an exercise plan.

This project was made possible with support from Optum Health Public Sector and the Smoking Cessation Leadership Center-University of California. NAMI does not endorse or promote any specific medication, treatment, product or service.

For more information about exercise or the NAMI Hearts & Minds program, visit [nami.org/heartsandminds](http://nami.org/heartsandminds)

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**OptumHealth Public Sector**

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Meditation and Mindfulness Training

Meditation, yoga, mindfulness training and relaxation techniques have been found to be very helpful to people with depression and anxiety.¹

The term *meditation* refers to a group of techniques, such as mantra meditation, relaxation response, and Zen Buddhist meditation. In meditation, a person learns to focus attention. Some forms of meditation ask you to become mindful of thoughts, feelings, and sensations and to observe them in a nonjudgmental way. This practice is believed to result in a state of greater calmness and physical relaxation, and psychological balance. Practicing meditation can change how a person relates to the flow of emotions and thoughts.

**The 4 common elements of meditation**

Most types of meditation have four elements in common:

1. **A quiet location**
   Meditation is usually practiced in a quiet place with as few distractions as possible. This can be particularly helpful for beginners.

2. **A specific, comfortable posture**
   Depending on the type being practiced, meditation can be done while sitting, lying down, standing, walking, or in other positions.

3. **A focus of attention**
   Focusing one’s attention is usually a part of meditation. For example, the meditator may focus on a mantra (a specially chosen word or set of words), an object, or the sensations of the breath. Some forms of meditation involve paying attention to whatever is the dominant content of consciousness.

Want to learn more? Visit the [National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCAM) website](http://www.nccam.nih.gov/health/meditation/overview.htm):
4. **An open attitude**
   An open attitude during meditation means letting distractions come and go naturally without judging them. When the attention goes to distracting or wandering thoughts, they are not suppressed; instead, the meditator gently brings attention back to the focus. In some types of meditation, the meditator learns to “observe” thoughts and emotions while meditating.

**Understanding relaxation techniques**

Relaxation is more than a state of mind; it physically changes the way your body functions. When your body is relaxed, breathing slows, blood pressure and oxygen consumption decrease, and some people report an increased sense of well-being. This is called the “relaxation response.” Being able to produce the relaxation response using relaxation techniques may counteract the effects of long-term stress, which may contribute to or worsen a range of health problems including depression, digestive disorders, headaches, high blood pressure, and insomnia.

Relaxation techniques often combine breathing and focused attention on pleasing thoughts and images to calm the mind and the body. Most methods require only brief instruction from a book or experienced practitioner before they can be done without assistance. These techniques may be most effective when practiced regularly and combined with good nutrition, regular exercise, and a strong social support system.

**Common relaxation methods**

- **Autogenic training** - When using this method, you focus on the physical sensation of your own breathing or heartbeat and picture your body as warm, heavy, and/or relaxed.

- **Biofeedback** - Biofeedback-assisted relaxation uses electronic devices to teach you how to consciously produce the relaxation response. Biofeedback is sometimes used to relieve conditions that are caused or worsened by stress.

- **Deep breathing or breathing exercises** - To relax using this method, you consciously slow your breathing and focus on taking regular and deep breaths.

- **Guided imagery** - For this technique, you focus on pleasant images to replace negative or stressful feelings and relax. Guided imagery may be directed by you or a practitioner through storytelling or descriptions designed to suggest mental images (also called visualization).
• **Progressive relaxation** - For this relaxation method, you focus on tightening and relaxing each muscle group. This method is also called Jacobson’s progressive relaxation or progressive muscle relaxation. Progressive relaxation is often combined with guided imagery and breathing exercises.

• **Self-Hypnosis** - In self-hypnosis, you produce the relaxation response with a phrase or nonverbal cue (called a “suggestion”). Self-hypnosis may be used to relieve pain (tension headaches, labor, or minor surgery) as well as to treat anxiety and irritable bowel syndrome.

1-Adapted from the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine.
Help with Sleep Problems

Sleep problems can be overcome

Insomnia is the most common type of sleep problem. It is very distressing when others do not understand the difficulties that you are having with sleep and how it can affect your life. The good news is that you can overcome your sleep problems.

About sleep

The amount of sleep that people need varies considerably. Most adults sleep between seven and eight hours at night. However, it is usual for some people to have less sleep without being badly affected. Often, people over 60 complain of having sleep problems, mainly because they have noticed that they are sleeping less. This change in sleep patterns is common and is a natural part of ageing.

*It doesn’t matter how much you sleep, what is more important is how well you feel physically and mentally as a result of your sleep pattern.*

Effects of poor sleep

If you do have a sleep problem, it is very likely that you are experiencing mental and physical problems as a result. You might have difficulties with concentration and this can create problems while you are driving or at work.

Some of the effects of poor sleep can include:

- falling asleep during the day
- feelings of tiredness
- poor concentration and/or memory problems
- problems in making decisions
- irritability
- frustration
- increased risk of accidents and injury.

About medication

It is important to note that medication alone will not cure your sleep problem. Long-term use can lead to dependence, which means when you stop using the medication your problems can become much worse. If you are going to use medication, only short-term or intermittent use is recommended. For example, someone who has suffered a loss may find it difficult to sleep and may benefit from the short-term (a few days to two to three weeks) use of sleeping pills as needed.
Keep in mind that sleeping pills:
• can be addictive
• can interact in a harmful way with alcohol and other drugs, which can cause problems in elderly people
• can be harmful to your baby if you are pregnant.

What may be causing your sleep problem?

There can be many causes of sleep problems. Sleep problems can be caused by physical illness, emotional factors or lifestyle factors such as too much coffee or tea, environmental factors like noisy streets, overcrowding or pollution or by a sleep disorder, such as sleep apnea.

Physical causes
Physical illness and medications are known to affect sleep. If you have a long-term physical problem or you have been taking medication for some time, your sleep can be affected in an ongoing way. Have a look at the list below, and mark any item that is relevant to you. If there are others, write them in the space below.

Possible physical causes:

☐ Indigestion
☐ Headaches
☐ Backache
☐ Arthritis
☐ Heart disease
☐ Diabetes
☐ Asthma
☐ Sinusitis
☐ Ulcers
☐ Other physical illness

If you have marked any of the above, you should consult your doctor. Although it may not be possible to cure a chronic illness, there might be better ways to manage the symptoms so it is less disruptive to your sleep.

Emotional causes
It is more common to experience sleep problems when feeling depressed, anxious or angry. Think about your situation, read through the list below and mark those items that apply. If you have another emotional problem that is not listed, write it in the space below.
Help with Sleep Problems

Possible emotional causes:

☐ Feeling stressed
☐ Worrying a lot
☐ Feeling tense or anxious
☐ Feeling sad or depressed
☐ Anger
☐ Other

If you have marked any of the above, we recommend that you discuss your feelings with your health worker. You might also want to try the relaxation exercise and other strategies outlined in the leaflet How to get a better night’s sleep.

Lifestyle causes
Lifestyle causes of sleep problems are very common. Read the list and mark items that apply. If you are aware of other lifestyle causes, write them in the space below.

Possible lifestyle causes:

☐ Drinking coffee or tea
☐ Drinking alcohol late at night
☐ Eating just before sleep
☐ Late dinners, going to sleep on full stomach
☐ Smoking a lot of cigarettes
☐ Strenuous physical activity before going to sleep
☐ Too much mental activity before sleep
☐ Too little exercise during the day
☐ Shift work
☐ Daytime naps
☐ Not having regular times for going to sleep
☐ Not having regular times for waking up

MNHealthScores.org/helpandhealing
If you have marked any of the above, we recommend you try some of the strategies in the section ‘How to get a better night’s sleep’.

**Environmental causes**

- Noisy sleep environment
- Too much light in sleep environment
- Pollution
- Overcrowding

If you have marked any of the above, we recommend you try some of the strategies in the section ‘**How to get a better night’s sleep**’.

**Sleep disorders**

It is important to determine whether you are suffering from a specific sleep disorder in addition to other possible causes. Think about the following questions.

- **Has anyone told you that your snoring is loud and disruptive?**  
  If so, you might be suffering from sleep apnea. This is a dangerous condition in which you stop breathing during sleep. There are effective treatments for this condition.

- **Have you ever experienced sudden attacks of irresistible sleepiness during the day in which you could not stay awake?**  
  If so, you may be suffering from narcolepsy in which people feel forced to sleep for a period ranging from a few seconds to half an hour. This can be dangerous, particularly when driving or operating machinery. However, the condition responds to medication.

- **Do you experience uncomfortable feelings in your legs or feet before falling asleep? Does strong movement ease the discomfort? Has anyone told you that your muscles twitch or jerk?**  
  If the answer is yes to any of these questions, you may have ‘nocturnal myoclonus’ in which there are numerous episodes of muscle twitching during the night. This condition can be treated with medication.

You should consult your doctor if you have answered ‘yes’ to any of the above questions.

If you are not able to find the cause of your problem, you should consult your doctor. Using a sleep diary can help you identify possible causes. Once the problem is identified, it will be possible to work out a solution to help you get back to a regular sleep routine.
Sleep diary

Keeping this sleep diary can help you identify possible causes of your sleep problem. It can also be a useful way of keeping track of your progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time of getting to bed</th>
<th>Time taken to fall asleep</th>
<th>No. of awakenings</th>
<th>Time spent awake during the night</th>
<th>Time of awakening in morning</th>
<th>Time of getting up</th>
<th>Naps</th>
<th>Exercise (type and duration)</th>
<th>Drugs, alcohol and caffeine</th>
<th>Significant events today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/10/13</td>
<td>10:45pm</td>
<td>11:30pm</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>30 min.</td>
<td>6:50am</td>
<td>7:15am</td>
<td></td>
<td>2-3pm 7-7:20pm</td>
<td>Two cups coffee, 15 cigs, one red wine</td>
<td>Job interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to get a better night’s sleep

The following pages outline a number of good sleep habits, as well as some of the most common causes of sleep disturbance. Practical guidelines for dealing with these disturbances are also covered. It is important that you read all of this section since most sleeping difficulties result from a number of different factors which all work together to disrupt your sleep.

Remember to get a friend or a family member to help and support you.

Establish a regular waking time

Establishing a regular sleep–wake pattern is very important, especially waking up at the same time each morning. The time that you wake helps to set (or synchronise) all of your body’s circadian rhythms. In fact, you should try not to vary the time of day that you get up by more than one hour, even across the weekends. In particular, avoid laying in bed until 12 noon on the weekend if you get up at 6 o’clock each weekday morning for work.

Establish a proper sleep environment

1. Comfort
The discomfort caused by a rumbling stomach, persistent aches and pains, or being too hot or cold, can prevent you from relaxing enough to fall asleep. Therefore, it is necessary that all your immediate needs have been met before you try to sleep. If you are hungry, have a light snack or a warm milk drink (caffeine-free) before you go to bed. If you are in pain, take a mild pain reliever. It is much easier to sleep if you are comfortable.

2. Noise
Noise during the night (such as traffic) is another common source of sleep disturbance. Even if you do not awaken and cannot remember the noises the next day, the noises can interfere with your normal sleep pattern. If you sleep in a place that tends to be noisy, try to shut out sound by closing windows and doors, wearing earplugs, or soundproofing the room. Even if you think that you cannot fall sleep without a radio or television in the background, remember that this noise will disrupt your sleep during the night. A clock radio that will automatically turn itself off may be useful.

3. Light
A light room will make it more difficult for you to sleep. Therefore, if you have trouble sleeping, it will be helpful to darken the room before going to bed and to ensure that the morning light does not wake you up in the morning. If you have a tendency to oversleep, it may be helpful to allow the light to enter the bedroom in the morning.
Allow a wind-down time before sleep

Make sure that you stop work at least 30 minutes before you go to bed and do something different and non-stressful, such as reading, watching television, or listening to music.

Use your bed only for sleep

Your bedroom should only be used for sleep, and of course sexual activity (which may help you to sleep). Activities such as eating, working, watching television, reading, drinking, arguing, or discussing the days problems should be done elsewhere, because their associated arousal may interfere with you getting to sleep. These activities also make you associate your bed with wakefulness and alertness rather than drowsiness and sleep onset. It may be useful to remove all objects in your bedroom that are not associated with sleep.

Do not stay in bed when you are not asleep

If you have been having problems falling asleep, only go to bed when you are sleepy. If you do not fall asleep in about 10 minutes, get up and go to another room. Stay up until sleepy and only then return to your bed to sleep. If you return to bed and still cannot sleep, repeat the preceding instruction. Do this as often as is necessary to fall asleep in 10 minutes.

Coping with worry and anxiety

One of the most common causes of sleep disturbance is anxiety. Many people find it difficult to wind down when they climb into bed at night after a hectic day. Often this is the first chance they have had to think about things that are concerning them. People can find themselves lying in bed worrying about their problems when they would really rather be asleep. The feelings of tension and arousal that accompany these thoughts make it more difficult to fall asleep; therefore, these individuals also begin to worry about their sleeplessness as well as their other problems. They may end up tossing and turning well into the night. If you think you are having trouble sleeping because you are anxious about things that are happening in your life, there are two things you can do to improve your sleep.

1. Set aside time for problem solving during the day

Bed is not the place for thinking about things that distress you. If you do not normally find time during the day for thinking about things that are happening in your life then you need to set aside a time each day to do so. It should be a time when you are alone. Try to think of ways to resolve your problems. Usually this will require you to make decisions, some of which may be difficult because they concern important features of your life such as family and work. However, putting off stressful decisions only extends your feelings of anxiety. In most cases, the uncertainty that accompanies difficult decisions is much more stressful and unpleasant than living with the outcome of the decision once the decision is made. Talk to your health worker if you would like more information about useful problem solving techniques.
2. Learn to relax
Learning ways to relax can help sleep problems. There are many relaxation techniques. Here, we will give you a breathing relaxation technique from which you will benefit:

- Breathe in slowly to the count of three seconds.
- When you get to three, slowly breathe out to the count of three seconds.
- Pause for three seconds before breathing in again
- After five minutes or so, say the word ‘relax’ to yourself as you breathe out
  - Breathe in using your abdomen (not your chest) and through your nose
  - Practise five to ten minutes at night in a comfortable chair
  - Keep in mind that the benefits of relaxation will not occur unless you practice
  - Do not try hard to relax or to sleep; just carry out the exercise.

3. Get out of bed
If you find yourself unable to stop worrying about things when you are in bed, get up and do something that is distracting yet relaxing, like knitting, listening to music, or reading a book. You may even want to listen to a relaxation tape. Do not return to bed until you feel sleepy again. When you do go back to bed, if you find that you are still worried and sleepless, get out of bed again and do something relaxing (as above) until you are sleepy enough to return to bed once more. At first, you may find you need to get out of bed a number of times before you are finally able to fall asleep. The important thing is that you will learn to associate your bed with sleep and not with worry.

Avoid napping during the day
It is not uncommon for people who have had a particularly bad night’s sleep to feel sleepy the next day. This daytime sleepiness can make it very tempting for you to take a nap in the middle of the day or early afternoon. However, if you have insomnia and nap in the afternoon, you make it much more likely that you will have another night of poor sleep. This is because when it comes to time for bed you will be less tired and will need less sleep because you have slept during the day. You will probably take longer to fall asleep and you will awaken more frequently during the night. The next day you are likely to feel sleepy again and will be tempted to have another daytime nap.

As you can see, this pattern of napping soon becomes a vicious cycle that makes your original sleeping problem even worse. If you have insomnia, no matter how tired you are during the day, try to avoid daytime naps (unless you are doing shift work). Stick to regular sleep times by going to bed at the same time every night and waking up at the same time every morning. If you cannot get to sleep until later than your normal sleep time, do not sleep late the next morning — get up at your normal waking time. By following these instructions, you will help to ensure that your natural body rhythm works with you, helping you to sleep at the times you want to sleep.
Avoid caffeine

This drug is found in coffee, tea, cocoa, cola drinks, as well as some over the counter medications. Consuming caffeine before bedtime, or drinking too much caffeine during the day will increase feelings of energy and wakefulness and make it more difficult for you to fall asleep. Any caffeine consumed after about 4 pm will still have an effect by the time you go to bed.

The table below shows the average quantity of caffeine in a variety of common drinks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caffeine content of common drinks per 150ml cup</th>
<th>mg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roasted and ground coffee (percolated)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant coffee</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decaffeinated coffee</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cola drinks</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk chocolate (60ml)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocoa (African)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocoa (South American)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes individuals get into a pattern of drinking too much caffeine during the day, sleeping badly at night time, and then consuming even larger quantities of caffeine the following day to help ward off sleepiness. Such behaviour sets up a vicious cycle, which is to be avoided wherever possible. Some helpful suggestions about caffeine are provided below:

- limit caffeine intake
- avoid drinking caffeine after about 4pm
- avoid using caffeine as a means of staying awake.

Avoid nicotine

Nicotine stimulates the nervous system by releasing a hormone called ‘adrenaline’. Adrenaline acts to arouse the body and mind, making you alert and ready for action. Your body normally releases small doses of adrenaline throughout the day and large doses when you are faced with something challenging or threatening. Therefore, smoking prior to bedtime causes adrenaline to be released, thereby increasing energy and liveliness at the very time when you want to be relaxed and ready for sleep. If you are a smoker and you normally have trouble getting to sleep at night, it is best that you do not smoke for at least an hour before going to bed (preferably an hour and a half), since this is the length of time it takes for the stimulating effects
of nicotine to wear off. Furthermore, if you wake up during the night and cannot go back to sleep, try not to smoke because the nicotine will make the sleeplessness worse.

**Avoid excessive alcohol**

A popular belief about alcohol is that alcohol will help you sleep if you are uptight and anxious. One or two glasses of wine or beer in the evening may help you to relax, but regularly having several drinks in the evening causes you to get much poorer sleep overall. As the alcohol in your system is broken down by your body, you tend to awaken more frequently and you spend less time in the deeper stages of sleep. If you drink regularly, you may find that you come to depend on the alcohol to reduce your anxiety and help you get to sleep. Not only will alcohol leave you feeling unrefreshed the next morning (because you are robbed of better quality sleep), but you are likely to have rebound anxiety which will last throughout the day and make it even more difficult to sleep at night. Alcohol is not the solution to sleeping problems so do not drink before you go to bed.

**Avoid sleeping pills**

The use of sleeping pills (sedative hypnotics) for any length of time causes as many problems as it solves. While sedative hypnotics will help you fall asleep and will decrease your anxiety in the short term, these benefits will disappear in the long term if you continue to use the sedatives regularly. That is, you will begin to feel anxious and sleepless even though you are taking the pills. When this happens you will be tempted to take more sleeping pills since doing so will bring back the benefits of the drug. Unfortunately, however, these benefits will not be permanent either so that after a time you again experience the unwanted symptoms of anxiety and sleeplessness. The process that makes you less sensitive to the benefits of the drug over time is called tolerance. While sleeping pills are useful for overcoming temporary sleep loss, the development of tolerance means that these drugs do not provide a long-term solution to sleeping problems.

Continual use of sleeping pills also has the disadvantage that you will find it extremely difficult to give up the drugs because doing so will cause you to experience withdrawal effects. The levels of anxiety and sleeplessness that you experience after stopping the drug are likely to be greater than the anxiety and sleeplessness that made you start using the drug. Coming off sleeping pills can also cause you to have vivid dreams and nightmares. These dreams are often highly emotional and disturbing.

If you do not use sleeping pills, or use them only occasionally, take heed of these warnings and do not start using them regularly. If you do use sleeping pills every night to help you sleep, it is recommended that you talk to your family doctor about reducing your intake of sleeping pills over time until you can stop using the pills altogether. Your doctor can help you come off the sleeping pills slowly without causing too many unpleasant side effects. Do not stop taking your sleeping pills without first talking to your doctor.
**Take a late snack**

A light bedtime snack, such as a warm glass of milk or a banana, will help some people get to sleep. These foods are high in an amino acid called tryptophan, which is thought to be involved in the biochemical systems that induce and maintain sleep. If nothing else, the snack will prevent you from getting hungry during the night.

**Don’t exercise before going to bed**

Avoid exercise in the three hours before you go to bed, otherwise you may still be too aroused following the exercise to be able to fall asleep.

**Coping with crying babies**

Young babies need frequent feeding and nappy-changing, therefore they tend to wake up often during the night. Moreover, a baby’s sleep cycle is much shorter than an adult’s sleep cycle. A baby usually has a 50-minute sleep cycle and tends to have about two to four cycles per sleep period. Therefore, babies tend to awaken much more frequently than adults who have a 90 minute sleep cycle and experience about 5 to 6 cycles per sleep period.

If you have a young baby to look after, there are a number of things that may help to reduce the extent of the baby’s crying. When a baby cries during the night, he/she usually wants food, or to be comforted. Trying to discipline a young baby by yelling at or ignoring a baby does not usually work. Many parents find it better to give the baby plenty of cuddles and kisses so that the baby quietens down and goes back to sleep feeling safe and secure. Moreover, it may help if you alter the baby’s feeding time so that the baby is fed immediately before you go to bed rather than, say, two hours later. This way, you may not have to get up as often during the night. These suggestions do not always work, but take heart — babies do grow up and one day they will actually sleep undisturbed all night long!
Summary of good sleep habits

1. Go to bed when you are sleepy and get up at the same time every morning. Do not sleep late in the mornings trying to make up for ‘lost sleep’ and, if you think you have insomnia, do not take naps during the day.

2. Set aside time for problem solving during the day, not last thing at night. Identify any problems that are causing you to be anxious and try to resolve these problems by making decisions.

3. Do not lie in bed worrying for long periods of time. If you cannot sleep, get out of bed and do something that is distracting yet relaxing, such as knitting or listening to music. (It will be important to plan appropriate activities in advance.) Return to bed only when you feel sleepy again.

4. Do not use alcohol to help you sleep.

5. If you experience insomnia, avoid drinking caffeinated drinks after about 4 pm and do not drink more than two cups of caffeinated drinks each day.

6. Do not smoke for at least an hour (preferably an hour and a half) before going to bed.

7. Avoid sleeping pills: they do not provide a long-term solution to sleeping problems.

8. If you sleep in a noisy place, try to reduce noise levels by closing windows and doors and wearing ear-plugs.

9. Ensure the room is dark and that the morning light does not filter in. If you have a tendency to oversleep, it may be helpful to let the morning light enter the bedroom.

10. Getting to sleep when you are comfortable is much easier than getting to sleep when you are hungry, cold, in some kind of physical pain, or when you need to go to the toilet. Make sure all your immediate needs have been met before you go to bed.

11. Regular exercise during the day or early evening can improve sleeping patterns. Try to avoid exercise late in the evening as this may make it more difficult for you to get to sleep (with the exception of sex, which may help you to sleep).

12. By doing the same thing every night before you go to bed you can improve your chances of falling asleep quickly. It is a good idea to develop a short routine involving things like washing your face and cleaning your teeth, which you can easily perform before going to bed at night. A hot bath for 20 minutes may also be helpful.

13. Be aware of things in the environment that may interfere with your sleep. For example, pets can disturb your sleep if they become active during the night or if they prevent you from moving freely in the bed. Moreover, digital clocks can be distracting if they glow or flash. It is often helpful to face the clock in the opposite direction.

1 The leaflet has been adapted with permission from World Health Organization. Mental Disorders in Primary Care: A WHO Educational Package, 1998, and Andrews G, Jenkins R. Management of Mental Disorders (UK Edition). Sydney: World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, 1999. Distributed for the publishers in the UK by IN 2 Mail Ltd, Fax: +44 (0) 1252 322315; PO Box 55, Aldershot, Hampshire GU12 4FP.
Depression is more than feeling sad or “blue;” depression can interfere with daily life. The best care for depression includes treatments that help you make progress with symptoms. The Depression Care Health Tracker was created to make it easier for patients and doctors to focus on actions that have been shown to help people feel better.

### DEPRESSION CARE HEALTH TRACKER

#### HOW PROGRESS IS MEASURED

Using the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) tool, your provider will ask 9 questions about the problems you might be having and how you are feeling. Your provider will let you know if you are getting better by using the PHQ-9.

#### TREATMENT GOALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remission:</th>
<th>When people who seek treatment get to a PHQ-9 score of less than 5.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response:</td>
<td>When people who seek treatment start to make progress toward feeling better by making a 50% improvement from their first PHQ-9 score. Lower is better.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MY PHQ-9 GOALS:
(desired PHQ-9 score by a specific date)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Remission (Feeling Better)</th>
<th>Partial Remission/Mild Depressive Symptoms</th>
<th>Mild Major Depression</th>
<th>Moderate Major Depression</th>
<th>Severe Major Depression</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

### MY PHQ-9 SCORES:
(actual PHQ-9 score at a specific date)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Remission (Feeling Better)</th>
<th>Partial Remission/Mild Depressive Symptoms</th>
<th>Mild Major Depression</th>
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</table>

Fill out this form with your doctor and work together to achieve the best care for treatment of depression. For more information visit [MNHealthScores.org](http://MNHealthScores.org).
### TAKING CARE OF MYSELF

Because my doctor and I are committed to improving my health, we will use this form to track my progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My next appointment is:</th>
<th>My doctor wants me to call if:</th>
<th>My doctor’s phone number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>date</td>
<td>time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BETWEEN NOW AND MY NEXT VISIT I PLAN TO:

#### GET RESTFUL SLEEP
A certain amount of restful sleep can improve your mood, health and safety. Everyone’s needs are different.

My goal is ________________ hours of sleep each night.

Suggestions for how to improve sleep: Weaning off/stopping caffeine and/or alcohol; getting up and going to bed at the same time; exercising daily but not immediately before bedtime.

#### TAKE MEDICATIONS
If other treatments don’t work, your doctor may prescribe medicine to reduce your symptoms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dose</th>
<th>Time</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### INCREASE EXERCISE
Depression symptoms often improve with exercise.

An activity I would enjoy is: _____________________________________________

____ minutes _____ times per week

#### EAT HEALTHY
The foods you eat can affect your daily life, mood and energy levels.

My diet goal is:_____________________________________________________

______________________

______________________

______________________

#### AVOID USE OF HARMFUL SUBSTANCES
If you use tobacco, recreational drugs or alcohol, the best you can do is to avoid them.

My goal is:_____________________

______________________

______________________

#### ENGAGE IN PLEASANT SOCIAL INTERACTIONS
Regular contact with family, friends or other supporters helps depressive symptoms.

I will call/email/visit with _________ people I enjoy spending time with.

#### FIND WAYS TO RELAX
Easing stress and anxiety can help you relax. Try different techniques to learn what works best for you.

An activity I would enjoy is: _____________________________________________

____ minutes _____ times per week

---

Depression Care Health Tracker • For more information visit [MNHealthScores.org](http://MNHealthScores.org).
Relapse Prevention Plan

The goal of making a relapse prevention plan is to prevent a recurrence of depressive symptoms as much as possible. After the patient has been in remission (PHQ-9 less than 5) for two consecutive months, initiate the Relapse Prevention Plan.

Patient Name: ____________________________ Today’s Date: ____________

Contact / Appointment Information

Primary Care Provider: ____________________________ Tel. No. ________________

Next appointment: Date: ____________ Time: ________________

Depression Care Manager: ____________________________ Tel. No. ________________

Next appointment: Date: ____________ Time: ________________

Maintenance Antidepressant Medications

1. _____________ : ________ tablet(s) of ________ mg ________ Take at least until ____________
2. _____________ : ________ tablet(s) of ________ mg ________ Take at least until ____________
3. _____________ : ________ tablet(s) of ________ mg ________ Take at least until ____________
4. _____________ : ________ tablet(s) of ________ mg ________ Take at least until ____________

Call your primary care provider or your depression care manager with any questions (See contact information above)

Other Treatments

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
Goals: How to Minimize Stress from Depression

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

Personal Warning Signs

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

If symptoms return, contact: 

Clinician Signature ___________________________ Date __________

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