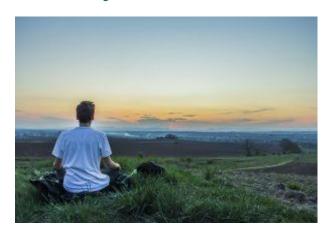# Parish Nurse's Notes – April 2024

5 Easy Wellness Practices to Improve Your Health

Life can get pretty hectic. Whether someone has a demanding job, they are caring for children, or they are just plain busy, many people don't make time to take care of themselves. Many times they put caring for others first and don't think of their own emotional and mental health needs. Over time, this neglect can build up and manifest itself into a variety of physical, emotional, or relational symptoms. To remind us to practice self-care, we have put together this list of five easy self-care practices.

Develop healthy habits

Taking care to eat right, engage in regular physical activity, and get enough sleep are important aspects of self-care. Maintaining a healthy diet can help reduce symptoms of depression and fatigue, improving a person's overall mood. Exercising releases endorphins in the brain. Endorphins are the brain chemicals that cause people to feel happier and more relaxed. Getting enough sleep improves concentration and productivity, your emotional responses, and social interactions. A lack of sleep is also connected to [depression](#) and an overall decrease in cognitive ability. Scientists recommend that the healthy, average amount of

sleep for an adult is 7 to 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep. For children, it is 9 to 12.

Establish a set routine

We are all creatures of habit, which is why it is no surprise that when we have a routine, we improve our mental health, reduce stress, increase productivity, and ultimately experience a more well-balanced lifestyle at home and at work. As you establish your routine, understand that you don't have to schedule every aspect of your day. Time is one of your most precious assets and putting some structure to your day should provide more opportunities to relax, incorporate things you can't get to currently, and have more fun!

Make time for yourself

As you establish a routine, don't forget to make time for yourself. While we often are able to find time to care for others – spouse, children or parents – we underestimate the importance of taking care of ourselves. If you are able, take a day off from work for you. A mental health day can help people feel refreshed and "reset" themselves. If that isn't an option, try carving out just 15-20 minutes a day to do something that will re-energize you. As you can, increase your "me time" and try and get up to an hour a day. If you put your wellness first, you will be much more effective in caring for the loved ones in your life.

Try meditation

Over the years, meditation has grown more popular as people discover its benefits. Learning how to meditate can increase a person's overall awareness and mindfulness. Habitual meditation can help lower stress and improve the symptoms of stress-based conditions. Meditation can also be responsible for increasing

positive emotions and help a person's ability to operate in social situations. This is a great activity to do on your own or as a family. Think of the benefits your family could gain by meditating together as part of your new routine!

Know when to seek help

This one might be harder for some people, but reaching out for help when life gets overwhelming and you aren't able to manage your own mental health is important. Counseling services can be extremely beneficial. Counseling can help people work through difficult emotions that they might not be able to process on their own. Another way counseling can help is that it can help people who have faced issues in their past work through them in a healthy manner while also giving them the tools to understand how to face challenges as they arise in the future. Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness. It's a sign that you are ready to face your struggles so you can live a healthy life.