



Stress Awareness Month

Stress can affect your mental health, physical health and emotional well-being. From everyday routine stress, stress brought on by sudden negative changes to traumatic stress, all types of stress can affect people in different capacities and different severities. Stress in the workplace, stress from relationships and family, financial stress, the stress of a move, lack of sleep, and a life transition such as a new baby, a divorce or a death call all affect an individual. Although some stressors may be unavoidable, the way we cope with stress can affect the outcome.

The best thing you can do to prevent stress overload and the health consequences that come with it is to know your stress symptoms and learn how to avoid and manage them in a healthy way. Here are some healthy ways to manage stress:

- **Avoid drugs and alcohol:** They may seem to be a temporary fix to feel better, but in the long run drugs and alcohol can create more problems and add to your stress – instead of taking it away.
- **Find support:** Seek help from a partner family member, friend, counselor, doctor, or clergyperson. Having someone with a sympathetic, listening ear and sharing about your problems and stress can really lighten the burden.
- **Connect Socially:** After a stressful event, it is easy to isolate yourself. Make sure that you are spending time with loved ones. Consider planning fun activities with your partner, children, or friends.
- **Take care of yourself:**
 - Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet
 - Exercise regularly
 - Get plenty of sleep
 - Give yourself a break if you feel stressed out – for example, treat yourself to a therapeutic massage
 - Maintain a normal routine
- **Stay active:** You can take your mind off your problems with activities like helping a neighbor, volunteering in the community, and taking the dog on a long walk. These can be positive ways to cope with stressful feelings. Re
- **Recognize when you need more help:** If problems continue or you are thinking about suicide, talk to a psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor.

Live Better Louisiana Health Capsule – Go to Bed; It's for Your Health

When you don't get enough sleep at night, it causes more than just crankiness the next day. Long-term lack of good, quality sleep can lead to mental health issues, heart or lung strain and can impair brain function. In this video, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Medical Director Dr. Larry Simon shares information about why sleep is a key component of overall health.



Live Better Louisiana Clinics

Earn your 2020 premium credit in just one step: by completing your preventive health checkup. Blue Cross works with an industry leader, Catapult Health, to bring preventive checkups to a **site near you**. You can schedule a free checkup with a licensed nurse practitioner and health technician through the online scheduler. You'll get **lab-accurate diagnostic tests** and receive a full **Personal Health Report** with checkup results and recommendations.

What do you do? Schedule your appointment online at www.TimeConfirm.com/OGB or call **1-877-841-3058**. Complete your clinic to get the credit. If you are not able to go to a clinic, have your doctor fax a completed Primary Care Provider form, found at info.groupbenefits.org, to Catapult Health.

Upcoming Clinics

Below is a list of clinics scheduled throughout the state. Remember, you have until **August 31, 2019** to get your preventive health checkup in order to be eligible for the 2019 wellness credit!

Live Better Louisiana Clinics	
Date	Location
4/1/19 – 4/5/19	University of Louisiana Lafayette
	Bossier Parish Community College
	University of New Orleans
	LA Workforce Commission
	Delgado CC City Park
	LaSalle Building
	Supreme Court of LA
	State Military Department
	Office of Public Health - Calcasieu Parish Health Unit (Lake Charles)
	Central Office - Concordia Parish School Board
4/8/19 – 4/12/19	Nicholls State University
	Bossier Parish Community College
	Office of Public Health - Calcasieu Parish Health Unit (Lake Charles)
	Louisiana Dept. of Environmental Quality - Galvez Building (Baton Rouge)
	Probation and Parole (Monroe)
	Central Office - Jefferson Parish School Board (Harvey)
	DOTD District 61 East Baton Rouge
	Probation and Parole (Covington)
	Central LA Technical Community College (Alexandria)
	Delgado CC Charity School of Nursing (New Orleans)
4/15/19 – 4/19/19	St. Bernard Parish School Board - Admin Building (Chalmette)
	Northwest LA Technical College (Shreveport)
	Central Office - Jackson Parish School Board (Jonesboro)
	McNeese State University (Lake Charles)
	Baton Rouge Community College (Baton Rouge)
	Pinecrest Supports and Services Center (Pineville)
	NWLTC Minden Campus
	LSERS Office (Baton Rouge)
	Northwest Louisiana Human Services District (Shreveport)
	DOTD District 45 (Baton Rouge)
4/22/19 – 4/26/19	South Louisiana Community College (Lafayette)
	ULL New Iberia Research Center (New Iberia)
	Orleans Parish Civil District Court (New Orleans)
	Office of Public Health Laboratory (Baton Rouge)
	Sabine Parish School Board - Ebarb High School (Noble)
	University of New Orleans (New Orleans)
	DOTD District 03 (Lafayette)
4/29/19 – 4/30/19	LDH - Office of Public Health (New Orleans)
	DOTD District 04 (Bossier City)
	Florida Parishes Human Services Authority (Hammond)
	Vernon Parish School Board - Central Office (Leesville)

Seasonal Allergies: Nip them in the bud!

Spring means flower buds and blooming trees – and if you're one of the millions of people with seasonal allergies, it also means sneezing, congestion, a runny nose and other bothersome symptoms. While seasonal allergies can make you miserable, there are some simple strategies you can try to keep them under control.

- **Reduce your exposure to allergy triggers.**
 - Stay indoors on dry, windy days. The best time to go outside is after a good rain which helps clear the pollen from the air.
 - Delegate lawn mowing, weed pulling and other gardening chores that stir up allergens.
 - Remove clothes you've worn outside and shower to rinse pollen from your skin and hair.
 - Don't hang laundry outside.
 - Wear a pollen mask if you do outside chores.
- **Take extra steps when pollen counts are high.**
 - Check your local TV or radio station, your local newspaper, or the internet for pollen forecasts and current pollen levels.
 - If high pollen counts are forecasted, start taking allergy medications before your symptoms start.
 - Close doors and windows when pollen counts are high.
 - Avoid outdoor activity in the early morning when pollen counts are highest.
- **Keep indoor air clean.**
 - Use the air conditioning in your house or car.
 - Use high-efficiency filters.
 - Keep indoor air dry with a dehumidifier.
 - Clean floors often with a vacuum cleaner that has a HEPA filter.
- **Try an over-the-counter remedy.**
 - Several types of nonprescription medications can ease allergy symptoms. They include:
 - Oral antihistamines
 - Decongestants
 - Nasal Spray
 - Combination medications
- **Rinse your sinuses.**
 - Rinsing your nasal passages with saline solution is a quick, inexpensive and effective way to relieve nasal congestion. Rinsing directly flushes out mucus and allergens from your nose.
 - Look for a squeeze bottle or neti pot – a small container with a spout designed for nasal rinsing – at your pharmacy.
- **Interested in alternative treatments? Consider these:**
 - A number of natural remedies have been used to treat hay fever symptoms. Treatments that may help include extracts of the shrub butterbur and spirulina (a type of dried algae).
 - Some people claim acupuncture can help with seasonal allergy symptoms. There's some evidence that acupuncture works, and there's little evidence of harm.
 - Talk to your doctor before trying alternative treatments.
- **When home remedies aren't enough, see your doctor.**
 - If you have bad seasonal allergies, your doctor may recommend that you have skin test or blood test to find out exactly what allergens trigger your symptoms. Testing can help determine what steps you need to take to avoid your specific triggers and identify which treatments are likely to work best for you.
 - For some people, allergy shots can be a good option. Also known as desensitization, this treatment involves regular injections containing tiny amounts of the substances that cause your allergies. Over time, these injections reduce the immune system reaction that causes symptoms. For some allergies, treatment can be given as tablets under the tongue.

So when does allergy season actually start?

Tree pollen pops up in late March to April. Grass pollen arrives around May. Weed pollen is most prevalent in the summer, July to August, and ragweed pollen takes over from late summer to fall (late August to the first frost).

Pollen.com has a National Allergy Map that provides an up-to-date allergy forecast in different areas around the country and an Allergy Alert app that gives five-day forecasts with in-depth info on specific allergens, helping you decide if you should stay indoors that day.

Baked Teriyaki Pork & Veggies



Minimal preparation makes this dish easy. Try it served over rice or noodles.

Ingredients

- 2 cups fresh cut broccoli florets
- 1 lb. fresh baby carrots, halved lengthwise
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp minced gingerroot
- ½ tsp pepper
- ¼ tsp salt
- 4 boneless pork loin chops
- 4 tbsps reduced-sodium teriyaki sauce
- Toasted sesame seeds, optional

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Line a 15x10x1-in pan with foil; add broccoli and carrots. Toss with olive oil, ginger, pepper and salt; spread out into a single layer.
2. Place pork chops on top of vegetables; drizzle with teriyaki sauce. Bake 30 minutes. Top with sesame seeds if desired.

For more information, visit us at www.bcbsla.com/ogb
Follow us on Twitter [@LiveBetterLA](https://twitter.com/LiveBetterLA)