

# MyHealthy Decisions

HEALTH & WELLNESS ISSUE 2020



Bassett Healthcare  
Network

## Good for your body and soul

### There's nothing like the great outdoors

Feeling cooped up after weeks of isolation and social distancing? You probably need a change of scenery, and one with lots of it: the great outdoors.

You can stay safe and move your exercise outside, and there's plenty of incentive.

Research suggests that outdoor exercise delivers health benefits that can't be duplicated indoors. And a key one is a bigger boost in positive emotions.

One study, for example, found that outdoor workouts can lift your mood more and help you feel more energetic and revitalized than indoor ones. Another found that as few as five minutes of outdoor exercise can improve self-esteem, especially if you're near greenery or water.

Moving your workouts outdoors also lets you:

**Connect with nature.** That's one of the best perks of outdoor exercise. Think of it this way: Where are you likely to enjoy exercise more, on a treadmill or on a hiking trail in a nearby park?

**Save money.** You don't need a gym membership. The outdoors belongs to all of us.

**Potentially burn more calories.** When you're jogging or biking outdoors, a strong headwind can help you burn more calories. You have to work harder to overcome the wind's resistance.

### GET OUT AND ENJOY!

Take a brisk walk to clear your mind. Work out your muscles on a local hill, bike on a neighborhood street, or walk one lap and jog the next at a nearby school track. Or treat yourself to a walk in the woods, in a meadow or along a stream at a park.

You can turn exercise into family time too. Play outside with your child (or grandchild), or take a nature hike together. After all, everybody deserves to have fun outdoors.

Source: American Council on Exercise





## THE FUTURE IS NOW!

Because of its convenience and cost savings, telemedicine is a growing trend.

To learn about how we're using telemedicine to benefit our patients, visit [bassett.org/telemedicine](https://bassett.org/telemedicine).



*"As we navigate a new world after the spread of COVID-19, telemedicine has become a key tool in providing care."*

—Steven J. Heneghan, MD, FACS, Chief Clinical Officer

When they landed on the moon in 1969, Neil Armstrong and the rest of the Apollo 11 crew made history in a way you may not know: The astronauts were wearing devices that allowed NASA to monitor their health in space.

Today, that early example of what's now known as telemedicine has taken a strong hold in health care down here on Earth as many of our practitioners and patients are using this innovation to communicate.

### NICE TO 'SEE' YOU, DOC!

Telemedicine (sometimes referred to as telehealth) uses computers, phones and mobile devices to deliver care remotely. With this techy treatment style, you may find yourself at home video chatting, emailing or texting your clinician about a medical concern or a chronic condition, such as diabetes or heart failure. Devices can even send real-time data to your provider about your heart, blood pressure or blood glucose.

"Telemedicine is changing the face of how we deliver health care," says Steven J. Heneghan, MD, FACS, Bassett Healthcare Network's Chief Clinical Officer. "It's smart, efficient and can bring services to patients—right in their homes. As we navigate a new world after the spread of COVID-19, telemedicine has become a key tool in providing care. Bassett Healthcare Network is proud to be on the forefront of telemedicine in our region."

## Real care and convenience

Telemedicine may not work for every health care situation, but it has proved useful for a wide variety of reasons.

Some examples include:

- ▶ Senior citizens who are too frail to leave home may find video chatting with their doctors a good solution for getting care.
- ▶ Your provider may conduct a live videoconference to consult with a specialist—in a distant location—after seeing you. Together they can look at your electronically transmitted medical images to create a treatment plan.
- ▶ Diabetes patients may send their blood sugar and blood pressure readings, via a computer or phone, to a nurse for ongoing monitoring.

MyHealthy Decisions is published as a community service and to provide general health information. It is not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained from your primary care provider. Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

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# Can my mental health affect my body?

Start feeling like yourself again



James Anderson, PhD, DSRIP Medical Director, Behavioral Health and Integrated Services

**Maybe this question has been on your mind:** Can my mental state affect my physical health? The answer is yes.

For centuries, doctors have suspected that there is a powerful tie between mind and body, and modern medical studies prove them right. Researchers now know unhealthy levels of stress, depression and anxiety can wreak havoc with

your hormones, immune system, heart health and blood pressure.

Back pain, chest pain, headaches, extreme fatigue, diarrhea, a stiff neck or a racing heart are just a few of the physical symptoms that can appear when your emotional health is off-kilter, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Tending to your emotional health can improve your quality of life. It also may help your body fight infections, recover from an illness and prevent chronic disease.

“Taking care of mental health is as important as managing other areas of wellness,” says James Anderson, PhD, clinical psychologist and

Bassett’s Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment Program medical director, Behavioral Health and Integrated Services. “When you take care of your mental health, it not only improves your overall well-being, but improves the health of others who love you as well.”

Finally, remember these words of wisdom: Be honest with your doctor about the stresses and challenges you face. Ask for help if you think you’re feeling depressed. Your doctor can suggest many ways to improve your health and wellness—both mental and physical.

Additional sources: American Psychological Association; National Institutes of Health

## FIND YOUR BALANCE

What helps the mind-body balance grow strong? Thankfully, research has answered that question too. These top the list:



**Finding healthy ways to relax.** Some people use music, art, prayer, woodworking, reading or even 10-minute walks to lower stress in their lives.



**Getting a move on.** Exercise changes how the body responds to stress. It also improves mood.



**Expressing yourself.** Negative feelings and fears that are bottled up may flow out as aches, pains and problems. A trusted friend, partner or spiritual adviser may be able to help you focus on the positives and work through challenges. Some people keep a gratitude journal or write down goals and accomplishments. Professional counseling is advised if you are stuck or feeling overwhelmed.



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# Simplify your life for better physical and mental health

**2020** has been filled with challenges. It can be difficult to avoid suffering from stress, even from things we can't control. Now is a good time to take charge of the things you can control that are weighing you down—both physically and emotionally. Here are six ways to simplify—and empower—your life.



**Organize your time.** Are you always running behind or forgetting important dates? Smart time management can reduce stress and make life easier. Use lists and calendars to keep track of tasks, projects and appointments. There are many daily planner formats to choose from and a variety of apps to make this easier.

**Clear the clutter.** A messy house, a messy desk, a messy car—all of these things can zap your energy. Take a hard look at the items you own and decide which ones stay and which ones go. Then figure out the best way to manage the items you're keeping. You can find all sorts of storage solutions online and at specialty stores. To keep clutter from building up again, vow to put things away immediately after you use them.

**Plan to eat smart.** A

healthy diet can help ward off serious diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer over time. It can also reduce the risk of depression. Rid your pantry and refrigerator of less-than-healthy foods, and stock them instead with things like fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, dried beans, nuts, eggs, canned fish, whole grain pasta, and olive oil. With a well-stocked kitchen, you can quickly and simply prepare a nutritious meal.

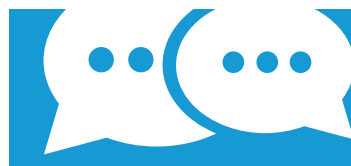


**Spend time with people who support you.** That positive connection is important to good emotional health.

**Make other healthful habits a priority too.** Sleep isn't a luxury—it's a necessity. Help your brain unwind by staying away from screens starting two hours before bedtime. Do your best to stick to a regular sleep schedule too. And use your scheduling tools to set aside time for some exercise. Moving more can boost your mood and help relieve stress.



Sources: American Heart Association; HelpGuide; Mental Health America



## NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO?

Get connected to our caring mental health experts. For free, confidential support, call 607-322-0157.