

Take a moment ... to check in with yourself

Are you feeling OK?

Often we get so busy that we don't stop to think about our mental health. We may even be surprised when a friend or loved one spots a problem we, ourselves, weren't aware of.

One of the best things you can do for your mental health is to check in with yourself each day. Here are some questions to ask.^{1,2}

Eyes •

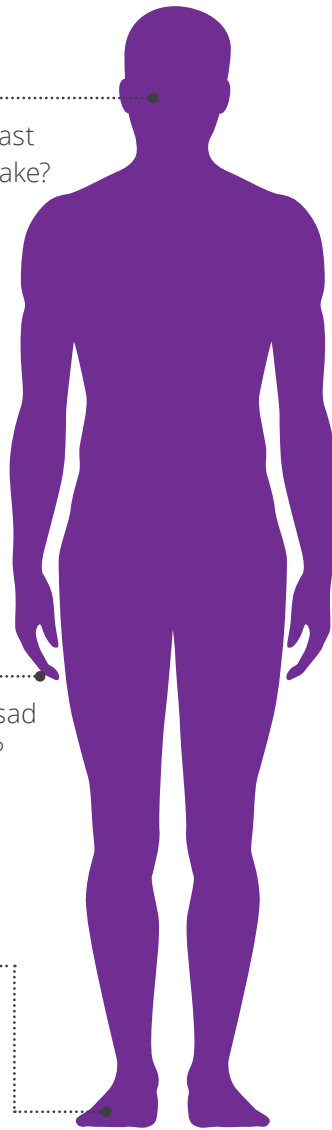
Did I get a good night's sleep last night? If not, what kept me awake?

Fingertips •

How am I feeling today? If I'm sad or anxious, what's the reason?

Feet •

When did I last engage in vigorous physical activity? What can I do today that will bring me energy?



Head •

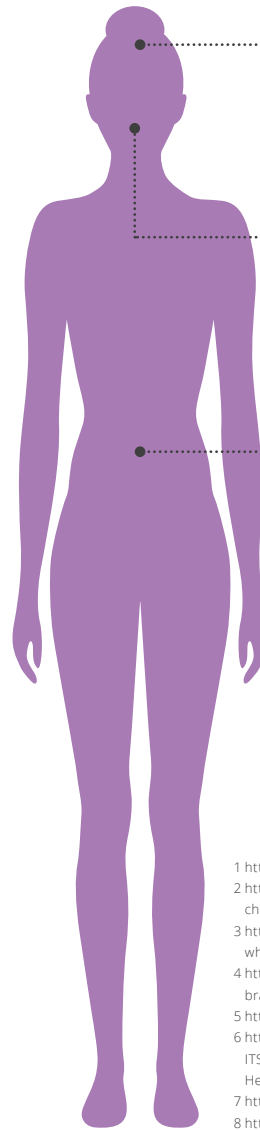
What's occupying my thoughts today? Am I worrying unnecessarily?

Mouth •

When did I last smile? What can I do today that will bring me joy?

Stomach •

When did I last eat a nutritious meal? Am I drinking alcohol in moderation or, even better, not at all?



1 <https://www.wellandgood.com/mental-health-questions/>
2 <http://blogs.uww.edu/healthandwellness/2019/10/22/check-in-on-your-mental-health/>
3 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-works-and-why/201803/how-your-mental-health-reaps-the-benefits-exercise>
4 <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/nutritional-psychiatry-your-brain-on-food-201511168626>
5 <https://ccbhc.org/a-sunny-disposition-sunlight-and-mental-health/>
6 <https://unlimitedloveinstitute.org/downloads/ITS-GOOD-TO-BE-GOOD-2014-Biennial-Scientific-Report-On-Health-Happiness-Longevity-And-Helping-Others.pdf>
7 <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/p/pets-and-mental-health>
8 <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10902-007-9057-2>

Ways to strengthen your emotional health

There's no single cause for mental distress and no single way to improve your outlook. Here are few things you can do to strengthen your emotional health.



Connect with your emotions. Don't bottle up how you're feeling. Acknowledge that your emotions are valid, then visit our Mental health resources hub to begin learning how to deal with them.



Get a move on. Ever heard of the runner's high? Exercise increases levels of mood-boosting endorphins. It can even forestall clinical depression—all while strengthening your heart, lungs and muscles.³



Eat well. The heart-healthy Mediterranean diet can reduce the risk of depression by 25% or more. So eat right, drink plenty of water and adopt the practice of mindful eating: <https://www.aetnainternational.com/en/about-us/explore/workplace-mental-health-support-resource/good-food-good-mood.html>⁴.



Spend some time in the sun. Sunlight boosts your level of serotonin, the "happy hormone." Just don't forget the sunscreen.⁵



Sleep well. The quality and quantity of your sleep has a direct impact on your emotions. Get sleep tips at <https://www.aetnainternational.com/en/about-us/explore/fit-for-duty-corporate-wellness/10-sleep-tips-for-better-sleep.html>



Unplug and unwind. Do something for yourself every day, whether that's meditating, watching TV, listening to music or chatting on the phone. You don't have to be on the go all the time.



Get creative. Colouring, drawing, painting, writing, knitting, woodworking, carving, cooking, sculpting, upcycling. The list is endless and the satisfaction is unlimited.



Treat your senses. A bath with essential oils and salts. A massage. Scented candles. Fresh flowers. A foodie treat. Sensory activities like these can boost your mood



Spend time with pets. Animals and pets can improve your attitude. One study found that 87% of cat owners said having a pet improved their well-being.⁷



Help a neighbour or a charity. When you volunteer, you make the world a better place. And you may reduce your risk of depression because giving to others can give us a sense of satisfaction and purpose.⁶



Make a commitment to change. Take steps today to build healthy habits. Even the act of setting a goal can boost your morale and mood.⁸

In our hectic lives, we often neglect our mental health. That's why it's so important to take a moment to think about this important aspect of overall health. At our Mental health resources hub, you can find the information to prevent and manage mental health conditions.

Also, Aetna International members can access the Health Hub—register if you haven't already—to quickly find self-care tools, professional services, member offers, and to submit and track claims and more. Within the Health Hub, you can learn more about the Wysa app, which offers instant access to AI-driven mental well-being support. The app is free for members to download and includes a free one-on-one session with a human coach. For more information about your health care benefits, contact your plan sponsor or one of Aetna International's expert sales consultants for group business or individuals and families.

Take a moment...Discover. Breathe. Heal.

Mental health support resources: <https://www.aetnainternational.com/en/about-us/explore/workplace-mental-health-support-resource.html>

Health Hub: <https://www.aetnainternational.com/members/login.do>

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