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An Aon Company

Wise & Well

Welcome to the Wise & Well Newsletter, where we promote whole-person well-being each month and highlight health-related topics to help you be your best.



Men's Health Month

The value of social connections and emotional well-being is essential for overall well-being. Given that June is Men's Health Month, it is a great time to talk about one of the things men typically don't talk about — male friendships. While it may be challenging for some men to open up about their feelings and experiences, by recognizing and encouraging men to open up about the things that matter most to them, we can help them build stronger, more supportive relationships and ultimately improve their overall well-being.

Men and Close Friends

In today's challenging world, it's not uncommon for men to feel isolated and disconnected from others. In fact, according to a 2021 Survey from the Survey Center on American Life, over the last thirty years, American friendship groups across the board have grown smaller, while the number of Americans without any close friends has risen terribly.

The decline in close friendships among Americans has had a disproportionate impact on men. In 1990, more than half of men (55%) said they had six or more close friends, but today, that figure has plummeted to just over a quarter (27%). Even more alarming is the growing number of men who report having no close friendships at all — a staggering 15%, which is five times higher than it was three decades ago. While women have also experienced a decline in close friendships, this trend appears to be far more pronounced among men.

The "friendship recession" among men is not just a social issue; it is a serious public health concern. Numerous studies have shown that sustained loneliness, and social isolation can have profound negative effects on both mental and physical health. Men who lack close friendships and social support are at a significantly higher risk of developing depression and anxiety disorders, which can lead to a host of other problems, such as substance abuse, decreased productivity, and a lower quality of life. Moreover, the health risks associated with loneliness extend beyond mental well-being. Research has found that chronic loneliness can have a detrimental impact

on cardiovascular health, increasing the likelihood of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke. In fact, some studies suggest that the health risks of loneliness may be comparable to those of smoking or obesity.

Reaching Out

To combat loneliness and improve overall well-being, men should prioritize building and maintaining social connections. This can involve reaching out to friends and family, joining a club or group that aligns with their interests, or even seeking professional help if needed. Engaging in regular physical activity and practicing mindfulness can also help alleviate feelings of loneliness and improve overall mental health.

Friendships between men are often built on a foundation of shared experiences, interests and passions. Whether it's bonding over sports, embarking on outdoor adventures, or pursuing creative hobbies like music or art, engaging in activities together can help foster a deep sense of camaraderie and strengthen the ties of friendship. These shared experiences can further create opportunities for men to connect, laugh and support one another, thereby cultivating and tending to meaningful friendships.

It's also important for men to open up and share personal experiences with one another, creating a safe space for discussing physical and mental health, family issues and other sensitive topics. By taking the risk to disclose what's going on at a deeper level, men can signal to others that it's okay to talk about these issues and form more meaningful connections.

The Effort

Building and maintaining friendships takes effort, but the benefits are well worth it. This Men's Health Month, let's prioritize our social connections and emotional well-being alongside our physical health. Reach out to an old friend or join a group or team that shares your interests.

By nurturing our friendships and being open and vulnerable with others, we can improve our mental and emotional well-being, leading to happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Remember, gents, taking care of our health involves more than just physical wellness — it's about fostering meaningful connections and supporting one another through life's challenges.

References: americansurveycenter.org



Additional Resources

Upcoming Wise & Well Webinar — Register Now!

Navigating Your Financial Roadmap Through All Stages of Life

When: Tuesday, July 9 | Noon – 1:00 p.m. ET

Join us to equip yourself with the knowledge and confidence to navigate the ever-changing financial landscapes throughout the various stages of life. Better understand the resources available to you and chart a course towards a financially secure future.

Whether you are just beginning your career or eyeing retirement on the horizon, join us to learn:

- The influence of world events on the markets
- The keys to developing a sound financial strategy
- Effective strategies for saving and safeguarding your money
- The difference between risk and risk tolerance
- The steps to developing a budget and long-term investment plan



To register, [click here](#) or scan the QR code.



Monthly Moves

One-Minute Power Aerobics

Choosing a few favorite aerobic exercises and doing a couple of them around the office each day can help you burn a few extra calories this summer. Try to do a few of these each day in 60-second intervals while you're on your break or before you eat, or you can spread it out through the workday for a little pick-me-up.

To perform the exercise:

- 01 Laps.** If you have a large office or an available empty room in the building, walk a few brisk laps around the room. This exercise can relieve stress and anxiety, and it's a great way to start the day and get a few extra steps in.
- 02 Lunges.** Instead of a brisk walk, try walking lunges to get a leg stretch. This is especially beneficial if you've been sitting at your desk for a few hours.
- 03 Run-in-place.** Not a lot of space? Run in place quickly for a minute, football-drill style! Or slow the pace a bit and lift the knees as high as possible.
- 04 Jumping Jacks.** Quick, simple, invigorating, and you can do it anywhere. If you don't want to work up a sweat in your business clothes, do a less vigorous version. Instead of jumping, simply tap one foot out to the side as you lift your arms; switch feet halfway through.
- 05 Jump Rope.** Using a jump rope at work is probably not sensible, but you can do a jump rope simulation! Cross your arms, cross your feet, vary speed — anything you could do if you had a real jump rope in your hands.

Source: [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com)

Birria Tacos

Birria is a mainstay of Mexican cuisine, a stew that originated in the state of Jalisco traditionally made from goat, beef or lamb. For this birria tacos recipe, the meat marinates in adobo sauce, then cooks slowly in adobo broth until it's fork-tender. The shredded meat makes a fantastic taco filling, especially when topped with onion, cilantro and a squirt of lime. Store-bought tortillas will do, but nothing beats homemade if you have the time (and the tortilla press) to make them.

Ingredients

- 1 (2-pound) boneless chuck roast (about 2 1/4-inches thick)
- 2 pounds English-cut beef short ribs (about 3 ribs)
- 2 tablespoons plus 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided, plus more to taste
- Adobo
- 8 cups water
- 1 cup finely chopped white onion, rinsed
- 1/3 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro
- Canola oil (or other cooking oil), for greasing
- 32 (6-inch) fresh corn tortillas or 16 packaged corn tortillas
- Lime wedges, for serving

For the Adobo

- 6 dried guajillo chiles, stemmed and seeded
- 4 dried ancho chiles, stemmed and seeded
- 4 dried cascabel chiles, stemmed and seeded
- 1 large white onion, cut into 1-inch wedges
- 10 garlic cloves
- 2 tablespoons roughly chopped peeled fresh ginger
- 8 cups water, divided
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons black pepper
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 6 thyme sprigs
- 3 dried bay leaves

Source: [foodandwine.com](https://www.foodandwine.com)

Directions

1. Sprinkle chuck roast and short ribs all over with 2 tablespoons salt. Combine roast, ribs and adobo in a large nonreactive bowl; toss to coat. Cover and chill at least 4 hours or up to 24 hours.
2. Preheat oven to 300°F. Transfer adobo mixture to a large (9 1/2-quart) Dutch oven; add 8 cups water. Bring to a simmer, uncovered, over medium, stirring occasionally.
3. Cover with lid and place in preheated oven. Bake until meat is fork-tender, about 4 hours.
4. Remove chuck roast and short ribs from braising broth and transfer to a large bowl; cover with aluminum foil to keep warm.
5. Return broth in Dutch oven to heat over medium and cook, uncovered, skimming off fat as needed, until reduced to about 8 cups, 15 to 20 minutes. Season broth with salt to taste.
6. Shred meat; discard bones.
7. Toss meat with 1 1/2 cups of the broth.
8. Stir together onion, cilantro and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt in a small bowl; set aside.
9. Heat a large nonstick electric griddle to 400°F or a large (12-inch) cast-iron skillet over medium-high. Using a paper towel dipped in oil, lightly grease griddle. If using fresh tortillas, stack two tortillas and use tongs to dip them together into adobo broth. (If using packaged tortillas, dip one tortilla per taco.)
10. Place stacked tortillas on griddle; top with 1/4 cup meat. Repeat with as many tortilla stacks as will comfortably fit on griddle. Cook until bottom tortilla is lightly browned and crispy, 1 to 2 minutes.
11. Fold tacos in half, gently pressing with a spatula. Transfer to a serving plate. Repeat process with oil, adobo broth, remaining tortillas and remaining meat.
12. Serve tacos hot with onion-cilantro mixture, lime wedges and remaining adobo broth for dipping or sipping.

For the Adobo

1. Heat a large cast-iron skillet over medium. Add chiles to skillet; cook, stirring occasionally, until fragrant, 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer chiles to a large saucepan; add onion, garlic, ginger, and 6 cups water. Bring to a boil over medium-high. Cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until chiles are softened, about 8 minutes. Drain chile mixture; discard cooking liquid.
2. Combine chile mixture, vinegar, salt, black pepper, oregano, cumin, cinnamon, cloves, thyme, bay leaves, and remaining 2 cups water in a blender. Secure lid on blender, and remove center piece to allow steam to escape. Place a clean towel over opening. Process until smooth, about 45 seconds. Let cool to room temperature, about 1 hour. Cover and chill until ready to use.

Source: [foodandwine.com](https://www.foodandwine.com)





Tips

Try sending our Wise & Well Tips of the Week to your employees for quick, easily digestible health and well-being tidbits they can incorporate into their daily lives.

– Your Wise & Well Team

In June, we celebrate Men's Health Awareness, so it's a great time to think about some important steps men can take to put their health first. Compared with women, men are at increased risk for a number of conditions, including heart disease, cancer, respiratory disease and more. But with education and motivation, you can start the habits that make for a longer, healthier life.

June 7

Forget Dieting. Eat Healthfully.

There isn't one perfect diet or eating style for everybody. Instead of following diet trends, you should strive to eat more healthful foods in a way that works for you. This week, try the 80/20 rule, in which you spend 80% of the time eating healthy whole foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains (such as oats, brown rice and barley), nuts, beans, fish, shellfish and eggs and 20% of the time indulging in other foods you like.

June 14

Take Breaks.

Taking care of your mental health is essential to maintaining your overall health. However, our lives, schedules and responsibilities don't always cooperate. This week, focus on taking more breaks, whether that's finding little ways to relax each day or just focusing on breathing for one extra minute during the work day. Force yourself to find some downtime and focus on taking time for yourself.

June 28

Prioritize Sleep.

Nothing can substitute solid, restful sleep on a consistent basis. Your mental, physical, social and emotional health, as well as your mood, memory, problem-solving skills, appetite and much more, are tied to the quality of your sleep. The recommended amount of sleep for adults is between seven and eight hours. Make sure to get yours this week.

June 21

Prioritize Physical Activity.

You should try to exercise moderately for at least 30 minutes every day, changing up your exercise routine every once in a while to challenge your muscles and heart. This week, ensure that you meet (or exceed) this goal by dedicating at least 30 minutes of every single workday to moderate-intensity exercise.

Sources: [labcorp.com](https://www.labcorp.com)

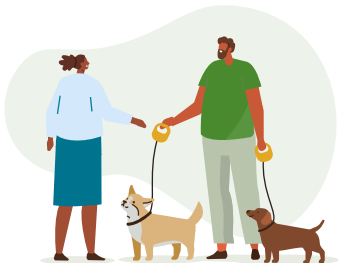
Three Ways to Prioritize Your Health

The purpose of Men's Health Month is to raise awareness about preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys. Make your health a top priority this month and beyond.



Eat Healthy.

At each meal, eat a variety of foods and at least one fruit or vegetable.



Get Moving.

Choose activities that keep you moving and motivated. Something is better than nothing.



Make Prevention a Priority.

Many conditions can be detected with regular health checkups, so schedule a visit with your healthcare professional today.

Source:
dph.illinois.gov