



Stress Less and Smile More

You may be aware of the physical and emotional symptoms of stress such as headaches, stomachaches, and anxiety. But did you know that stress can also affect your oral, or mouth, health? It's important to pinpoint the causes of your stress and know your body's early warning signs. It's also smart to take steps to reduce your stress.

Oral conditions caused by stress*

Stress can affect your oral health in a number of ways:

- **Jaw issues**, or disorders of the jaw joint or chewing muscles. These can cause pain around the ear or face.
- **Teeth grinding**, or bruxism. This can happen during the day, especially when you're concentrating, or at night.
- **Poor oral hygiene**, caused by a lack of good brushing and flossing. If you're too busy or forget to keep up with your dental hygiene, you can wind up with tooth decay and gum disease.
- **Cold sores**, which are caused by the herpes simplex virus HSV-1. Cold sores are often triggered by dental treatment, stress and sunlight.
- **Oral infections or sores**, which may show up as ulcers, white lines, or white or red spots. These can be brought on by stress.
- **Decreased immune response**, which can lead to periodontal (gum) disease.

Reduce your symptoms

It's important to get to the root of the problem and figure out why you're stressed. Once you've pinpointed the causes, think about how to lower your stress levels. In the meantime, follow these steps to get relief for painful oral symptoms:

- **Talk to your dentist** about treatment options.
- **Address teeth grinding** by asking your dentist about getting a custom-fitted night guard. It can be worn at night to prevent tooth damage caused from grinding and clenching. The night guard also creates a cushion to remove stress on your aching muscles and joint tissues.
- **Avoid hard or crunchy foods** when you're in pain.
- **Don't cope with tobacco and alcohol.** These products can make your oral symptoms worse.
- **Manage pain** through gentle massage, physical therapy or pain relief medications.
- **Ask about prescription medications.** Anti-inflammatory drugs can help inflammation of the jaw joint. Antiviral drugs may prevent cold sores.
- **Avoid the sun** or use a sunscreen with at least an SPF of 30 to help reduce cold sores.

Talk to your health care provider about your symptoms.

**<http://www.webmd.com/oral-health/healthy-mouth-14/your-healthy-mouth/stress-teeth>*

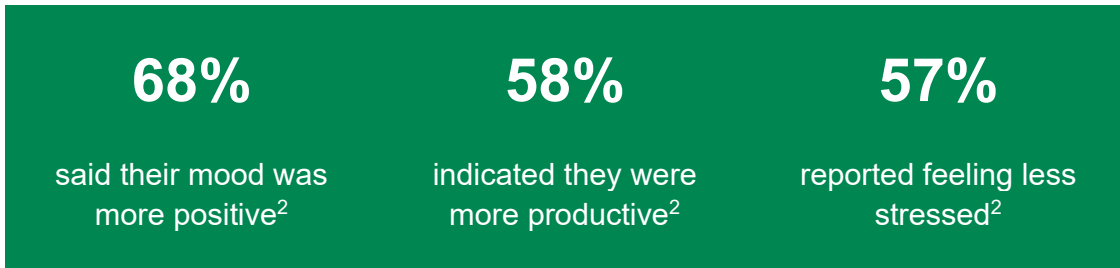
Treat Yourself By Taking PTO

Time away from work helps you relax. Take a break and spend time with your family without also juggling work duties. Surveys show PTO can even make you happier, healthier and a more productive employee.

People who take all or most of their PTO are:



Among workers returning from PTO:



¹U.S. Travel Association

²U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Healthy Heart, Healthy Eyes

They say the eyes are the window to your soul, but did you know they can also show how healthy your heart is? If you weren't aware, you're not alone. According to a [survey](#) conducted by VSP Vision Care and YouGov, only 1% of people know that signs of diseases and conditions that affect the heart and eyes, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, can be detected through an eye exam. This is incredibly concerning because if conditions like these are left untreated, they can cause eye diseases like

diabetic retinopathy, hypertensive retinopathy, and macular degeneration. All of which can cause serious vision issues or complete loss of sight if left untreated.

According to Dr. Jennifer Tsai, a VSP network doctor, the arrangement of blood vessels at the back of the eye are closely connected to the health of your heart. Many patients don't realize that cardiovascular and eye diseases share the same underlying causes, as well as the same treatment. A root symptom of many of these diseases is inflammation, which your eye doctor can identify through an annual comprehensive eye exam.

"I've seen a range of heart-related eye diseases while practicing optometry," said Dr. Tsai. "Patients often come in with only a complaint of blurry vision. Most are completely unaware of the state of their overall health and how their blurry vision may be caused by an underlying condition."

Similarly, not being able to see out of one eye or other visual disturbances may be an indication of a deeper heart-related issue. Being aware that the lens you're seeing the world through can determine the status of your overall health is the first step to healthier living. When early signs of diseases such as stroke, bacterial endocarditis, and diabetes can be identified through an eye exam, there is no reason to forego it.

The next time you're due for an annual eye exam with your [VSP network doctor](#), remember how crucial it is in taking care of your overall health. Your body will thank you later!

Mouth-Friendly and Visibly Pleasing Recipes



Broccoli and Red Pepper Frittata

If you're craving something rich and satisfying, this frittata recipe is perfect for brunch or any meal! It's filled with flavorful broccoli, spinach and red bell peppers that can boost your immunity and keep your smile healthy.

Ingredients:

- 8 eggs
- ¼ cup milk
- 16 ounces sour cream
- ½ cup cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons salted butter
- 1 cup frozen broccoli
- 1 cup spinach
- ½ cup red bell pepper, sliced

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 350 F.
2. Beat eggs and milk in a large mixing bowl until combined. Stir in sour cream, cheddar cheese, salt and pepper.
3. Melt butter in a cast-iron skillet over medium heat.
4. Cook broccoli, spinach and red bell pepper in skillet until just soft. Remove from heat and pour egg mixture over vegetables in skillet.
5. Place skillet in oven. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes until egg is solid in the middle.
6. Remove from oven and let cool.
7. Slice and enjoy!



Guacamole Chicken Lettuce Wraps

Got avocados and lettuce? Try this Mexican-inspired recipe for an appetizer rich in flavor and potassium.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
- 1 head lettuce, leaves separated
- 2 ripe avocados
- ½ cup diced tomato
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- 2 cups shredded chicken

Directions

After removing the skin and pit, mash the avocado until smooth. Pour in the lime juice, salt, cilantro and cumin, stirring well. Add the chopped tomato. Scoop a heaped tablespoon of the mixture onto each lettuce leaf. Top with shredded chicken.



Raspberry-Lemon Vegan Donuts

These delightful **Baked Fresh Raspberry Lemon Donuts** are sweetened with just ripe banana and Medjool dates, coconut whip on top. These amazing vegan donuts are baked and gluten free. Give them a whirl for a healthy happy morning!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup oat flour

- 2 tsp chia or flax seeds, ground
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice + pinch of zest
- Coconut Whip: 2-3 heaping Tbsp chilled (canned or boxed) coconut cream + 1-2 tsp coconut liquid
- 1 tsp virgin coconut oil, softened
- 1 ripe banana
- 1/2 cup non-dairy milk
- 2 Medjool dates, pitted
- 20-22 large raspberries, lightly crushed (organic)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees and grease your donuts (or muffin) pan.
2. Add all the dry ingredients to a large mixing bowl and toss.
3. Add all the wet ingredients to a blender and process until smooth. This will take 2-3 minutes from low to high to smooth out those dates.
4. Fold the wet into the dry and stir well.
5. Fold in the lightly mashed raspberries. Spoon the batter into the donut pan, filling it to the brim is fine!
6. Bake donuts at 400 degrees for ten minutes and then lower heat to 375 to bake for another 8-10 minutes or until the edges of the donuts lightly brown.
7. Cool for a few minutes before serving.
8. For the east coconut whip: Add 2-3 heaping tablespoons of chilled (firm) coconut cream to a small and tall-brimmed bowl. Add 1-2tsp of the wet coconut liquid (clear oily looking stuff). Beat with a beater for 1-2 minutes until fluffy. That's it! If you want a more sweet, light and "classic" coconut whip, follow this recipe.
9. Serve donuts with a dollop of coconut whip and a fresh raspberry on top.

Yield: 6 donuts

Prep Time: 10 mins.

Cook time: 18 mins.

Total time: 28 mins.

