

# Family and Community Health “Connections” in Runnels County



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“Stop watering the weeds in your life and start watering the flowers.”



## Mental Health First Aid

When we talk about health, we can’t just focus on heart health, or liver health, or brain health, and not whole health. You have to see the whole person, and make use of the tools and resources that benefit minds and bodies together. Mental Health First Aid is a public education program that can help individuals across the community understand mental illnesses, support timely intervention and save lives.

### What Is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid teaches how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The 8-hour course introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health concerns, builds understanding of their impact and provides an overview of common treatments. Through role-playing and simulations, it demonstrates how to assess a mental health crisis; select interventions; provide initial help; and connect people to professional, peer and social supports as well as self-help resources.

Mental Health First Aid encourages early detection and intervention by teaching participants about the signs and symptoms of specific illnesses like anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, eating disorders and addictions. The program offers concrete tools and answers key questions like “What can I do?” and “Where can someone find help?” Participants are introduced to local mental health resources, national organizations, support groups and online tools for mental health and addiction treatment and support.

### Why Mental Health First Aid?

One in five Americans has a mental illness or substance use disorder, yet many are reluctant to seek help or simply don’t know where to turn for care. Recognizing mental health and substance use challenges can be difficult, which is why it’s so important for everyone to understand the warning signs and risk factors. Even when friends and family of someone who may be developing a mental illness recognize that something is amiss, they may not know how to intervene or direct the person to proper treatment. All too often, those in need of mental health services do not get them until it is too late.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is approaching mental health education as an interdisciplinary community based awareness and educational program. AgriLife agents are not counselors or physicians, but do have connections within the community as well as a base of trust to help in bringing awareness and reducing stigma associated with mental health or behavioral health education. For more information about how Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in your community can assist with mental health first aid, please contact your local Family & Community Health Extension Agent.

# What Small Steps Are the Secret to Better Health?

Living healthier isn't about starting a new diet on Jan. 1 or signing up for a gym. It's embracing a way of living that naturally leads to better health. Restrictive weight loss diets don't work for many people. Exercise programs don't work for many people. That's because they're hard. The extra time and effort required to follow many popular diets and do the things most of us consider "working out" makes it less likely that we will keep up with those habits over the long term. Making things too difficult is the reason that many people fail when they try to change their behavior.

So, where do you start? Start by changing your surroundings to make better choices easier. People spend most of their time in the same places. That impacts how easy or hard it is to make healthy choices.

## Small Changes that Make a Big Difference

The changes to make are simple:

- \* Eat less.
- \* Cook affordable, fresh, natural foods, including a lot of colorful fruits and vegetables.
- \* Put family and friends first.
- \* Walk and move more.
- \* Attend religious services or build other connections in your community.



## Small Steps to Change What You Eat

Changing small habits and setting up your surroundings for success can help you more easily make better food choices every day. Here are some things to try in your home:

- \* Keep fresh fruit and vegetables front and center because it's hard to eat too much fresh produce.
- \* Bread is not bad for most people, as long as it's whole grain. Try making your own bread. Kneading gives you a mini upper-body workout.
- \* Eat more beans and fish and less red meat.
- \* Cook at home as a family or with friends. You'll be more likely to have small, healthy portions with less salt and fat.
- \* Save sweets and salty snacks for special occasions. Go out for treats, rather than stocking your refrigerator and pantry with them.
- \* Don't eat late at night.
- \* Drink more water.
- \* Remove the toaster from the counter. Then you'll be less likely to buy and eat low-nutrition toast or snack pastries.
- \* The out of sight, out of mind principal applies to other food choices as well. Don't leave a bag of salty snack chips on the counter because they will be hard to resist.

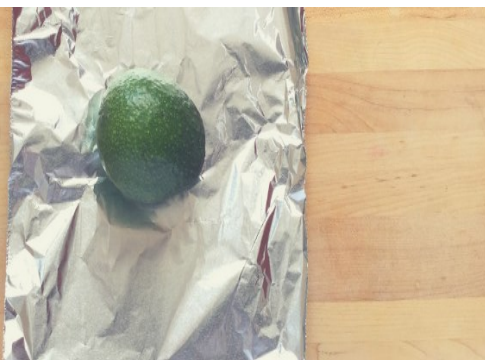
## Mindlessly Move

What does it mean to mindlessly move? Make activity a natural part of your day. Many of us think joining a gym will help us be active. It may start out that way, but people often get busy and stop going. You may have more success by adding different activities throughout the day. Do things that don't require special clothes or equipment or a trip to the gym like walking or doing chores.

Resource: <https://lifetimes.bcbstx.com/health-and-wellness/general-health/secret-to-better-health>

## Understanding the Dates on Food Labels

STEP 1: WRAP  
AVOCADO IN  
FOIL



# QUICKLY RIPEN AN AVOCADO



### Avocados

Heart-healthy avocados are naturally sodium-, cholesterol-, sugar-, and trans fat-free. They are a good source of fiber, folate and vitamin K. One-third of a medium avocado has 80 calories and contributes “good” fats (1g polyunsaturated and 5g monounsaturated), is low in saturated fat (1g) and contributes nearly 20 vitamins and minerals, including 254 mg of potassium or 6% Daily Value.

Avocados are considered “in season” in the spring, summer and winter months. Choose avocados with firm skin and no soft spots, firm but yielding to gentle pressure when ripe.

Store unripe avocados in paper bag at room temperature. Refrigerate when ripe for 2-3 days.

Resource: <https://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/avocado-nutrition-selection-storage>

Have you ever wondered what all the “dates” on food packages mean? Here’s a quick and easy reference for you to use:

**“Sell By” Date**—The last date food should be sold. Do not buy food after the “sell-by” date.

**“Best if Used By” Date**—Eat these foods before this date for best quality.

**“Use By” Date**—The last date you should eat the food to get its best quality.

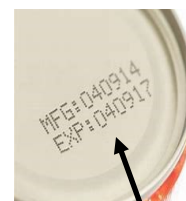
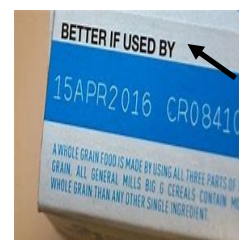
Most foods are safe to eat after the “sell by”, “best if used by” and “use by” date IF they have been handled and stored safely (EXCEPT produce that has been washed and bagged).

Do not buy or eat produce that has been washed and bagged after the “sell by”, “best if used by” or “use by” date.

**Expiration Date**—The last date that a food is considered safe to eat.

Most foods with an expiration date should be thrown away after the date has passed (EXCEPT eggs).

Eggs can be used up to 30 days after the expiration date.



Resource: [http://fcsagents.tamu.edu/food\\_and\\_nutrition/food\\_safety/index.php](http://fcsagents.tamu.edu/food_and_nutrition/food_safety/index.php)

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**Ingredients:**

- 1 TBSP light mayonnaise
- 1 TBSP fresh lemon juice
- 1/3 cup quick-cooking oats
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
- 2 TBSP chopped mint
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 1 small apple, peeled and grated
- 1 can (14 3/4 oz) sockeye salmon, not drained

**Directions:**

In a large bowl, combine the mayonnaise and lemon juice. Add the oats, stirring until moistened. Add the basil, mint, scallions and apple. Stir in the salmon and teriyaki sauce until evenly combined. Shape the burger mixture into four 1-inch thick patties. Spray a large nonstick skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Cook the burgers over medium heat until brown and heated through, about 4 minutes per side.

Makes 4 servings

**Nutrition Information Per Serving:**  
236 calories; 9.6g total fat (1.9g saturated); 47mg cholesterol; 2g dietary fiber; 14g carbohydrate; 23g protein; 831mg sodium

*Recipe Source: <http://www.berkeleywellness.com/>*

***Runnels County News***

**Heart Health Lunch 'n Learn series to start  
May 2! Bring your lunch and come learn  
about heart healthy topics! Each session is  
30 minuets or less!**

**May 2- Cholesterol Matters: Be Heart  
Healthy**

**May 9: Pressure Down: Controlling Your  
Blood Pressure**

**May 16: Act F.A.S.T. to Prevent a Stroke**

**See flyer on this page FMI**

Family and Community Health "Connections"

is provided by the following  
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