



NATIONAL WELLNESS MONTH

SMALL HABITS, BIG IMPACT

August is National Wellness Month — a yearly reminder that good health is built in small, everyday moments. You don't need a dramatic overhaul to feel better. Leading health organizations find that modest, consistent habits add up to real gains in energy, mood and long-term health. Here are five worth focusing on this month.

1. Move a little more. Adults need about 150 minutes of moderate activity a week — roughly 30 minutes, five days a week — plus two days of muscle-strengthening activity. It doesn't have to happen all at once; a brisk 10-minute walk after each meal counts.

2. Protect your sleep. Adults who get at least seven hours of sleep a night tend to have sharper focus, steadier moods and stronger immune health. A consistent bedtime and a simple wind-down routine make the biggest difference.

3. Add color to your plate. Filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables is one of the easiest ways to eat well. Seasonal summer produce — berries, tomatoes, peaches and leafy greens — makes it affordable and delicious.

4. Take stress breaks. Short pauses to breathe, stretch or step outside can lower tension and reset your focus. Even a few minutes of slow, deep breathing signals your body to relax.

5. Stay connected. Strong relationships are linked to better physical and mental health — and a longer life. A quick text, a shared lunch or a phone call all strengthen the bonds that support you.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Department of Agriculture (MyPlate); American Psychological Association; U.S. Surgeon General.

YOUR DAILY RESET

Wellness isn't only about big goals — it's also the small resets that carry you through a busy day. Try weaving a few of these into your routine:

Start with water. Begin the day with a glass of water to rehydrate and boost alertness.

Step away from screens. A short break every hour eases eye strain and clears your head.

Get some daylight. A few minutes of morning sun helps regulate your body clock and mood.

Note one good thing. Jotting down something you're grateful for can lift your outlook.

Small resets, repeated daily, become the habits that shape a healthier life.

Source: National Institutes of Health (News in Health); Mayo Clinic.

BUILDING HABITS THAT ACTUALLY STICK

Wanting to be healthier is easy; making it routine is the hard part. Behavior researchers find that people who succeed rarely rely on willpower alone — they design their days, so the healthy choice is the easy one. A few evidence-based strategies:

- **Start small.** Pick one habit and make it almost too easy — a five-minute walk, one extra vegetable. Small wins build momentum.
- **Anchor it to something you already do.** Pair a new habit with an existing one, like stretching while your coffee brews.
- **Track your progress.** Checking off a simple calendar or app keeps you motivated and honest.
- **Expect setbacks.** Missing a day is normal. What matters is getting back to it, not being perfect.

Give a new habit time — it often takes a couple of months to feel automatic. Patience is part of the plan.

Source: National Institutes of Health (News in Health).

A MID-YEAR CHECK-IN ON PREVENTIVE CARE

August, with its back-to-school rhythm, is a natural time to make sure your family's preventive care is up to date. Preventive visits, screenings and vaccinations catch problems early — often before symptoms start — and most are covered at no cost by health plans.

- Schedule your annual wellness visit if you haven't had one this year.
- Review recommended screenings with your provider based on your age and history.
- Confirm vaccinations are current. August is National Immunization Awareness Month — a good prompt to check your family's schedule.

Not sure what you're due for? Your primary care provider or your plan's preventive care list is the best place to start.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (MyHealthfinder).

IN THE KITCHEN

SUMMER CHICKPEA & CUCUMBER SALAD

A no-cook, protein-packed salad that comes together in about 15 minutes — perfect for hot August evenings or a make-ahead lunch. Makes 4 servings.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 (15-oz) cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 large cucumber, diced
- 1-pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ cup red onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ tsp dried oregano; salt & pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine chickpeas, cucumber, tomatoes, onion and parsley in a large bowl.
2. Whisk olive oil, lemon juice, garlic and oregano in a small bowl.
3. Pour dressing over the salad and toss to coat; fold in the feta.
4. Season with salt and pepper. Serve right away or chill up to two days.

Per serving (approx.): 320 cal · 13 g protein · 34 g carbs · 9 g fiber · 16 g fat · 430 mg sodium. Nutrition information is approximate.

Source: Wellbeing for Your WORLD kitchen.