

The Faith Health Link



Sowing Seeds of Wellness

Loudon Avenue Christian Church
Disciples of Christ (DOC)
730 Loudon Avenue
Roanoke, VA 24016
540/342-8852

loudonavenuecc.org

Volume XVI Issue III Spring 2021



Being Grateful Can Improve your Overall Health.



Ever wish there were a magic pill you could take to boost your energy levels, improve your mood, help you sleep better, increase your kindness and even help you make more money? Unfortunately, no such pill exists, but there is a way you can reap these benefits — without a visit to the doctor's office.

The secret? A daily gratitude practices, counting your blessings each day has been shown to significantly increase your mental, physical and spiritual health.

The simple act of reminding yourself of the positive things in your life – even as simple as the roof over your head or food on your plate – can invoke feelings of thankfulness and optimism that make managing stress, depression or anxiety easier.

If you are not sure where to start or how to practice gratitude every day, try these suggestions:

1. **Try to appreciate everything.** This includes not only the big and obvious, but also the small. Recognize the good in every part of your day.
2. **Find gratitude in your challenges.** It can be hard to feel thankful when faced with a stressful situation. But taking the time to find gratitude and optimism during your difficult times can make managing them easier.
3. **Keep a gratitude journal.** Take a few minutes at the end of each day to think about what you are grateful for and write them down. This can help you develop a habit of recognizing the good from each day.
4. **Volunteer in your community.** Volunteering is significantly helpful in improving mental and physical health, including increased life satisfaction and happiness, and lower depressive symptoms, stress and anxiety.
5. **Spend time with loved ones.** Spending time with loved ones can help you recognize things to be grateful for and evoke feelings of happiness and love.

Continue Page 2

laccparishnurse@hotmail.com

Mission

Our mission is to develop a culturally, competent, Biblically informed, wellness ministry to meet the physical, mental, social-emotional, and spiritual needs through education, outreach and counseling that is affordable, accessible, and available

Vision

The vision of Loudon Avenue Christian Church Faith Health Ministry is to address the needs of the congregation and community that promote wellness of the Body, Mind and Spirit, based upon the will of God in our lives.

Save the Date Virtual Men's Health Day



Saturday, June 26, 2021

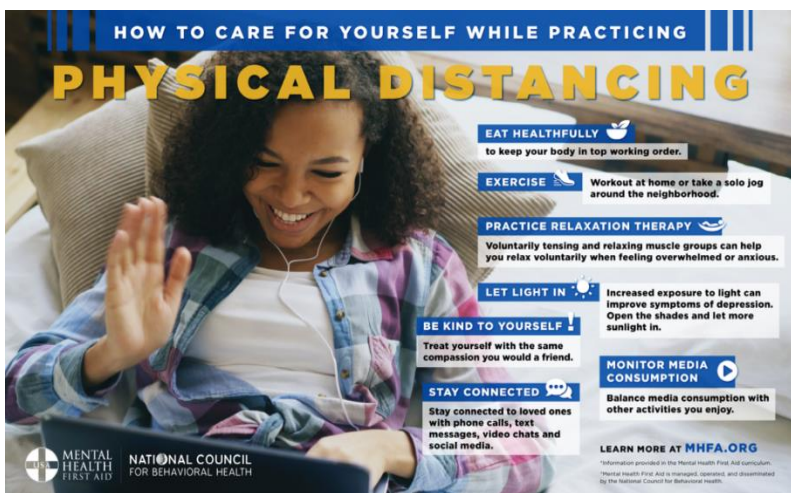
10:00 am

Virtual link will be available
at a later date

Having a **thankful heart** can change your entire perspective and outlook on life. One of the best ways to experience the power of thanksgiving is to through prayer. When we offer a prayer of thanks to God, our focus shifts from our problems to our blessings. That is the beauty of faith - we can experience gratitude and give thanks despite the circumstances and storms that surround us.

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

It can be easy to get busy but taking a few minutes every day to practice gratitude can have a positive and long-lasting impact on your physical, mental health and spiritual health.



How to Care for Yourself While Practicing Social Distancing

This is a stressful time for many. With the government and media sharing updates throughout the day and the fear of the unknown, it is understandable to feel overwhelmed, stressed and anxious. You are not alone.

Millions of people across the country are facing the same worries and challenges that you are. During this time, it is important to remember that it is OK to not be OK. It is also important to take care of your mental health.

While practicing physical distancing, there are easy self-care strategies that can help reduce feelings of depression and anxiety or prevent anxiety before it even starts.

laccparishnurse@hotmail.com

Use these tips to take care of your mental health while practicing physical distancing.

1. **Eat healthfully** to keep your body in top working order.
2. **Exercise** reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety, whether we are working out at home or taking a solo jog around the neighborhood.
3. **Practice relaxation therapy.** Focusing on tensing and relaxing muscle groups can help you relax voluntarily when feeling overwhelmed, stressed or anxious.
4. **Let light in.** For some people, increased exposure to light can improve symptoms of depression. If you can, open the shades and let more sunlight in.
5. **Be kind to yourself!** Treat yourself with the same compassion you would a friend.
6. **Stay connected.** Even if you cannot get together face-to-face, you can stay connected to friends, family and neighbors with phone calls, text messages, video chats and social media. If you are feeling lonely, sad or anxious, reach out to your social support networks. Share what you are feeling and offer to listen to friends or family members about their feelings. We are all experiencing this scary and uncertain time together.
7. **Monitor media consumption.** While you might want to stay up-to-the minute with COVID-19 news, too much exposure can be overwhelming. Balance media consumption with other activities you enjoy, such as reading, cooking or listening to music.

Self-care does not require you to go outside or spend a lot of money. Adding small changes to your routine can make a big difference to your overall mood and well-being.

www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

AN AFFIRMATION TO SAY EVERYDAY:

THE HEALING POWER OF GOD IS WORKING IN ME RIGHT NOW. EVERY DAY I GET BETTER AND BETTER IN EVERY WAY.

SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION

Colorectal Cancer Rates Higher in African Americans—Rising in Younger People

The recent passing of Chadwick Boseman, the talented actor best known for his portrayal of the superhero Black Panther, at the age of 43 came as a surprise and shock to many. For a seemingly healthy, relatively young man to die from colorectal cancer seems almost incomprehensible.

What is a Colon Anyway?

Colon cancer is the second most common cancer in the United States, so understanding colon health and colon cancer is important to your overall health. But you may have wondered, “What is a colon anyway?”



After we eat and chew our food, it goes into our stomach, where stomach acid works to break down the food. This broken-down food then makes its way through our small intestine where most digestion takes place with the help of digestive enzymes. After this process of digestion, the leftover food material makes its way to the large intestine, also called the colon.

The colon, also known as the large intestine, is a tubular structure that is the next step for this leftover food material. The colon reabsorbs excess water from the leftovers and colonic bacteria break down the food material further resulting in formation of stool. Like many other parts of the body, the colon can also be affected by cancer.

However, while colorectal cancer is not as common in people under the age of 50 as it is in older people, it is not as uncommon as many people might think. In 2020, about 12% of colorectal cancers – about 18,000 cases – will be diagnosed in people under the age of 50 in the US. Also, while rates of colorectal cancer have been falling in older age groups in recent years, they have actually been rising among younger people. In addition, African Americans have the highest death rate and shortest survival of any racial and ethnic group in the US for most cancers.

Risk is higher in African Americans

Colorectal cancer also disproportionately affects the Black community, where the rates are the highest of any racial/ethnic group in the US. African Americans are about 20% more likely to get colorectal cancer and about 40% more likely to die from it than most other groups.

The reasons for the differences are complex, but they largely reflect differences in risk factors and in health care access, both of which are related to socioeconomic status. In fact, [African Americans are disproportionately burdened by cancer in general](#). They often experience greater obstacles to cancer prevention, detection, treatment, and survival, including systemic racial disparities that are complex and go beyond the obvious connection to cancer. These obstacles can include lower paying jobs and lack of (or less comprehensive) health insurance, lack of access to healthy and affordable foods, low-quality education and housing, and unsafe environments.

This disease is ravaging the Black community, and it is as important as ever that everyone has access to and is receiving the recommended screenings.

Screening can help find – and even prevent – some colorectal cancers

Acknowledging the rising colorectal cancer rates among younger people, the [American Cancer Society now recommends](#) that people at average risk of colorectal cancer begin regular screening at age 45. People at higher risk for colorectal cancer should talk with their doctor about whether starting screening earlier might be right for them. This includes people with:

- A family history of colorectal cancer or certain types of polyps
- A personal history of colorectal cancer or certain types of polyps
- A personal history of inflammatory bowel disease (ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease)
- A known or suspected family history of a hereditary colorectal cancer syndrome, such as familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or Lynch syndrome (also known as hereditary non-polyposis colon cancer, or HNPCC)
- A personal history of radiation to the abdomen (belly) or pelvic area to treat a prior cancer

[Different types of tests can be used to screen for colorectal cancer.](#) Colonoscopy is one of these, but other tests, some of which can be done at home, are also good options, especially during the pandemic. Screening can often prevent colorectal cancer by finding and removing growths called polyps in the colon and rectum before they have a chance to become cancer. Screening can also find colorectal cancer early, when it is still small, has not spread, and is likely to be easier to treat.

Know the possible symptoms of colorectal cancer

The American Cancer Society does not recommend starting screening before age 45 for most people, largely because the benefits are not likely to outweigh the possible downsides. But it is still important to be aware of possible symptoms of colorectal cancer, no matter what your age. The most common symptoms of colorectal cancer include:

- A change in bowel habits, such as diarrhea, constipation, or narrowing of the stool, that lasts for more than a few days.
- A feeling that you need to have a bowel movement that's not relieved by having one.
- Rectal bleeding.
- Blood in the stool, which might make the stool look dark brown or black
- Cramping or pain in the abdomen (belly)
- Feeling tired or weak
- Losing weight without trying

Many of these symptoms can also be caused by other conditions. But if you have any of them, especially if they last for more than a few days or are getting worse, it's important to have them checked out by a doctor as soon as possible so the cause can be found and treated, if needed.

[Colorectal Cancer Rates Higher in African Americans, Rising in Younger People](#)

Tips for Managing Your Diabetes

Diabetes is a disease that occurs when your blood glucose, also called blood sugar, is too high. Blood glucose is your main source of energy and comes from the food you eat. Insulin, a hormone made by the pancreas, helps glucose from food get into your cells to be used for energy. Sometimes your body does not make enough—or any—insulin or does not use insulin well. Glucose then stays in your blood and does not reach your cells.

laccparishnurse@hotmail.com

Over time, having too much glucose in your blood can cause health problems. Although diabetes has no cure, you can take steps to manage your diabetes and stay healthy.

You may have heard people say they have “a touch of diabetes” or that their “sugar is a little high” These words suggest that diabetes is not a serious disease. That is not correct. Diabetes is serious, but you can learn to manage it.

Know your diabetes ABCs. Talk to your health care team about how to manage you **A**1C, **B**lood pressure and **C**holesterol. This can help lower your chances of having a heart attack, stroke or other diabetes problems.

Learn how to live with diabetes. Take your medicines for diabetes and any other health problems even when you feel good. Check your feet every day for cuts, blisters, red spots and swelling. Brush your teeth and floss every day. Keep track of your blood sugar. Make healthy eating choices, choosing healthy carbs and tracking them can help keep your blood sugar levels on target.

Get routine care to stay healthy. Have an A1C test twice a year. It may be checked more often if it is over 7.



Advance Care Planning is not just about old age. At any age, a medical crisis could leave you too ill to make your own health care decisions. Even if you are not sick now, planning for health care in the future is an important step toward making sure you get the medical care you would want if you are unable to speak for yourself and doctors and family members are making the decisions for you.

The Faith Health Ministry is planning an upcoming Virtual Advance Care Planning Information Session.

Date to be Determined