

Plan for Health: December 2021



This month's highlights include **National Handwashing Awareness Week** and **Healthy Holiday Tips!**

National Handwashing Awareness Week

December 1-7, 2021 is National Handwashing Awareness Week. If we've learned anything this past year, it's how important personal hygiene basics are. Think about how many things you touch with your hands in a given day. Now think about how many other people have touched the same objects. By making sure to wash our hands, we are making sure to prevent the spread of germs that lead to sickness. Below are some facts about hand hygiene.

1. Hand washing can prevent 1 in 5 infections, including the flu.
2. Around 1.4 million children under the age of 5 die from pneumonia and diarrheal diseases.
3. The CDC reports only 65 percent of women and 31 percent of men washed their hands after using a public restroom.
4. Using antibiotics creates antibiotic resistance. Handwashing prevents many sicknesses reducing the need for antibiotics.
5. A typical human sneeze exits the body at around 200 miles per hour and emits around 40,000 droplets into the air.

Other Habits to Stop the Spread of Germs

Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough. Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Don't hoard "used" tissues. Cover your cough or sneeze with your hand if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs can live for a long time on surfaces like telephones, doorknobs, desks and tables.

When you are sick or have flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest, and check with a health care provider as needed. Keeping your distance from others may protect them from getting sick. Common symptoms of the flu include fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose and muscle aches.

Practice other good health habits, such as eating a well-balanced diet, exercising regularly, drinking plenty of water, getting adequate sleep and controlling stress. All of these habits help support a healthy immune system.

Sharecare Featured Challenge

Join the National Handwashing Awareness Week challenge this month. Complete the challenge certifying that you have washed your hands using the CDC guidelines every day this week! Join this challenge starting on November 29th by going to mycare.sharecare.com and clicking Achieve → Challenges → Upcoming and join the challenge.

Healthy Nutrition Holiday Tips

The holidays are right around the corner, and with that means lots of gatherings, and lots of food. Here are some tips to stay healthy and on track this holiday season:

1. Bring a healthy dish. Ensure there is one nutritional option available to eat.
2. Visit the people, not the food. Move socializing away from the appetizers to prevent mindless eating.
3. Don't skip meals. Make sure to prevent overeating by not attending social events hungry.
4. Eat until you're satisfied, not stuffed. Eat slowly and be sure to check your fullness levels.
5. Eat in color. Try to fill half your plate with colorful fruits and vegetables.
6. Choose drinks wisely. Alcoholic beverages contain empty calories, so stick with zero calorie drinks such as water, tea, or seltzers.
7. Don't feel guilty. If you do happen to overindulge, don't stress. Just make sure your next meals are healthy and make sure to be physically active.

Find the Joy

It's wonderful getting to enjoy all the holiday season treats and traditions but remember to find the balance within each day. The holidays can be hard with all the hustle and bustle. Allow yourself to slow down, decompress and reflect on the season.

1. Replace self-criticism and self-doubt with self-celebration and self-confidence.
2. Turn on those positive thoughts in your mind and turn off the negative ones.
3. Write down your daily achievements as a reminder of what you do well and were able to accomplish.
4. Be optimistic. This takes practice but it's also very contagious!
5. Celebrate your successes no matter how big or small. A victory is a victory!
6. Get plenty of sleep so you can operate at your best each day.

Plan Ahead: Join us next month for January's health topic: **New Year's Resolutions and Aim for Change Wellness Coaching Program**