

**TOPEKA**

**AUGUST 2021**

# Health & Wellness

[www.TopekaHealthandWellness.com](http://www.TopekaHealthandWellness.com)

**MAGAZINE**

**BACK TO  
SCHOOL**

**FREE  
TAKE ONE!**

**10 BACK-  
TO-SCHOOL  
HEALTH TIPS  
FOR PARENTS**



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front page photo

**Is your teen  
stressed out  
by school?  
Here's how  
to help**

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**Why you should run with your kids**

**Helping Topekans live happier, healthier lives since 2015!**



# Don't Ignore Signs of Stroke

**W**ith hospitals around the country reporting a recent drop in the number of stroke cases arriving in their emergency rooms, some health experts suspect that fear of COVID-19 may be causing people to avoid going to the hospital and calling 911 for non-COVID related medical emergencies, like stroke.

“During this pandemic, emergency care professionals like myself are working to provide care for those who need it. So much of what we do is time sensitive. We are particularly aware of the ‘Big Four,’ trauma, sepsis, stroke and heart attack, so it’s important to remember, when it comes to stroke or any medical emergency — call 911 and get to a hospital immediately. Hospitals and urgent care facilities across the nation are open and ready to help,” says Dr. Ben Usatch, medical director at UCHHealth Highlands Ranch Hospital emergency department and assistant professor of Emergency Medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

Here are a few important things to keep in mind about stroke to protect your health and the health of others:

- **Emergency preparedness:** Not only are emergency healthcare providers working tirelessly to provide care for those who need it, including those showing signs of stroke, they are also taking all necessary steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and are trained to treat patients safely.

- **Time:** Time is of the essence. It is critical to call 911 immediately if a stroke is suspected.

- **Stroke Signs:** The signs of stroke can be subtle and hard to recognize, so educating yourself and others is key to noticing and responding quickly. Keep the acronym BE FAST in mind to help you identify some of the signs of stroke in yourself or a loved one. BE FAST stands for Balance, Eyes, Face, Arm, Speech, Time, and refers to these signs of stroke: difficulty with balance, vision loss, droopy facial appearance, arm weakness, slurred speech — as well as the need to act quickly when these symptoms present.

- **Sudden Onset:** While the BE FAST signs are most common, the sudden onset of any of these 10 signs and symptoms could mean stroke: confusion, difficulty understanding, dizziness, loss of balance, numbness, severe headache, trouble speaking, trouble walking, vision changes and weakness.

- **Risk Factors:** Though strokes affect people of all ages and backgrounds, being advised of risk factors is important.

While some risk factors are beyond one’s control, including family health history, gender, age and ethnic background, other risk factors can be managed with lifestyle changes and treatment and include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, atrial fibrillation, smoking, diabetes, poor circulation, lack of physical activity and obesity.

- **Take Action:** Spread the word and empower others to seek immediate medical attention if stroke is suspected. Tell friends and family that it’s okay to “over-react” and call 911 at the first signs and symptoms.

For more shareable information and resources, visit [StrokeAwareness.com](http://StrokeAwareness.com), developed by Genentech Inc, a member of the Roche Group.

Remember, stroke does not stop during a health crisis and can be disabling or even fatal.

“BE FAST” was developed by Intermountain Healthcare, as an adaptation of the FAST model implemented by the American Stroke Association.

CONTINUE TO  
**TAKE ACTION**  
WHEN IT COMES  
TO STROKE AND  
**CALL 911**



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— StatePoint



## STROKE KILLS.

### **BE FAST! Call 911.**

Know the Signs:

<b>Balance</b>	sudden loss of balance or coordination
<b>Eyes</b>	sudden change in vision
<b>Face</b>	sudden weakness of the face
<b>Arms</b>	sudden weakness of an arm or leg
<b>Speech</b>	sudden difficulty speaking
<b>Time</b>	time the symptoms started

During a stroke 32,000 brain cells  
die every second. **BE FAST! Call 911.**





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## ON THE COVER:

Our cover this month features kids excited to finally be going back to school with their friends.

Our thanks go out to all of our advertisers and contributing experts who helped inform our readers this month! Let us know how you like what we have to offer, and any suggestions you may have for improvements & additions, simply by emailing us at info@TopekaHealthandWellness.com.

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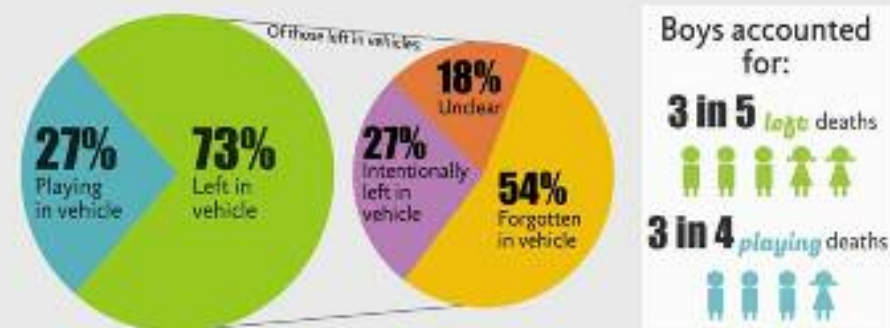


## Heatstroke Deaths of Children in Vehicles

BY THE NUMBERS NHTSA (2012)

- 10** the minutes it takes for a car to reach deadly temperatures on an 80 degree day
- 38** the average number of children who die from vehicular heatstroke in the US each year
- 57** the lowest known outside temperature at which heatstroke can occur

BY CIRCUMSTANCE Guard (2005)



BY AGE Guard (2005)



TIPS NHTSA (2012)

**Never** leave children in a vehicle unattended, even with the windows cracked, even "for a minute"

**Always** check the backseat when exiting the vehicle (put your phone or your purse in the backseat to create a reminder system)

**Always** keep vehicle doors and trunks locked and keys out of reach

**Make** an agreement with your childcare provider to always call you when your child is absent

**Call 911** if you see a child alone in a vehicle

For detailed sources and resources: [ChildrensSafetyNetwork.org/publications/heatstrokeinfographic](http://ChildrensSafetyNetwork.org/publications/heatstrokeinfographic)  
For NHTSA's Look Before You Lock Campaign: [safercar.gov/parents/heat-involved.htm](http://safercar.gov/parents/heat-involved.htm)



Children's Safety Network

[www.ChildrensSafetyNetwork.org](http://www.ChildrensSafetyNetwork.org)

July 2013



**"There can be joy and peace at the end of life. It deserves the same dignity and respect as the beginning of life."**

- Camille Carson, Midland Care Hospice House RN

# Hospice Myth vs. Fact

Myth: Enrolling in hospice means giving up on living.



Fact: Enrolling in hospice is choosing to focus on quality of life and focused care. People enrolled in hospice actually live, on average, 29 days longer.

Myth: To get hospice care, I will have to leave my home for an inpatient facility and give up my primary care doctor.



Fact: Hospice is not a place, it is a service. 67% of hospice patients receive hospice services in their own homes with their own doctor as part of the team.

Myth: Hospice care is expensive and my family won't be able to afford it.



Fact: Hospice is often available at little or no cost to the patient. Hospice is a covered benefit under Medicare and many private insurance companies.

Myth: Hospice care is just for people with a cancer diagnosis.



Fact: Hospice serves people of any age dealing with any life-limiting illness, and is not limited to those with a cancer diagnosis.

Myth: If it's time for hospice, my doctor will talk to me about it.



Fact: Many doctors wait for the patient to bring up hospice, leading to late enrollment. Families and patients often wish they had enrolled in hospice earlier.

**The sooner you call, the sooner we can help! | [www.midlandcare.org](http://www.midlandcare.org) | 1-800-491-3691**

Sources: Comparing hospice and nonhospice patient survival among patients who die within a three-year window, Journal of Pain Symptom Management. 2007 Mar;33(3):238-46; Quality of Life in Hospice Patients With Terminal Illness, Western Journal of Nursing Research, 2004, 26(1), 113-128; NHPCO's Facts and Figures, Hospice Care in America, 2014 Edition



# What is stress and how can I deal with it?

By Michaela Butterworth,  
Health Promotion Specialist

Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Stress is how the brain and body respond to any demand. Any type of challenge - such as performance at work or school, a significant life change, a traumatic event, or even a positive life change can be stressful.



Michaela Butterworth

There are different types of stress - all of which carry physical and mental health risks. A stressor may be a one-time or short-term occurrence, or it can happen repeatedly over a long time. Some people may cope with stress more effectively and recover from stressful events more quickly than others.

While we may know what it's like to feel stressed, it's not always easy to pin down exactly what stress means. When we say things like "this is stressful" or "I'm stressed", we might be talking about:

- Situations or events that put pressure on us – for example, times where we have lots to do and think about, or don't have much control over what happens.
- Our reaction to being placed under pressure – the feelings we get when we have demands placed on us that we find difficult to cope with.

We each experience stress differently in different situations. Sometimes you might be able to tell right away when you're feeling under stress, but other times you

might keep going without recognizing the signs. Stress can affect you both emotionally and physically, and it can affect the way you behave.

Stress isn't a psychiatric diagnosis, but it's closely linked to your mental health in two important ways:

- Stress can cause mental health problems, and make existing problems worse. For example, if you often struggle to manage feelings of stress, you might develop a mental health problem like anxiety or depression.
- Mental health problems can cause stress. You might find coping with the day-to-day symptoms of a mental health issue, as well as potentially needing to manage medication, health care appointments or treatments, can become extra sources of stress.

Stress, especially long term stress, can impact your health. It is important to pay attention to how you deal with minor and major stressors, so you know when to seek help. If you take practical steps to manage your stress, you may be able to reduce the risk of negative health effects. Here are some tips that may help you cope with stress:

- Be observant. Recognize the signs of your body's response to stress, such as difficulty sleeping, increased alcohol and other substance use, being easily angered, feeling depressed, and having low energy.
- Talk to your health care provider or a health professional. Don't wait for your health care provider to ask about your stress. Start the conversation and get proper health care for existing or new health problems. Effective treatments can help if your stress is affecting your relationships or ability to work.
- Get regular exercise. Just 30 minutes per day of walking can help boost your mood and improve your health.

- Try a relaxing activity. Explore relaxation or wellness programs, which may incorporate meditation, muscle relaxation, or breathing exercises. Schedule regular times for these and other healthy and relaxing activities.
- Set goals and priorities. Decide what must get done now and what can wait. Learn to say "no" to new tasks if you start to feel like you're taking on too much. Try to be mindful of what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do.
- Stay connected. You are not alone. Keep in touch with people who can provide emotional support and practical help. To reduce stress, ask for help from friends, family, and community or other organizations.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health emergency, it is important to visit Valeo's Crisis Center located at 400 SW Oakley Avenue. Valeo's Crisis Center never closes, it is a walk-in emergency clinic, with no appointment necessary. Valeo's 24-Hour Crisis Line is 785-234-3300.

## Valeo Behavioral Health Care (Adults)

Crisis Services  
400 SW Oakley  
Topeka, KS 66606  
24 Hour Crisis Line  
785-234-3300

## National Suicide Prevention Life Line

1-800-273-8255

## Shawnee County Suicide Prevention Coalition

SCSPC.org

## Family Service & Guidance Center (18 and under)

325 SW Frazier  
Topeka, KS 66606  
24 Hour Crisis Number  
785-232-5005

## Healing after Loss to Suicide Group (HeALS)

Sandy Reams – Group Facilitator  
Topeka.Heals@gmail.com  
785-249-3792

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# How Physical Therapy Can Improve Your Quality of Life

**P**hysical therapy (PT) is one type of medical treatment provided through a home health care service. Our licensed physical therapists are experienced healthcare professionals that know how to identify and treat movement problems to help you recover from an injury or improve your overall mobility and physical function.

If you're not familiar with home health care that involves physical therapy, there are several ways it can improve your quality of life at home. According to the American Physical Therapy Association, here are some of the primary ways PT helps you live a better life.

## It will help you maintain your independence.

Physical therapists help people improve and restore their physical function to the fullest extent possible. Having the ability to move and function physically gives you the ability to live independently at home because you'll be better able to do things like get dressed, bathe yourself, and maintain your house or yard. A career as a therapist will better equip you to earn a living and manage your health and fitness goals with regular exercise.

## It may help you avoid surgery.

Physical therapy can help reduce many chronic diseases and medical conditions and prevent them from getting worse. In turn, this can also help you avoid invasive surgeries that require lengthy recovery times (sometimes much of that time must be spent in a hospital or clinic environment instead of at home). Before you have surgery, PT may be a better alternative that allows



you to continue living comfortably at home. At the same time, you work to improve your health and your medical condition.

## It's convenient.

Physical therapists can see patients anywhere, including at work, outpatient clinics, nursing homes, private practices, or even at your home! So, if it's more convenient or desirable for you not to travel, you can complete your PT treatment in the comfort of your own home.

## Get More Details About Home Care Services Like Physical Therapy

At Phoenix Home Care and Hospice, we provide a variety of home care services, including physical therapy. We recognize all the great benefits home care has to offer, and we want to make sure that you and your loved ones have the best chance at healing. If you're interested in learning more about our in-home physical therapy services, call us today for more information.

## Phoenix Home Care

Phoenix Home Care & Hospice specializes in caring for clients at home, where we believe the best healing occurs. Our home health services can help you or your loved one navigate the healing process, and we'll help you rest and sleep better while at home. Contact Phoenix Home Care online or call toll-free 1-888-830-2388 for more information on what we offer.



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Phoenix Home Care & Hospice was founded in 2011 and has 3500 employees.

Phil Melugin, President/CEO  
Nick Carroll, Topeka Regional Manager

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# FINANCIAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

## IRS to issue 4 million refunds for unemployment compensation overpayments

**T**he Internal Revenue Service has announced it will issue another round of refunds this week to nearly 4 million taxpayers who overpaid their taxes on unemployment compensation received last year.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which became law in March, excluded up to \$10,200 in 2020 unemployment compensation from taxable income calculations. The exclusion applied to individuals and married couples whose modified adjusted gross income was less than \$150,000.

The IRS previously issued refunds related to unemployment compensation exclusion in May and June, and it will continue to issue refunds throughout the summer.

To ease the burden on taxpayers, the IRS has been reviewing the Forms 1040 and 1040SR that were filed prior to the law's enactment to identify those people who are due an adjustment. For taxpayers who overpaid, the IRS will either refund the overpayment, apply it to other outstanding taxes or other federal or state debts owed.

For this round, the IRS identified approximately 4.6 million taxpayers who may be due an adjustment. Of that number, approximately 4 million taxpayers are expected to receive a refund. The refund average is \$1,265.

Most taxpayers need not take any action and there is no need to call the IRS. However, if, as a result of the excluded unemployment compensation, taxpayers are now eligible for deductions or credits not claimed on the original return, they should file a Form 1040-X, Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return.

Taxpayers should file an amended return if they:

- did not submit a Schedule 8812 with the original return to claim the Additional Child Tax Credit and are now eligible for the credit after the unemployment compensation exclusion;
- did not submit a Schedule EIC with the original return to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (with qualifying dependents) and are now eligible for the credit after the unemployment compensation exclusion;
- are now eligible for any other credits and/or deductions not mentioned below. Make sure to include any required forms or schedules.

Taxpayers do not need to file an amended return if they:

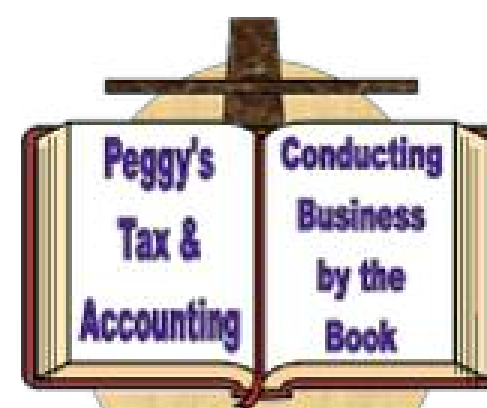
- already filed a tax return and did not claim the unemployment exclusion; the IRS will determine the correct taxable amount of unemployment compensation and tax;
- have an adjustment, because of the exclusion, that will result in an increase in any non-refundable or refundable credits reported on the original return;
- did not claim the following credits on their tax return but are now eligible when the unemployment exclusion is applied: Recovery Rebate Credit, Earned Income Credit with no qualifying dependents or the Advance Premium Tax Credit. The IRS will calculate the credit and include it in any overpayment;
- filed a married filing joint return, live in a community property state, and entered a smaller exclusion amount



than entitled on Schedule 1, line 8.

Taxpayers will generally receive letters from the IRS within 30 days of the adjustment, informing them of what kind of adjustment was made.

—Peggy Beasterfeld, EA



**peggystaxks.com**

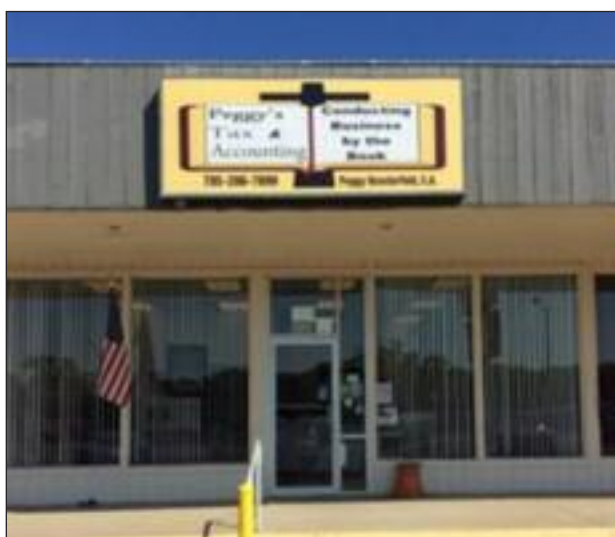
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**300 SE 29th, Suite C**

**Topeka, Kansas 66605**

**Tel: 785-286-7899**

**Frontdesk@peggystaxks.com**





# Is your teen stressed out by school? Here's how to help

**I**s your teen stressed about school, homework and extracurricular activities? Has the uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic added to their worries? School is oftentimes a top contributor to a teen's stress level, with assignments due, tests to study for, extracurricular activities, friendship problems, and more testing their resilience. In fact, one study shows that 83% of students report school as the top cause of stress in their life. Other studies show that the amount of stress teens feel actually rivals adult stress levels. If you're a parent or caregiver, identifying when your teen is going through a difficult time is critical. Here are some strategies you can try to help alleviate their stress.

## Establish a Stress-Free Zone

Teens need a place to escape from the daily pressure of school and school-related activities. Giving them space to relax helps them decompress and recharge from deadlines and responsibilities. Offering them the freedom to create their own positive environment, whether this involves listening to music, going for a walk, creating art, meditating, spending time with friends, or taking a nap, can reduce the effects of stress on their body and mind.

## Manage Your Own Stress

Your teen can feel your stress. If they notice your stress, they can feed off of it, in turn increasing their stress level. Your teen is constantly learning from you and acting according to your example. Use healthy coping mechanisms like deep breathing, physical exercise, and get a good night's sleep when you're feeling stressed and your teen will likely do the same. If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a trusted family member, friend, doctor or religious leader. They will be able to help you just as you would help your child.

## Allow Your Teen to Vent Without Judgement

Venting can be a great stress reliever as long as



it doesn't become too common. Giving your teen the freedom to vent and not punishing them for doing so can help relieve tension and stress. Then, they will be better able to think through the issues they face. Try giving teens a chance to vocalize their frustrations in a judgment-free environment. Journaling, whether with pen and paper or on a computer, is another safe way that teens can talk about their challenges and work through feelings.

## Limit Extracurricular Activities

Sometimes, teens just have a bit too much on their plates. Academic pressures can be easier to manage if they don't have an overabundance of extracurricular activities. If your teen seems tired too often, is underperforming grade-wise or seems uncharacteristically sad or disinterested, you may want to consider limiting outside activities. Encourage your

teen to relax and take some time for themselves. It'll give them a reprieve from the constant demands of their lives.

## Seek Help from a Counselor or Mental Health Professional

Talking to a counselor is a great option if school stress is affecting your child's ability to cope with day-to-day life. It takes a village to raise a child and it's always okay to ask for help and support. If your teen is stressed, complete this free mental health assessment with your child to learn if they would benefit from speaking with a mental health professional. Please note: The information contained in this assessment should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of a mental health professional.

—Source: [kvc.org](https://www.kvc.org)



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Source: American Heart Association. Added Sugars and Saturated Fats: What's New in 2015

**American Heart Association. It's a Why.**

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# Small Tips to Lose a Big Belly

**T**he simple, smart choices you make each day really do add up — like choosing bottled water over sugar-filled pop, fresh berries instead of ice cream for dessert, whole-grain versus white bread or a small, non-fat latte over a large one made with full-fat milk.

## Make it “Splurge-Worthy”

When you get the urge to splurge on calorie-laden indulgences (and we all do!), rate the indulgent food on a scale of 1 to 10. If it isn't a 9 or 10, don't bother — it's not worthy! There's nothing worse than having to loosen your belt after eating a food that you didn't really enjoy. Talk about waisting calories!

## You Booze, You Lose!

Actually, you don't lose! It's not just the empty calorie wallop from alcohol that makes your Buttvider, it's the alcohol itself. A mere three ounces of alcohol can reduce the body's ability to burn fat by one-third! Holy Brown Cow! Alcohol, even if “low carb,” still raises blood sugar, stimulating insulin, the powerful fat-storage hormone. And it bogs down your liver, which is directly involved in fat metabolism. So drinking makes your liverwurst and your beer belly even worse!

## Chill Out or Fill Out

When you're under stress, the hormones cortisol and adrenaline rise. These stress hormones make us hungry, especially for sweets. No wonder “stressed” spelled backwards is “desserts!” These hormones also encourage your body to store fat around the middle, so ongoing stress can lead to a flabby abdomen — a flabdomen! Massage, deep breathing, listening to music, even laughing are good ways to turn off the cortisol tap.

## Go Graze!

It's important to never let your tank run dry. Aim for smaller, more frequent meals (250-500 calories per meal, every 3 hours or so) to keep your metabolism (your calorie-burning furnace) stoked and your blood sugar even-Steven. Another good point: Studies suggest that exceeding 500 calories at any meal makes it easier for your body to store the excess calories as fat. So, Do Not Exceed the Feed



Limit!

## Yank Your Sweet Tooth

Sugar is your waistline's worst enemy. It raises insulin (the fat-storage hormone) and it's easily converted into fat—the type of fat that usually ends up around your middle! Plus, it's an anti-nutrient — it takes away from your body, depleting it of nutrients, rather than contributing anything to it. The more sugar you eat, the more you crave. So try an experiment: For two weeks, eat nothing sweet. (You can have two pieces of fruit per day, but NOTHING else sweet. Watch the flab melt off your waist, almost like magic — Flabra-cadabra!

## Join the Breakfast Club

Studies show that breakfast eaters are thinner, smarter, and nicer to be around! A hearty, healthy, high-fiber breakfast like oatmeal, fruit, whole-grain toast or whole-grain cereal does more than keep your brain cells, blood sugar and relationships operating smoothly. It also jump-starts your metabolism, so you'll start burning fat and calories right out of the gate. Plus, eating breakfast prevents overeating at lunchtime. If you skipped breakfast, chances are you'll be so famished at lunchtime you'll snort down three McHappy Meals without a second thought. And that's McSad.

## Follow the 80/20 Rule

Try this: 80 percent of the time, choose foods that are nutritious — high in fibre, good fats, unprocessed, natural foods — and 20 percent of the time, have whatever it is you're craving. If you've just gotta have that cheese-cake, have a small piece, enjoy every mouthful, and then get back on the healthy eating track for the rest of the day. It's not every morsel you eat that's important; it's what you do consistently, over the long haul that matters most.

## Show Some Flex Appeal

Muscle is a calorie-zapping machine. A fat-burning furnace. For each pound of muscle you gain, you'll burn an extra 50 calories per day just to maintain it. The more muscle you have, the more fat you'll incinerate 24 hours a day, even while sleeping! So the more muscle you have, the more you can eat, as well! That's reason enough for us to pick up a dumbbell! (And we're not talking about internet dating here, either!)

## Avoid Pop-o-matic Trouble

Be careful with diet sodas. People who drink beverages loaded with artificial sweeteners may actually develop cravings for real sugar, leading them to overeat. Plus, artificial sweeteners stimulate insulin, the dreaded fat-storage hormone, just like real sugar does. And they suppress the hormone leptin, which controls appetite. Sure seems like diet sodas might help you GAIN weight! Ouch! If you're a soda-holic, limit yourself to one per day, or better yet, switch to lemon and water or cranberry juice and water.

## Keep it Light at Night

Put a “closed” sign on your kitchen door at about 7:30 pm. You might be shocked to find out how many calories you absentmindedly nibble or chug while watching TV, surfing the net, helping kids with homework, or just puttering around. And you don't have a chance to burn off those needless calories, either. Plus, this kitchen curfew gives your liver a break from digestion duties so it can concentrate on more important tasks (like restoring and detoxifying your body) during the night.

—Janet & Greta Podleski

# New Treatment for Spinal Cord Injury Patients



(Ivanhoe Newswire) —

**P**eople who are paralyzed after a spinal cord injury are at higher risk for other life-threatening health problems. Depending upon the location and severity of the injury, life expectancy can be shortened by years or even decades. Researchers are studying a widely prescribed pain relief drug to see if it can block harmful changes in an injured person's system.

A violent crash, a fall, or a sports accident. When someone is paralyzed from a spinal cord injury, there are also changes happening inside the autonomic nerve centers, putting the body into an uncontrolled state of flight or fight.

“These problems can predispose individuals living with spinal cord injuries, to things like heart attack and stroke and infections like pneumonia,” explained Faith Brennan, PhD, a research scientist at The Ohio State University.

Now, scientists at The Ohio State University are testing the FDA approved pain relief drug gabapentin to see if it can halt the damaging changes in spinal cord injury patients. The researchers tested the drug in mice and found that even one month after they stopped treatment, the benefits remained.

“Giving gabapentin early prevents these struc-



tural changes from happening. And as a result, we see reduced cardiovascular problems and also less immune suppression,” illustrated Brennan.

A spinal cord injury is damage done to any part of the spinal cord or nerves at the end of the spinal canal, also called the cauda equina. It often causes permanent changes in strength, sensation and other body functions below the site of the injury. The ability to control limbs after a spinal cord injury depends on two factors: the place of the injury along the spinal cord and the severity of injury to the spinal cord. The lowest normal part of the spinal cord is referred to as the neurological level of an injury. The severity of the injury is often called “the completeness” and is classified as either of the following: complete, when all sensory feeling and all ability to control movement, or motor function, are lost below the spinal cord injury, or incomplete, when there is some motor or sensory function below the affected area. There are varying degrees of incomplete injury.

“The spinal cord relays information between the

brain and the body, and this is information that we don’t even think about in terms of things like blood pressure and heart rate. So when you have an SCI, this causes problems for the whole body. And this includes things like deregulated blood pressure, deregulated heart rate, loss of temperature control and systemic immune suppression. These problems can predispose individuals living with spinal cord injuries to things like heart attack and stroke and infections, like pneumonia. These health problems are the leading cause of morbidity and also early hospitalization and early death in this population. So, this is a very real problem that people living with spinal cord injuries face – these health problems caused by deregulation of this autonomic nervous system.”

Researchers say because the drug is already FDA approved to treat neuropathic pain, it could more easily be repurposed for patients with spinal cord injury.

The researchers are now working to determine how long treatment with gabapentin can be delayed after an injury and still benefit patients.



# Farmers Markets can be healthy fun

**F**armers Markets have been a source of healthy food for centuries, but they can also be fun. Today, Farmers Markets are thriving throughout the US with a variety of food and other merchandise for sale, as well as being a source of fun and exercise.

Topeka's Downtown Farmers Market has grown so large that it is good exercise just walking through all the aisles of goods and services offered.



The Downtown Topeka Farmers Market is open 7:30am to noon on Saturdays. For info: 785-249-4704 or topekafarmersmarket@gmail.com.

Many locals find it to be a fun and enjoyable time to pick up healthy food items, as well as visit with friends and merchants. There is also a variety of crafts and household merchandise for sale.



Of course, Farmers Markets also provide an opportunity for access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Visitors may also find whole wheat baked goods, fresh cut flowers, potted plants, local honey and much more.

Visit one of Topeka's Farmers Markets and your health will be the better for it.

## Find a Farmers Market in Shawnee County, KS



View each market on the map at [heartlandhealthynighborhoods.org](http://heartlandhealthynighborhoods.org)

A Farmers Market is a venue at which farmers sell agricultural products and food directly to the general public. Consumers get to build unique relationships directly with the people that grow our foods.

As a coalition, Heartland Healthy Neighborhood recognizes that community design features- like farmers markets, sidewalks, bike lanes, and healthy food retail-makes it easier to be healthy in Shawnee County and we support our local farmers markets.

Learn more about our community's health at [heartlandhealthynighborhoods.org](http://heartlandhealthynighborhoods.org) or like us on Facebook.



Markets updated 3/18/2019  
Suggestions to Lissa Staley, [lstaley@tscpl.org](mailto:lstaley@tscpl.org)

**Capitol Midweek Farmers Market**  
Corner of Jackson and 10th Avenue,  
South Capital Lawn, Topeka, KS 66612  
Wednesdays 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
**On hiatus**

**Downtown Topeka Farmers Market, Inc.**  
12th and Harrison, South of Judicial  
Building, Topeka, KS 66612  
Saturdays 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
**Open April 3 - Nov. 7**



**Monday Market @ Your Library**  
Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library  
1515 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, KS 66604  
Mondays 7:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.  
**Open May 10-Oct. 4**

**Silver Lake Farmers Market**  
Silver Lake Public Library  
203 Railroad Street, Silver Lake, KS 66539  
Tuesdays 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
**Open June 1**

**East Topeka Farmers Market**  
Topeka Housing Authority  
2010 SE California, Topeka, KS 66607  
**On hiatus**



**Mother Teresa's Farmers Market**  
Mother Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Church  
2014 NW 46th St., Topeka, KS 66618  
**Open July 3 to Sep. 11**

**Lawrence Farmers Market**  
Sat. 7:30-11:30  
824 New Hampshire Street  
**Open April 10-Nov. 20**

**Lawrence Tuesday Market 4-6pm**  
South Park, 1141 Massachusetts  
**Open May 4-Oct. 26**

- Some markets accept SNAP and offer Double-Up programs to provide twice the amount of produce to consumers using their SNAP/EBT card.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) offers nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income individuals and families and provides economic benefits to communities.
- In Kansas, the program is known as the Food Assistance Program.
- Learn about eligibility and complete the Online Application for Benefits at <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/> to or visit DCF Office Location for Topeka/Shawnee County, 500 S.W. VanBuren, Topeka, KS 66603 or call 785-296-2500.







## Pool and Beach Safety Steps for Summer

Summer 2015 is here and many will spend at least part of the long summer days either in a pool or at a beach. The American Red Cross wants you to be safe and has some steps you can follow to safely enjoy your summer water fun:

**POOL SAFETY** Ideally, you should learn to swim before enjoying the water. While at the pool:

- Swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards. Always swim with a buddy; do not allow anyone to swim alone.
- Have young children or inexperienced swimmers wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets around water, but do not rely on life jackets alone.
- Have appropriate equipment, such as reaching or throwing equipment, a cell phone, life jackets and a first aid kit.
- Know how and when to call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.

With children, constant supervision is key:

- If you have a pool, secure it with appropriate barriers. Many children who drown in home pools were out of sight for less than five minutes and in the care of one or both parents at the time.
- Never leave a young child unattended near water, and do not trust a child's life to another child; teach children to always ask permission to go near water.
- Avoid distractions when supervising children around water.
- If a child is missing, check the water first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability.

**BEACH SAFETY** Swimming in the ocean takes different skills, so before you get your feet wet, it's best to learn how to swim in the surf. You should also swim only at a lifeguard-protected beach, within the designated swimming area. Obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards.

While you're enjoying the water, keep alert and check the local weather conditions. Make sure you swim sober and that you never swim alone. And even if you're confident in your swimming skills, make sure you have enough energy to swim back to shore.

Other tips to keep in mind:

- No one should use a floatation device unless they are able to swim. The only exception is a person wearing a Coast Guard-approved life jacket.
- Don't dive headfirst—protect your neck. Check for depth and obstructions before diving, and go in feet first the first time.
- Pay close attention to children and elderly persons when at the beach. Even in shallow water, wave action can cause a loss of footing.
- Keep a lookout for aquatic life. Water plants and animals may be dangerous. Avoid patches of plants. Leave animals alone.

**RIP CURRENTS** Rip currents are responsible for deaths on our nation's beaches every year, and for most of the rescues performed by lifeguards. For your safety, be aware of the danger of rip currents and remember the following:

- If you are caught in a rip current, swim parallel to the shore until you are out of the current. Once you are free, turn and swim toward shore. If you can't swim to the shore, float or tread water until you are free of the rip current and then head toward shore.
- Stay at least 100 feet away from piers and jetties. Permanent rip currents often exist near these structures.

As the temperatures soar, more and more of us will take to the water for some summer fun. For more on how to keep you and your loved ones safe this summer, visit the swimming and water safety information on our web site.

## SMART TIPS FOR YOUR DOG

Dogs may find these tasty, but they can make them ill, many are toxic



Alcohol



Avocado



Caffeine



Chives



Chocolate



Dairy



Garlic



Grapes/raisins



Ham



Macadamia nuts



Mushrooms



Nutmeg



Seeds/pits



Spicy



Sugar-free candy and gum



Tobacco



Yeast/dough



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# Neighborhoods to gather on National Night Out

**S**afe Streets is about to embark on its 25th year of National Night Out in the Topeka/Shawnee County community! This annual event, which will be held Saturday, August 7, brings neighborhoods together to connect with one another and local law enforcement. The simple act of getting to know your neighbors is the best form of crime prevention.



In Shawnee County, neighborhoods are encouraged to hold individual events on August 7. It is not too late to register. As of late June, there were nearly 50 neighborhoods registered! Neighborhood activities vary – some may host an ice-cream social, cookout, pot luck dinner or a pool party. Some events are smaller with around 25 people, and others are larger with more than 300 attending.

In 2019, Topeka/Shawnee County ranked 5th in the na-



tion for cities of comparable size, for our National Night Out events. Due to COVID-19, National Night Out could not be held in 2020, but we are excited to get together this year.

NNO event is coordinated through Safe Streets in partnership with local law enforcement including the



Topeka Police Department, Shawnee County Sheriff's Office, Shawnee County District Attorney's Office, Kansas Highway Patrol, Topeka Fire Department and with area businesses, including Evergy, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Federal Home Loan Bank, Topeka Credit Union Foundation, Reser's, Hy-Vee, Shawnee County Parks and Rec, Dillon's, Frito Lay and many others!

To sign up your neighborhood or to find out if your neighborhood has National Night Out plans, contact Safe Streets at 785.266.4606 or email Judy at [jwilson@safestreets.org](mailto:jwilson@safestreets.org). You don't need to have a neigh-

borhood organization to host an event, so contact your neighbors and Safe Streets and get involved today!



Safe Streets, a program of Prevention and Resiliency Services, is a local crime prevention and substance abuse prevention organization in Topeka.



Safe Streets wants neighbors to talk and get to know one another – this plays a huge role in making our community safer. Contact Safe Streets for more information or to register your neighborhood by calling 785-266-4606. You can also email Judy Wilson at [jwilson@safestreets.org](mailto:jwilson@safestreets.org).





# 10 Back-to-School Health Tips for Parents

**G**etting your kids back-to-school ready involves more than shopping for school supplies and new clothes. Caring for their health will ensure they are physically prepared to go back to school. To kick-start the new school year, consider these healthy tips.

## TEACH GOOD HYGIENE HABITS

The most effective way to avoid spreading germs is proper hand washing. Encouraging your kids to sing the alphabet or the Happy Birthday song from beginning to end will teach them how much time should be spent on this task. Everyone should wash the fronts and



backs of their hands and in-between fingers. Hand sanitizer is a good alternative when soap and water aren't available. Don't have a tissue? Teach your kids to cough or sneeze into the crook of the elbow or sleeve, to prevent spreading germs.



## VISIT THE DOCTORS OFFICE

An annual check-up will ensure your kids are healthy and virus-free before heading back to school. Make sure their immunizations are up-to-date, too. Every state requires certain vaccinations at different grade levels for children attending both public and private schools. Flu vaccines are also recommended for all school-age children.

## GET BACK INTO THE ROUTINE



Shift your kids back to a school-year bedtime routine at least a week before school starts.

This is also a good time to cut back on playing electronic games and watching TV. Reading or playing quiet games an hour before bedtime will help with the transition.

## PROVIDE HEALTHY MEALS

Provide healthy meal options for your kids, including breakfast. Students who eat breakfast



are more alert during class than those who don't. Plus, the right foods combined with adequate rest will help fight off infections.



## STAY HYDRATED

Keeping your kids hydrated with healthy drink choices like water and milk has many benefits. It will help prevent fatigue, improve mood, aid digestion and maintenance, and enhance brain function.



Try to eliminate sugary drinks such as soda, sports drinks and energy drinks, as they are often packed with sugar, caffeine and other unwanted ingredients. Too much caffeine can increase heart rates, blood pressure, interrupt sleep and cause nervousness and irritability.

## MANAGE ALLERGIES

Managing your kid's allergies at school is an important part of caring for their health. Seasonal allergies are believed to affect as many as 40% of U.S. children, causing many to miss school. Even if they don't miss school, allergies



can get in the way of a productive school day. Symptoms like fatigue, headache, sneezing, runny nose, watery eyes and itchiness can get

in the way of attention and concentration. Food allergies are very common, too.

If your child has allergies, talk with your child's teacher and principal about how to manage them during school.

## STAY ACTIVE

Your kids have probably been active all summer, and it's important to keep moving. Kids typically sit most of their school day, so incorporating sports and exercise into their daily routine will keep them focused, improve behavior and boost positive attitude.



If possible, enroll your kids in after-school activities. Enjoy a family walk or bike ride and encourage them to keep moving. If you engage in physical activity, they will follow along.

## CALM WORRIES AND ANXIETY

Separation anxiety, social anxiety, fear of not fitting in or feeling the pressure to stay on top of grades and activities is a growing concern for children. Make sure your kids are aware of who their teacher is, their class schedule and any other changes they might encounter. Plan-



ning a tour of the school and classroom or a meet-and-greet with the teacher is a good way to help your kids acclimate before the first day.

## CHECK FOR HEAD LICE



More than 12 million Americans get lice every year, and most are between ages 3 and 11. School-age kids are in close contact during the day and are more likely to share combs, brushes and hats. Check your kids for head lice once a week if possible. They are most often found behind the ears and at the back of the neck, near the neckline.

## CHOOSE THE RIGHT SCHOOL BACKPACK

These days, backpacks are heavier than ever. The wrong type of backpack and wearing it in-



correctly can lead to back pain. Along with cool colors and designs, choose a backpack for your kids that will be comfortable and won't cause pain. Also, show them how to wear their backpacks correctly to prevent back problems.

—Source: Beaumont.org



# Shawnee County Warm Line 1-800-972-8199

**Feeling worried, lonely or isolated?**

*Call to request regular check-in phone calls,  
or call when you want to talk!*

**We are here to listen and to provide  
helpful community resources!**

**Monday - Friday from 10 am - 2 pm.**



# Running with your kids: a parent's guide

**W**hile marathon running may seem a little extreme for most kids, doctors agree that the sport poses no more physical threat to children than it does to adults -- even at the marathon distance.

In fact, regular aerobic exercise for kids helps to strengthen bones, aids in weight control and leads to improved cardiovascular health into adulthood. By far, the biggest problems for children and running seem to be the psychological aspects of training and racing that make child runners different than their often-overzealous parents.

## Baby Joggers

It was the arrival of the Baby Jogger in 1984 that introduced recreational and competitive running to a whole new audience. Kids could now accompany their parents on a run even before they could crawl.

Stacie Luizzi, a longtime runner and recent mother, enjoys going for three or four runs per week with her 18-month-old daughter.

"Jocelyn absolutely loves it!" Luizzi says. "When I ask her if she wants to go running, she says 'cow, cow, moo, moo' be-

cause we always run past the cow pastures. Then she gets out her coat and hat and climbs in (the jogger)."

But it isn't long before kids outgrow the stroller and are ready to run on their own, and this is when doctors caution parents to take a step back and contain their enthusiasm before pushing their kids.

## Young runners

Most running parents dream of the day their offspring will begin running and racing, but young children are not ready for structured training and the pressure that comes with competition.

At a young age, running should be more free-form and fun, with goals that are easily attainable. Events like the RunTex Marathon Kids program in Austin, Texas, are a great way to introduce children to running as a fun activity.

In the program, Children from kindergarten through fifth grade must accumulate 26.2 miles of running in increments of one-half to one mile over a five-month period. The "Final Mile Celebration" is held in the University of Texas Mike Myers Track & Field Stadium, where the kids complete the last mile of the program alongside Olympic athletes and receive their finishers medals.



games and events. Don't yell at other players, coaches or officials.

8. Be a cheerleader for your child and the other children on the team.

9. Respect your child's coaches. Communicate openly with them. If you disagree with their approach, discuss it with them.

10. Be a positive role model. Enjoy sports yourself. Set your own goals. Live a healthy lifestyle.

## Training guidelines

Physician and Sports medicine lists the following 10 guidelines for pre-teen children and competitive athletics. These apply to all sports, including running.

1. Make sure your children know that "win or lose," you love them and are not disappointed with their performance.
2. Be realistic about your child's physical ability.
3. Help your child set realistic goals.
4. Emphasize improved performance, not winning. Positively reinforce improved skills.
5. Don't relive your own athletic past through your child.
6. Provide a safe environment for training and competition.
7. Control your own emotions at

## Set a good example

With almost half of American teenagers reporting they do not engage in regular vigorous activity, and nearly that many classified as overweight, an exercise program is a simple solution that will reap lifetime benefits.

Doctors recommend that children should exercise vigorously for a minimum of 30 minutes, three or four times per week. This can be anything from running, to playing tag, to riding their bikes.

Being runners, we'd all like to see our kids choose running; however, pushing your child into running when they would rather do something else will make them despise the sport for life. Instead, try and set an example.

When your child sees you running and enjoying it, they will most likely try the sport themselves -- especially if they have a grown-up cheering for them from the sidelines of local running events.

Regular family bike rides and hikes will also show your kids that being active can be fun, and in the long run will make them fitter, healthier and happier adults.

For more information visit [www.kidsrunning.com](http://www.kidsrunning.com).





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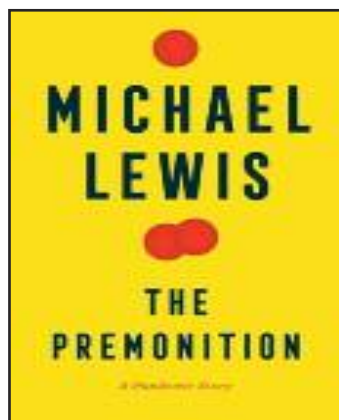
# New Health & Wellness Info at the Library

By Kelly Barker

**F**ulfill your prescription for information at the library's Health Information Neighborhood, where wellness knowledge is at your fingertips.

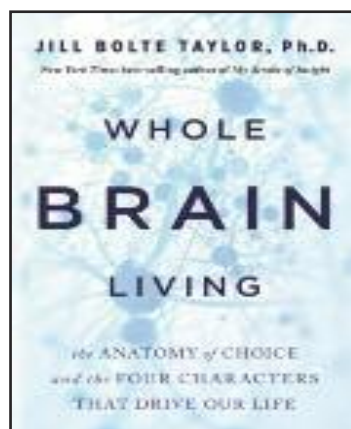
**The Premonition:** A Pandemic Story by Michael Lewis, New Health Books Media Center 614.58 LEW

Fortunately, there are those among us who study pandemics and are willing to unflinchingly look at worst-case scenarios. The Premonition is Michael Lewis's taut and brilliant nonfiction thriller that pits a band of medical visionaries against the wall of ignorance regarding the outbreak of COVID-19.



**Whole Brain Living:** The Anatomy of Choice and the Four Characters that Drive Our Life by Jill Bolte Taylor, New Health Books Media Center 612.82 TAY

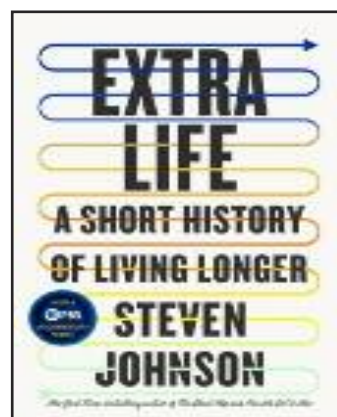
Discover how to tap into the present moment, shift out of anxiety and gain a sense of deep inner peace by understanding the brain's two hemispheres. Drawing upon up-to-the-minute brain science as well as a wealth of lived experience, Dr Jill will



show you how you how you how your brain holds the key.

**Extra Life:** A Short History of Living Longer by Steven Johnson, New Health Books Media Center 614.4 JOH

As a species we have doubled our life expectancy in just one hundred years. This book is the author's attempt to understand where that progress came from. Behind each breakthrough lies a story of innovation, brilliant thinkers bolstered by strong systems of public support and collaborative networks.



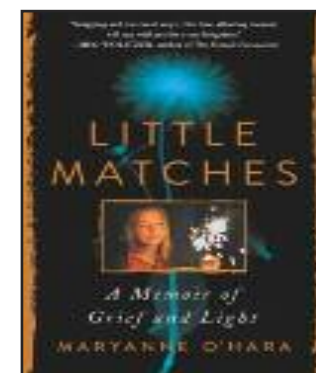
**Beat Breast Cancer Like A Boss:** 30 Powerful Stories by Ali Rogin, New Health Books Media Center 616.99449 ROG

Drawing from first-hand interviews of successful, high-profile women from myriad industries and perspectives, award-winning journalist Ali Rogin brings together an all-star support and recovery team to inspire anyone confronting a cancer diagnosis, along with their loved ones.



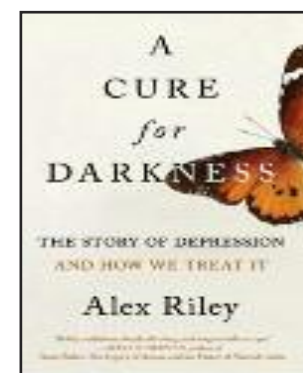
**Little Matches:** A Memoir of Grief and Light by Maryanne O'Hara, New Health Books Media Center 616.37 O'HA

Little Matches is an emotionally raw and inspiring memoir that illuminates a mother's grief over the loss of her adult child to cystic fibrosis and considers the hope of soulful connections that transcend the boundary of life and death.



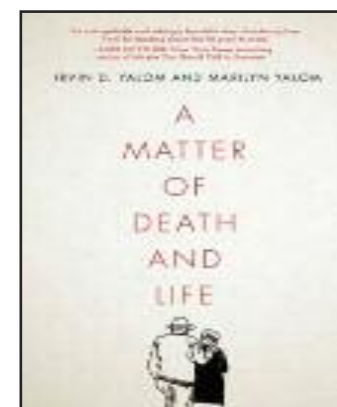
**A Cure for Darkness:** The Story of Depression and How We Treat It by Alex Riley, New Health Books Media Center 616.8527 RIL

What is depression? Are antidepressants effective? A Cure for Darkness explores these questions and provides a gripping narrative journey and is a surprisingly hopeful work that delves deep into the science of mental health.



**A Matter of Death and Life** by Irvin Yalom, New Health Books Media Center 616.994 YAL

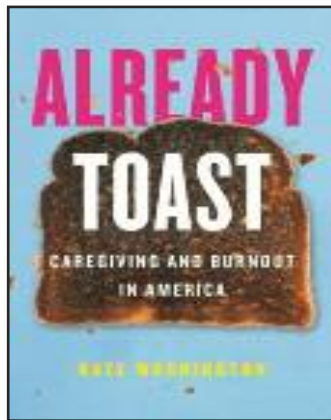
A Matter of Death and Life is a year-long journey by the renowned psychiatrist, Irvin Yalom, and his writer wife after her terminal diagnosis, as they reflect on how to love and live without regret. It is an openhearted offering to anyone seeking support, solace, and a meaningful life.





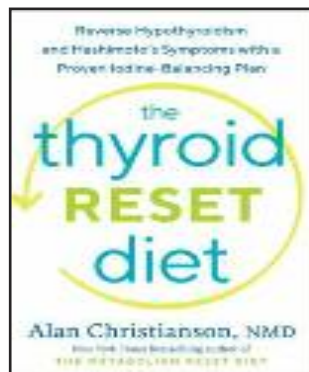
**Already Toast:** Caregiving and Burnout in America by Kate Washington, New Health Books Media Center 610.84 WAS

Already Toast is the story of one woman's struggle to care for her seriously ill husband and a revealing look at the role unpaid family caregivers play in a society that fails to provide them with structural support and keeps them in these unpaid roles.

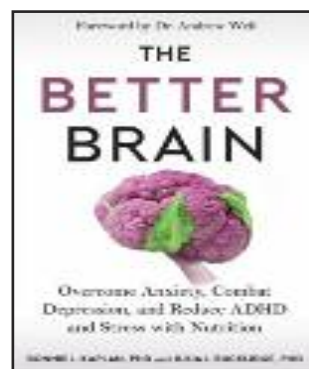


**The Thyroid Reset Diet:** Reverse Hypothyroidism and Hashimoto's Symptoms with A Proven Iodine-Balancing Plan by Alan Christianson, New Health Books Media Center 616.44 CHR

A surprising new plan to reverse the symptoms of thyroid disease by reducing excess dietary iodine. Instead of following a restrictive diet for thyroid health, The Thyroid Reset Diet does not require eliminating any food category. Instead, Dr. Christianson recommends food.



**The Better Brain:** Overcome Anxiety, Combat Depression, And Reduce ADHD And Stress with Nutrition by Bonnie J. Kaplan, New Health Books Media Center 616.8527 KAP

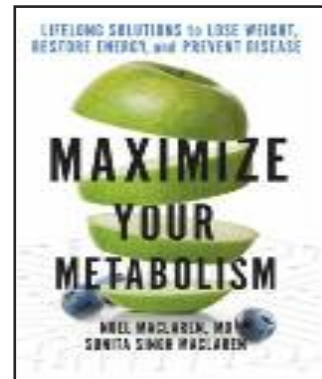


What if we're looking for solutions in the wrong places? What if instead of treating

mental illness with prescriptions and medication, we changed what we eat and how we feed our brains? The Better Brain is a paradigm-shifting approach to treating mental disorders like anxiety, depression, and ADHD with food.

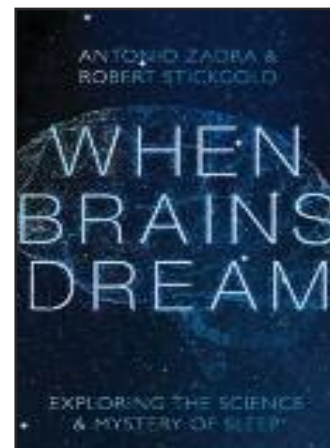
**Maximize Your Metabolism:** Lifelong Solutions to Lose Weight, Restore Energy, And Prevent Disease by Noel Maclaren, New Health Books Media Center 613.25 Mac

Like our fingerprints, each of us has a unique metabolism and one in four of us will experience trouble with our metabolism. Maximize Your Metabolism is a revolutionary new approach to mastering your metabolism that combines both medical and behavioral insights.



**When Brains Dream:** Exploring the Science and Mystery of Sleep by Antonio Zadra, New Health Books Media Center 616.8498 ZAD

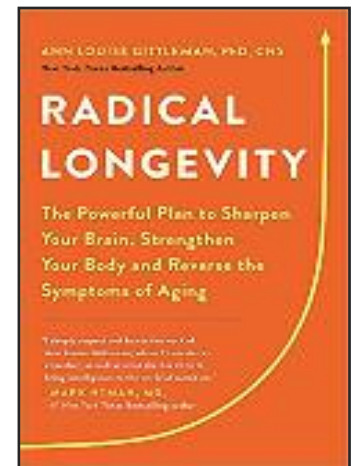
Questions on the origins and meaning of dreams are as old as humankind, and as confounding and exciting today as when nineteenth-century scientists first attempted to unravel them. When Brains Dream addresses core questions about dreams while illuminating the most up-to-date science.



**Radical Longevity:** The Powerful Plan to Sharpen Your Brain, Strengthen Your Body, And Reverse the Symptoms of Aging by Ann Louise Gittleman, New Health Books Media

Center 613.0438 GIT

Welcome to a Radical new view of aging - one that defies conventional wisdom and redefines the aging process with resilience, vitality, and grace. You'll discover the most advanced program that staves off the effects of aging, which includes how to release a lifetime of accumulated toxins and deficiencies.



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# Healthy Family Recipes for the Summer

**H**ealthy and tasty recipes are key to sticking with a healthy nutrition plan. Here are some good ones!

## California Roll Wrap



When it's hot outside, try this oven-less recipe!

### Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons light cream cheese
- 3 tablespoons fat-free sour cream
- 4 green onions (the white and part of the green), chopped (about 1/4 cup)
- 1/2 pound fresh crab meat (free of bones)
- Pepper to taste
- 6 whole-wheat 8-inch tortillas
- 1 cucumber, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon wasabi powder, combined with 1 tablespoon cold water
- 1 large avocado, quartered, pitted, and sliced

### Directions

Add cream cheese, sour cream, green onions, and crab to food processor and pulse until well blended (about five seconds). Add pepper to taste.

Soften the tortillas by wrapping in a slightly damp cloth and microwaving on HIGH for about a minute.

Spread one-sixth of the crab mixture on each tortilla. Then top each with about 12 thin slices of cucumber. Spread a small line of the wasabi mixture down the center of each tortilla (use more or less depending on your taste). Top the wasabi with the avocado slices.

Fold one end of each tortilla up toward the center, then continue to roll until you have a wrap (with the avocado in the center of each wrap).

### Nutrition Information (Servings: 6)

200 calories, 13 g protein, 26 g carbohydrate, 7.5 g fat (1.8 g saturated fat, 3.4 g monounsaturated fat, 1.2 g polyunsaturated fat), 42 mg cholesterol, 4 g fiber. Calories from fat: 30%.

Source: webmd.com

## Crock Pot Chicken Enchiladas



These enchiladas are an easy, healthy weeknight dinner that the whole family will love!

### Ingredients

- Tbsp Olive oil
- 1/2 Cup Onion, diced
- 1 Tbsp Garlic, minced
- 1 Cup Fire roasted tomatoes
- 6 Tbsp Salsa
- 1/2 tsp Chili powder
- 1/4 tsp Cumin
- 1/4 tsp Paprika
- 1/4 tsp Crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- Salt and pepper
- 2 Cups Shredded chicken breast
- 1/2 Cup Corn kernels (thawed if frozen)
- 8 8 Inch Whole wheat flour tortillas
- 1 1/2 Cups Red Enchilada sauce
- 1 Cup Cheddar cheese, grated
- Cilantro, for garnish

### Directions

Heat the oil in a large pan on medium/high heat. Cook the chopped onion and garlic until soft, about 1-2 minutes.

Place the fire roasted tomatoes in a small food processor (mine is 3 cups) and blend until well combined.

Stir the blended tomatoes, salsa, chili powder, cumin, paprika and red pepper flakes into the onion mixture. Season to taste with salt & pepper.

Take one tortilla and place 2 Tablespoons of the tomato sauce in a line along the bottom portion. Top with 1 Tablespoon of the thawed corn and 1/4 cup of shredded chicken. Roll up tightly and place in the bottom of a 7 quart slow cooker. Repeat with all tortillas - you should be able to fit them in one layer.

Pour the enchilada sauce on top and sprinkle with cheese. Place a paper towel on the top of the slow cooker and then place the lid on. Cook on low for 3-4 hours until cheese is melted and tortillas are soft

### Nutrition Information (Servings: 8)

Calories: 279.9kcal | Carbohydrates: 30g | Protein:

12.5g | Fat: 11.9g | Cholesterol: 28.7mg | Sodium: 807.4mg | Sugar: 4.7g

Source: foodfaithfitness.com

## Healthy Vegan Morning Muffins



Perfect for weekday mornings.

### Ingredients

- 1/4 cup warm water
- 1 tablespoon ground flaxseed
- 2 over-ripe bananas, mashed
- 1/2 cup applesauce
- 1/2 cup grated carrots
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup almond milk
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup quick oats
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

### Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease a 12-cup muffin tin.

Mix together warm water and ground flaxseed; let sit for 5 minutes.

Mix mashed bananas with applesauce, grated carrots, vegetable oil, almond milk, brown sugar, and vanilla extract in a large bowl. Mix in water and flaxseed mixture. Add in flour, oats, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, baking soda, cloves, and salt and stir until just mixed. Pour 1/4 cup of batter into each muffin cup.

Bake in the preheated oven until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean, 20 to 30 minutes.

### Nutrition Information (Servings: 12)

192 calories; protein 2.5g; carbohydrates 23.5g; fat 10.1g; sodium 202mg.

Source: allrecipes.com

# Health & Wellness Marketplace

Check out the companies and service providers below to fulfill your health and wellness needs. To advertise in this section for as little as \$25, call us at 785-380-8848 or email [info@TopekaHealthandWellness.com](mailto:info@TopekaHealthandWellness.com).

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**24 For Life** - Program offered by Midland Care to prevent or delay Type 2 Diabetes. For information, contact Donna Doel at 785-250-5210 or [ddoel@midlandcc.org](mailto:ddoel@midlandcc.org)

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**TERRITORIAL CAPITAL MUSEUM** – Now Open, 640 E Woodson, Lecompton. (785) 887-6148 [www.lecomptonkansas.com](http://www.lecomptonkansas.com) [historiclecompton@gmail.com](mailto:historiclecompton@gmail.com)

**AUG. CYCLING EVENTS** – Various cycle rides are offered by Kansas Cyclist. [www.kansascyclist.com/](http://www.kansascyclist.com/)

**AUG. OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES** – Outdoor events and activities. [www.getoutdoorskc.com](http://www.getoutdoorskc.com)

**DALE EASTON'S THE DRUNKARD** – July 30, 31 at 8pm, VFW Phillip Billard VFW Post, 3110 SW Huntoon [kate\\_hastings@outlook.com](mailto:kate_hastings@outlook.com)

**VINEWOOD MARKET** – July 31-Aug. 1, and Oct. 2-3: 8-4 Sat. & 8-2 Sun. The Vinewood, 2848 SE 29th St. Indoor & outdoor flea market & craft fair. Food Trucks. 785-260-6772 or [thehistoricvinewood.com](http://thehistoricvinewood.com)

**GAGE PARK CONCERT SERIES** – Aug. 1, 7-9pm, Gage Park Amphitheatre. Santa Fe Band

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: "THE JOURNEY OF GRACE"** – Aug. 3-6, 6:30 - 8:30 pm, Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Price: Free. A treacherous trek through a dense forest, up a jagged mountain & through the darkness. [LakeNaz@aol.com](mailto:LakeNaz@aol.com). (785) 266-3247

**BACK TO SCHOOL SPLASH JAM** – Aug. 4, 7-8:30pm, Shawnee North Family Aquatics Center, 300 NE 43rd. Lazy River, Childrens Pool, Fitness Jam, more! Tickets at <https://familysplashjam.eventbrite.com>

**EBTREPRENEURIAL SOCIAL** – Aug. 4, 5-7pm, The Woodshed, 1901 NW Kansas Ave. A free event for Topeka business folks to network. Several networking groups will be represented as well. Food and drinks available. Sponsored by SCORE. [Topeka.score.org](http://Topeka.score.org)

**HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS** – Aug. 6, Stormont Vail Events Center.

**TOUCH A TRUCK** – Aug. 7, 9 - 11am, Christ Lutheran Church, 3509 SW Burlingame Rd. Price: Free. Join us for a free community event – Check out large trucks and other vehicles up close and meet first responders and other hard-working members of the Topeka community. Fun for the whole family! Free event! Free refreshments! Free book for the first 100 kids!

**SCHOOL SUPPLY GIVEAWAY** – Aug. 7, 10am-Noon, Seaman Community Church, 2036 NW Taylor. Proof of address needed for this drive-up event – for Oakland and N. Topeka area only. Hosted by Topeka North Outreach. 785-286-1370

**NATIONAL NIGHT OUT EVENTS** – Aug. 7. National Night Out events throughout Topeka and Shawnee County. For info call Judy at Safe Streets, 266.4606 or email [jwilson@safestreets.org](mailto:jwilson@safestreets.org).

**WOMEN ON WHEELS** – Aug. 7, 9am-2pm, Washburn University Parking Lot 7 (MacVicar & 19th St). Car & Motorcycle Show geared to Women who are crazy about their rides. Choose your category! Compete for Awards! To enter: <https://ktwu.org/wow-participant-registration/>

**C5Alive "POWER" LUNCHEON** – Aug. 12, 11:30-1. at The Peak, 930 SW Gage. Barry Feaker will be the featured speaker! • Cost: \$10 for C5 members & first-time guests who RSVP, \$12 at the door; \$15 for non-members & repeat guests. • Please RSVP to [info@C5Alive.org](mailto:info@C5Alive.org), so we know how much food is needed! Open to the public – Put POWER in your life with great food, great speakers and great company! Invite a friend to join you! SAVE THE DATE: C5 POWER Luncheon, Sep. 9, 11:30-1, C5Alive POWER Luncheon.

**GREATER VISION CONCERT** – Aug. 13, 7pm, Wanamaker Woods Nazarene Church, 3501 SW Wanamaker

Rd. Greater Vision performs gospel concerts across the country, and is seen regularly on the In Touch TV program with Charles Stanley. No tickets needed; freewill offering. Doors open at 6pm. 785-273-2248; [www.facebook.com/events/923288371572235](https://www.facebook.com/events/923288371572235); [wwood-snaz@wnnaz.org](mailto:wwood-snaz@wnnaz.org)

**SECOND SATURDAY CONCERT SERIES** – Aug. 14, Noon, Downtown on SW 8th between Crosby Garage and SW Jackson Ave

**CRUISING THE CAPITAL** – Aug. 14, Noon, Harrison 8-10th, Jackson 8-12th, 8th Topeka-Kansas, 10th

**TOPEKA CLASSIC HIGHLAND GAMES** – Aug. 14, 9am-6pm, 9220 SW 10th Ave. Tickets: \$40. [www.eventbrite.com/e/7th-annual-topeka-classic-highland-games-tickets-143794819175](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/7th-annual-topeka-classic-highland-games-tickets-143794819175)



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**THIRD THURSDAYS: TOPCITY COMEDY AT THE FOUNDRY** – Aug. 19, 8pm, 400 SW 33rd St. Open mic after the show. (785) 633-1767. Price: \$10

**HEARTLAND NIGHTS! CRUISE-IN & DRAGS** – Aug. 19, 4pm, 7530 SW Topeka Blvd. Dust off your old or new ride and cruise out to Heartland Park for an informal car show or get on the drag strip for grudge races-testing-tuning or simply to burn some fuel! Cruise-in gates open at 4pm, with dragstrip test-tune-grudge race passes available from 6pm-10pm. Cruise-in or spectate for only \$10 per person or drag strip car and driver for \$30.00, and kids 12 and under are FREE! (785) 861-7899

**FORGEFEST DOWNTOWN CONCERT** – Aug. 28, 5:30 – 9pm, Every Plaza, 630 S Kansas Ave. Join the GTP's young professional group, Forge, at their downtown concert with Josh Vowell and then The Familiar at 7PM. Food & drinks available. (785) 215-8765

**FREE BREAKFAST LAST SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH** – Aug. 29, 8am-12pm, VFW Philip Billard Post 1650, 3110 SW Huntoon. Free breakfast to all that come through the door. Pancakes, sausage, eggs, coffee, juice and some times biscuits & gravy. Donations are accepted and will go to helping vets in the Topeka area. vfw1650seniorvice@gmail.com; 785-383-2997

**GUN & KNIFE SHOW** – Sep. 4, Stormont Vail Events Center

**KANSAS CITY RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL** – Sep. 4 – Oct. 17, 10am-7pm; Weekends only plus Labor Day and Monday Oct. 11. 628 N 126th St., Bonner Springs, KS. www.KCRenFest.com. 913-721-2110

**NOTO Live** - Sep. 11, 11:30am-8pm, NOTO Arts & Entertainment District. A celebration of performance art, live music, busking, and talent of all kinds, with special acts at Redbud Park and Compass Point, and a grand finale by Last Carnival Act to end the evening. <https://explore-noto.org/product/noto-live-vip-ticket/>

**HOE-DOWN** – Sep. 11, 4-6:30pm, Kansas Ave UMC, 1029 N Kansas Ave. Bring your lawn chairs - Entertainment: "The Heartstrings," Joe Kampsen- keyboard; Infinity Dancers; Children's Activities; Door Prizes, Free hot dogs, chips, soda, cookies, popcorn.

**BLARNEY BREAKFAST** – Sep. 18, 7am, Blind Tiger. For details: [www.capper.org/events](http://www.capper.org/events)

**GATHER TOPEKA** – Sep 19, Every Plaza. Meet Me at the Park is now GATHER TOPEKA @Every Plaza. Join us for a fun, family-centered worship service. First Southern Baptist Church, 785-272-0443

**CIDER DAYS FALL MARKET** – Sep. 25-26, Exhibition Hall - Stormont Vail Events Center. Explore over 175+ makers, creators, artisans and pickers at this weekend filled with amazing shopping, unique food and live entertainment.

**YOUTH FOR CHRIST GOLF CLASSIC** – Sep. 27, 9AM reg.; 10AM shotgun start, Lake Shawnee. Several sponsorship levels available. Lots of prizes! 232-8296 or [topekayfc.org](http://topekayfc.org)

**CASTING CROWNS** – Oct. 3, 7pm, Stormont Vail Event Center. Special guest will be Matthew West. For info: [castingcrowns.com](http://castingcrowns.com)

**TOPEKA FALL FEST** – Oct. 9, 10am-3pm, at the Vinewood, 2848 SE 29th St. Come out and enjoy the live music, a craft & vendor fair, food trucks, and a health & fitness fair, plus games and activities for kids. Fun for the whole family, and admission is free! Dozens of local businesses, non-profits & churches will operate games & activities such as Face Painting, Craft Stations, Photo Booth, Inflatables, Petting Zoo, Pony Rides, Ball Toss, Cake Walk, Trunk or Treat and more! We'll have a Health & Fitness Fair sponsored by Topeka Health & Wellness Magazine, featuring Health Screenings & Fitness Demonstrations, Information & Educational Booths, Health & Safety Products and more. For more information, email [info@C5Alive.org](mailto:info@C5Alive.org).

## ONGOING EVENTS:

**SENIORS NUTRITIONAL LUNCH** – Weekdays, except holidays, noon at Auburn Civic Center, 1020 N. Washington St. Minimal cost per person. Reservations/cancellations are required 24 hours in advance by calling 295-3980. Each meal includes 1% milk and sugar-free items are included for diabetics. 785-215- 0064.

**MEDICARE MONDAYS** – First Mon. of ea. month, 1-3pm. Topeka/Sh. Co. Public Library (Menninger Room 206), 1515 SW 10th. Senior health insurance counseling. For info: 580-4545 or [nhonl@tscl.org](mailto:nhonl@tscl.org)

**GREATER VISION**

Concert at The Woods

August 13<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm

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3501 SW Wanamaker Rd. • 785-273-2248 • [www.woodsnaaz.org](http://www.woodsnaaz.org)

**TOPEKA MANKIND PROJECT** – Mondays, 6:30pm, 2112 SW Morningside Rd. Supports men in becoming their best selves, including physical, mental & emotional health & wellness. Open to any man. Brian Thomas: [brian.thomas01@gmail.com](mailto:brian.thomas01@gmail.com) or 785-727-9439

**SENIOR FIT & FUN PROGRAM** - every Mon., Wed., & Fri., 1:30pm, Rolling Hills Christian Church, 4530 NW Hiawatha Place (US Hwy 75 & NW 46th St.) 785-286-0601 or [office@rhctoepka.org](mailto:office@rhctoepka.org)

**SENIOR STRETCHING EXERCISES** - each Mon. – Wed. – Fri., 9:30-10:15am, Seaman Community Church, 2036 NW Taylor St. Enter on east side of the Fellowship Hall. No Charge. 785-354-8777 or 785-213-6016

**TRAIL LIFE & AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS TROUPS** - Every Mon. 6pm, Cornerstone Comm. Church, 7620 SW 21st. Faith-based scouting programs for kids age 5-18. Reg: [cornerstonetopeka.com](http://cornerstonetopeka.com). 478-2929

**TOPEKA TWILIGHT LIONS BRANCH CLUB** - 4th Mondays at 5:30pm, Norsemen Brewing Co., Visitors welcome.

**HEARTLAND HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS** – 2nd Mon., 11:45am-1pm. Promoting neighborhood well-being by mobilizing people, ideas & resources. 233-1365

**MONDAY FARMERS MARKET** – Mondays 7:30-11:30AM, Topeka & Sh. Co. Library, through Oct. 5

**MARKET MONDAYS** - Monday 3-7pm through October, Every Plaza. A farmers market and artisan market helping to increase access to fresh, locally produced foods and other products.

**SILVER LAKE FARMERS MARKET** – Tuesdays 6-8pm, June 1-Sep. 7, Silver Lake Library

### FREE Vision ! Screening Service



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VE Kansas Lions have purchased 2 hand held auto-refractors from Pedia Vision. It does not touch the child and looks like a large SLR camera.

#### Who does the screening?

The screener is used by all of the Lions Clubs in Northeast Kansas and the Lions members assist in the screening.

#### How do I get the Screener scheduled?

Contact the Topeka Lions Club, Spot Screening Coordinator, Spencer Smith, e-mail: [slsmithks@att.net](mailto:slsmithks@att.net) or call (785) 633-8321



**LAWRENCE TUESDAY MARKET** – Tuesdays, May 4-Oct. 26, 4-6pm, South Park, 1141 Massachusetts

**TOPEKA SWING DANCE** – Tuesdays, 7-8pm, Swing Dance Lessons, no partner required, Jayhawk Theatre, 720 SW Jackson. [www.topekasingdance.com](http://www.topekasingdance.com).

**OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP** – First Tuesday of each month at St. Francis Health, 1700 SW 7th St, Meeting Room, 2nd floor, 6:00 – 7:30 PM. Anyone with an ostomy may attend. The goal is to provide education and ongoing support. Call 295-5555

**FIBROMYALGIA & CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP** – 2nd Tue., 7-9pm. First Congregational Church, 17th and Collins. For info: Randy at 785-969-4038 or [TopekaCFS@outlook.com](mailto:TopekaCFS@outlook.com).

**EMOTIONS ANONYMOUS**: 12-step program for those suffering with emotional instability such as depression, anxiety, grief, etc. Meets every Tues. at Grace Episcopal Cathedral, Noon-1pm. N/C. 785-633-7764

**LADIES' EXERCISE** – Tue 7-8 pm & Fri. 8-9 am, First Baptist, 129 W 15th St., Lyndon. free active support: fat

burning, strength, fitness. 207-0380

**GRANDPARENT/RELATIVE CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP** – 3rd Tue., 6:30-8pm, 2nd floor meeting room, St. Francis Hosp, 1700 SW 7th. For info: Sharla, 286-2329; Jennie (English/Spanish) 231-0763.

**LIBRARY'S LEARN & PLAY BUS** – Every Tuesday 1-3pm, Auburn Community Center.

**SAFE STREETS COALITION MEETING** – First Wed. of the month, 11:45am-1pm. Great Overland Station. Info: 266-4606 or [jwilson@safestreets.org](mailto:jwilson@safestreets.org)

**GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS** – Every Wed, 7pm, St. Francis Hospital, meeting room #8.

**VIP LUNCHEON FOR SENIORS** – Every Wed., 10:45 bible study and meal at Noon, Topeka Church of the Brethren, 3201 NW Rochester Rd. (1 mile north of Dillon's North). FREE lunch with Christian fellowship, devotions & entertainment provided by Topeka North Outreach, Free will donations accepted. For info: 785-224-8803 or [vip@topekanorthoutreach.org](mailto:vip@topekanorthoutreach.org)

**OPERATION BACKPACK** – 1st Thurs., 6pm, Indian Creek Elementary, 4303 NE Indian Creek Rd. Volunteers gather to assemble Weekend Snack Sacks for low-income students. Topeka North Outreach. 286-1370.

**TOPEKA AREA BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP** – Third Thur. every month, 6-7:30pm, Kansas Rehabilitation Hospital, 1504 SW 8th Ave., employee cafeteria on 1st floor. All survivors, family, & friends welcome. Call Faye: 207-2606 or Randy: 232-8553

**COUNTRY AND BALLROOM DANCING** – Thursday's 6-9pm. Croco Hall. Edwina 379-9538 or 478-4760.

**SHEPHERDS CENTER LINE DANCING GROUP** – meets 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 2-4pm at First United Methodist, 6th & Topeka. Park on west side & use west door, turn left & take ramp to the library, then left to the elevator. Push [B] to go to the fellowship hall. 49-3258.

**SHEPHERDS CENTER HHHS WALKING GROUP** – meets 2nd & 4th Thurs 9:30-11 at HHHS, 21st & Belle. Entrance for walkers is on the WEST side of the building. Walking is done on an inside track. People who would like to walk a shelter dog call Kelsey, 233-7325.

**STROKE SUPPORT GROUP** – 1st Fri of every month from 4-5pm in cafeteria of Kansas Rehab Hospital, 1504 SW 8th Ave. Meet other stroke survivors, their families, and hear guest speakers. (785)232-8553 with questions.

**NICOTINE ANONYMOUS** – Every Fri., 6:30pm, Town & Country Christian Church Renaissance Room, 4925 SW 29th St., use west door cross red foot bridge. A fellowship of men & women helping each other to live free of nicotine. No fees. 402-321-486; [Laboomaha@att.net](mailto:Laboomaha@att.net).

**NOTO MARKET & ART WALK ON FIRST FRIDAYS** – NOTO arts district. Arts, antiques, crafts, and flea market.

**CELEBRATE RECOVERY** – Every Fri., 6pm, 1912 Gage Blvd. A Christ-centered program, based on 8 principles found in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Applying these Biblical principles, become free from addictive & dysfunctional behaviors. [crtopekaks.org](http://crtopekaks.org).

**TOPEKA NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUP** – For families & friends who are affected by someone else's narcotic addiction. Every Sat., noon-1:15 pm, rm. A, 1st Baptist Church, 3033 SW MacVicar, enter on S. side, door A.

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FALL FAMILY MARKET

**Sep. 25-26**

**Stormont Vail Events Center**

**Tickets \$6 in advance  
\$8 at the door  
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**CiderDays.com**



www.naranonmidwest.org

**DOWNTOWN TOPEKA FARMERS MARKET** - Saturday's April 3 to Nov. 7, 7:30am-noon, 12th & Harrison. The open-air market is full of fresh fruits and vegetables, herbs, arts & crafts, flower, home-baked goods and more.

**SATURDAY FAIRLAWN STARTER BIKE RIDE** - Every Sat., 8am at Classic Bean in Fairlawn Plaza, end at Pizagles. Great for beginners. director@cottonwood200.org

**HARVESTER'S PROGRAM FOR SENIOR CITIZENS** - second Sat., at Christian Lord Ministries, 2421 SE California. Call 266-4979.

**THE BERRYTON PICKERS** - First Sat. of ea. month, 7-9pm, Berryton Baptist Church. Bring snacks, have fun!

**HERBTalk** - Topeka herbs study group meets Third Saturdays for fun and interactive group learning and sharing about herbs/medicine plants. 7321 SE 45th, Prairie Meadow Greenhouse. RSVP Amy 785-379-8848. \$5.00 cash only charge; Free beverages and herb snack samples. Lunch option \$6.00. talkherbswithus@gmail.com

**LAWRENCE FARMERS MARKET** - Sat. 7:30-11:30, 824 New Hampshire Street. Open April 10-Nov. 20

**MOVIES AT EVERYGY PLAZA** - Second Fridays til fall  
**TOPEKA FOLK DANCERS CLASSES** - Sundays, 2-4pm 2637 SE 41st. No partner/experience needed. 215-0968.  
**KANSAS PRAIRIE PICKERS** - Fourth Sun. ea. Month, 1pm, Auburn Community Center. Foot-stomping, hand-clapping tunes to tickle your fancy.

**SQUARE DANCING** - Shawnee Swingers has monthly dances and sponsors lessons in the Fall. For info, call or text 785-845-2357 or email shawneeswingers@gmail.com. On Facebook: Shawnee Swingers Square Dance Club. wesquardance.com

**SEX TRAFFICKING INFORMATION** - 785-230-8237  
**ABORTION RECOVERY SUPPORT** - Providing services for women & men who suffer from Post-Abortion Syndrome. For info: Kay Lyn at KLCarlson20@cox.net.

**AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS** - for friends & families of alcoholics. For info: 785-409-3072 or topekaalanon.org

**ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUPS** - Monthly support group meetings for care-

givers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. All of our programs have moved from in-person to virtual. In person programs will resume once the current safety restrictions are lifted. Email Hayley Young at hdyoung@alz.org or call 785.379.3067 for the meeting link and other info.

**HHHS Volunteer Program** - Volunteers help keep animal's environments clean and enriching, socialize with and read to cats, walk dogs, and more. Please complete a volunteer application at hhhstopek.org.

**CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS** - Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging provides opportunities for caregivers to get together and share their ideas & feelings. 235-1367 on Aging, 2910 SW Topeka Blvd.

**Send your event information to:**

**info@TopekaHealthandWellness.com**

**See complete updated calendar at  
 TopekaHealthandWellness.com**



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<sup>1</sup> "Medicare & You," Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2020  
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 6255

# Spiritual Wellness

## Isolation Destroys; Solitude Transforms

By Troy Ismir

**W**hen I have been frustrated with life or with people in the past, I would go into isolation mode. I would cut myself off from the world not wanting to deal with the reality of my life. My fantasy was to run away to a tropical island being a beach bum avoiding the world. Sometimes life can feel so hard. I have wanted to do nothing more than isolate and escape my problems.

But that has never served me. When I finally decide to come out of isolation, my problems are still there and so are the people that I am struggling to accept, including myself. Nothing has changed.

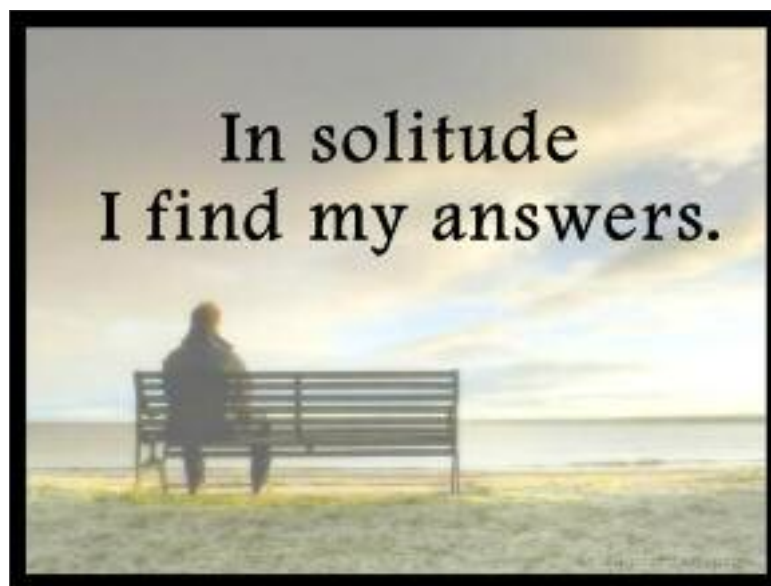
I am learning a new and healthier way to thrive in my life through solitude. What is the difference you ask? That's a great question. They both require time spent alone, but with completely different connotations.

### Isolation vs. Solitude

Isolation means cutting myself off from the real world and not dealing with it. It's zoning out watching TV or doing something mindless that doesn't involve personal growth. For some it may mean playing video games for hours, drinking to excess, spending countless hours at work or getting caught up in pornography. Name your addiction of choice.

Whereas solitude is spending time alone, not to withdraw from the world in an unhealthy way, but to learn more about ourselves and to hear from God. The ultimate purpose of solitude is to be a better person while resting in God.

I have found when I have spent time in solitude listening to the voice of God is when my inner life becomes strong and powerful as compared to when I check out and don't want to deal with my reality. Isolation leads to sadness and depression. Solitude leads to peace, joy and happiness.



### It's a Mindset

It's about a mindset and being intentional with our time alone. One is very unhealthy and one is very healthy. We get to choose how we view it. Isolation and solitude both can get lonely, but it's what we do with that loneliness that matters.

We can use that time of being alone to play the victim and feel sorry for ourselves, which I have done plenty of times in my life. Or we can take our time of solitude to read books that inspire us, pray, meditate, journal and be still. It's a time to be open and receptive to God's guidance.

Isolation sucks the life right out of us. Solitude can energize us as we get more clear on who we are. It's also a time to heal any past wounds that have been festering.

### Get Still and Listen

I recently went on a four day silent retreat where I was able to be still out in nature for hours at a time. No agenda other than to listen to God and connect with my deep self. If you want your life to change, get still. Stop striving and be open to receive. It's not easy to do as it is contrary to our nature.

I have spent my whole life trying to achieve success, to prove myself, to be perfect, to become somebody. That is a pathway to frustration and despair. When we stop trying to be somebody, we can actually be who we are. That is a very freeing feeling.

Men are especially good at isolating. We don't know how to express our emotions or don't feel like it is safe to be vulnerable, so we shut down. We close ourselves off from the real world, because it's easier that way.

Spend a few days by yourself in meditation and prayer and you will find out more about yourself in those few days than you could possibly in your day to day life. Going off by ourselves may seem like a selfish thing to do, but I think it's one of the most selfless things we can do.

### Practice Underachieving In a Healthy Way

Time of self-reflection and looking in the mirror can be hard, but it is life changing. God will speak to you in transformative ways, if you are willing to stop and listen. It's a great opportunity to stop doing and to just be. When is that last time you practiced underachieving in a healthy way?

If a silent retreat isn't your gig, just get away for a day or two with the intent of being still and listening. Take a journal and write down what you hear. Go for long walks with no phone and see what happens. It has the possibility to transform your life.

Isolation leads to quiet desperation. Solitude can lead to divine inspiration. The choice is up to you. I want to challenge you to find a way to create healthy solitude in your life for the purpose of spiritual growth. Ditch the isolation and unhealthy habits and see what God can do in your life. Go on a journey of self-exploration. Give yourself permission to explore your authentic soul. Have fun with it. It will be challenging and it will get uncomfortable, but my experience has been profound to say the least.

It's a lifetime's work to get back to our inner soul and overcome our false self. We get pretty good at living a life of ego and pride. That certainly has been my story, but as I practice more solitude in my life, I am realizing that getting back to who I truly am is the path to joy and inner peace. Let's start to practice solitude instead of isolation. You will be much happier and our world will be a much better place.

—Troy Ismir, Spiritual Warrior Coach  
Founder and Creator of Barbells & Brothers



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