



PTSD Awareness

PTSD101

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a medically-diagnosed mental health condition that can develop after exposure to one or more traumatic events.

PTSD can develop after experiencing, witnessing or learning the details of a traumatic event.

Threat of injury or death	Terrorist attack	Natural disaster
Serious accident	Sexual assault	Childhood sexual or physical abuse
Combat	Physical assault	

A diagnosis of PTSD requires the presence of symptoms from FOUR different categories.

<p>1 INTRUSIONS Recurring distressing memories, dreams or flashbacks</p>	<p>2 AVOIDANCE Of people or places that remind them of the trauma</p>	<p>3 PERSISTENT NEGATIVE MOOD OR THOUGHTS Inability to experience positive emotions; excessive blame, fear, shame, guilt; detachment from others</p>	<p>4 AROUSAL OR REACTIVITY Irritability, hypervigilance, difficulty concentrating, self-destructive behaviors</p>
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BY THE NUMBERS

Between fiscal years 2016 and 2020, **93,346 service members** received care for PTSD in the Military Health System.

74,232 of those service members were diagnosed during or following deployment.

↑ = 5,000 active-duty service members
Source: Military Health System Management Analysis and Reporting Tool (MART)

The first line of treatment recommended for PTSD is individual, trauma-focused psychotherapy.

<p>EVIDENCE-BASED PSYCHOTHERAPIES</p> <p>Most therapies involve eight to 16 sessions and include these core techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to traumatic images or memories Exposure to avoided thoughts or situations that trigger feelings of anxiety Cognitive restructuring focused on identifying and changing troublesome thinking patterns and beliefs 	<p>MEDICATION INTERVENTIONS</p> <p>Rx For patients who choose not to engage in or do not have access to trauma-focused psychotherapy, these medications are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) of fluoxetine, paroxetine, or sertraline Serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor (SNRI) of venlafaxine
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PTSD is treatable. Talk to your health care provider today.

Released May 2021

What does nutrition have to do with it?

Chronic stress can really take a toll on our mind and body, and can sometimes take an even greater toll on our overall health, depending on how we choose to deal with it.

Below are some tips on how to use nutrition as a helpful tool during those hard times¹:

- ❖ Eat regularly. Eating consistently throughout the day helps keep your blood sugar levels stable, which in turn also helps keep your energy levels steady and helps avoid mood swings.
- ❖ Eat your veggies. Dealing with stress can be exhausting, both physically and mentally. Balanced, healthful foods rich in vitamins and minerals can provide you with the extra energy needed to cope during these trying times. Research shows some foods, like vegetables and healthy fats, may help to regulate levels of the stress hormone cortisol².
- ❖ Limit excess caffeine. Caffeine can cause a temporary increase in blood pressure and may worsen the physical symptoms associated with stress. This doesn't mean you must eliminate caffeine completely, but rather be mindful of the amount you consume, especially during times of high stress.
- ❖ Short term solutions that can cause long term problems. Sometimes people turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms such as eating excessively, not eating, or self-medicating with drugs and/or alcohol. Use beneficial coping mechanisms like talking with someone you trust, exercise, journaling, meditating, etc. Be patient with yourself as you navigate these hard times, and if stress continues to negatively impact your quality of life, reach out for help.

https://www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/crisis_help.asp

1. Nutrition and stress. Campus Health. (2022, December 9). <https://campushealth.unc.edu/health-topic/nutrition-and-stress/>
2. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. (2021, October). Stress and Health. The Nutrition Source. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/stress-and-health/#:~:text=Healthy%20diet,.help%20to%20regulate%20cortisol%20levels.>



Scan the QR code for a PTSD self-screen

Baked Spinach, Feta & Egg-Stuffed Peppers

By Carolyn Casner Published on September 22, 2021



PHOTO: KELSEY HANSEN

Ingredients

- 2 large bell peppers
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 4 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons reduced-fat milk
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 2 cups chopped spinach
- ⅓ cup crumbled feta cheese

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 °F.

Halve peppers lengthwise; remove and discard seeds. Place the peppers cut-side up in an 8-inch-square microwave-safe dish. Microwave on High until just tender, 2 1/2 to 3 minutes. Pat dry and sprinkle with salt.

Whisk eggs, milk and pepper in a medium bowl.

Heat oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook, stirring, until softened and beginning to brown, about 2 minutes. Add spinach and cook, stirring, until wilted, 1 to 2 minutes more. Divide the spinach mixture among the pepper halves. Sprinkle with feta, then top with the egg mixture. Bake until the filling is set, 30 to 35 minutes.

<https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/7918926/baked-spinach-feta-egg-stuffed-peppers/>

Got questions on other health issues related to sleep health, physical activity, tobacco, or nutrition? Share them with us and we will help you “Bust The Myths!” Send your questions to usaf.jbsa.afmsa.mbx.hpo@mail.mil. Make sure to include in the subject line “Health Myth Buster.” For more online health tips visit the Air Force Health Promotion webpage <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/Resources/Health-Promotion/>



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Air Force Health Promotion HQ

Community Events

HERE'S WHAT'S GOING ON WHERE YOU LIVE

Your Local Health Promotion Office



Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday