

May 2025

# Wellness NEWSLETTER

## HEALTH OBSERVANCE

## Mental Health Month

Amanda Smith – *Wellworks For You*

### Break the Stigma and Prioritize Your Wellbeing:

Mental health is a crucial part of our overall health and wellbeing. Mental health includes our emotional, physiological, and social wellbeing. The way we think, act, and feel are affected by our mental health as well as how we manage stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Mental health is important throughout all stages of life, and it is important to note that mental health and mental illness are not the same thing. While anyone can have periods of poor mental health, not everyone has a mental illness.

Positive mental health allows individuals to realize their full potential, cope with the stresses of life, work productively, and make meaningful contributions to their communities!

- **Get regular exercise:** Physical activity improves mood, self-esteem, sleep, and mental clarity.
- **Eat a balanced diet:** Good nutrition fuels brain health and emotional stability.
- **Practice relaxation techniques:** Meditation, deep breathing, and yoga can help reduce anxiety and tension.
- **Stay socially connected:** Meaningful interactions and community involvement can improve your mood and outlook.
- **Seek professional help:** Counseling can provide guidance, coping tools, and support during challenging times.

### Know the Early Warning Signs:

Some signs of mental health challenges include changes in sleep or appetite, social withdrawal, feeling hopeless, increased substance use, mood swings, and difficulty performing daily tasks.

### Help is Available:

If you or someone you know needs support, reach out:

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** – Call, text, or chat 988 for free, 24/7 confidential support.
- **MentalHealth.gov** – Learn how to get help and find local resources.
- **SAMHSA's Treatment Locator** – Find behavioral health treatment services in your area.

### Sources:

- [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline- Homepage](#)
- [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline- Help Someone Else](#)
- [CDC- Mental Health](#)



### 2 Nourishing Your Mind:

## The Importance of Lifelong Learning

Keeping the brain active with learning is linked to improved mood and a decreased risk of cognitive decline.



### 3 Sleep Better, Live Better

## Better Sleep Month: Easy Habits for Restful Sleep

We may not think much about it, but sleep is essential—so much so that May is Better Sleep Month.



### 4 Featured Recipe



**INTELLECTUAL**  
**HEALTH TIP**  
**CORNER**



## Nourishing Your Mind: The Importance of Lifelong Learning

### Katherine Kline – *Wellworks For You*

Mental health needs shift as we move through life. What supports our wellbeing in one season may not be what we need in the next. Stress in early adulthood might stem from career pressures or identity-building, while in later years it may show up as loneliness, loss, or a lack of purpose. But one powerful practice supports us through every phase: lifelong learning. Staying mentally engaged offers structure, meaning, and joy. It reminds us that growth is always possible, even when life feels uncertain.

### A Workout for the Brain

Keeping the brain active with learning is linked to improved mood and a decreased risk of cognitive decline. Research suggests that learning new things stimulates the brain in ways that can help prevent symptoms of depression and delay memory loss. Just like physical exercise strengthens the body, mental stimulation strengthens the mind.

### Confidence, Resilience, and Mental Wellness

Learning something new—whether it's a small hobby or a larger goal—builds self-worth. Every new skill acquired reinforces the belief that we are capable and evolving. This is especially important when navigating feelings of burnout, stagnation, or major life transitions. Engaging the mind helps restore a sense of identity and control, both of which are essential to emotional wellbeing.

### Support Through Life's Transitions

During times of change—retirement, becoming an empty nester, recovering from loss, or even shifting careers—mental health can feel especially fragile. Learning offers an anchor. It gives you something to look forward to, a way to stay connected to yourself and the world around you, and often, a chance to meet others who share your interests.

### Simple Ways to Stay Engaged

Lifelong learning doesn't have to be formal, time-consuming, or costly—and it can take many different forms depending on your interests and lifestyle. Here are just a few approachable ways to begin incorporating lifelong learning into your everyday routine:

- Learn to play an instrument
- Try a new recipe
- Take a free online course
- Join a book club
- Learn a new language
- Grow an herb garden
- Explore a new craft
- Volunteer in your community
- Take up photography

No matter where you are in life, it's never too late—or too early—to begin again with curiosity. When we make space to grow, we make space to heal—and that's one of the most powerful things we can do for our mental health.

**Source:** <https://academic.oup.com/gerontologist/article-abstract/60/1/4/5128786?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

# Sleep Better, Live Better

## Better Sleep Month: Easy Habits for Restful Sleep

Caitlyn Keenen – Wellworks For You

As babies, it's all we do. As kids, we fight it. As adults, we miss it, and towards the end of life, we fear it. What is this elusive thing? Sleep.

We sleep every day but don't think much about it. Yet, it's vital that we get enough sleep—so much so that the month of May is recognized as Better Sleep Month. When we lack sleep, our bodies physically feel the decline in our health. Our exhausted brain makes concentrating and learning difficult, and we feel run down, making it harder to exercise and perform daily tasks. However, the importance of sleep on mental health is often overlooked.

Many of us know we feel better after a “good night's sleep” and tend to be grumpier when we don't sleep well. As a result, we negatively react to stressful and emotional situations, which worsens our mood. In addition to impacting mood, a lack of sleep affects the brain's functionality. During different stages of sleep, your brain processes information. It works to assess situations and recall thoughts and memories. Without this brain processing, you may experience a lack of understanding and recognition, which negatively affects your mental health. Lastly, sleep problems can cause the onset or decline of mental health disorders like depression and anxiety. Studies show that otherwise healthy people can feel higher amounts of anxiety and dejection after a night of insufficient sleep. Overall, it is clear that adequate sleep is vital for your mental health and wellbeing.

Now that we know how important sleep is, how can we go about improving it? Below are tips to get better sleep. Sweet dreams!

- CREATE A BEDTIME ROUTINE
- LIMIT FOOD AND DRINK BEFORE SLEEP
- CREATE A RESTFUL SLEEPING ENVIRONMENT
- EXERCISE REGULARLY
- AVOID SLEEPING THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Source: <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/mental-health>



**FEATURED RECIPE**

# Strawberry Nice Cream

*Gluten-Free, Vegan, Nut-Free, Diabetes-Friendly,  
Low-Sodium, Low-Fat, Soy-Free, High Fiber, Heart Healthy,  
Low Calorie*

 **4 SERVINGS** |  **12 HOURS 30 MINUTES**

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound fresh strawberries
- 2 medium bananas
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup ice-cold water, as needed

## DIRECTIONS

1. Hull and coarsely chop strawberries. Peel and coarsely chop bananas.
2. Spread the strawberries and bananas on separate sides of one baking sheet or on two sheets. Freeze until solid, at least 12 hours.
3. Let the strawberries thaw at room temperature for 15 minutes. Transfer to a food processor; pulse until finely chopped, about 10 pulses.
4. Add the frozen bananas and lemon juice; process until smooth, 1 to 1 1/2 minutes, adding up to 1/4 cup cold water if needed to achieve desired consistency, stopping to scrape down sides of bowl as needed.
5. Serve immediately or, for a firmer texture, transfer to a freezer-safe container and freeze for up to 30 minutes.

## TIPS

To make ahead: Freeze fruit (Step 1), transfer to separate sealable plastic bags and freeze for up to 6 months.

## NUTRITION

<b>Per Serving:</b>	<b>1 Cup</b>	<b>Per Serving:</b>	<b>1 Cup</b>
<b>Calories:</b>	191	<b>Protein:</b>	1g
<b>Carbohydrates:</b>	23g	<b>Dietary Fiber:</b>	4g
<b>Saturated Fat:</b>	0g	<b>Sodium:</b>	2mg
<b>Total Sugars:</b>	13g		

Source: <https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/272846/strawberry-nice-cream/>