

# Shamong Township Schools

## June 2026



## Live Well, Work Well

### Breaking Down Mental Health Stigma

Mental health issues and mental illness are common. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), more than 1 in 5 adults experience mental illness each year. Despite the prevalence of illnesses and increasing recognition of mental health ([Aetna](#) / [Horizon OMNIA](#)) as a critical component of overall well-being, stigma remains a significant barrier to receiving treatment and support. The fear of judgment and discrimination often prevents individuals from seeking help.

NAMI reports that roughly half (52%) of adults with a mental illness go without treatment.

It's imperative to raise awareness and educate others about mental health to combat stigma and create a more compassionate and supportive society. Stigma grows in silence, so here are some tips for helping break the silence:

- **Educate yourself and others.** Understanding the complexity of mental illness, including substance use disorders, can help dispel misconceptions.

Take the time to learn about mental health conditions, symptoms, and treatments.

- **Talk openly.** Break the silence surrounding mental health by initiating open and honest conversations with friends, family, and colleagues. Sharing personal experiences or listening without judgment can help create a safe space for others.
- **Choose words carefully.** Avoid stigmatizing words and use person-first language, emphasizing the individual rather than their condition.
- **Encourage equal treatment of physical and mental health conditions.** Mental illness is a medical condition, so it should be treated like any other medical condition.
- **Speak up.** If you suspect someone is struggling, send them messages of support or help them get on the path to treatment.

By taking proactive steps to reduce mental health stigma and break down barriers, you can help create an inclusive and supportive environment where everyone feels empowered to seek help.

Brought to you by Integrity Consulting Group

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These articles are intended for informational purposes only and are not intended to be exhaustive, nor should any discussion or opinions be construed as professional advice. Readers should contact a health professional for appropriate advice.

# EWG Releases the 2026 Dirty Dozen List

Each year, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) releases the Dirty Dozen, ranking pesticide residue levels based on produce samples taken by federal agencies. Nearly 100% of all conventional fresh produce sampled this year tested positive for potentially harmful pesticides, with Dirty Dozen items accounting for 96% of those samples. Here's the 2026 Dirty Dozen list:

1. Spinach
2. Kale, collard and mustard greens
3. Strawberries
4. Grapes
5. Nectarines
6. Peaches
7. Cherries
8. Apples
9. Blackberries

10. Pears
11. Potatoes
12. Blueberries

The EWG also publishes the [Clean Fifteen](#) list. Pineapples, sweet corn, and avocados continue to top the list. Nearly 60% of the Clean Fifteen produce had no detectable pesticide residues.

Whether organic or not, all properly handled fresh produce is considered safe to eat. The EWG stresses that the benefits of a diet rich in fruits and vegetables outweigh the risk of pesticide exposure. Do your best to get your daily dose of healthy produce while still being an informed shopper. If you're still uneasy about pesticides after scrubbing your produce, frozen or canned versions can be a great alternative. Ultimately, it comes down to what works best for your household and budget.

## Spring Clean Your Routine

Spring isn't just for cleaning out your closet. It's also a great time to refresh your mind and body. It's important to check in on yourself regularly; a routine refresh can help you avoid illness, reduce stress, and feel in control. Consider the following ways to freshen up your daily routine this spring:

- **Assess your current routine.** The first step in spring cleaning your routine is to take stock of your current habits and activities. Are there tasks or commitments that no longer serve you? Are there areas where you feel overwhelmed or stressed?
- **Declutter your home.** No clothing, equipment, or other belongings are off-limits, so get rid of items you don't use anymore.
- **Create space for self-care.** Prioritize self-care activities or take a few moments each day to relax and recharge.

- **Reset your recipes with seasonal produce.** Spring produce includes vegetables such as asparagus, artichokes, radishes, rhubarb, and peas, as well as fruits like strawberries. In-season produce is picked at the peak of its freshness and nutritional value and is packed with essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that boost the immune system.
- **Establish [healthy habits](#).** For example, you could commit to a regular sleep schedule or incorporate more movement into your day.

Start spring cleaning your routine today to create one that supports your mental health and enables you to thrive in spring and beyond. Log into your [Aetna](#) / [Horizon OMNIA](#) member account to find more resources.

# Recipe of the Month

## Spring Vegetable Saute

Makes: 4 servings

### Ingredients

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- ½ cup sweet onion (sliced)
- 1 garlic clove (finely chopped)
- 3 tiny new potatoes (quartered)
- ¾ cup carrot (sliced)
- ¾ cup asparagus pieces
- ¾ cup sugar snap peas or green beans
- ½ cup radishes (quartered)
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- ½ tsp. dried dill

### Nutritional Information

(per serving)

|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| Total calories | 138    |
| Total fat      | 1 g    |
| Protein        | 4 g    |
| Sodium         | 177 mg |
| Carbohydrate   | 29 g   |
| Dietary fiber  | 5 g    |
| Saturated fat  | 0 g    |
| Total sugars   | 4 g    |

Source: MyPlate

### Preparations

1. Heat the oil in a skillet. Cook the onion for two minutes, then add the garlic and cook for another minute.
2. Stir in the potatoes and carrots. Cover, turn the heat to low and cook until almost tender, about four minutes. Add a tablespoon or two of water if the vegetables start to brown.
3. Add the asparagus, peas, radishes, salt, black pepper, and dill. Cook, stirring often, until just tender, about four minutes more.

#### Summertime Life Events Reminder:

While generally able to change benefit elections only during Open Enrollment, certain life events qualify as an exception. If you experience, for instance, a marriage, birth, or a spouse's loss of coverage over the summer, notify the District benefits contact *immediately* to learn options.

**Learn more about Continuing Coverage at [shamongschools.org](https://shamongschools.org) / District / Staff Resources / Benefits / Employee Benefits Online.**

#### Telehealth Reminder: CVS Virtual Care

You have access to CVS Virtual Care telehealth services when you need convenient and flexible care. Learn more at [cvs.com](https://cvs.com).



# Your care. Your way.

## Convenient and affordable virtual care wherever you need it\*

From your therapy appointments to quick care, we've got you covered. You can use CVS Health Virtual Care™ in addition to your traditional network of providers. Access is included as part of your medical plan from Aetna®, a CVS Health® company because **healthier happens together™**.



### On-demand care

Access 24/7 quick care for minor illnesses and injuries



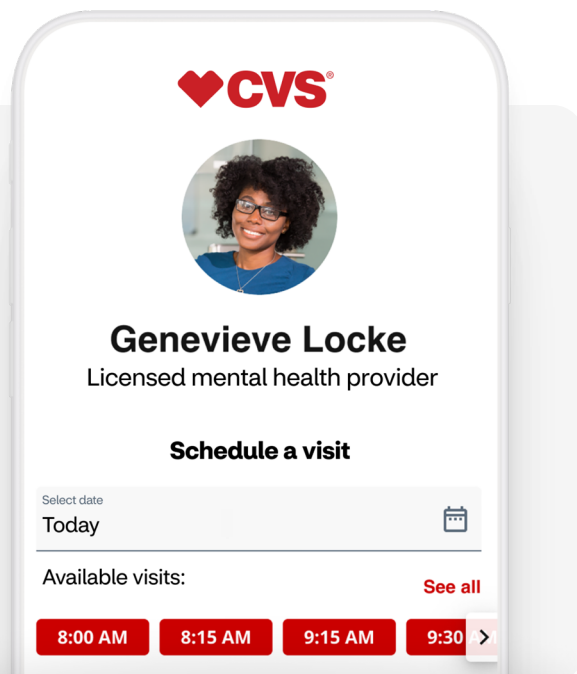
### Mental health services

Get counseling for things like anxiety and stress, plus psychiatry services for medication management

**Extend to in-person care when needed, at nearby MinuteClinic® locations\*\* or in-network provider clinics.**

## Get started today with CVS Health Virtual Care

- 1 Activate your virtual care benefit by visiting [CVS.com/virtual-care](https://CVS.com/virtual-care) or scan the QR code below
- 2 Create an account and confirm your details
- 3 Schedule a mental health appointment, or request on-demand care 24/7/365



Register today at [CVS.com/virtual-care](https://CVS.com/virtual-care)

\*Age restrictions do apply. Mental Health services coverage varies by employer. Make sure to check specific plan benefits to better understand covered mental health services.

\*\*MinuteClinic® in-person services are not included with this product and are subject to plan benefit.

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