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SIGNS OF A fad diet

Fad diets and pills don't work. You may lose weight quickly, but it's hard to keep it off. This causes a "yo-yo" effect that could harm your health and your confidence.

Beware! Look for these signs of a fad diet:

- Claims of fast, amazing weight loss
- Hard-to-believe testimonials
- Strict rules of avoiding certain foods
- A claim that the diet works for everyone

Talk to your doctor about safe, healthy ways to lose weight.

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Building resilience:

How you can do it

Life throws unexpected things at everyone. This can be everyday things, like spilling coffee on your shirt before a meeting. Or it can be major things, like a scary health diagnosis or the death of a loved one.

One thing is certain: We can't control many of these challenges. But they don't have to define who you are. You can learn how to deal with them in healthy ways and bounce back. In other words, you learn to be resilient.



WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience doesn't mean your life will be easy. And it definitely doesn't mean you should pretend everything is great all the time.

To be resilient, you will have to experience some challenges. And when those challenges happen, you learn actions and thoughts that help you rebuild your life.

Being resilient takes practice. It's like learning to play an instrument or building muscles with exercise. The more you do it, the better and easier it gets.

RESILIENCE HAS FOUR MAIN PARTS:

1. Connection
2. Wellness
3. Healthy thinking
4. Meaning



CONNECTION

Put your relationships first. Time with friends or family members helps you mentally and physically. Everyone needs to be alone sometimes, but don't isolate yourself when bad things happen. Use the power of community to get back on your feet. Join a support group or call a friend regularly. And consider using one of the many video chat options if you're avoiding group activities outside of your household.

WELLNESS

Healthy habits will help you be more resilient. Exercise, get enough sleep and eat healthy foods. Try prayer, mindfulness or yoga. These things give your body and mind strength to deal with challenges. Avoid alcohol, drugs or risky behaviors.

HEALTHY THOUGHTS

How you think affects how you feel. Accept that changes happen in life and that some are out of your control. Hope for a better future and find ways to make it better each day. Learn from past mistakes. Accept that worry doesn't help.

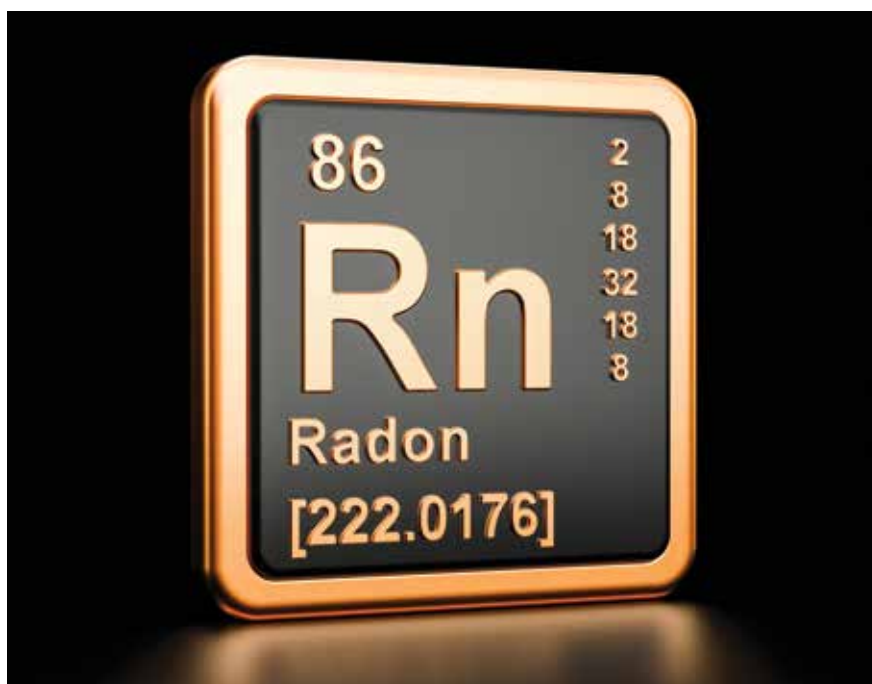
MEANING

Help others or volunteer. Acknowledge your feelings during hard times. Then ask yourself what you can do about the problem. When hard things happen, ask yourself how you can grow and become a better person.

Fight back against radon

It's Radon Action Month. Radon can get into your home and cause serious health problems. But you can take steps to remove this dangerous gas that you can't see, taste or smell.

Radon is a natural radioactive gas. When uranium breaks down in the soil, it makes radon. Then, radon can seep into a home's foundation, causing health problems for the people who live there.



WHY IS RADON HARMFUL?

When you breathe in radon, its natural radioactive particles can get trapped in your lungs. Radon is a leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. If you smoke and breathe radon, your risk of lung cancer is especially high.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE RADON?

The only way to know if a home has radon is through a radon test. You can buy radon tests at hardware stores or online. Your local health department may sell them.

Radon tests are easy to use. Usually, you let the test stay in your basement or the lowest point in your house for a few days. When the test is complete, you mail it in. The testing company sends you the results.

If your test results say your radon level is 4pCi/L or higher, take a second test to be sure. If the average between the two tests is 4pCi/L or higher, you need to fix the problem. You can do this with radon removal, also called radon mitigation.



**RADON
TESTING**

HOW DO I GET RID OF RADON?

Removing radon from a home requires special skills and tools. Choose a qualified radon mitigation contractor to fix your home.

Ask your state radon office for names. Many states require radon professionals to be licensed, certified or registered for your added safety.

NEW HOMES AREN'T SAFE

No matter how old or new your home, radon can get in. It seeps in through foundation seams, joints and cracks. It can also get in through a sump pump or drain located in the basement.

If you're buying a home, make sure the home has been tested for radon or that it has a radon mitigation system in place.

Setting doable goals *for a healthy diet*

When you're trying to eat healthier, it helps to have goals. If you have clear goals for yourself, it's easier to stick to your plan. Goals give you specific things to try for each day.

Healthy eating goals need a few things to make them work.
When you set a goal, make sure it is SMART.

S = SPECIFIC

Your goal should have details that keep you on track.

YES: I will eat one extra serving of vegetables each day.

NO: I will eat healthier.

YES: I will replace soda with water.

NO: I will avoid unhealthy drinks.

M = MEASURABLE

Your goal should be something you can measure. At the end of the day, you can look at your goal and say for sure that you did it.

YES: I will drink five or more glasses of water each day.

NO: I'll drink more water.

YES: I will eat an apple or pear instead of dessert.

NO: I'll eat less sugar.

A = ACTION-ORIENTED

Make sure the goal is something you can do. It tells you to take action.

YES: I won't buy potato chips when I go shopping.

NO: I'll think about ways I can eat less junk food.

YES: I will walk for 30 minutes, three times a week.

NO: I'll ask my friend to start walking with me.

R = REALISTIC

Don't start with a huge goal in the beginning. Make your goals doable. This will boost your confidence.

YES: I'll allow myself one mini-sized candy bar each day.

NO: I'll never eat chocolate again.

YES: I'll replace one glass of soda with water.

NO: I'll quit drinking soda.

T = TIMED

Have start and stop times for your goals. When the time is up, see how you did. If you succeeded, keep doing it. If not, think about how you could make it work better.

YES: I will start on Monday and stick with it for one week.

NO: I'll get started with my plan when life is less stressful.

YES: My goal starts on January 15 and I'll check my progress on January 22.

NO: I'll try to start this plan after the holidays.

Source: U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs

How much exercise kids need

Being inactive isn't good for children's health. Kids can have health problems related to being inactive, such as:

- Sleep problems
- Type 2 diabetes
- Excess weight
- High blood cholesterol

HOW MUCH EXERCISE IS ENOUGH?

Preschool children should be active throughout the day. School aged children should get at least one hour of moderate to intense activity every day.

Some exercise is better than none. If your child isn't active now, start with a few minutes of exercise each day. Gradually increase the time and intensity of their exercise as they get more fit.

WHAT IS 'MODERATE TO INTENSE ACTIVITY' FOR CHILDREN?

When your child is doing moderate to intense activity, their heartbeat will speed up. They will breathe much harder than normal.

This type of activity can be walking or biking at a brisk pace. It can also be more intense, like jumping on a trampoline or swimming. Whatever your child likes to do, encourage them to do it every day!

KNOW THE TYPES OF EXERCISE

Exercise doesn't have to be the same thing all the time. Try to encourage your child to do all three types throughout each week:

Aerobic exercise

Anything that speeds up your child's heart rate. It can include:

- Brisk walking
- Bike riding
- Swimming
- Running
- Dancing
- Playing games that require running and throwing

Muscle-strengthening exercise

These exercises build up muscles, which is important for lifelong fitness. Examples include:

- Climbing
- Push-ups
- Lunges
- Yoga
- Resistance bands
- Hand-held weights

Bone-strengthening

This puts pressure on bones. Pressure from exercise helps the bones rebuild and stay strong. Exercises include:

- Jumping
- Running
- Skipping
- Sports that require running and stopping, like basketball or soccer

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Drowsy driving:

Know the signs

Drowsy driving is the combination of driving a vehicle and being overly tired. It might happen if you didn't sleep well the night before. It can also happen if you take medicines that make you tired. Sometimes people who work long shifts or the night shift are drowsy when they drive home from work.



WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Experts believe drowsy driving causes tens of thousands of car crashes each year.

Driving when you're drowsy is a lot like driving drunk. Drowsy driving can:

- Make you less aware and less attentive
- Slow down your reaction time
- Make it hard for you to make decisions while you're on the road



HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M DROWSY?

Signs of being too tired to drive include:

- Yawning or blinking a lot
- Not being able to remember some of your trip
- Missing your turn or exit
- Drifting out of your lane or off the road
- Hitting rumble strips



WHAT TO DO

If you think you're driving while drowsy, pull over in a safe place. If you can, get some coffee or a caffeinated drink. Then lock the doors and take a 15- to 20-minute nap in your vehicle. The caffeine and nap combination may help you be more alert.

Opening the windows and loud music don't help you stay awake. When your body needs sleep, it will do almost anything to get it.



PREVENT DROWSY DRIVING

The best way to prevent crashes from drowsy driving is to:

1. Get enough sleep. If you can't get the sleep you need, have someone else drive you to your destination.
2. See your doctor if you think you might have a sleep disorder.
3. Never drink alcohol before driving.
4. Never take medicines that make you drowsy before driving.

Tips for a healthy budget

NOT SURE WHERE TO START WITH A BUDGET? IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE COMPLICATED. HERE ARE SOME TIPS.



Add up your monthly income.

Look at paystubs or your bank deposits from your job for one month. Include other income, like child support payments, if you have them.

Cut back where you can.

Put a limit on coffee stops or meals out. Too much online shopping? Give yourself a 48-hour waiting period before you buy.

Add up your expenses.

Think about bills you pay each month, such as mortgage, rent, utilities and car payment. Look at credit card bills or bank withdrawals. This tells you how much you're spending.

Divide into optional and essential.

On a piece of paper or computer, divide your expenses into two columns: optional and essential. When needed, cut expenses from your optional column.

Use breathing to lower stress

What do you do to relax? Many people sit down with their smartphones or in front of a TV. But these things may not actually help you de-stress. They could make you even more stressed, especially if you're watching the news or social media.

To fight stress, you need to engage the body's ability to relax. Your body has a natural way to decrease heart rate, blood pressure and muscle tension. This helps you cope with stress in healthy ways. It can decrease anxiety, too. And it only involves slow, deep breathing and some focus.



TIME TO BREATHE

Take a few minutes each day to do this exercise. You may find it makes a huge difference in your stress levels!

- Lie down or sit in a comfortable chair.
- Close your eyes and put one hand on your belly.
- Think about your breathing. Is it fast or slow? Does your hand move up and down when you breathe in and out?
- Slowly bring more air into your lungs. Allow your belly to inflate like a balloon as you breathe in.
- Let the air out gently, letting your belly flatten back down.

Do this for about five minutes to start. Then, increase to 10 minutes or more as you can. Try to do it every day. You're worth the few minutes it takes to release stress and feel better.

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs