

Live Well, Work Well

Q2

In the
News

NHO

Health and
Wellness

Recipes

**America's Race to
Vaccinate**



In The News

Catch up on the latest developments of the biggest health care news that happened in the past three months.



America's Race to Vaccinate

Since COVID-19 vaccine distribution began in the United States on Dec. 14, more than 90 million doses have been administered, reaching 17.7% of the total population, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That means the United States is currently administering more than 2.2 million shots a day.

Those numbers represent the three available COVID-19 vaccines. The Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna vaccines both require a two-shot regimen spaced out by three or four weeks. Vaccination is complete once both doses are received. A third vaccine, developed by Johnson & Johnson, that requires just one shot was authorized for emergency use on Feb. 27. Johnson & Johnson pledged to supply 100 million doses within the first half of this year.

What's Next?

The Biden administration secured deals for an additional 200 million vaccine doses from Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna. Additionally, pharmaceutical giant Merck & Co. agreed to help manufacture the new one-dose vaccine from Johnson & Johnson. That should give the United States enough COVID-19 vaccines for every adult by the end of May.

Finally, several vaccines remain in development. Given the urgent need for COVID-19 vaccines, some developers have compressed the clinical process by running trial phases simultaneously. Additionally, Pfizer and Moderna are running clinical trials with children 12 years and older, and hope to have those results by the summer.



What to Expect After Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

A COVID-19 vaccine will help protect you from getting COVID-19. As with any vaccination, you may have some side effects. Those are normal signs that your body is building protection.

Side effects of COVID-19 vaccinations may feel like the flu and impact your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Common side effects include fever, chills, tiredness and headache—in addition to pain or swelling in the arm where the shot was given. Health experts recommend not planning anything for the day after your vaccination in the chance you develop side effects.

If you have pain or discomfort after getting vaccinated, consider taking ibuprofen or acetaminophen. It's not recommended to take these over-the-counter medicines before vaccination because it is not known how these medications may impact the vaccine's effectiveness. Keep in mind that vaccine side effects may be uncomfortable, but COVID-19 symptoms can be worse.

The CDC released new guidance for people who have been fully vaccinated. People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose in a two-dose series, like the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, like Johnson & Johnson's vaccine. According to the guidance, if you have been fully vaccinated:

- You can gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask.
- You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people from one other household without masks, unless any of those people or anyone they live with has an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- You do not need to avoid others or get tested if you've been around someone who has COVID-19 unless you have symptoms.

Despite that long-awaited guidance, experts still say you should continue to wear a mask and stay at least 6 feet away from others in public. It's important for Americans to continue practicing safety precautions to help stop this pandemic as we learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions.



Record-low Flu Season

As the influenza season approached last fall, health experts worried about a potential “twindemic” as both the flu virus and the virus that causes COVID-19 would spread during the winter. However, that has not been the case.

Flu activity normally peaks between December and February, but the flu season has been mild in the United States. The CDC has only documented approximately 1,100 cases of the flu so far. While some mild cases are likely going undiagnosed, nearly every state is experiencing curbed flu activity.

What Happened to the Flu?

Health experts are attributing this year’s mild flu season to COVID-19 mitigation measures like social distancing, mask-wearing and frequent hand-washing. Due to influenza’s short incubation period and widespread population immunity, the safety measures used to stop the spread of COVID-19 also caused normal flu activity to diminish. Additionally, the closure of schools and offices contributed to this year’s low flu activity as many Americans learned and worked from home.

Although both are spread by respiratory droplets, COVID-19 is more infectious than the flu as a limited amount of people have immunity against the new disease at this point. That explains why flu cases drastically dropped this winter, but COVID-19 cases surged across the country.

Many Americans dodged the flu this season by getting vaccinated for the flu, practicing good hand hygiene, wearing masks and staying home when sick. It’s likely that people who are at high risk of flu complications might be encouraged to continue those effective preventive measures during future flu seasons.





NHO

Learn more about national health observances (NHOs) from the past three months in this section.



January—National Radon Awareness Month

Radon, a naturally occurring radioactive gas found in some homes, is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, according to the National Cancer Institute. Due to its high prevalence, National Radon Awareness Month is celebrated every January in hopes of raising awareness about radon and its harmful effects.

In fact, 1 in every 15 homes has an elevated radon level, so it's important for you to test and eliminate radon dangers at your residence. Ensure that your family is breathing easy by testing for radon and installing a radon mitigation system if the gas levels in your home are too high.

If a radon test reveals that your home's radon level is dangerous, you can install a radon mitigation system. A qualified radon reduction contractor can install a system in typically less than a day. If your home's water source also has high levels of radon, a point-of-entry treatment device can be installed to reduce emissions.



February—American Heart Month

Everyone knows how important the heart is to the body's overall health. What some people don't know is how factors like poor diet and limited exercise can lead to serious heart conditions, putting the whole body at risk. Diet and exercise are the best ways to reduce your risk of heart complications. Some of these complications include cardiac arrest, heart attacks, diabetes, high blood pressure, strokes and high cholesterol.

Cardiac arrest, heart attacks and strokes are some of the most serious heart conditions, and their symptoms should be monitored closely. You should call 911 if you or someone you know starts experiencing the following signs:

- Chest discomfort lasting more than a few minutes
- Arm weakness or numbness
- Slurred speech
- Unresponsiveness when tapping on shoulders

For more information about heart health and early warning signs, visit heart.org.



March—National Nutrition Month

National Nutrition Month is celebrated every March and focuses on spreading the importance of making informed food choices and developing healthy eating habits. Many Americans think that eating healthy means they have to empty their wallets, which isn't necessarily the truth. In honor of National Nutrition Month, keep the following money-saving tips in mind:

- **Make a weekly meal plan.** Before you go to the store, think about what meals and snacks you want for the week. Read recipes thoroughly so you can make an accurate list of everything you need, reducing the risk that you'll have to run back to the store later in the week.
- **Create a list—and stick to it.** Make a detailed list of what you need to buy before you go to the store. When you get to the store, don't buy anything besides what's on the list.
- **Plan where you're going to shop.** Many grocery stores run sales or offer coupons on various healthy foods. Check out the ads and plan your grocery list around what's on sale.

Looking Ahead...

April

National Distracted Driving
Awareness Month

May

National Stroke
Awareness Month

June

Fireworks
Safety Month



Health and Wellness

Remain on top of the latest trends in health and wellness with the three articles in this section.

Breathing Exercises for Anxiety

Breathing techniques are often recommended to deal with anxiety. When anxious, you tend to take rapid, shallow breaths from the chest. Chest breathing can result in increased heart rate, dizziness and muscle tension. During abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing, you instead take even deep breaths, which reduces the amount of work your body needs to do to breathe.

First, it's helpful to be conscious of the way you're breathing. Put one hand above your belly button and one hand on your chest. Take note if your stomach or chest are moving when you breathe. The goal is to make your belly move when you breathe in through your nose and exhale through your mouth. If you're feeling breathless because of anxiety, try the following techniques to alleviate symptoms:

1. **Equal breathing**—You can practice equal breathing from a sitting or lying-down position. Get comfortable, and inhale for the same amount of

time as you're exhaling. Your counting may vary, but try using a four-second count when starting out.

2. **Mindful breathing**—Breathing control is a big part of mindfulness. Focus on your breathing and bringing your mind's attention to the present. Don't let your mind drift to any concerns.
3. **Slow breathing**—You normally take 10 to 20 breaths per minute, so strive to take four to 10 breaths per minute. Slow breathing can be restorative and relaxing to your body.
4. **Resonant breathing**—Lie down and close your eyes. Gently breathe in through your nose, with your mouth closed, for six seconds. Exhale for six seconds, allowing your breath to leave slowly and gently. Practice this type of breathing for 10 minutes.

If these types of breathing feel challenging, try again in a day or so, or build up the time gradually. If your anxiety persists or gets worse, contact your doctor.





Try a Fake Commute For Your Mental Health

Many people dread the daily commute to work. However, as many Americans are still working from home, they may now be missing that daily ritual. It can be tough to separate work and home lives, so experts recommend adding a fake commute to improve your mental health and work-life balance.

Routines and rituals are beneficial because they set you up for what's coming next, without really having to think about it. As a result, that helps the day flow better. Commutes are forced pauses that signal it is time to transition from your home identity to your work identity—and vice versa.

A fake commute involves using your normal commute time period to transition and mentally set yourself up for the workday. Consider the following ideas:

- **Get dressed and walk out the door.** From there, go grab the mail or take a brief walk.
- **Turn your phone off.** Setting your phone to “Silent” or “Do Not Disturb” mode can help you focus on the present and avoid distractions.
- **Get a workout in.** Keep up with your exercise routine for some normalcy. Physical activity can help reduce problems with stress, mental health and sleep, while also boosting your immunity.
- **Make time for mental fitness.** Emotional fitness is just as important as physical fitness. Focus on incorporating self-care acts like meditation, stretching or yoga.

Discover what works best to help you transition to and from your virtual workday. Build new healthy habits into your workday and make the most of your normal commute time.



Brain Foods That Help You Concentrate

The foods you eat play a role in keeping your brain healthy and can improve mental tasks, such as memory and concentration. Nutritionists recommend following a healthy dietary pattern full of fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains. It's best to get protein from plant sources and fish. When possible, choose healthy fats—such as olive oil or canola oil—instead of saturated fats.

Your brain uses 20% of your body's calories, which means it's even more important to consider what you're eating each day. You can help support overall brain health and boost your concentration by strategically including the following foods or drinks in your daily diet:

- **Fatty fish**, including salmon, trout and sardines, are rich sources of omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3s help build brain and nerve cells, and are essential for learning and memory. If you're not a fan of fish, ask your doctor about taking an omega-3 supplement.
- **Blueberries** are loaded with antioxidants that may delay brain aging and improve overall function and memory. Blueberries may even delay short-term memory loss, while being a great source of several important nutrients.
- **Nuts** contain brain-boosting nutrients, healthy fats and antioxidants. Vitamin E can even help slow mental decline. Eating nuts—specifically walnuts, almonds and hazelnuts—on a regular basis can enhance your memory and recall.
- **Green tea** doesn't contain as much caffeine as coffee, but enough caffeine to produce alertness without any jittery effects. Green tea also contains L-theanine, an amino acid that increases brain wave production. Working together, the brain-boosting duo of caffeine and L-theanine is proven to increase mood, reaction time and memory.

Additionally, studies have shown that eating breakfast may improve short-term memory and attention. Set yourself up for success and fuel up with a well-balanced breakfast of high-fiber whole grains, dairy and fruits.



Recipes

Try out these two healthy recipes, which are from the USDA's MyPlate Kitchen website.



Garden Frittata

Makes 4 servings



Ingredients

- 4 large eggs
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 2 medium red potatoes (unpeeled)
- ½ Tbsp. olive oil
- 4 cups Italian kale (or other kale variety)
- ¼ cup onion (chopped)
- ½ red bell pepper (chopped)

Nutritional information for 1 serving

Calories	180
Total fat	7 g
Saturated fat	2 g
Cholesterol	185 mg
Sodium	240 mg
Total carbohydrate	22 g
Dietary fiber	3 g
Total sugars	3 g
Added sugars included	0 g
Protein	9 g
Vitamin D	1 mcg
Calcium	80 mg
Iron	3 mg
Potassium	900 mg

Directions

1. Beat eggs, black pepper and salt in a large bowl. Set aside.
2. Microwave potatoes until slightly soft, but not completely cooked, then cube them. (An alternate cooking method is to cube potatoes and boil 5 minutes until slightly soft, then drain.)
3. Chop remaining vegetables while potatoes cool. Mix vegetables together.
4. Heat oil in a nonstick skillet and saute vegetables for 5-8 minutes. Add to eggs and mix well.
5. Pour egg-vegetable mixture into the same skillet. Cook over low to medium heat until eggs are almost set, about 8-10 minutes.
6. Cover and let sit until eggs are completely set, about 5 minutes. Egg dishes should be cooked to 160 F.



Vegetable and Turkey Stir-fry

Makes 4 servings



Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 thin slices of ginger root (minced)
- 1 garlic clove (peeled and minced)
- 16 ounces turkey (cooked, cut into ½-inch cubes)
- ½ tsp. sugar
- 2 10-ounce packages fresh or frozen vegetables (chopped)

Optional Gravy Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 2 tsp. low-sodium soy sauce
- ½ cup chicken stock

Directions

1. Heat pan at a high temperature. Add oil.
2. Add ginger, garlic, turkey and vegetables. Stir-fry for about 1 minute to coat with oil.
3. Adjust heat to prevent scorching. Add sugar. If vegetables are tender, stop cooking.
4. If the vegetables are firm, add 1-2 Tbsp. of water, cover and cook for 2 minutes or until tender.
5. Serve at once, or add a gravy. (For gravy, mix the cornstarch, soy sauce and chicken stock well. Pour over vegetables and turkey, cook for 30 seconds.)
6. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Nutritional information for 1 serving

Calories	290
Total fat	6 g
Saturated fat	1 g
Cholesterol	85 mg
Sodium	1079 mg
Total carbohydrate	21 g
Dietary fiber	6 g
Total sugars	5 g
Added sugars included	1 g
Protein	37 g
Vitamin D	0 mcg
Calcium	50 mg
Iron	2 mg
Potassium	549 mg