

# Dakota Wellness Program

## APRIL 2025

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Join Sanford Health Plan  
Wellness team members for  
our monthly 15-minute  
wellness webinar.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER TODAY!](#)



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PUBLIC EMPLOYEES  
RETIREMENT SYSTEM

**SANFORD**  
HEALTH PLAN

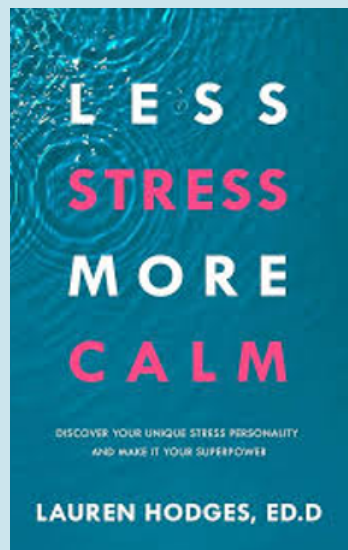
# Stress Management for Well-being

Stress is a natural part of life, but chronic stress can harm your physical, mental, and emotional health. It triggers the body's "fight or flight" response, and when prolonged, can lead to fatigue, anxiety, and strained relationships.

Effective stress management begins with mindfulness—practices like deep breathing or meditation help calm the nervous system and restore focus. Regular physical activity releases endorphins that reduce tension and boost mood, while quality sleep provides emotional balance and resilience. Managing time effectively by prioritizing tasks and setting boundaries can also ease overwhelm.

Connecting with trusted friends, family, or professionals provides emotional support and perspective. Taking time to relax through hobbies, nature walks, or creative activities fosters calm and joy.

While stress is unavoidable, adopting healthy habits can minimize its impact. Small, consistent changes help you regain control, build resilience, and live a more balanced, fulfilling life.



## Book Club

***Less Stress, More Calm: Discover Your Unique Stress Personality and Make It Your Superpower***  
by Lauren Hodges Ed.D.

Less Stress, More Calm by Lauren Hodges, Ed.D., explores how understanding your unique "stress personality" can help you manage stress more effectively. The book identifies different stress personality types, each with its own triggers and responses to stress. By recognizing your type, you can tailor stress-reduction strategies that align with your natural tendencies, transforming stress into a source of strength. Hodges offers practical tools and techniques, such as mindfulness and cognitive reframing, to build resilience and maintain calm in challenging situations. The book empowers readers to take control of their stress and use it as a catalyst for personal growth.

### Discussion questions

1. How can identifying your unique stress personality help you create personalized strategies for managing stress in your daily life?
2. In what ways can transforming stress into a superpower positively impact both your personal and professional life?
3. How do mindfulness and cognitive reframing, as suggested in the book, compare to other stress management techniques you've used or encountered?



## Ask the Expert: How to Get More Vitamin D

To offset Vitamin D deficiency from limited sunlight, include Vitamin D-rich foods in your diet. However, these can be hard to consume regularly. Key sources include fatty fish (salmon, trout, sardines), mushrooms, egg yolks, and beef liver. Additionally, fortified foods like cow's, soy, oat, and almond milk, as well as certain orange juices and yogurts, can help. If dietary intake is insufficient, your primary care provider may suggest a Vitamin D supplement. Recommended daily intakes are:

- 400 International Units (IU) for infants (up to 12 months)
- 600 IU for children and adults (1–70 years), and
- 800 IU for adults over 70

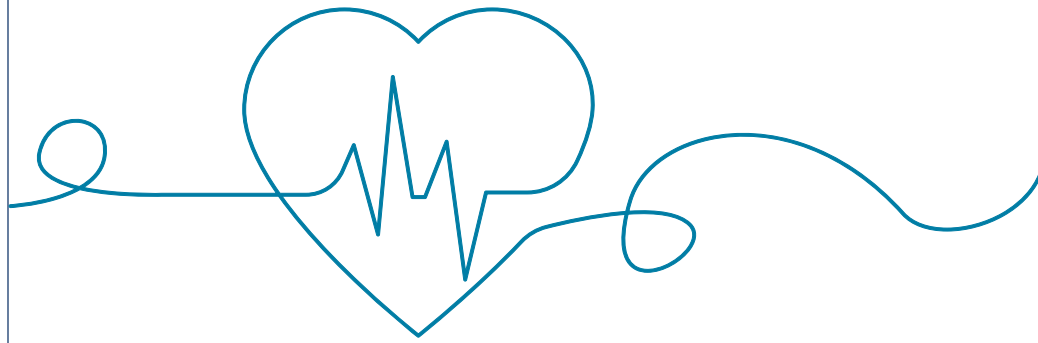
Adequate Vitamin D supports overall health.



## Show Your Heart Some Love

Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the U.S. for both men and women, but you can take steps to protect your heart and stay healthy. Start by tracking key heart health numbers like your weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose. One important number to know is your body mass index (BMI), which estimates body fat based on height and weight. A higher BMI can increase your risk for heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Get your blood pressure checked annually and ask for your target numbers. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity each week. Track your steps or jot down your daily activity. Eat a heart-healthy diet and keep a daily food and drink record.



## Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

As a Sanford Health Plan member, you have a FREE diabetes prevention program offering to help you make small lifestyle changes that can lead to big health improvements. Change Your Weigh is an evidence-based program offered in partnership with the CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program. This yearlong group-coaching program focuses on simple strategies to help you lose weight, increase physical activity and decrease your risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

### The group virtual program includes:

- Weekly meetings for the first four months
- Monthly meetings for the last eight months
- Support from a trained lifestyle coach and class peers

**REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN** for for spring and summer program start dates.



Learn more

◀ Scan the QR Code or visit

[sanfordhealthplan.com/diabetes-prevention](https://sanfordhealthplan.com/diabetes-prevention).

# Preventive Health

## April is National Stress Awareness Month

Stress can affect many aspects of our body including our feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Individuals with higher levels of stress are at greater risk of dying from different causes such as stroke and heart disease. Stress can also lead to health problems including diabetes, obesity, heart disease and high blood pressure.

If you are feeling stressed, try one or more of the following to focus on your physical and mental health:

- Set a regular sleep cycle - wake up and go to bed at the same time every day
- Get regular physical activity. It is recommended you get 150 minutes of moderate activity each week. This can relieve depression and anxiety and tension from stress.
- Reach out to connect with friends and family on a regular basis
- Walk outdoors and connect with nature
- Interact with a pet. Animals may help decrease our reactions to stress

These activities allow you to independently reduce stress. Reach out to your health care provider for a referral or other ideas to reduce stress.

### Blackened Shrimp, Asparagus and Avocado Salad with Lemon Pepper Yogurt Dressing

#### Blackened Shrimp:

500 g raw peeled large shrimp, (King Prawns), tails removed  
2 cloves of garlic, minced  
1 teaspoon ground basil  
1 teaspoon dried thyme  
1 teaspoon sea salt  
1 teaspoon fresh cracked black pepper

1/2 -1 teaspoon cayenne pepper, (add more to suit your tastes)  
2 teaspoons sweet paprika, (or smokey for a different flavor option)  
2 bunches of asparagus, halved  
1 teaspoon olive oil

#### Salad:

4 cups Cos lettuce leaves, (or lettuce of choice), washed and ready to use

1 Avocado, cubed  
1/4 red onion, sliced  
1 handful fresh basil leaves

#### Dressing:

1/3 cup Greek yogurt  
1 teaspoon lemon pepper  
Salt to taste

1 teaspoon lemon juice, (optional for extra flavor)  
2 tablespoons water, (or olive oil)

#### Instructions:

In a shallow bowl, combine shrimp (prawns) with all of the spice ingredients, and rub into the shrimp until evenly coated. Heat a large pan/skillet on medium heat and add the olive oil. Sauté the shrimp/prawns and the asparagus while turning occasionally until the shrimp/prawns and asparagus have started to change color and are just cooked (about 5 minutes). Combine the lettuce leaves, avocado, onion slices and basil leaves in a salad bowl. Add the shrimp/prawns and avocado over the top. Drizzle with the dressing.

#### For the dressing:

Combine the yogurt in a bowl with the lemon pepper, lemon juice (if using), water and salt. Mix well to combine.

#### Notes

You can use frozen shrimp if you don't have fresh, just make sure to thaw them before cooking.

#### Nutrition

Calories: 422kcal | Carbohydrates: 22g | Protein: 42g | Fat: 20g | Saturated Fat: 3g | Polyunsaturated Fat: 3g | Monounsaturated Fat: 12g | Trans Fat: 0.02g | Cholesterol: 317mg | Sodium: 2609mg | Potassium: 1226mg | Fiber: 11g | Sugar: 4g | Vitamin A: 10353IU | Vitamin C: 19mg | Calcium: 265mg | Iron: 4mg



## Monthly Observances

**Alcohol Awareness**

**Autism Awareness**

**Cancer Awareness**

**Stress Awareness**

**Testicular Cancer Awareness**

**April 7 World Health Day**

**April 16-22 Oral, Head, and Neck Cancer Awareness Week**

### QUICK LINKS

[sanfordhealthplan.com/ndpers](http://sanfordhealthplan.com/ndpers)

### SET-UP A

[mySanfordHealthPlan](http://mySanfordHealthPlan)

### ONLINE ACCOUNT

[sanfordhealthplan.com/memberlogin](http://sanfordhealthplan.com/memberlogin)

### CONTACT US

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