

Be a Friend/Be a Hero

There's a
Hero in You

You are
Brave

You are
a Role
Model

2021 Newsletter

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KOHL'S
Cares

 **BEACON HEALTH SYSTEM**

Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies

Many of us are aware of the physical benefits of exercise. But did you know that exercising is an important element to good mental health as well? Let's face it, stress happens. Daily. When we are experiencing difficult situations, our bodies release cortisol, better known as the fight, flight, or freeze hormone. This automatic response is crucial for survival. However, if we do not metabolize, or rid our bodies of the cortisol, it can build up and cause serious physical ailments.

Exercise is an excellent way to metabolize stress. Not only does exercise reduce the levels of cortisol, it also stimulates the production of endorphins. Endorphins are often referred to as the "feel good chemical" because they are the body's natural mood elevators and painkillers. Because exercising reduces the level of cortisol while increasing the level of endorphins, it is an ideal way to feel good both mentally and physically. In addition to being physically active, we have all been taught that eating fruits and vegetables are a vital component to a healthy lifestyle, and of course that is correct. However, the benefits of incorporating fruits and vegetables into our daily diets go beyond good physical health. Eating appropriate amounts of fruits and vegetables promotes good mental health as well. Sometimes, it can seem like an impossible task to eat healthy and stay fit but it is easier than you might think.

One Step at a Time

Exercise is not everyone's cup of tea, and that is okay. You don't need to be a marathon runner or a triathlete to maintain good physical health. Walking is a wonderful way to keep moving. Whether it be a leisurely stroll or a brisk walk in the neighborhood the important thing is to get your heart rate up and use those muscles. There are many [benefits of walking](#). Not only does it strengthen bones and muscles, walking relaxes the mind and can promote a good night sleep. With all the perks of walking, why not take in some fresh air and sounds of nature and enjoy a walk today? As beneficial as walking is, it is not the only option for becoming more mobile. Make the commitment to becoming more active, and [get the whole family involved](#) in the quest for more physical activity. Go for a bike ride together or recapture your youth and play a game of tag with the kids. When parents make exercise and physical well-being fun, engaging, and a priority, children will be far more likely to develop active and healthy lifestyle choices as well.

Deliciously Simple and Healthy

We all know the importance of a well-balanced diet. But did you know that spinach (and other leafy greens like kale and broccoli) and mango promote healthy brain function? The B vitamin folate in these super foods protect the neurons in the brain; improving memory and keeping your brain up to seven and a half years younger! Let's not forget about our immune systems. Citric fruits like oranges are not the only foods that provide our bodies with Vitamin C. Ounce for ounce, red bell peppers are packed with almost three times as much Vitamin C as oranges. Adding peppers to a stir fry or salad can be an easy way to boost your immune health. Don't have time for a sit-down meal? Try a [delicious and healthy smoothie](#). Smoothies are a great way to cram a lot of nutrient rich fruits and vegetables into one simple and delicious serving you can take on the go. When making smoothies using spinach or kale these greens can be added sparingly at first so the color isn't off-putting for little ones. No matter which recipe you choose these delicious smoothies are good for the whole family.

Hand in Hand

As you can see physical and mental well-being go hand in hand. Exercising has many physical benefits but it is also proven to help relieve stress, improve sleep, decrease blood pressure, and improve overall mental health. Likewise, having a diet rich in fruits and vegetables not only improves physical health it also has a positive impact on our brain chemistry, which in turn influences our mood, memory, and cognitive ability.