



April is Stress Awareness Month

Stress and poor mental health are some of the biggest public health challenges that society faces today. Despite this, many choose to ignore their mental health and continue to separate it from their physical health. In reality, the two greatly contribute to each other. Stress can be debilitating and can cause and/or aggravate numerous health problems, such as headaches, stomach disorders, and depression. This is why every April healthcare professionals from across the country raise awareness on the causes, treatments, and various ways to cope with stress.

Coping with Stress

According to the World Health Organization, **stress** is defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a normal human response, meaning it is normal to feel stressed and to look for ways to cope with what you are feeling. Feeling emotional and nervous or having trouble sleeping and eating are all

normal reactions to stress. Learning to cope with stress and finding healthy ways to deal with challenging situations can go a long way in living a healthy and positive life.

Here are some healthy ways you can deal with stress according to the CDC:

Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress

- **Take breaks** from news stories, including those on social media. It's good to be informed, but constant information about negative events can be upsetting. Consider limiting news to just a couple times a day and disconnecting from the phone, TV, and computer screens for a while.
- **Take care of your body:** Staying physically healthy can improve your emotional well-being. Here are some ways to improve your health:
 - **Eat healthy.** Have fruits and vegetables, lean protein, whole grains, and low-fat or no-fat dairy. Limit foods with unhealthy fats, salt, and added sugars.
 - **Get enough sleep.** Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day to help you sleep better. Adults need 7 or more hours per night.
 - **Move more and sit less.** Every little bit of physical activity helps. Start small and build up to 2 ½ hours a week. You can break it into smaller amounts such as 20 to 30 minutes a day.
- **Make time to unwind.** Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- **Avoid drugs and alcohol.** These may seem to help, but they can create additional problems and increase the stress you are already feeling.
- **Talk to others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling. Share your problems and how you are feeling and coping with a parent, friend, counselor, doctor, or pastor.
- **Recognize when you need more help.** If problems continue or you are thinking about suicide, talk to a psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor.

Types of Stress

There are (3) three different types of stress that someone may encounter: acute, episodic acute, and chronic stress. Understanding the differences between them can help you better manage your stress and improve your health and well-being.

- **Acute stress** is usually brief and is the most common and frequent of the three. This type of stress is often caused by reactive thinking and negative thoughts that take over events or situations you are in or may have coming up. Some situations that may cause acute stress include taking an exam, starting a new job, giving a speech, or having a deadline at work.
- **Episodic acute stress** is when a person experiences acute stress more frequently than others. This often affects people to have constant stress triggers, such as taking on too much responsibility at once, being in an unusually demanding job, being responsible for others with frequent difficulties, and even having interpersonal difficulties. Overcoming episodic acute stress is not simple and must be looked at on a case-by-case situation.
- **Chronic stress** is a constant sense of feeling pressured and overwhelmed over a long period of time. It is the most harmful of the three. If chronic stress is left untreated over a long period of time, it can consequentially damage both your physical and mental health. Some reasons people may experience chronic stress are family changes (such as the death of a loved one or a divorce), financial difficulties, and health issues. Fortunately, it is possible to manage and alleviate chronic stress by improving your lifestyle, making better behavioral choices, and even seeking professional help.

Reducing the Stigma

1. Talk about Stress and its effects – work together to reduce the stigma that is associated with stress by talking about the topic openly and freely with friends, family, and colleagues.
2. Share your coping mechanisms – if something has worked for you why not share it? It might benefit someone you care about and in the meantime, it might help you take your focus off your own challenges.
3. Be nice to those who are stressed and anxious – we are all undoubtedly going to experience stress and anxiety in our lifetime so treat others going through it with compassion and empathy.



There are countless health observances that raise awareness for a variety of health related conditions (both big and small) throughout the year that helps remind the community to stay on top of their health.

This Month's Observances:

- [Alcohol Awareness Month](#)
- [National Autism Awareness Month](#)
- [National Cancer Control Month](#)
- [National Dontae Life Month](#)

Weeks to Note:

April 24-30: [World Immunization Week](#)

Notable Days:

April 28: [World Day for Safety and Health at Work](#)

Sources/For More Info:

- [NIH National Stress Awareness Month](#)
- [The American Institute of Stress](#)
- [Stress Management Society](#)
- [National Today](#)
- [Harvard Countyway Library](#)

Sparkling Strawberry Lemonade

Serving Size: 3/4 cup
Serves: 8

What You Need

- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup water
- 16-ounce container fresh strawberries, cleaned and hulled
- 3/4 cup fresh lemon juice (about 10 large lemons)
- 3 cups naturally-flavored strawberry sparkling water*

** Note: Club soda or plain sparkling water may be substituted for strawberry-flavored sparkling water.*

How to Make

1. Combine sugar and water in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and cool completely, about 30 minutes.
2. Combine strawberries and half of cooled sugar mixture in a blender. Cover and process until very smooth, about 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a 2-quart pitcher.
3. Stir in remaining sugar mixture and lemon juice. Add sparkling water just before serving.

[More recipes like this](#)



Strawberries the Stress Reliever?

Not only are the red fruit packed with Vitamin C, but strawberries also help boost brain power and can help protect your brain as you get older.

Berries such as strawberries and blueberries are packed with vitamin C and antioxidants which has been shown to provide relief from anxiety and can even help prevent anxiety.

Some tips on *selecting & storing berries*:

- The red fruit can be purchased fresh, frozen, and even dried. All good options for good nutrition and ease.
 - If in the mood for fresh strawberries, choose fruit that is shiny and firm with a bright red color.
 - The tops of the strawberries, or "caps," should be fresh, green, and intact.
 - Avoid fruit that is shriveled, mushy, or berries that appear to be leaking.
- If storing strawberries, do not wash until ready to eat.

Strawberries can be stored in the refrigerator up to three (3) days.

Upcoming Events**

**** Times/Locations Subject to Change ****
****Cancellations may also apply if inclement weather**

Visit the Healthy Fontana booth at one (or all) of these upcoming events for FREE resources and giveaways!

- **Thursdays, April 13th, 20th & 27th:** [Fontana Farmers' Market](#), 2pm-7pm, Southridge Park (Don Day Center Parking Lot)
 - **April 13th will feature a FREE food demo of the recipe of the month! 4pm-6pm**
- **Sundays, April 16th, 23rd, & 30th:** [Fontana Farmers' Market \(FM\)](#), 10am-3pm, Fontana Park/Aquatics Center Parking Lot
 - **April 16th will feature a FREE food demo of the recipe of the month! 12pm-2pm**
 - **April 23rd market will be in conjunction with a blood drive. Choose a donation time [here](#).**
- **Saturday, April 15th:** [Fontana Walks!](#), 8am, Mary Vagle Nature Center
- **Saturday, April 22nd:** [FREE Garden Open House/Workshop](#), 10am-12pm, Central City Park Community Garden
- **Saturday, April 29th:** [Special Needs Resource Fair](#), 10am-12pm, Miller Park
- **Sunday, April 30th:** [Walk for Kids/Farmers' Market](#), 8am-12pm, Fontana Park



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Forward

The Healthy Fontana team is here to support you and help provide you with resources on how to be a healthier version of yourself. For more information about Healthy Fontana or the programs available to you, visit the [Healthy Fontana website](#) or connect with us via one of the ways below!

Connect with Healthy Fontana

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