

MARCH 2025

PLAN FOR HEALTH NEWSLETTER

THIS MONTH'S TOPICS:

- **Stress**
- **Alcohol Awareness**
- **March Recipe: Baked Chicken Parmesan**

Managing Stress

According to the World Health Organization, stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. It is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. Stress can be acute, which can be good for you, but persistent high levels of stress can have a negative impact on our health. It may increase your risk for anxiety, depression, substance abuse, heart attacks, high blood pressure, and obesity. The way we respond to stress makes a big difference to our overall well-being.

The first steps to handling stress are to practice healthy habits such as eating a healthy diet, exercising, and getting quality sleep. The healthier you are, the more equipped you are to manage chronic stress and tension. However, even if you are staying healthy, it may not be enough. One of the best approaches to managing stress is to use the Four A's: avoid, alter, adapt, or accept.

- **Avoid** is learning to say no and prioritizing the "must do's" over the "should do's". If you're feeling overwhelmed, pass up on the things that do not need to be done or attended to.

- **Alter** your situation. Communicate clearly and let people know your expectations. If possible, delegate work to others and voice your limitations in advance. Make sure to create a schedule that balances work, family, fun, and some self-care activities in order to avoid burnout.
- **Adapt** by changing your standards, expectations, and attitude. Don't strive for perfection, but instead make reasonable substitutes throughout your life and learn to compromise. Focus on the positive aspects in your life and change your perspective by asking if the stressor will matter in five years. This is a good space to practice gratitude and meditation.
- **Accept** the situation when avoiding, altering, and adapting do not work. Be kind to yourself and forgive yourself or others for the current situation. Talk with someone about how you are feeling, such as a close friend or schedule an appointment with a therapist.

Stress is an inevitable part of our lives. How we handle that stress is important for our overall well-being. Next time you are dealing with a significant stressful situation, try putting this Four A's method into practice.



Alcohol Awareness

Alcohol can have a serious impact and can take a toll on your health if not managed. Drinking too much alcohol on a single occasion or even large amounts over time can affect your body and its organs in different ways:

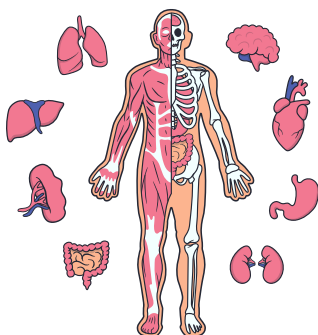
Brain – Alcohol impacts the brain by impairing balance, memory, speech, and motor-control which could result in a higher chance for injury. Longer term impacts can result in neurological alterations and damage.

Heart – Alcohol in excess can lead to high blood pressure, heart failure, or stroke. Long term alcohol use can also result in a condition called alcohol induced cardiomyopathy.

Liver – The main function of this organ is to filter the blood of toxins, drugs, and other harmful substance. Heavy alcohol consumption can result in cirrhosis of the liver, alcoholic hepatitis, and liver inflammation.

Pancreas – Alcohol causes the pancreas to produce a toxic substance that can lead to developing pancreatitis which leads to swelling and pain that can spread throughout the body.

Immune System - Drinking too much can weaken your immune system, making your body a much easier target for disease. Chronic drinkers are more liable to contract diseases like pneumonia and tuberculosis than people who do not drink too much.



How to Manage Alcohol Intake

If you are having a drink, setting goals and being aware of how much alcohol you are consuming is a good habit to practice. A standard drink size is considered: 12 fluid oz. of regular beer, 5 fluid oz. of wine, 1.5 fluid oz. of hard liquor or distilled spirits.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), moderate alcohol use is two drinks per day or less for men and one drink per day or less for women. Cutting back and moderate alcohol intake reduces your risk for negative health effects and conditions that were mentioned previously. There are a variety of tips and strategies to keep in mind or practice when drinking alcohol:

- **Set Limits** – Know how much you might want to drink, amount, frequency and consider what might be excessive for your health.
- **Count Your Drinks** – Understand what a 'standard drink' equivalent is and know what is considered 'moderation' for your alcohol intake.
- **Manage Triggers** – You can limit or reduce time if certain places, people, or events tempt you to drink more. If happy hour is one example, choose to meet friends or others for a breakfast or brunch instead.
- **Know About Your Support** – Have someone you can talk to about alcohol usage such as your health care provider, a trusted friend, or family member.

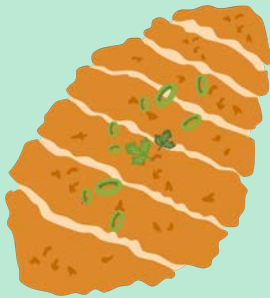
Small changes can make the biggest differences when it comes to consuming alcohol.

March Recipe: Baked Chicken Parmesan



Ingredients:

- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup panko bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves (6 ounces each)
- Olive oil-flavored cooking spray
- 4 cups fresh or frozen broccoli florets (about 10 ounces)
- 1 cup marinara sauce
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup minced fresh basil, optional



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Lightly coat a 15x10x1-in. baking pan with cooking spray.
2. In a shallow bowl, whisk egg. In a separate shallow bowl, stir together the next 5 ingredients. Dip chicken breast in egg; allow excess to drip off. Dip in crumb mixture, patting to help coating adhere. Repeat with remaining chicken. Place chicken breasts in center third of baking pan. Spritz with cooking spray.
3. Bake 10 minutes. Remove from oven. Spread broccoli in a single layer along both sides of sheet pan (if broccoli is frozen, break pieces apart). Return to oven; bake 10 minutes longer. Remove from oven.
4. Preheat broiler. Spread marinara sauce over chicken; top with shredded cheese. Broil chicken and broccoli 3-4 in. from heat until cheese is golden brown and vegetables are tender, 3-5 minutes. If desired, sprinkle with basil.

Stay tuned for April topics:
Parkinson's Awareness and National Minority Health Month

