



**Connected
Community**
WELLNESS SCREEN
BWell2Excel

Connected Community Wellness Screen is an emotional wellness check-up offered right at school to 9th graders and other teens whose parents consent.



Nutrition Impacts Mental Health

When teens are home for summer vacation and families are juggling outdoor activities, sports and family getaways, nutritional health can be an afterthought.

According to Dr. Eva Selhub of Harvard Medical School, what you eat can directly affect both the structure and function of your brain and how you feel. Like any fine-tuned machine, your brain is always working and requires the best fuel to work most efficiently, especially during the teenage years.

The digestive system doesn't just digest food. It helps guide your emotions. Serotonin, 95% of which is produced in the gastrointestinal tract, helps regulate sleep, appetite, mood and inhibit pain. When good bacteria is lacking in the digestive tract due to poor nutrition, the production of serotonin is influenced.

Lack of healthy eating can impact mental health, especially when eating fast and

convenient foods, and foods high in sugar, leading to:

- **Moodiness**
- **Worsening of existing mood disorders, such as depression**
- **Increased anxiety**
- **Sleep irregularity**

What foods can *your* teen choose to improve mental health?

The best way to improve teen mental health through diet is by making changes. Diet tips that can help include:

Focusing on quality. High quality foods such as fruits and vegetables contain lots of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. These nourish the brain and protect it from stress.

Limiting sugar intake. Diets high in refined sugar have been found to promote inflammation and stress, impair brain function, and worsen mood disorders.

Considering probiotics. [Probiotics](#) can be found in dairy products, yogurt and chocolate, and can be taken as a supplement. They increase serotonin production that improves anxiety levels, perception of stress and overall mental outlook.

Looking for a recipe containing ingredients that fuel the brain? [Smoothies are perfect for boosting brain health and supporting mental health.](#)

Deciphering Teen Behavior -- What's Normal and What's Not?

Participating in the Connected Community Wellness Screen can help differentiate between typical adolescent behavior and signs of emotional health concerns.

Wellness Screen helps provide valuable information. It either indicates emotional health is right on track or reveals an opportunity to intervene while an issue is in early stages.

How does Wellness Screen work?

First, **parents/guardians provide consent** for teens to participate in the check-up. Then the **teens themselves agree to participate** in the two-step screening process:

1. Teens complete a **10-minute computerized questionnaire** exploring vision, hearing and dental problems; symptoms of depression and anxiety; suicidal thinking and behavior; attention problems; disruptive behavior; and use of drugs and alcohol.
2. Teens meet with a member of the Wellness Screen staff to discuss their check-up. **When a check-up indicates reason for concern, parents are notified** and assisted in connecting with a community resource for further evaluation.

How can I refer an adolescent for a screening check-up?

Teens can be scheduled to participate at partnering schools where the Wellness Screen is offered.

Or, a check-up may be requested by calling **(920) 886-9319 ext. 109**.

Think you or someone you know might be depressed?

The N.E.W Mental Health Connection is sponsoring an **anonymous screening** for adults, which concludes with a list of local resources that offer help and hope -- including Samaritan Counseling Center.

For more information about Wellness Screen,

please call **(920) 886-9319 ext. 109**

or visit our [website](#)

Connected Community Wellness Screen is administered through Samaritan Counseling Center with guidance from the Connected Community Wellness Screen Advisory Councils.

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