

# NEELY EAP

MARCH 2023

GET THE MOST FROM YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



## WELCOME

We are so pleased to be your employee assistance provider. Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are a first-line response to providing prevention and short-term problem resolution services. We provide short-term counseling services, seminars, legal services, and financial advice, all FREE of charge to you. Each month our newsletter will be packed full of wellness information and updates about upcoming seminars and webinars.

24/7 Helpline: 866-212-6096

For TDD: 800-735-2989

Email: [admin@neelyeap.com](mailto:admin@neelyeap.com)

Web: [www.neelyeap.com](http://www.neelyeap.com)



## WELLNESS SEMINAR

Please join us for our live seminar "Healthy Eating to Help Cope with Stress"

Mar 9th @ 3pm

[REGISTER](#)

## QUARTERLY WEBINARS

Please join us for our live seminar "Time Management and Planning for Effective Leadership"

May 25th @ 3pm

TBD

# Healthy Eating to Cope with Stress

By: Courtney Garcia Echeverria

Stress is something that we have all experienced. Three main types of stress may occur: **acute** (a brief event), **acute episodic** (frequent acute events), and **chronic stress** (persistent events). We may also experience a combination of these. Stress can affect the body's use of calories and nutrients. The body's metabolic needs increase, as do the use and excretion of many nutrients. In addition, stress places a greater demand on the body for oxygen, energy, and nutrients. Yet people who experience chronic stress may crave comforting foods such as highly processed snacks or sweets, which are high in fat and calories but low in nutrients.

## Ways stress affects eating habits

- People feeling stressed may lack the time or motivation to prepare nutritious, balanced meals or may forget to eat meals.
- Stress can disrupt sleep by causing lighter sleep or more frequent awakenings, which leads to fatigue during the day. People may use stimulants such as caffeine or high-calorie snack foods to cope with fatigue.
- With chronic stress, elevated cortisol levels may cause cravings, particularly for foods high in sugar, fat, and calories, which may lead to weight gain.
- Cortisol favors fat accumulation in the belly area, which is associated with insulin resistance and an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and certain cancers. It also increases the hormone ghrelin (which increases appetite).

## A balanced diet

A balanced diet can support a healthy immune system and repair damaged cells. In addition, it provides the extra energy needed to cope with stressful events. Research suggests that certain foods like polyunsaturated fats, including omega-3 fats and vegetables, may help to regulate cortisol levels. If you frequently rely on fast food because you are tired or too busy to prepare meals at home, consider meal planning, a practice that can help save time in the long run and ensure more balanced, healthful meals.

## Foods to eat

- Foods high in vitamin B, specifically B12, can help metabolize cortisol. For example, try beef, chicken, eggs, fortified cereal, yeast, and organic meats.
- Eat foods high in omega-3 fatty acids to help reduce inflammation. Try anchovies, avocados, chia seeds, flax seeds, olive oil, oysters, salmon, tuna, and walnuts.
- Foods rich in Magnesium can aid in relaxing the mind and body. Try Avocados, Bananas, Broccoli, Dark chocolate, Pumpkin seeds, and Spinach.
- 80% of our immune system is reliant on our gut. So try these gut-healthy foods: Greek yogurt, Kefir, Kimchi, Kombucha, and Sauerkraut.

## How can we help

These foods may help regulate your cortisol levels- but they won't work independently. Stress management and healthy eating work hand-in-hand. Learning coping mechanisms will allow you to understand better how to manage your stress. If this is something you might need help with or to learn new techniques, please use your EAP benefits. Remember, nutrition is one thing about your health that you can control.

**To learn more about eating and managing stress, tune into the upcoming March seminar: [Healthy Eating to Help Cope with Stress.](#)**

### References:

[Eat These Foods to Reduce Stress and Anxiety - Cleveland Clinic](#) | [Stress and Health | The Nutrition Source](#) | [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health](#)

# Women and Mental Health Awareness

By: Courtney Garcia Echeverria

With March being National Women's History month, it is imperative that we look at mental health with women and how far we have come, but also how far we need to go. If you are a woman experiencing depression, an anxiety disorder, or another mental health condition, you are not alone. Women have been experiencing mental health illnesses since before we even had research available. Luckily, the available resources keep becoming more and more abundant. According to a recent Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration survey, 29 million American women, or about 23 percent of the female population, have experienced a diagnosable mental health-related disorder in the last year alone. Experts say that millions of other cases may go unreported – and untreated.

## How women are affected differently

- **Depression:** Women are twice as likely as men (12 percent of women compared to 6 percent of men) to get depression.
- **Anxiety and specific phobias:** Although men and women are affected equally by such mental health conditions as obsessive-compulsive disorder and social phobias, women are twice as likely as men to have panic disorder, generalized anxiety, and specific phobias
- **Post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD):** Women are twice as likely to develop PTSD following a traumatic event.
- **Suicide attempts:** Men die from suicide at four times the rate than women, but women attempt suicide three times more often than men.
- **Eating disorders:** Women account for at least 85 percent of all anorexia and bulimia cases and 65 percent of binge-eating disorder cases.



## Why it's different for women

- **Biological influences.** Female hormonal fluctuations are known to play a role in mood and depression. Women tend to produce less mood stabilizer serotonin and synthesize it more slowly than men, which may account for the higher rates of depression. A woman's genetic makeup is also believed to play a role in developing neurological disorders like Alzheimer's.
- **Socio-cultural influences.** Despite strides in gender equality, women still face challenges with socio-economic power, status, position, and dependence, which can contribute to depression and other disorders. Women are still the primary caregivers for children. It is estimated that they also provide 80 percent of all caregiving for chronically ill elders, which adds stress to a woman's life. Women are often dissatisfied with their bodies which can lead to depression. Girls are also sexually abused more often than boys, and one in five women will experience rape or attempted rape, which can lead to depression and panic disorder.
- **Behavioral influences.** Women are more likely to report mental health concerns to a general practitioner, while men tend to discuss them with a mental health specialist. However, women are sometimes afraid to report physical violence and abuse.

If you are a woman that needs to explore your mental health resources, or if you know a woman that you would like help with learning how to support, please use your EAP benefits to explore resources for yourself or family members.

**References:**  
[Mental Health Issues in Women - Women's Health Center - EverydayHealth.com](#)



## WHAT CAN MY EAP DO FOR ME?



### About our logo

For decades, enslaved African Americans looked to the North Star for hope, inspiration, and freedom. Neely EAP (NEAP) provides the **hope** that your situation will improve, the **inspiration** to move you in the right direction, and the **freedom** to live your best life.

At Neely EAP, we understand the challenge of balancing work and life stresses while staying mentally healthy. That's why we've partnered with your employer to offer you the following services free of charge:

- 24/7 Hotline, Access to Confidential Services
- Short-Term Counseling Couch Time Check-In (preventive annual counseling session)
- Legal and Financial Assistance
- Work-life referrals for adult care, childcare, pet care and more
- Wellness Trainings & Online Employee Training Vault
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

