

VIRTUAL SUPPORT FROM YOUR DISEASE MANAGEMENT TEAM

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We are glad to give you support with printed materials and expert disease management clinicians. However, we would also like to help you stay healthy through free virtual support, which we offer in three exciting ways:

Webinars: We offer live webinars via computer and phone. Our live webinars bring you up-to-date information about medical subjects from our clinical experts through presentations and audio. After the online session, you will have a chance to ask questions of the clinician. Getting signed up for a free Zoom session is easy. Visit HumanaMilitary.com/dm to make your reservation today.

Community groups: These live sessions, conducted by our clinical experts, give you the support you need to stay healthy. For beneficiaries struggling with diabetes or depression/anxiety disorder, signing up is easy. Visit the group meetings calendar at HumanaMilitary.com/dm.

Web-based training: On our disease management website, you will find videos about your disease and how to control it effectively. Available to you 24/7, these digital resources give you the knowledge you need to stay focused on your health. Please visit HumanaMilitary.com/dm to access this information.

We hope you will take advantage of these exciting tools to help you achieve your health and wellness goals.



Managing your health during colder months

While winter brings a lot of chances to get together with friends and family, it can also bring more opportunities for exposure to colds and infections. Good news! Spring is right around the corner!

Some tips to help this winter:

1. Prevent colds and infections by washing your hands frequently, sneezing into your elbow or a tissue and not your hand, eating as healthy as possible and getting six to eight hours of sleep every night.
2. Ask your provider about getting the flu, COVID, RSV or pneumonia shot this season.
3. Ask your employer if there are plans to prevent spreading colds in the workplace and how they will react if multiple people get sick. Wear a mask if you are more susceptible to infection and see if you can work from home.
4. Take medication with care, and talk with your provider about what are considered safe medications.
5. If you do get sick, schedule an appointment, or go to urgent care if after hours. Call the TRICARE Nurse Advice Line at (800) 874-2273.

Mental health crisis



A mental health crisis is any time you can no longer cope or be in control of your situation. You might experience great emotional distress such as suicidal feelings, extreme anxiety or panic attacks, or psychotic episodes (like delusions, hallucinations, paranoia or hearing voices). You also may be at higher risk of harming yourself or others.

Many things can lead to a mental health crisis. Stress, physical illness, problems at work or at school, changes in family situations, trauma/violence in the community or substance use, may trigger an increase in behaviors or symptoms that lead to a crisis.

Some of the warning signs to be on the lookout for:

- Poor daily self-care, like refusing to perform personal hygiene habits, get out of bed, or eat
- Extreme changes in mood, like suddenly becoming depressed and withdrawing or suddenly becoming happy/calm after a period of depression
- Violent, threatening, or aggressive behavior, like making verbal threats, destroying property, hurting other, or using inappropriate language
- Experience unexplained physical symptoms, like headaches or stomach aches
- Decrease in interest and/or participation in recreational activities, friendships, school or work

A mental health crisis is as important to address as any health crisis. It is difficult to predict when a crisis will happen. While there are triggers and signs, a crisis can occur without warning. It can occur even when a person has followed their treatment or crisis prevention plan and used techniques they learned from mental health professionals. If you or a loved one is in or nearing a crisis, seek help.

- If you are in a crisis, please call 911 or the 24 hour crisis hotline at (800) 273-8255.
- To find a professional in your area, call Humana Military at (800) 444-5445 or visit [HumanaMilitary.com](https://www.humanamilitary.com).
- For answers to your urgent care questions, healthcare advice, and more contact the Nurse Advice Line at (800) TRICARE (option 1) to speak to registered nurses who are available 24/7.

CRISIS PLAN



Do you have a plan in place in the event a crisis occurs? Unfortunately, crises do happen, and it is important to be prepared. Having a plan in place can help you to feel empowered, rather than powerless. Your provider can help you to create one. Be sure to share your plan with friends and family.

When creating a plan be sure to include specific information. This plan can help when you are in a crisis by laying out all of your steps and contacts. When in a crisis, it can be difficult to think about next steps. Your plan should include:

- Phone numbers for a therapist, psychiatrist and other healthcare providers
- Local crisis line phone number
- Trusted family and friend's contact numbers
- Addresses of walk-in crisis centers or emergency rooms
- National Suicide Prevention lifeline
- Your address and phone number
- Your diagnosis and medications
- Previous psychosis or suicide attempt information
- History of drug use
- Mental health triggers
- Things/coping mechanisms that have helped in the past
- Step-by-step instructions of what to do when feeling suicidal

Keep multiple copies of your plan, and make sure they are handy. Consider keeping a copy in your car, home, friend/family home and your phone. Also ensure that your provider has a copy and is in agreement with your plan.

Being Prepared for a Crisis | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness

Nutrition and mental care



The benefits of a good diet go beyond physical health. What you eat directly affects the structure and function of your brain and, ultimately, your mood.

Researchers in the field of nutritional psychiatry have found strong links between diet, anxiety and depression. Evidence suggests that healthy dietary patterns (such as those with high intake of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, fish and minimal intake of processed foods) can decrease risk of anxiety and depression and improve symptoms. Whereas unhealthy dietary patterns (those with frequent consumption of high-fat, high-sugar, and processed foods) are harmful to the brain, can worsen your body's regulation of insulin and promote inflammation.

Your brain requires a constant supply of fuel. That fuel comes from the foods you eat. High-quality foods that contain plenty of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants help your brain function best. "Low-premium" fuel (such as processed or refined foods) are harmful to the brain and can worsen your body's regulation of insulin and promote inflammation.

References:

[Health.harvard.edu/blog/nutritional-psychiatry-your-brain-on-food-201511168626](https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/nutritional-psychiatry-your-brain-on-food-201511168626)

[Ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4131231/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4131231/)



FROM THE CLINICIAN

Due to the stigma surrounding mental care and health, many people do not reach out for help. The behavioral health disease management program works to destigmatize this type of care, encouraging beneficiaries along the way. As clinician Lisa explains, "I feel I have done my job well if I can help even one person recognize everyone struggles with their mental well-being at some point in their lives. It is not uncommon to need assistance and that it's okay to ask for help. Practicing self-care, abstaining from substance use, and working with providers on a treatment plan can have profound impacts on a person's mental and overall health."

One of Lisa's beneficiaries, Aquisha, has been a wonderful example of this. She is juggling many things in her life and made the decision to prioritize herself and her mental well-being. Lisa was able to have conversations with Aquisha about her feelings and help her set goals around establishing care. Now, Aquisha has the care she needs and is a huge advocate for encouraging others to prioritize/seek mental care. "Together, we can create an environment that encourages openness and trust so that people can feel safe to get help."



FROM THE PATIENT

Aquisha a participant in the Humana Military behavioral health disease management program. She explains she was hesitant to join the program at first, but her clinician has made all the difference in the world. She normally has reservations talking to people she doesn't know well, but with her clinician's help, it has been much easier for her and helped her in her well-being journey.

"It is a battle to put yourself first," Aquisha explains, "especially when it comes to caring for your mental well-being." Once she got the phone call and letter, she knew that not only was this important for her to do, but this was a legitimate action she could take to improve her health and well-being. Having Humana Military initiate the outreach was important, as it took that step out of her hands and allowed her to get started quickly on her health goals. Lisa, her clinician, was also patient with her and worked around her schedule to ensure that she would be able to focus her attention appropriately.

"You can do this in private without having to feel ashamed. A quick phone call can make a lot of impact and can be done privately," said Aquisha. "It is brave to seek help with your behavioral health before small problems become worse. The support, education and experience of the disease management program help you get better. It can definitely save your life."

THE DOCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE



We are beginning to see warmer weather in some areas of the country. As we approach spring, we can see life around us blooming. Many people begin to have busy schedules, plan to get outside and become active and/or plan activities or vacations with those around them. For those that have anxiety, sometimes this can become overwhelming. If you begin to experience anxiety, there are many things you can do to help. However, I would like to concentrate on how you might be able to utilize breathing techniques when you start to feel anxious.

Breathing techniques, drawn from ancient practices like yoga and meditation, offer powerful tools for managing anxiety and restoring calm. One effective method is diaphragmatic breathing, also known as belly breathing. Sit or lie comfortably, placing one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen. Inhale deeply through your nose, letting your abdomen rise, then exhale slowly through your mouth, feeling your abdomen fall. This engages the diaphragm, triggering the body's relaxation response and reducing stress.

Another technique involves inhaling deeply for a count of four, holding for seven, and exhaling slowly for eight. This extended exhalation helps release tension and induces relaxation.

Box breathing, also known as square breathing, is another powerful technique. Start by inhaling deeply for a count of four, hold the breath for a count of four, then exhale slowly for a count of four, and finally, hold the breath again for a count of four before beginning the cycle again.

Picture your breath as a gentle wave, bringing peace with each inhale and exhale. By focusing on your breath, you can anchor yourself in the present moment, away from past worries and future uncertainties.

Incorporating these techniques into your daily routine can profoundly impact your well-being, helping restore balance and perspective. Regular practice builds resilience, training the mind to respond calmly to stressors.

Mastering breathing techniques takes time, so be patient with yourself. Whether it's a few deep breaths during a busy day or a dedicated meditation practice, remember that peace is within reach—just a breath away. I hope these breathing tools are helpful and that you enjoy an invigorating and happy spring.



Sarah Rasco, MD





OVEN CRUSTED CHICKEN BREAST

Prep time: 20 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes
Yield: 4 servings
Serving size: 3 oz chicken breast, 1 C salad

A healthy way to fry chicken

Ingredients for chicken:

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (3 oz each)
 1 egg white (or substitute liquid egg white)
 1 C fat-free evaporated milk
 1 C breadcrumbs
 ¼ C rolled oats, crushed; pulse a few times in the food processor or crush between fingers to make smaller pieces
 1 C whole-wheat flour
 2 Tbsp olive oil or vegetable oil

Ingredients for salad:

2 Tbsp lemon juice
 ½ Tbsp olive oil
 4 C red leaf lettuce, rinsed and dried
 1 C cherry tomatoes, rinsed and halved
 ¼ tsp salt
 ¼ tsp ground black pepper

Nutritional information (per serving):

Calories	264
Total fat	11 g
Protein	24 g
Cholesterol	49 mg
Potassium	553 mg
Carbohydrates	18 g
Saturated fat	2 g
Total fiber	3 g
Sodium	263 mg
Percent daily values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. Place chicken in a freezer bag with the air squeezed out, and pound each breast down to ½-inch thickness.
3. Combine the egg white and evaporated milk in a bowl, and mix well. In a separate bowl, combine the breadcrumbs and crushed oats, and mix well.
4. Coat the chicken breasts in flour, and shake off the excess. Dip the chicken breasts in the egg and milk mixture, and drain off the excess. Then dip the chicken breasts in the breadcrumb mixture to coat, and shake off the excess. After all chicken breasts have been coated, discard any leftover breading mixture.
5. Heat oil in a large sauté pan. Stir fry the chicken over medium-high heat on one side until golden brown, about 2–3 minutes. Turn carefully, and pan fry the second side for an additional 2–3 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from the pan, and place on paper towels to soak up excess oil. Place on baking sheet, and finish cooking in a 350 °F oven for about 5–8 minutes (to a minimum internal temperature of 165 °F).
6. For the salad, combine lemon juice and olive oil, and mix well to make a dressing. Toss the lettuce leaves and cherry tomatoes with the dressing, salt and pepper.
7. Serve 1 cup of salad with one piece of chicken.

Tip: Try serving with a side of oven-roasted potatoes.



Care management program

- Toll-free phone number: **(800) 881-9227**
- Find information on the My health page
HumanaMilitary.com/myaccess



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Staying active for optimal health

Mood-lifting benefits of staying active and fit



Staying fit can make a real difference in your well-being. Working out and other forms of physical activity can ease symptoms of depression or anxiety and make you feel better. Exercise may also help keep depression and anxiety from coming back once you start to feel good again. In one study, researchers found that those who got regular, vigorous exercise were 25 percent less likely to develop depression or an anxiety disorder over the next five years.

Regular exercise may help ease depression and anxiety by:

- Releasing endorphins: Natural brain chemicals that can increase your sense of well-being.
- Taking your mind off worries: Avoid negative thoughts that can add to your anxiety and depression.
- Helping you gain confidence: Getting in shape can make you feel better about your looks.

You don't need to overdue your workout to gain the benefits. In fact, doctors suggest a 10-minute walk may be all you need to lift your mood temporarily, giving you several hours of relief. Of

course, there's no guarantee you'll improve your mood by staying fit, but the overall benefits of exercise go far beyond just helping you feel better. Researchers say the beneficial effects of exercise on physical health are well documented, and you should do all you can to stay active.

Find ways to move more, sit less

Cutting back on sitting time may not be easy, since many jobs now require you to sit in front of a computer for most of the day. But you can find ways to be more active at home or work. Try to take breaks every couple of hours or take a quick walk around the halls or to step outside (bathroom breaks don't count). And get away from your desk for lunch.

The bottom line

You can improve your health and avoid negative impacts to your well-being by limiting the time you sit. Find time every day for some physical activity – the more you move, the more you can reduce your risk for depression, anxiety and other conditions.

Physical Activity Is Good for the Mind and the Body - News & Events | health.gov