



# BHS A.S.S.I.S.T. Spotlight

January 2020

Your EAP is a free and confidential service, which provides assessment and short-term counseling for a variety of mental health, substance abuse and work/life related issues. To learn more about your available benefits, contact your BHS Care Coordinator at 800.245.1150.



National Drug & Alcohol  
Facts Week

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Don't Just Sit There!

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The Power of Pets

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Recipe: Easy Chicken  
Tortilla Soup

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## National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week: January 22-27

Prescription drug abuse is the use of a prescription medication in a way not intended by the prescribing doctor. Prescription drug abuse or problematic use includes everything from taking a friend's prescription painkiller for your backache to snorting or injecting ground-up pills to get high. Drug abuse may become ongoing and compulsive, despite the negative consequences.

An increasing problem, prescription drug abuse can affect all age groups, but it's more common in young people. The prescription drugs most often abused include opioid painkillers, sedatives, anti-anxiety medications and stimulants.

Early identification of prescription drug abuse and early intervention may prevent the problem from turning into an addiction.

### SYMPTOMS

Signs and symptoms of prescription drug abuse depend on the specific drug. Because of their mind-altering properties, the most commonly abused prescription drugs are:

- **Opioids**, such as oxycodone (Oxycontin, Roxicodone) and those containing hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lortab, Norco), used to treat pain
- **Anti-anxiety medications and sedatives**, such as alprazolam (Xanax) and diazepam (Valium), and **hypnotics**, such as zolpidem (Ambien), used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders

- **Stimulants**, such as methylphenidate (Ritalin, Concerta, others), dextroamphetamine and amphetamine (Adderall XR) and dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine), used to treat attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and certain sleep disorders

### Prescription Drug Abuse Symptoms:

Opioids	Stimulants	Anti-Anxiety Medications
Constipation	Poor appetite	Drowsiness
Nausea	Agitation	Confusion
Euphoria	Insomnia	Slurred Speech
Slow breathing	Anxiety	Unsteady walking

### COMPLICATIONS

Abusing prescription drugs can cause a number of problems. Prescription drugs can be especially dangerous — and even lead to death — when taken in high doses, when combined with other prescription drugs or certain over-the-counter medications, or when taken with alcohol or illegal drugs.

If you think you may have a problem with prescription drug use, don't hesitate to seek advice. Call your BHS Care Coordinator for confidential assistance at 800-245-1150.





## Don't Just Sit There!

Hectic schedules and busy personal lives can make it seem impossible to fit workouts into our week. But sitting all day can have a detrimental impact on your health. You are more likely to exercise if it's a regular part of your day. You can make it happen if you put exercise at the top of your to-do list and look for easy ways to add physical activity to your regular schedule:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Take a walk with coworkers during your lunch break. An exercise buddy can help you stick with your plan to be more active!
- Instead of sending an email, walk down the hall and talk with a coworker.
- Park away from your office, and enjoy the walk.
- Join your company's fitness center, if there is one.

### FIT EXERCISE INTO YOUR BUSY WORK DAY

Find 10-minute workout breaks throughout the day. There are a variety of strength, balance, and flexibility exercises you can do right at your desk:

- For upper-body strength exercises, try doing chair dips and wall push-ups.
- For lower-body strength exercises, do knee curls and chair stands (like a squat, where you stand up and sit down from your chair). Then get up and do toe stands (push up and down on your tiptoes), back leg raises, and side leg raises.
- For balance, stand on one foot or walk heel to toe.

### FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

Move around a little to warm up; then stretch your thigh, calf, and ankle. Also try the stretches for your neck, upper body, chest, and back. These are great after you've been sitting for a while hunched over your computer!

An office workout can vary widely in type and intensity - from swapping your desk chair out for a stability ball, to going for a run during your lunch break. By making exercise part of your everyday work routine, you'll be healthier, happier and more productive.





## The Power of Pets

Nothing compares to the joy of coming home to a loyal companion. The unconditional love of a pet can do more than keep you company. Pets may also decrease stress, improve heart health, and even help children with their emotional and social skills.

There are many health benefits of owning a pet. They can increase opportunities to exercise, get outside, and socialize. Regular walking or playing with pets can decrease blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and triglyceride levels. Pets can help manage loneliness and depression by giving you companionship. Most households in the United States have at least one pet.

Studies have shown that the bond between people and their pets can increase fitness, lower stress, and bring happiness to their owners. Some of the health benefits of having a pet include:

- Decreased blood pressure
- Decreased cholesterol levels
- Decreased triglyceride levels
- Decreased feelings of loneliness
- Increased opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities
- Increased opportunities for socialization

Researchers have found that older homebound adults who owned cats or dogs had better executive function (the skills you need to pay attention, remember details, and use past experience to decide how to act) than those who didn't own a pet.

Pets can be extremely entertaining without even trying or knowing they are doing so, and without any special training. Their antics instantly make us laugh. We enjoy watching them, and the happiness we derive from the laughter is great for our health and emotional well-being.

Although owning a pet isn't for everyone, it is clear to see that owning a pet is a positive, life-enriching experience for those who choose to make these wonderful creatures a part of their life.

### RECIPE: Easy Chicken Tortilla Soup

- 1 (15 oz) can whole kernel corn, drained
- 2 (14.5 oz) cans chicken broth
- 1 (10 oz) can chunk chicken
- 1 (15 oz) can black beans, rinsed
- 1 (10 oz) can diced tomatoes w/green chili peppers, drained

• Open the cans of corn, chicken broth, chunk chicken, black beans, and diced tomatoes with green chilies. Pour everything into a large saucepan or stock pot. Simmer over medium heat until chicken is heated through.

• **Tip:** Add garlic powder, salt, pepper, cumin, and chili powder to punch up the flavor. Top with fat free sour cream and shredded cheddar cheese.