

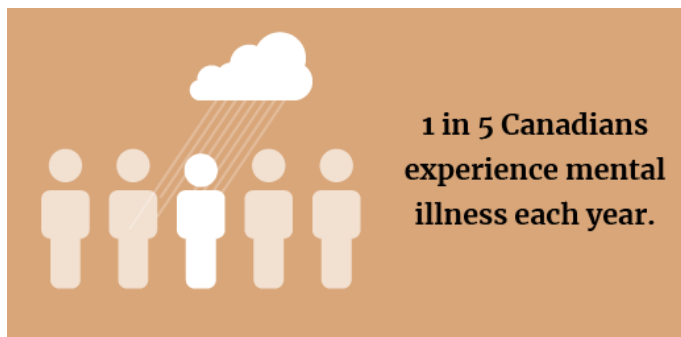
May 2023

# Live Well, Work Well



## Boosting Your Mental Health Daily

Mental Health Awareness Month, observed every May, is a time to raise awareness of mental health, break the stigma surrounding it and support people with mental illness. In fact, approximately one-third of Canadians will be diagnosed with a mental illness—a variety of conditions that affect one’s mood, behaviour, feelings or thinking—at some point in their lifetime, according to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.



Mental health plays a huge role in your overall health and well-being. It affects everything, including how you think, feel and act, and influences how you make healthy choices and cope with stress. Because it’s such a crucial component of your wellness, focusing on maintaining or improving your mental health is important. Here are five ways to boost or prioritize your mental health every day:

- **Express gratitude.** Taking five minutes daily to write down the things you are grateful for has been proven to lower stress levels and may help you achieve a more positive mindset.

- **Get moving.** Regularly exercising can benefit your brain function, reduce anxiety and improve your self-image.
- **Spend time outdoors.** Getting outside, especially when it’s sunny, can greatly improve your mood, which benefits your mental health.
- **Be kind.** Helping others and being kind benefits not only the recipient but also your mental health. Simply holding the door for someone or giving a compliment can go a long way.
- **Get a good night’s sleep.** Individuals who are fatigued typically experience drowsiness, mood changes, loss of energy and appetite, headaches, and a lack of motivation, concentration and alertness. Strive for seven to eight hours of sleep a night.

Seek help from your primary care doctor or a mental health professional if you’re concerned about your mental health. If you need mental health-related crisis support, or are worried about someone else, call Talk Suicide Canada at 1-833-456-4566 or [visit the government website](#) for further mental health support resources.

## Caffeine Withdrawal Symptoms? Decaf Can Help

The Coffee Association of Canada reported that two-thirds of Canadians drink at least one cup of coffee per day, with the average person consuming just over three cups daily. Unfortunately, drinking too much coffee may negatively affect your health. But if you're reducing your coffee intake, you may experience caffeine withdrawal symptoms, making it more challenging to cut back. Common symptoms include headache, fatigue and irritability.

Fortunately, new research from the University of Sydney has a tip for people trying to drink less coffee. In a study, researchers found drinking a cup of high-quality decaffeinated coffee temporarily reduces withdrawal symptoms. The study noted that the cup of decaffeinated coffee should taste like the real deal to have an impact. Some study participants were unaware they were drinking decaf due to conditioning; many people associate coffee's effects with its characteristics (e.g., taste and smell). Therefore, a cup of quality decaffeinated coffee can offer those same experiences without caffeine.

If you have concerns about your coffee consumption, talk to your doctor.

### The Health Risks of Coffee Consumption

Coffee in moderation is reasonable, but excessive amounts are linked to the following health risks:



Anxiety



High blood pressure



Heart palpitations



Difficulty sleeping

## Improving Your Relationship With Your Phone

Smartphones have made people's lives so much easier, but they can also impact their physical and mental well-being. To build a healthier relationship with your phone, try the following strategies:

- **Turn off notifications.** Disable notifications for social media apps or mute group chats to avoid being tempted by distractions.
- **Check at specific times.** Create achievable boundaries by checking your phone at certain times or leaving your phone in another room.
- **Avoid use before bed.** Try to cut down on phone use in bed or right before sleeping. The bright screen can signal to your body that it's time to be awake, so you may have trouble falling asleep or experience lower sleep quality.

Start small to create an action plan that works for your life and schedule.

## Stuffed Bell Peppers

*Makes: 5 servings*

### Ingredients

- 5 bell peppers (any colour)
- 450 ml 90% lean ground beef
- 180 ml ( $\frac{3}{4}$  cup) brown rice
- $\frac{1}{2}$  can of diced low-sodium tomatoes
- 45 ml (3 tbsp) lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp allspice
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp ground black pepper

### Preparations

1. Cut a circular hole in the tops of the bell peppers. Remove the seeds and membrane and set aside.
2. In a large bowl, combine the remaining ingredients and stir until completely mixed. Fill the bell peppers with the meat mixture.
3. Place the stuffed bell peppers on the stove in a large stock pot with the tops facing up. Add approximately 3 cm of water to the bottom of the pot and cover.
4. Place the heat on medium, keeping covered for 30-40 minutes until the rice is done.

### Nutritional Information (per serving)

Total calories	277
Total fat	8 g
Protein	21 g
Sodium	66 mg
Carbohydrate	29 g
Dietary fibre	4 g
Saturated fat	3 g
Total sugars	4 g

*Source: MyPlate*