

Wellness Matters

NOVEMBER 2023

Brought to you by INTEGRITY CONSULTING GROUP



The Link Between Health and Happiness

Happiness is a positive emotion that can include feelings of gladness, satisfaction, joy, and well-being. Many Americans desire happy, fulfilling lives. However, happiness is not an isolated feeling. It's complex and connected to your overall physical and mental health.

Happiness and Physical Health

A study published in the Psychological Science Journal found a link between happiness and physical health. When your body is healthy, it serves as a foundation for happiness to thrive. Exercise, diet, and sleep all play vital roles in facilitating health and happiness.

The body releases natural feel-good chemicals known as endorphins during physical activity. This can improve mood and reduce stress and anxiety. Physical activity also improves cardiovascular health and boosts energy levels.

A balanced diet of lean proteins, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats can support improved cognitive function, emotional stability, and overall well-being.

Sleep is another factor that impacts health and happiness. Studies show that quality sleep can improve focus, mental health, cognitive performance, and emotional resilience.

Happiness and Mental Health

Mental health plays a critical role in overall well-being and happiness. It encompasses your emotional, psychological, and social state. Strong mental health allows happiness to flourish.

Healthy relationships are crucial for mental well-being. Supportive friendships and positive social interactions can foster a sense of belonging and contribute to happiness.

Professional guidance can also help you maintain positive mental health. Mental health professionals can provide tools and support to overcome challenges. They can also help you identify and address any underlying mental health conditions which can contribute to your happiness in the long run.

The Benefits of Meditation for Anxiety

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, anxiety affects 19% of American adults every year, making anxiety disorders the most common mental illness in the United States.

Meditation has been proven to help improve mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression. A recent study published by JAMA Psychiatry found that meditation may be as effective as medication for managing long-term anxiety symptoms for some people.

How Does Meditation Help with Anxiety?

Meditation involves focusing your attention on the present and reducing the flow of thoughts in your mind. As a result, it can help you reduce negative feelings and social anxiety symptoms, as well as help you accept your anxious thoughts and feelings. Studies have shown that meditation can also reduce chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and insomnia.

Beginner Meditation

If you're new to meditation, one of the best places to begin

is by focusing on being present in the moment. You can start by focusing on your body or breathing for 15 minutes at a time. Try this while walking, eating, or relaxing on the couch.

You can also try mantra meditation, which involves focusing on a specific thought or phrase. To do this, find a comfortable place to sit where you'll repeat your mantra to yourself, redirecting your thoughts if they begin to wander.

Guided imagery meditation is another good practice for people who have anxiety. It involves visualizing a place, sound, or object you find relaxing and focusing on it while your body unwinds. You may consider using a guided imagery video or app to help you begin.

Conclusion

Anxiety is extremely common in the United States. If you suffer from anxiety or anxious thoughts, meditation may help. Try one of the practices listed here or consult a medical health care professional for further information.

Older Adults are at High Risk for Severe RSV Infection

Respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, is a common virus that affects the lungs and breathing passages

RSV infections can be dangerous for certain adults. Adults at highest risk for severe RSV infection include

- Older adults, especially those 65 years and older
- Adults with chronic heart or lung disease
- Adults with weakened immune systems

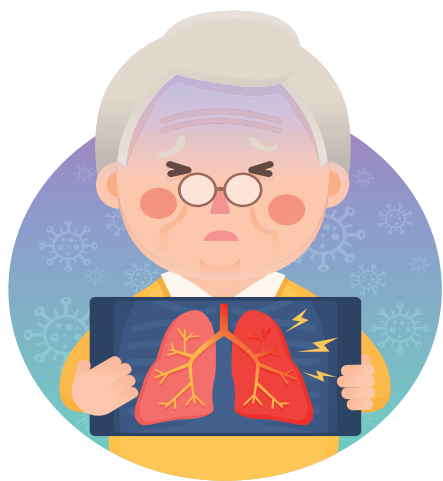
Each year an estimated 177,000 older adults are hospitalized and 14,000 of them die in the United States due to RSV infection.

Severe RSV infection

When an older adult gets RSV infection, they typically have mild cold-like symptoms including runny nose, sore throat, cough, and headache. But RSV can sometimes lead to serious conditions such as:

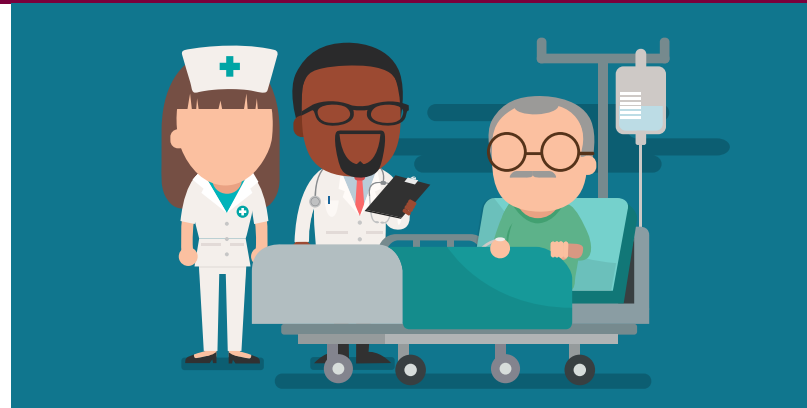
- Pneumonia (infection of the lungs)
- More severe symptoms for people with asthma
- More severe symptoms for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) (a chronic disease of the lungs that makes it hard to breathe)
- Congestive heart failure (when the heart can't pump blood and oxygen to the body's tissues)

Older adults who get very sick from RSV may need to be hospitalized. Some may even die. Older adults are at greater risk than young adults for serious complications from RSV because our immune systems weakens when we are older.



Scientists are working to develop vaccines

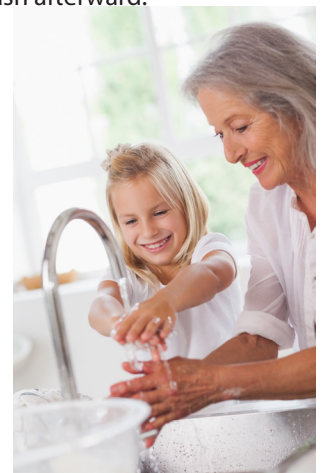
There is no vaccine to prevent RSV infection yet, but scientists are working hard to develop one. If you are concerned about your risk for RSV, talk to your doctor.



How to protect yourself and loved ones

RSV season occurs each year in most regions of the U.S. during fall, winter, and spring. If you are at high risk for severe RSV infection, or if you interact with an older adult, you should take extra care to stay healthy:

- **Wash your hands often**
Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Washing your hands will help protect you from germs.
- **Keep your hands off your face**
Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Germs spread this way.
- **Avoid close contact with sick people**
Avoid close contact, such as kissing, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who have cold-like symptoms.
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes**
Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue in the trash afterward.
- **Clean and disinfect surfaces**
Clean and disinfect surfaces that people frequently touch, such as doorknobs. When people infected with RSV touch surfaces and objects, they can leave behind germs. Also, when they cough or sneeze, droplets containing germs can land on surfaces and objects.
- **Stay home when you are sick**
If possible, stay home from work, school, and public areas when you are sick. This will help protect others from catching your illness.



**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention**
National Center for Immunization
and Respiratory Diseases