

# Wellness News

April 2024

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**“Happiness and wellbeing are actually best regarded as skills” – Richard Davidson**



**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!*



# Understanding

## autism spectrum disorder



1 in 36  
children in the U.S.  
have ASD\*

4x  
more common in boys  
than girls\*

### What is autism spectrum disorder?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a condition that causes people to behave, communicate, interact, and learn in ways that are different from most people. ASD impacts all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups and includes a spectrum of conditions.

### Recognizing signs and symptoms of ASD

Symptoms of ASD tend to appear in the first two years of life. They differ from child to child, but common symptoms fall into three main groups:

#### Social interactions

- Children with ASD often have trouble connecting with others. They might:
- Show limited interest in other people.
- Avoid making or keeping eye contact.
- Not play with other children.
- Be unaware of emotions in themselves or others.

#### Communications

A delay in talking or an unusual speech pattern is a common sign of ASD. Children with ASD also might not:

- Respond to their name by 9 months of age.
- Show facial expressions, like happy, sad, or angry, by 9 months.
- Use simple gestures, such as waving good-bye, by 12 months.
- Be able to follow a conversation.

#### Restrictive or repetitive behaviors

People with ASD often show repetitive or restrictive behaviors, often referred to as stimming or self-stimulatory behaviors. Examples include:

- Repeating words or phrases.
- Repetitive body movements like pacing back and forth, rocking, or hand flapping.
- Intense, highly focused behavior or interests, such as with specific topics or moving objects.
- Difficulty with changes to routine.
- Sensory processing difficulties like being more or less sensitive to light, odors, sound, taste, or touch.

### Talking with your child's doctor

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children get screened for ASD at their 18- and 24-month exams. If you notice early warning signs in your child before then, it's important to talk with their doctor. Here's how to start that process.

**Take notes on what you see.** Keep a record of specific behaviors or milestones your child may be missing.

**Express your concerns** and ask for an ASD evaluation. The doctor will guide you on the next steps.



If you have questions, connect with Anthem Autism Spectrum Disorder Program. Utilize the Sydney<sup>SM</sup> Health app or at Anthem.com

Log-in to Sydney scroll to the bottom of home screen to find programs.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP): *Autism Spectrum Disorder* (accessed June 2023); [aap.org](http://aap.org) Autism Speaks: *What Is Autism?* (accessed June 2023); [autismspeaks.org](http://autismspeaks.org) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): *Autism Spectrum Disorder* (accessed June 2023); [cdc.org](http://cdc.org) National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): *Autism Spectrum Disorder* (accessed June 2023); [nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov)

\*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Data & Statistics on Autism Spectrum Disorder* (accessed June 2023); [cdc.org](http://cdc.org)

The information above is meant to educate, not serve as medical advice. Ask your child's doctor for medical advice about their health.



# Is it Stress or Anxiety?

## It's important to manage your stress.

Everyone experiences stress, and sometimes that stress can feel overwhelming. You may be at risk for an anxiety disorder if it feels like you can't manage the stress and if the symptoms of your stress:

- Interfere with your everyday life.
- Cause you to avoid doing things.
- Seem to be always present.

## Coping With Stress and Anxiety

Learning what causes or triggers your stress and what coping techniques work for you can help reduce your anxiety and improve your daily life. It may take trial and error to discover what works best for you. Here are some activities you can try when you start to feel overwhelmed:

- Keep a journal.
- Download an app that provides relaxation exercises (such as deep breathing or visualization) or tips for practicing mindfulness, which is a psychological process of actively paying attention to the present moment.
- Exercise, and make sure you are eating healthy, regular meals.
- Stick to a sleep routine, and make sure you are getting enough sleep.
- Avoid drinking excess caffeine such as soft drinks or coffee.
- Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.
- Reach out to your friends or family members who help you cope in a positive way.

Life can be stressful—you may feel stressed about performance at school, traumatic events (such as a pandemic, a natural disaster, or an act of violence), or a life change. Everyone feels stress from time to time.

**What is stress?** Stress is the physical or mental response to an external cause, such as having a lot of homework or having an illness. A stressor may be a one-time or short-term occurrence, or it can happen repeatedly over a long time.

**What is anxiety?** Anxiety is your body's reaction to stress and can occur even if there is no current threat. If that anxiety doesn't go away and begins to interfere with your life, it could affect your health. You could experience problems with sleeping, or with your immune, digestive, cardiovascular, and reproductive systems. You also may be at higher risk for developing a mental illness such as an anxiety disorder or depression. Read more about [anxiety disorders](#).

### Stress



- Generally is a response to an external cause, such as taking a big test or arguing with a friend..
- Goes away once the situation is resolved.
- Can be positive or negative. For example, it may inspire you to meet a deadline, or it may cause you to lose sleep.

### Both Stress and Anxiety

Both stress and anxiety can affect your mind and body. You may experience symptoms such as:

- Excessive worry
- Uneasiness
- Tension
- Headaches or body pain
- High blood pressure
- Loss of sleep



### Anxiety

- Generally is internal, meaning it's your reaction to stress.
- Usually involves a persistent feeling of apprehension or dread that doesn't go away, and that interferes with how you live your life.
- Is constant, even if there is no immediate threat.

## Recognize When You Need More Help

If you are in immediate distress or are thinking about hurting yourself, call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at **988** or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).

**Anthem Members:** Please utilize the **Emotional Wellbeing Resources** which offers digital tools you and your covered family members may need to develop resilience, reduce stress and practice mindfulness. Take advantage of this free and confidential resource for ages 13+.

**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.



**Makes:** 4-6 servings

**Free of:** gluten and all top allergens

## Ingredients

- 1 whole organic chicken, rinsed and cut into 8
- 4 tbsp whole coriander seeds
- 2 tbsp whole mixed peppercorns
- 2 tbsp fresh garlic, roughly chopped
- 1 tsp coarse salt
- 1 tsp olive oil
- Bunch fresh coriander leaves (for garnish)

## Sweet & Spicy Dipping Sauce

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) rice wine vinegar [look for allergen-free brands]
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) clear honey
- 1 tbsp fresh garlic, minced
- 1/2 tsp dried red pepper flakes
- 1/2 tsp salt

[Simon Clarke](#) is a chef and recipe dev

## Instructions

1. Place coriander seeds, peppercorns, garlic, salt and oil in a large mortar and pound with a pestle until a paste forms. (Or pulse ingredients for 1 minute in a spice grinder or mini chopper until combined.)
2. Rub paste over cut-up chicken to coat. Marinate for 2-4 hours in the refrigerator.
3. **Meanwhile, make the dipping sauce:** combine rice wine vinegar and honey in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat and then simmer over low heat for 2-3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for an additional 2 minutes. Set aside and cool.
4. Pre-heat barbecue or broiler on high. Cook chicken on both sides for 6-8 minutes or until
5. juices run clear when cut with a knife.
6. Transfer chicken to a serving platter garnished with fresh coriander leaves. Pour dipping sauce into small individual bowls and serve.



**Anthem members:** Check out **Eat Healthy Action Plan**. Do your eating habits need an overhaul? If so, let us steer you in a new direction. This action plan is packed with meal plans, recipes and nutrition tips that will help you approach eating in a whole new way! Don't wait get started today! Login to Sydney, select **MENU** on bottom navigation bar, **ACCESS CARE, My Health Dashboard** then **Action Plans**

Categories: [Celiac](#), [Gluten-free](#), [Eggs](#), [Fish](#), [Grilling](#), [International](#), [Main Dishes](#), [Milk/Dairy](#), [Mustard](#), [Other Legumes](#), [Peanut](#), [Sesame](#), [Shellfish](#), [Soy](#), [Spring](#), [Sulphites](#), [Summer](#), [Tree Nuts](#), [Wheat](#)