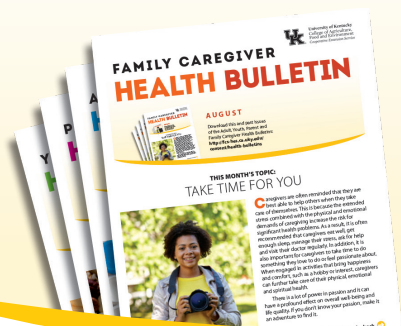




University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

FAMILY CAREGIVER HEALTH BULLETIN



FEBRUARY 2022

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

RESOLVE TO SELF-CARE AND SELF-PAMPER



Self-care includes keeping your physical, mental, and spiritual self healthy. According to Dr. Mathew Glowiak from the University of Southern New Hampshire, self-care can “clinically reduce and even eliminate anxiety and depression, reduce stress, improve concentration, minimize frustration and anger, increase happiness, and improve energy.” Glowiak also emphasizes that physically, proper self-care reduces cardiovascular disease, stroke, and cancer; and spiritually, it can help people discover purpose or meaning in life.

While many know to make self-care a priority, it is often pushed aside when faced with life’s challenges such as COVID-19, busy schedules (jobs, school, caregiving), poor health, financial crisis, various losses, etc.

Ignoring self-care can lead to distress. According to the CDC, common signs of distress include “feeling fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration; changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels; difficulty concentrating and making decisions; difficulty sleeping

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

When you take time to spend time on yourself, you ultimately benefit everyone around you.

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or nightmares; physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes; worsening of chronic health problems; and increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.” Burnout can also lead to depression, anxiety, resentment, and many other negative consequences (Glowiak, 2020). If such negative experiences, behaviors, and feelings persist and/or prevent your ability to carry out daily responsibilities, it is important that you call a health-care provider and seek professional services (CDC).

Many self-care plans focus on various domains of wellness that strengthen, develop, and nourish who we are at our core so that we do not fall prey to distress and burnout. For example, Glowiak highlights the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) eight dimensions of wellness that make us whole: (1) emotional; (2) environmental; (3) financial; (4) intellectual; (5) occupational; (6) physical; (7) social; and (8) spiritual. When we keep these dimensions in balance, we reach higher levels of wellness for the long-term.

Drs. Bernecker and Becker have found that the practice of self-care and self-pampering can complement each other. While self-care focuses on prevention and health maintenance over time; self-pampering is something we engage in for temporary pleasure. In terms of a car, the engine can represent self-care — it may not be visible, but the car will not run smoothly without keeping it in good shape. The exterior of the car represents pampering — washing and polishing it makes it shiny, at least temporarily (Howard, 2020).

When used in moderation, pampering yourself in healthy ways can be a form of self-care that we should not feel guilty about. According to some researchers, taking a timeout to enjoy a simple pleasure leads to a higher sense of well-being (Bernecker and Becker, 2020). This is because temporary pleasures, even when unassociated with long-term/ongoing self-care goals, can make you feel great and provide a recharge.

Self-care, including self-pampering, can provide the necessary reset that allows you to get back to a healthy point where you can maximize

daily productivity and your part in relationships. When you take time to spend time on yourself, you ultimately benefit everyone around you.

Self-pampering activities might include:

- Soak in a hot bath
- Sleep in or take a nap
- Go to a spa or create a spa day at home (dim the lights, play relaxing music, give yourself a foot massage)
- Unplug from technology
- Watch a movie in your pajamas
- Eat ice cream out of the container
- Buy something for yourself
- Explore your surroundings: take walks and tours within your own city and surrounding communities
- Play music
- Connect with nature: walk, pick fresh flowers, feel the wind, smell the smells
- Meditate
- Order a sweet treat and don’t feel guilty about it
- Take an afternoon off and do nothing
- Sign up for a class you always wanted to take
- Look in the mirror and compliment yourself
- Buy new sheets for your bed
- Declutter a closet

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**FAMILY CAREGIVER
HEALTH BULLETIN**

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