

# Wellness News

April 2025

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“The Earth has music for those that listen.” **William Shakespeare**



**Anthem members:** You can view and manage your benefits, access wellness tools and resources to improve your overall wellbeing. Simply scan this QR code with your smartphone's camera to download the Sydney Health app.

**Tip:** Anthem.com and Sydney Health use the same username and password!

# April is World Autism Month

## What is World Autism Month?

Every April, the American Autism Association celebrates World Autism Month, beginning with United Nations-sanctioned World Autism Awareness Day on April 2. Throughout the month, they focus on sharing stories and providing opportunities to increase understanding and acceptance of the autism community.

## What is Autism?

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated [1 in 36 children](#) and [1 in 45 adults](#) in the United States today.

Autism looks different for everyone, and each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges. Some autistic people can speak, while others are nonverbal or minimally verbal and communicate in other ways. Some have intellectual disabilities, while some do not. Some require significant support in their daily lives, while others need less support and, in some cases, live entirely independently.

For more information and resources on Autism go to [Autism support, resources & advocacy](#) | [Autism Speaks](#)

**Anthem members**, if you or a family member has ASD you may have access to a support team of behavioral health clinicians. Log into the Sydney app or anthem.com and look for **Autism Spectrum Disorder Program**.

**Sydney Health** app select **MENU, ACCESS CARE**, then, **My Health Dashboard**, then **Featured Programs** to find the above program and others available to you and your covered loved ones.

## Autism Awareness Activities that will help make a difference

### Express yourself through your clothing

- Clothing is one of the easiest ways to celebrate autism awareness. **Wear blue** or whatever color the organization you support chooses to raise autism awareness
- Autism awareness symbols can be worn on clothing such as a puzzle piece or infinity symbol

### Create sensory toys

- Many sensory toys can be made at home with inexpensive materials
- Sensory toys can help support autistic people and introduce kids to a meaningful way to spread kindness to those with autism.

### Watch a show or movie about autism

- There is many portrayals of autism in film and television that have done a good job on showing the importance of being knowledgeable about autism spectrum disorder

### Support businesses owned by autistic individuals

- Autistic individuals own all sorts of businesses. We can seek out some of these businesses and find ways to support them as a way to celebrate autism awareness.
- Frequenting these businesses can not only help provide an economic boon for the person with autism but encourage others to do the same. This can help foster inclusivity and autism acceptance.

### Donate to an autism organization

- Many organizations help raise autism awareness and autism acceptance. Find the one you believe can do the most good and donate to the cause. Some serve as advocacy groups, while others fund research or offer support services.



Source: American Cancer Society: What are the key statistics about colorectal cancer? (accessed June 2018); cancer.org; 2 Fight Colorectal Cancer: Facts and stats (accessed June 2018); 3 givestrengthtocolorectal.org; 4 American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons: The color: What it is, what it does, why it's important (accessed June 2018); 5 National Cancer Institute: Colorectal Cancer - Patient Version (accessed June 2018); cancer.gov/pdq/colorectal; 6 American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons: Basic Facts About Colorectal Cancer (accessed June 2018); 7 factr.org; 8 American Cancer Society: What are the risk factors for colorectal cancer? (accessed June 2018); cancer.org; 9 American Cancer Society: Six Ways to Lower Your Risk for Colorectal Cancer (accessed June 2018); cancer.org.

# Celebrating Earth Day

**Tuesday, April 22nd, 2025 is the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day.**

This year's theme according to [earthday.org](http://earthday.org) is "Our Power, Our Planet."

For 55 years, Earth Day has led the world in raising awareness and taking action on critically important environmental issues.

**Here are ten simple choices for a healthier planet:**

## PROTECTING OUR PLANET STARTS WITH YOU



**BIKE MORE  
DRIVE LESS**



**EDUCATE**

When you further your own education, you can help others understand the importance and value of our natural resources.

**Volunteer!**



Volunteer for cleanups in your community. You can get involved in protecting your watershed too!



**reduce  
REUSE  
recycle**

Cut down on what you throw away. Follow the three "R's" to conserve natural resources and landfill space.

**CONSERVE WATER**



The less water you use, the less runoff and wastewater that eventually end up in the ocean.

**choose sustainable**



**seafood**

Learn how to make smart seafood choices at [www.FishWatch.gov](http://www.FishWatch.gov).



**-SHOP-  
WISELY**

Buy less plastic and bring a reusable shopping bag.



**Long-lasting  
light bulbs  
- ARE A -  
BRIGHT  
IDEA**

Energy efficient light bulbs reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Also flip the light switch off when you leave the room!

Trees provide food and oxygen. They help save energy, clean the air, and help combat climate change.



**PLANT  
A TREE**



**Don't send  
chemicals  
into our  
waterways.**

Choose nontoxic chemicals in the home and office.



[oceanservice.noaa.gov](http://oceanservice.noaa.gov)



### The Buzz on Bees

The i.e.,atic drop in the population of bees has increasingly been of concern because of the important role they play as pollinators. Without bees, many of the world's most important crops would fail and affect the food supply of humans and other species.

**There are 20,000 distinct bee species around the world**, with 4,000 of them in the US alone. From 2006-2015, approximately 25% fewer species were found. A decline in bee diversity driven by either increasing rarity or irreversible extinction will affect the pollination of wild plants and crops.

**Many factors are influencing the decline of bees**, including habitat fragmentation, increased use of **pesticides** (i.e. Mosquito yard treatment), colony collapse disorder, and climate change.

**Bees play a massive role in pollinating the plants we eat.** A single bee colony can pollinate 300 million flowers in a day. Approximately 75% of the world's crops depend on pollinators. In North America, bees help with the production of at least 90 crops.

**One third** of the world's food supply relies on bees.

To read more on the impact of bees:

[Bee Fact Sheet](#)

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/ocean/earthday.html>



# Protect Yourself From Stress

When we feel challenged by demands on our time, energy, and resources, we may experience stress. While occasional stress is usually harmless, ongoing stress that disrupts your daily routines can affect your quality of life and potentially put your long-term health at risk. Being able to recognize the signs of stress and find different strategies to manage it can help you be your healthiest self and avoid larger health problems down the road.

## Warning signs of stress

The symptoms of stress are not the same for everyone, but may include:

- Shoulder, neck, or back pain
- Shortness of breath or chest pain
- Increased mood swings
- Headaches
- Inability to focus or remember things
- Lack of energy
- Teeth grinding or jaw clenching
- Changes in eating habits or sleep
- Upset stomach
- Feeling overwhelmed

## Healthy ways to cope

If you feel increased levels of stress, try one or more of the following tips to figure out what helps you manage stress the best:

- **Move your body regularly.** Even 10 minutes at a time can make a difference.
- **Make time for hobbies you enjoy.** Start a new book, listen to music, or sit down to paint.
- **Meditate or practice deep breathing.** Just a few minutes of mindfulness can help.
- **Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.** Make sure your body has the nutrients it needs to stay energized.
- **Try to get enough sleep.** Aim for 7 to 9 hours a night if you can.
- **Connect with others.** Talk through your stress and lean on people you trust.



If you are having trouble coping with stress, reach out to a doctor or a mental health professional for help. To find a doctor or healthcare provider in your plan's network, use the Find Care

**Anthem Members:** Please utilize the **Emotional Wellbeing Resources (EWR)**, **ages 13+** and Mental Health Support through the **Virtual Care Center Sydney Health** app select **CARE**, then, **Virtual Care** or for programs: select **MENU**, **ACCESS CARE**, **My Health Dashboard**, then **Featured Programs** to find the above program and others available to you and your covered loved ones.

# What You Need To Know About Shingles

Shingles is a painful skin rash caused by a virus called varicella-zoster. The rash can appear anywhere on the body or face but most frequently shows up as a stripe of blisters on one side of the torso.

About 1 million people in the United States get shingles every year, and more than 1 in 3 will get shingles in their lifetime. Here's what you need to know about this common illness, also known as herpes zoster.

## What Causes Shingles In Adults?

Anyone who has had chickenpox can get shingles. After chickenpox, the varicella-zoster virus remains dormant in your nerve tissue and can wake up years later as shingles. The risk of getting shingles increases as you get older, especially after age 50. For reasons unknown, women have a slightly higher risk of getting shingles than men, according to the [American Medical Association](#).

## What Are The Symptoms Of Shingles?

Shingles is best known for an itchy or tingly red rash that turns into a cluster of painful blisters on one side of the body. Early signs of shingles can include fever, headache, and a burning or tingling feeling on the skin. Pain or stinging can persist even after the rash subsides.

## What's The Treatment For Shingles?

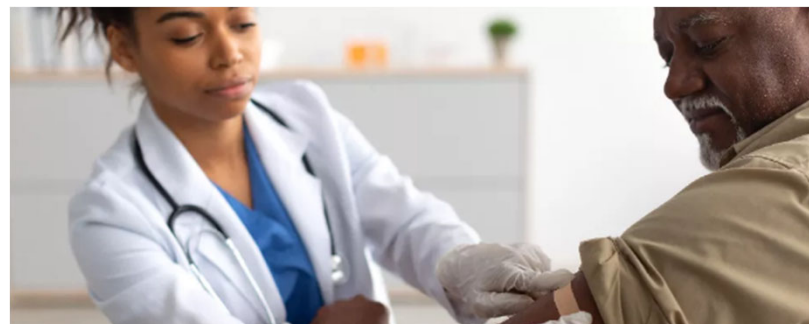
If you notice symptoms of shingles, see a doctor right away. Your doctor might prescribe an antiviral medication to shorten the life of the virus and suggest over-the-counter medicines to relieve pain and soothe itchy skin.

As with any illness, it is important to eat a healthy diet, get lots of rest, and try to reduce stress.

## How Long Is Shingles Contagious?

When you have shingles, you're contagious as soon as blisters appear. You stop being contagious when they crust over, which usually takes 7 to 10 days.

The fluid in the blisters can spread the virus, so be sure to keep your rash covered with a bandage. Try not to itch your skin and wash your hands often to prevent spreading the virus to others. Avoid being around pregnant women and people who have a compromised immune system.



## Can Shingles Be Prevented?

The good news is that you can protect yourself against shingles — and the intense pain that comes with it — by getting vaccinated. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) recommends the Shingrix vaccine](#) for people over age 50.

The shingles vaccine can have mild to moderate side effects that last a few days. You might feel tired, have a headache, or even a fever after getting the vaccine. Most health plans cover preventive vaccines like Shingrix. Check your plan details to see if you are covered.

Even if you already have had shingles, chickenpox, or the chickenpox vaccine, the CDC recommends getting the shingles vaccine. According to the CDC, it is safe for adults to receive the Shingrix shingles vaccine with the flu and COVID-19 vaccines. You should not get the Shingrix vaccine if you currently have shingles or are pregnant.

Here's one last thing to consider. If you've never had chickenpox or the chickenpox vaccine, you're never too old to get it. That's why [experts at Cleveland Clinic recommend](#) getting the varicella vaccine to protect yourself from picking up that illness from someone who has shingles.

# Chicken & Spinach Skillet Pasta with Lemon & Parmesan

Active Time: 25 mins

Total Time: 25 mins

Servings: 4

## Ingredients

8 ounces gluten-free penne pasta *or* whole-wheat penne pasta  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breast *or* thighs, trimmed, if necessary, and cut into bite-size pieces  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon salt  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ground pepper  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
1 cup dry white wine  
2 teaspoons lemon zest  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup lemon juice  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup unsalted butter, cubed  
4 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, divided  
10 cups chopped fresh spinach



**STEP 1 :** Bring a large pot of water to a boil; add 8 ounces pasta and cook according to package directions. Reserve  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of cooking water; drain the pasta and set aside



**STEP 2 :** Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large high-sided skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken pieces,  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon salt and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon pepper; cook, stirring occasionally, until an instant-read thermometer inserted in thickest portion registers 165°F, 5 to 7 minutes. Add minced garlic; cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in 1 cup wine, 2 teaspoons lemon zest and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup lemon juice; bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Add cubed butter and 1 tablespoon Parmesan; cook, whisking constantly, until the sauce is creamy and emulsified, about 2 minutes. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup pasta water; cook, stirring occasionally, until the sauce thickens slightly, about 2 minutes.



**STEP 3:** Stir in chopped spinach and the cooked pasta. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the spinach is wilted and bright green, about 5 minutes. Divide among 4 plates; top with the remaining 3 tablespoons Parmesan.

<https://www.eatingwell.com/high-protein-spring-dinner-recipes-8609275>

**Nutrition Information** Serving Size: 2 cups

Calories 493, Fat 28g, Saturated Fat 12g, Cholesterol 107mg, Carbohydrates 26g, Total Sugars 1g, Added Sugars 0g, Protein 29g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 648mg, Potassium 710mg