



COMMUNITY HEALTH COALITION

Improving the Health of Durham
& NC Communities since 1989

Let's start discussing ways to turn our nurturing inward for much needed self-care. We have emerged from the pandemic with increased levels of anxiety, depression, and stress overall. The underlying social burdens caused by structural and individual racism can heighten stress for black and brown women even more. In turn, stress increases the incidence of chronic diseases including hypertension, diabetes, coronary artery disease, obesity, certain cancers, anxiety, and depression. Turning around these processes requires prioritizing health and self-care.

Self-Care Habits for the Best Medical Outcomes include:

- Healthy eating habits with whole grains, fruits, vegetables, fish, chicken and very little red meat or processed food
- Exercise (thirty minutes – 5 days/week)
- Limiting alcohol
- Positive social relationships (interactions with friends and family is important for preventing cognitive decline and decreasing stress)
- Programmed down time including mindfulness activities, such as meditation, yoga or centering prayer practices can improve anxiety. Yoga is now recommended for acute back pain and is important in preventing breast cancer recurrence for survivors.

*Celebrating,
Women's
Health
May 2023*





Deanna Branscom, MD

Celebrating, Women's Health

Old Habits are Hard to Break.

Self-care, however, requires us to change our routines—something that our brains are VERY resistant to do. How many times have we promised ourselves to walk with a friend, go to the gym, or spend time in silence before starting the day? Luckily, science can help us out with this problem too. Studies show that you are more likely to create a new habit if it is small (think “micro habit”) and linked to something already in your routine. For instance, if you want to improve your strength, do one push up before you put on your shoes and one when taking them off. You can slowly increase the number of push ups over time. Perhaps you will only listen to your favorite artist or podcast if you are at the gym, walking, dancing or running. Activities that you do for over 3 weeks are more likely to become a persistent habit so you may want to give yourself a special treat for making the 3 week mark such as dinner with a friend. Another stumbling block in creating healthy habits is finding the time. Again, make small time commitments and let them grow. Exchange childcare with a friend so that you can facilitate time to exercise for one another. Say no to activities that do not nurture you.

As a pediatrician and internist, I would be remiss if I didn't include routine medical care as self care including cancer screening with Pap smears, mammograms, colonoscopy or Cologuard, diabetes testing and blood pressure monitoring.

For more information please visit www.communityhealthcoalition.com

[Call us at \(919\) 470-8680](tel:9194708680) and/or email contact@communityhealthcoalition.com

Please Consider Giving

Community Health Coalition provides FREE health tips, blood pressure checks, glucose screenings, community health education workshops, and a library of brochures and pamphlets about chronic diseases.

You may give to Community Health Coalition, Inc. through SECC or PayPal.

If you are a state employee or retiree, choose (Code 3770) to send your SECC gift to us or click on [DONATE](#) to make an online donation. Thank You!