Love is an important factor for our emotional well-being. While some can fill that need through friends, pets, community or other outlets, many of us look to intimate relationships for love. Below are some scenarios you might relate to—looking for new love, adding spark to a long-term relationship or mending a family bond. Each is followed by advice from PacMed Behavioral Medicine specialist Rebecca Wolff, LMHC.

Keep in mind, relationships are complex, and there is no one-size-fits-all advice for everyone. We encourage seeking additional support if needed.

Keep the fire burning
Tia and David have been married for 15 years. They have a healthy marriage, except their whirlwind romance early on has cooled significantly in recent years. Privately they wonder, “Will we ever have passion again?”

“With any relationship, the amount of time you devote to it is what you’re going to get out of it. Find ways to show love for your partner in the way they’re going to get out of it. Find yourself in a situation where your senses are awakened, and you’ll be more receptive to meeting someone along the path.”

Repair a scorched relationship
Anthony had a close relationship with his daughter until the divorce. Despite shared custody, he felt his daughter favored his ex-wife. Then, a series of minor disagreements with his daughter led to her cutting off contact with him. Now it’s been a few years since they spoke.

“Repariring a family relationship is a big challenge. In the situations, each party genuinely feels hurt. As the adult, you need to be willing to hear a tough conversation and let your guard down to really focus on what the other person is saying. It requires self-reflection. Ask yourself honestly, ‘What have I contributed to this situation?’”

“Whether the breakdown is with a child, a parent or a sibling, it’s important to accept each other for who you are. Not for who you always hoped they would be, but for who they actually are. This goes for yourself as well. Learn to begin from a place of self-compassion, to allow yourself to fail and try again. When you realize your relationship is not what you want it to be, it’s easier to extend kindness and grace to those you care about the most.”

WE RECOMMEND

• Authors John and Julie Gottman: 10 Games to Transform Your Manager – Eight Dates
• Airplane mode for your phone during dinner or date night
• Meetup groups: www.meetup.com
• Individual/couples/family counseling

PACMED DONATES SPECIALTY CARE TO OUR NEIGHBORS
While programs exist that help cover basic health needs, specialty care for more serious issues can be hard to access for people at financial risk. Project Access Northwest aims to close that gap. PacMed is proud to be a long-time partner of Project Access Northwest. It’s one of many ways we support our community. People who use Project Access Northwest are often uninsured. It coordinates specialty care and provides other programs for people on the brink. Last year, PacMed physicians provided over 10% of all donated specialty care sought through Project Access Northwest.

We honor the people struggling to make ends meet and are grateful for our partners at Project Access Northwest and many other local nonprofits and programs. Together, we can help our neighbors find and maintain stability in these changing times. To seek assistance or learn more, visit www.projectaccesswr.org

Submit your own story at www.PacMed.org/MentalHealth

Need to pay your bill or request an appointment? You can access PacMed 24/7 at www.PacMed.org or the MyChart app.
Reshape your habits for better health

How we choose to eat, drink and unwind plays a major role in our health over time. Entering the new year, we asked several PacMed providers to offer insight into what’s trending—and what should be.

GET MOVING

“An hour of activity outside of work per day complements the other factors of good health: diet, sleep and stress management. It doesn’t need to be strenuous—walking is an excellent option. Find an activity buddy. Studies show even an online accountability partner helps the behavior stick.”

—Charles Falzon, MD, MBA, Family Medicine doctor at Northgate

TRY “DRY JANUARY”

“Many people start the new year by abstaining from alcohol for a month. Why is this a good thing? People can develop a tolerance with regular drinking. Taking a break helps destress and gives your liver a chance to repair itself.”

—Dimple Sahay, MD, Family Medicine doctor at Renton

WHOLE30: TRY IT (NOT A DIET)

“If you decide to get on the Whole30 bandwagon, remember it’s a 30-day elimination diet to assess your long-term strategy for health or losing weight. There may be success stories, but there’s no scientific evidence backing Whole30 yet. Even if you find some foods to eliminate, you’ll need to follow a proven healthy eating plan—like the Mediterranean diet—for lasting health.”

—Christy Goff, MS, RDN, CD, and Christine Strizpoto, RDN, CDE—dietitians serving PacMed clinics, plus local employers through the Living Well Alliance

• Cook for yourself: www.PacMed.org/Recipes
• Sign up for home veggie delivery: www.imperfectfoods.com

WE RECOMMEND

IS VAPING A HEALTHY OPTION?

“Although e-cigarettes are relatively new, there are a number of case reports connecting vaping to lung diseases like ‘popcorn lung’—named for workers in the popcorn-making industry exposed to the compounds used to color and flavor the popcorn. The solutions that go into vaping solutions are fairly unregulated, and inhaling any extraneous chemicals is fraught with health dangers.”

—Hina Sani, MD, Pulmonologist at Beacon Hill, First Hill and Renton

CANNED OR FROZEN?

If you don’t buy fresh produce, pay attention to labels. Canned fruits and vegetables often have added sugar or salt, while frozen don’t and are easy to heat with a microwave or stovetop.

Reseat your social life

Being social—whether in person or online—is good for your health! Harvard Psychology Today and others say being social helps us live longer, boost our immune system and reduce risks of dementia, depression and even cancer.

Whether you prefer large groups of new people or small gatherings with trusted friends, extraverts and introverts alike can find ways to overcome isolation this season and socialize for good health.

Phone date

Schedule time to connect from the comfort of your favorite couch or chair.

Host someone

Invite a friend for a dinner or walking date. Have a friend or family member over for coffee or tea.

Babysit or help with homework

Short bursts with grandchildren, nieces or nephews are sometimes better than a full day. They help avoid the stress and spending of grand gestures.

Get a pet

Furry or feathered friends can provide sweet companionship and health benefits as well.

Create something to talk about

Visit a museum, show or game with a friend and chat about what you saw. Or join a book group you find through the library, internet or word of mouth.

PACMED LISTENERS! Something you love? Something we can do better? We’d like to hear about it. Contact us at StayHealthy@pacmed.org

Be a quitter

“Smokers who are ready to quit can be helped by individual or group therapy, as well as websites or phone apps. Smoking is tied to cardiovascular and coronary diseases, lung diseases such as asthma and COPD, bronchiectasis and lung cancer.”

—Lu Gao, MD, PhD, Internal Medicine doctor at Renton

WE RECOMMEND

Stop smoking: www.smokefree.gov www.cancer.org

Fun-focused, low-key sports: www.underdogseattle.com

Public library book groups and author talks

Video chat with FaceTime, Skype, WeChat, Viber

Making new connections: www.bumble.com

Intimate gigs in small venues: www.sofarounds.com

Google “volunteering” + your hometown

Throw a party

It’s a great excuse to clean up your place. Plus you can ask other people to bring the food.

Pop up (at an event)

Subscribe for alerts to surprise music or comedy events around town.

“Show” up

Use the app Bandsintown to link your music preferences to local shows by your favorite artists—and see which friends are going, too.

Healthy Today is brought to you by Pacific Medical Centers, Northgate, Park and First Hill—Charles Falzon, MD, MBA, Family Medicine doctor at Northgate

Contact us at StayHealthy@pacmed.org

WE RECOMMEND

Try a class or find a group on meetup.com to develop writing, music, woodworking or any other talent you’ve always meant to explore.

Volunteer

Many causes need help. Call to offer your skills, or start with an organization experienced with volunteers like Habitat for Humanity.

Sweat together

Join a local club or league for soccer, softball, rowing, bowling or another sport you enjoy or want to learn. Or invite a friend to jog, walk, swim or work out with you.

Slack together

For a laid-back group experience, check out Underdog Sports Games for boocce ball, cornhole, kickball, dodgeball and more.

Be board

Organize a game or card night, or visit one at a local game shop.

Reset your social life

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Use the app Bandsintown to link your music preferences to local shows by your favorite artists—and see which friends are going, too.
Reconnect and help depression with One More Question

If you’ve ever been depressed, you know how easy it can be to hide it. People struggling with mental health can walk through the world with a smile and a “Fine,” hiding a sometimes-serious need for help.

PacMed created the #OneMoreQuestion campaign in 2019 after one of our primary care providers followed her intuition and gave a teenage patient a depression screening at the end of the family’s doctor visit. When asked, the young man revealed he had planned to end his life that night. Because of one more question, we were able to connect the teen and family to resources and support.

The example of this doctor is something we can all emulate in our daily lives— to be more present when checking in with friends, acquaintances or even strangers.

We all “need to be seen and heard in our humanity,” said Dr. Lisa Ivanjark, PacMed co-chief of primary care, in an interview last year with Seattleite. “We may not have all of the answers or be able to solve someone else’s problems, but we can listen. This simple act can drastically change someone’s outcome or perspective during a hard time in their life.”

Mental health issues will affect one in five Americans during their lifetimes. Chances are someone you know is affected right now. Not sure what to ask? Here are some ideas:

- I really want to know: how are you feeling today?
- You don’t seem like yourself. Is there something on your mind?
- Are you feeling down? Would you like to talk?
- You’re not eating as much as usual. Is there something going on?
- You seem_menu has changed. Is everything all right?

For a quick sauce over brown rice and vegetables, mix ¼ cup natural peanut butter; 1 tablespoon each of low-sodium soy sauce, Sriracha and hoisin sauce; 2 tablespoons lime juice; 1 teaspoon sesame oil and ¼ cup hot water. Also try as a marinade or sandwich spread.

PacMed and US Family Health Plan created the #OneMoreQuestion campaign with Dr. Ivanjark as a way to talk about mental health and ask one more question. When things get busy this year, remember to slow down and find an opportunity to ask one more question.

You never know how healing that simple act might be.

WE RECOMMEND

- www.PacMed.org/Depression
- www.PacMed.org/Recipes
- www.PacMed.org/What-We-Do
- Find a Farmers Market www.wafarmersmarkets.org
- For a full list and description of our medical services and specialties, visit www.PacMed.org/What-We-Do

PACMED COMMUNITY CALENDAR

JANUARY

- 1 Special Olympics Alpine Regionals, Snoqualmie Pass
- 6 NRA Flower & Garden Fest Begins
- School’s Out! Midwinter Break
- School’s Out! Spring Break
- 10 U-Pick Berry Season
- 13 Special Olympics Alpine Regionals, Snoqualme Pass
- 20 Ladies Spring Wine Tasting, Renton
- 26 NW Women’s Show, Tacoma, with PacMed
- 26 NW Flower & Garden Fest Begins
- 30 PacMed and US Family Health Plan Family Health Day
- 31 Puppet Sound Girls on the Run 5K/10K, Renton
- 13-17 School’s Out! for Midwinter Break

FEBRUARY

- 1 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 8 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 14 2nd Annual Washington State Fairgrounds Music Festival, Puyallup
- 17 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 20 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 24 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington

MARCH

- 1 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 2 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 7 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 14 Kirkland Shamrock Run, with PacMed
- 27 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 14 Rise Up Hamilton Tribute Band, Bothell
- 11 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 14 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 21 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 14 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 28 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington

APRIL

- 1 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 1 Skagit Valley Tulip Festival
- 20 Earth Day and Free Entry Day at State Parks
- 27 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 27 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 13 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 23 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 25 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 29 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington

MAY

- 1 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 6 ADA Tour de Cure, Woodinville
- 7-8 Pacific Rim Food and Wine Festival, Renton
- 8-9 Pacific Rim Food and Wine Festival, Renton
- 15 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 15-17 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 22-23 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 27 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 27-28 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington

JUNE

- 1 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 1 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 3 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 8 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 8 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 15 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 15 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 15 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 22 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 22 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 29 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington

FIND SWIM LESSONS, RE-FIT BIKE HELMETS

APRIL

- 1 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 2 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 3 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 4 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 5 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 10 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 11 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 12 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 17 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 18 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 19 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 24 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 25 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 30 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington

MAY

- 1 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 2 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 3 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 4 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 5 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 6 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 7 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 8 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 9 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 10 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 11 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington

JUNE

- 1 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 2 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 3 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 4 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 5 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 6 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 7 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 8 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 9 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 10 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 11 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington

PACMED COMMUNITY CALENDAR

JANUARY

- 13 Line dancing class, Mondays, Little Red Hen, Seattle
- 18 Burrata Cheesemaking Class, River Valley Cheesie, Renton
- 18-19 Leavenworth Ice Festival
- 23-26 Tacoma Home & Garden Show
- 25 Lunar New Year, Seattle ID

FIND A FARMERS MARKET www.wafarmersmarkets.org

APRIL

- 1 2022 Special Olympics, Lake Washington
- 20 Earth Day and Free Entry Day at State Parks
- 20 School’s Out! Spring Break

MAY

- 20 School’s Out! Spring Break

JUNE

- 20 School’s Out! Spring Break

WE RECOMMEND

- www.PacMed.org/Depression
- www.PacMed.org/Recipes
- www.PacMed.org/What-We-Do
- Find a Farmers Market www.wafarmersmarkets.org
- For a full list and description of our medical services and specialties, visit www.PacMed.org/What-We-Do
Get the most from your doctor visits

Did you know doctors can have up to 2,000 patients under their care? That’s a lot to keep track of for any human being. Rather than assuming your doctor will think of everything, it pays to drive your own care. Successful patients work with their doctors as partners in their health care.

We’ve seen successful patients do some creative things to take ownership of their care. See if any of these can improve your trips to the doctor.

**Prepare**

Keep track of symptoms or questions you have. Note the date, time and situation where symptoms show up. Take pictures if needed, and note temperatures or pain levels.

Use a notepad or an app like Evernote to record everything, including your medications. If something seems urgent, use this information when calling your clinic or nurse helpline to see if you should make an appointment, go to an urgent care clinic or visit the emergency room.

**Prioritize**

As you prepare to see the doctor, organize your most important questions at the top of your list. Tell your scheduler or care team what you want to discuss. This will help them schedule the right type of appointment so you have enough time.

**Print**

Bring two typed copies of your questions to your appointment. Give the first to your MA or nurse when they show you to the exam room. Ask them to give it to the doctor, to help them get oriented before coming in to see you. The other copy is for you to consult during your appointment. Go down the list, making sure to cover all your items. Take notes too, since it’s hard to remember everything. You can invite a friend or family member along to help if needed.

**Persist**

After your visit, you may have specialist visits, tests or follow-ups to schedule. Make these before you leave the clinic, while it’s fresh in your mind.

Ask how long test results will take and set a reminder to check MyChart. Message your doctor if you need help understanding results when they come in and to find out follow-up steps to take. Navigating the medical system can be complicated. Taking ownership of your doctor visits is one thing you can do to have a better experience—and better health outcomes.

Let us know if these tips helped you at StayHealthy@pacmed.org.

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**AS WE ENTER 2020, let’s go beyond “resolutions” and reset our lives in new directions—for our physical, emotional and social health.**

**QUICHE, CAPISCE?**

Leftovers not enough for a meal? Mexican, Mediterranean—almost any cuisine works. Mix with 4–5 beaten eggs and a splash of regular or coconut milk for an impressive reboot. Bake in a store-bought pie crust at 375° F for 35 minutes, or until a fork comes out clean.

**DRY JANUARY?**

Try a refreshing Kombucha Mocktail Recipe inside.

**NOT SURE WHAT TO COOK TONIGHT?**

Let our own Christy Goff walk you through meal ideas in our new cooking videos at www.PacMed.org/Recipes

**EXPANDED SERVICES AT PACMED**

- Schedule your next primary care visit online! For both new and current patients: www.Pacmed.org/schedule
- Our two new gastroenterologists can see you at PacMed Canyon Park, Northgate, First Hill or Renton.
- Our Behavioral Medicine team has grown! Ask your PacMed Primary Care doctor for a referral to one of our 20+ mental health professionals.

**PLANNING AN ADVENTURE FOR SPRING BREAK OR SUMMER?**

Avoid health risks abroad by seeing a PacMed Travel Clinic—Beacon Hill, 206.621.4504; Renton, 425.227.3132; or Canyon Park, 425.412.7200.