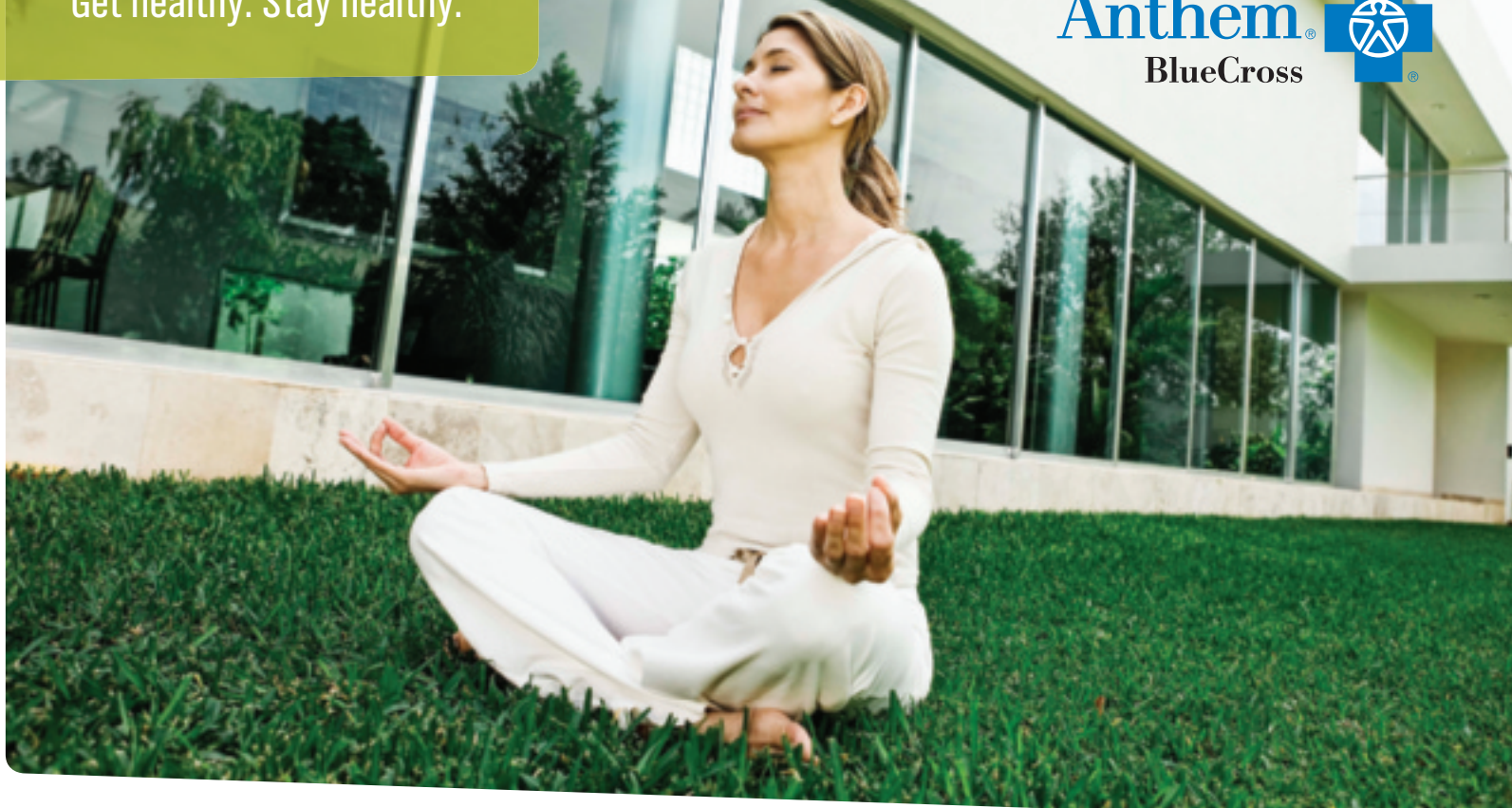


Get healthy. Stay healthy.



Taking steps toward good mental health

If you suffer from a mental illness, it can affect your whole life. Your feelings, moods and ability to think – they all suffer. How you relate to others may also suffer. It may even make it hard to function on a daily basis.¹

But you are not alone. More than one in four Americans deal with depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and other mental issues.² A mental illness is a real medical condition – it's not just “in your head.” The good news is that most mental illness can be treated with the help of your doctors.¹

Are you at risk?³

The exact cause of most mental illness is hard to pin down. If people in your family have struggled with mental disorders, you may have a higher chance of doing the same. But DNA isn't the whole story. Things that happen to you – today or in the past – can play a part too. Even your lifestyle matters. Your risk of mental illness is a combination of many of the factors below. Talk about them with your doctor.

Your body

- Certain infections
- Brain injuries

- Brain damage before or during birth
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Not eating right
- Contact with environmental toxins

Your history

- Severe childhood trauma
- Abuse or neglect
- Loss of a parent or other important person at an early age

Your world

- Death of a family member or close friend
- Divorce
- An unhealthy or abusive family life
- Living in poverty
- Low self-esteem, anger, anxiety and loneliness
- Changing jobs or schools

What can you do?

A healthy mind often goes hand in hand with a healthy body. Only a mental health professional can help you deal with the serious symptoms and causes of mental illness. But you can take steps to good mental health every day. Try these tips from Mental Health America:⁴

See your doctor when you're not feeling well. Don't settle for feeling crummy. Your doctor can help you decide if your symptoms are due to a health problem or a medication you're taking.

Get enough sleep. Your body needs to be at its best to help your mind recover. Ask your doctor how much sleep is enough for you.

Watch what you eat. A healthy, balanced diet fuels your body and keeps your blood sugar steady. This prevents mental highs and lows that can make depression and anxiety seem worse.⁵

Get moving. Regular exercise can help you feel less stressed, depressed and anxious. It can even help you sleep better. Again, check with your doctor first.

Value yourself. Make time each week to do something you enjoy.

Connect with others. Surround yourself with positive, caring people, and spend a lot of time with them. If you don't have supportive people in your life, seek them out by joining a support group.

Manage your stress. Pay attention to how you're feeling, and don't take on too much. It's OK to say no to people or projects that place too many demands on you. Know your limits, and only take on what you can handle.

Mental health benefits and health care reform laws⁶

Employers don't have to offer mental health benefits, and health plans don't have to cover treatment for mental illnesses. But if your company does offer mental health benefits, the law says it must have "coverage parity" with health benefits. This means that the mental health benefits and regular health benefits must cover the same number of visits, at the same copay and deductible. (This rule only applies to companies with more than 50 employees.)

Where can you get help?

If you or a loved one is struggling with a mental illness, help is nearby. Ask Human Resources about your employer's Employee Assistance Program. These web sites are also good sources of support:

- MentalHelp.net (active support forums and articles on dealing with mental health issues in all parts of life)
- mentalhealth.samhsa.gov (information from the National Mental Health Information Center)
- nmha.org (depression screenings, newsletters, and links to local resources from Mental Health America)

Visit anthem.com/ca for more ways to get healthy – and stay healthy.

The information contained in this flier is provided for educational purposes only, and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Please consult your doctor for medical advice about changes that may affect your health and before taking any medications or beginning any lifestyle program. Some services may not be covered under your health plan. Please refer to your Group Certificate and Schedule of Benefits for details concerning benefits, procedures and exclusions.

Sources

¹National Alliance on Mental Illness, *What is Mental Illness: Mental Illness Facts* (accessed September 2010): nami.org

²National Business Group on Health, *Mental and Behavioral Health* (accessed September 2010): businessgrouphealth.org

³WebMD, *Causes of Mental Illness* (February 9, 2009): webmd.com

⁴Mental Health America, *Staying Well When You Have a Mental Illness* (accessed September 2010): nmha.org

⁵The Center for the Improvement of Human Functioning International, *Mood Swings And Depression: Let's Get To The Bottom Of It* (accessed October 8, 2010): orthomolecular.org

⁶HRHero.com, *Mental Health Parity in Employer-Sponsored Health Plans* (accessed September 2010): hrhero.com

