

# THE MATCH CONNECTION

## Mental Health Awareness Month

I'm claiming  
today  
to be a  
good day.

Mental Health Awareness Month, observed every May, serves as a vital reminder of the significance of prioritizing mental well-being. In a world where stressors seem ever-present and societal pressures can weigh heavily, this designated month provides a platform for education, advocacy, and destigmatization surrounding mental health issues. It's an opportunity for individuals, communities, and organizations to come together to raise awareness, promote understanding, and encourage action towards supporting mental wellness for all.

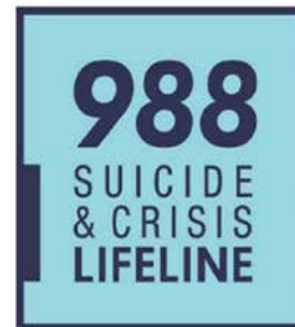
During Mental Health Awareness Month, it's essential to equip ourselves with tools and strategies to foster mental resilience and well-being. Here are a few tips to consider:

**Prioritize self-care:** Dedicate time each day for activities that nourish your mind, body, and soul. Whether it's practicing mindfulness, engaging in physical exercise, or indulging in creative pursuits, prioritize activities that bring you joy and relaxation.

**Connect with others:** Cultivate meaningful connections with friends, family, and supportive communities. Social support plays a crucial role in maintaining mental health, so don't hesitate to reach out and lean on others when needed.

**Practice mindfulness:** Incorporate mindfulness practices into your daily routine to stay grounded and present in the moment. Techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and progressive muscle relaxation can help reduce stress and promote emotional well-being.

**Set boundaries:** Establish healthy boundaries in your relationships and daily life. Learn to say no to obligations that drain your energy and prioritize activities that align with your values and goals.



**Seek professional support:** If you're struggling with persistent or severe mental health symptoms, don't hesitate to seek help from a qualified mental health professional. Therapy, counseling, and medication can be invaluable resources for managing mental health challenges.

By raising awareness, fostering open dialogue, and practicing self-care, we can all contribute to creating a culture that prioritizes mental health and supports those facing mental health challenges. Let's use Mental Health Awareness Month as an opportunity to advocate for positive change and promote mental well-being in our communities and beyond.



If you or someone you know  
needs support now,  
**CALL OR TEXT: 988**  
**CHAT: 988lifeline.org**

## Healthy Vision Month

### Check Out These Tips for Optimal Ocular (Eye) Health



**May is Healthy Vision Month**, and it's the perfect time for teens to start taking their eye health seriously. In today's screen-centric world, protecting your vision is essential for your overall well-being. Take small steps like reducing screen time, practicing good lighting habits, and scheduling regular eye check-ups. By making simple changes now, you'll set yourself up for a lifetime of clear sight and optimal eye health. Let's focus on keeping those eyes in top condition – start today for a brighter tomorrow!

- **Wear sunglasses, even on cloudy days-** Be sure that the glasses filter out 99-100% of UVA and UVB rays (this should be clearly labeled on the glasses)
- **Wear protective eyewear-** Whether you are playing sports, cutting grass, or working on a construction project, make sure your eyes are protected with the appropriate safety glasses or goggles.
- **Eat for eye health!** Include dark leafy greens like spinach and collards, as well as foods high in omega-3 fatty acids such as salmon into your diet to keep those eyes healthy!
- **Take a tech timeout-** When working on the computer, try using blue light filtering glasses. You should also take a break every 20 minutes and gaze at something at least 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds; this relaxes your eye muscles and helps prevent headaches.

Source: <https://www.nei.nih.gov/>

## USDA SNAP Ed Recipe

### Pasta Primavera

A flavorful spring recipe that you and your family will savor. Use your favorite spring vegetables from your garden or local farmers market: kohlrabi, sugar snap peas, carrots, and asparagus are all delicious options.

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup noodles, uncooked
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 cups mixed vegetables (chopped)
- 1 cup tomatoes (chopped)
- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 tablespoons Parmesan cheese



#### Directions

1. Cook noodles according to package directions.
2. While noodles are cooking, heat oil in a skillet.
3. Add vegetables and saute until tender; stir constantly.
4. Add tomato and saute 2 more minutes.
5. Toss vegetables with noodles and margarine.
6. Add seasonings; sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

## Featured MATCH Lesson: The Importance of Water



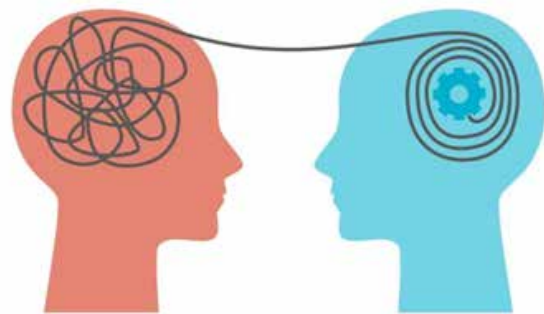
Your child will be receiving a variety of health and wellness-themed lessons as part of the MATCH program. “The Importance of Water” is an important lesson, often taught during the kickoff of MATCH. Water is one of the six essential nutrients. While your body does not get energy from water it is needed for most of your body functions. As the summer sun shines bright, it’s crucial to remember the importance of staying hydrated. With temperatures soaring, our bodies lose water rapidly through sweat, making hydration essential for maintaining overall health and well-being. Dehydration can lead to fatigue, dizziness, and even heat-related illnesses. Whether you’re enjoying outdoor adventures or simply soaking up the sun, make hydration your top priority. Keep a water bottle close at hand, sip frequently, and replenish electrolytes lost through perspiration with hydrating drinks, fruits, and vegetables. Stay cool, stay hydrated, and savor every moment of the sunny season ahead!

### Social and Emotional Wellness Spotlight:

## Empathy

As a teen, navigating the complexities of emotions can sometimes feel overwhelming, both for yourself and those around you. But showing empathy – understanding and sharing the feelings of others – can make a world of difference. Start by actively listening to friends, family, and even strangers without judgment. Put yourself in their shoes, imagining how they might be feeling. Offer a kind word, a supportive gesture, or simply a shoulder to lean on. Small acts of kindness can have a big impact. Remember, empathy isn’t about fixing

someone’s problems but showing that you care and are there for them. By practicing empathy, you’ll not only strengthen your relationships but also contribute to a more compassionate and understanding world.



## MATCH Reminders

- Post SEAT Survey
- Complete 2nd or 3rd PANT Survey
- Post Heights and Weights
- Log your physical activity in MyPA Log to earn Badges and participate in Challenges!

## “Summer Thrive: Move Your Body, Fuel Your Mind, Feel Alive!”

*Just because the school year is coming to an end doesn't mean it's time to turn off your brain and become a couch potato! Summer break is a great time to keep your mind and body engaged! Try some of these ideas to keep moving and grooving all summer long!*

1. Integrate structure into your day
2. During the summer, it is super easy to slip into a pattern of sleeping in and hanging out in your PJs all day! Try establishing a schedule to help you get up and get going each day! Going to bed and waking up around the same time each day can help. Activities such as day camps, swim lessons, or meeting up with friends are good ways to maintain routines!
3. Place Limits on screen time
4. Try limiting screen time (phone, computer, TV, other electronic devices) during school hours (even during the summer) to allow you to engage with others and fun summer activities!
5. Be prepared for the weather
6. The sizzling days of summer bring heat, humidity, and afternoon thunderstorms. Beat the heat by engaging in outdoor activities in the morning, before temps rise. Incorporate water into your outdoor games to help you cool down! Don't forget to use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 or higher! Plan ahead by packing a filled reusable water bottle and snacks to keep you hydrated and fueled! Tip: Freeze a water bottle overnight to help keep water cooler on a hot summer day!
7. Have a family sports night
8. Get the entire family involved in a friendly game of backyard volleyball or soccer! You can even make up games like relay races or slip-n-slide kickball. Invite other families and friends for some healthy competition and fun!
9. Try new recipes: <https://www.chopchopfamily.org/recipes/>
10. Summer brings warmer weather and fresh produce! So many fruits and veggies are in season and readily available, making it the perfect time to experiment with new recipes! Cooking with friends and family is a great way to build healthy relationships, make memories, establish healthy eating patterns, and have fun!



**MATCH History**



**MATCH** - *Motivating Adolescents with Technology to CHOOSE Health™* is a 7th-grade, school-based program developed by a North Carolina teacher using an interdisciplinary approach to empower students to make healthy choices through lessons in nutrition education and by increasing physical activity.

**MATCH** meets the educational objectives of teachers, producing health outcomes simultaneously. It is unique among school-based wellness programs because it: (1) is teacher-developed; (2) is embedded within national curriculum standards; and (3) uses interdisciplinary lessons to teach individual skill-building in health choices. **MATCH** uses relevant wellness examples to teach students how the health choices they make today will impact their future.

To implement **MATCH**, teachers are trained to deliver ready-to-use lessons. Most lessons are taught in the Healthful Living Curriculum (Health and P.E.). Lesson materials are made available via a secure website, and in a student-friendly workbook, provided to all students. By the end of the program, students increase aerobic fitness, decrease sugar-sweetened beverage and snack consumption, and improve weight status.

Although **MATCH** started in one middle school in Martin County, NC, the program is now in 69 schools across the state.

To learn more about the **MATCH** program, visit:  
[www.matchwellness.com](http://www.matchwellness.com)