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including repeated unsolicited phone calls, sending unwanted letters or items, and following victims to their workplaces or homes. Cyberstalking, another threatening behavior, encompasses unwarranted emails, instant and direct messaging, or engaging with social media posts. The fear, stress, and anxiety endured by victims can be debilitating.

The consequences of stalking extend beyond immediate emotional distress. The persistent fear for one's safety and the loss of a sense of security can lead to long-lasting psychological effects. Victims may grapple with anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), with the trauma permeating various aspects of their lives.

National Stalking Awareness Month is a crucial annual call to action, urging individuals, communities, and policymakers to recognize the gravity of stalking and take effective steps to prevent and respond to it. Awareness stands as the first line of defense against this crime. By understanding the red flags and patterns associated with stalking, individuals are empowered to identify and report potential instances, fostering a safer environment for everyone.

NEED HELP? KNOW SOMEONE WHO DOES?

Contact your [local service provider](#) or a national hotline:

- Victim Connect: **1.855.484.2846**
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: **1.800.799.7233** or TTY **1.800.787.3224**
- National Sexual Assault Hotline: **1.800.656.4673**

Additional resources for victims of stalking are available at the [Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center](#).



NATIONAL STALKING AWARENESS MONTH

AN ANNUAL CALL TO ACTION

January 2024 marks the twentieth annual National Stalking Awareness Month (NSAM), serving as an annual call to action to address the serious crime of stalking. Stalking, as defined by the [Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center \(SPARC\)](#), is a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person, causing a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others or experience substantial emotional distress. While individual acts may seem harmless or noncriminal on their own, when viewed in the context of a stalking situation, they could constitute criminal acts. Shockingly, stalking impacts [1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men](#) in the United States. Stalking often occurs in many different forms,



ADDRESSING MATERNAL HEALTH

CHALLENGES, DISPARITIES, AND SUPPORT

Maternal Health Awareness Day, observed on January 23 by the [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists \(ACOG\)](#), stands as a crucial initiative shedding light on the pressing maternal mortality crisis in the United States. This day serves as an opportunity to educate the public about the urgency of the issue and strategies to enhance maternal health outcomes. However, recent data from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) reveals a troubling trend of rising maternal mortality in the United States.

According to the CDC report, maternal deaths have been on the rise, with 1,205 U.S. women succumbing to maternal causes in 2021, a notable increase from 861 in 2020 and 754 in 2019. The growing number of maternal deaths is a cause for concern and necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to this alarming trend.

Several factors contribute to the heightened risk of pregnancy complications leading to maternal death. These include women getting pregnant at older ages, disparities in healthcare access, and a rise in chronic health conditions. Despite these challenges, data from state committees dedicated to reviewing maternal deaths indicates that about [84% of pregnancy-related deaths are thought to be preventable](#).

Compounding the issue, the accessibility of maternal care in the U.S. is dwindling, particularly affecting Ohio, as highlighted by a report from the [March of Dimes](#). The report reveals that nearly 7 million women face areas of no to low access, with over 97,000 women in Ohio impacted by overall reductions in access to care. Importantly, within the affected population, Black women are disproportionately at a higher risk

of maternal mortality. Black women are more than [three times more likely](#) to die of pregnancy-related complications than white women, and the Black infant mortality rate is more than twice that of white infants.

Recognizing the importance of addressing disparities in maternal care, healthcare providers are increasingly acknowledging the significance of care matching. This involves pairing patients with doctors who share or implicitly understand their unique lived experiences, whether through race, ethnicity, or sexual identity. Studies show that when patients see providers who understand and empathize with them, they are more likely to spend more time with their providers and actively participate in shared decision-making. This approach has been associated with reduced bias and improved health outcomes.

In the realm of maternal health, research emphasizes the pivotal role of birth workers, such as doulas, in reducing the rate of cesarean surgeries, particularly among Black women who experience [higher rates](#) than other groups. A doula, a trained professional providing emotional and physical support during childbirth and the postpartum period, plays a crucial role in helping pregnant individuals navigate the healthcare system, make informed decisions about their care, and understand their options throughout pregnancy.

Doulas, as advocates for pregnant individuals, ensure they can ask questions, voice concerns, and be actively heard, addressing the common experience of Black pregnant individuals having their concerns dismissed or ignored by healthcare professionals. To support this initiative, medical plan members currently have access to virtual doulas through Maven at no cost, and beginning March 1, 2024, members can receive up to \$3,000 in reimbursement for in-person doula expenses through United Healthcare.

As Maternal Health Awareness Day nears, empower yourself with Maven's session on [February 27th at 12PM](#). Learn self-advocacy for crucial moments in fertility, pregnancy, postpartum, parenting, and menopause. Gain valuable insights to navigate your reproductive health effectively.

3 Steps to a New Year's Reset:

A healthy eating pattern includes feast days and favorite treats as much as fresh produce and whole grains, but getting back to your typical balanced eating routine can be a challenge after the holidays. Learn more from the [American Heart Association here](#).

- 1. Clean out the fridge:** We often accumulate sweets, leftovers, and an assortment of snacks over the holidays. Cleaning out what you don't need leaves room to add in those staple foods that fuel your body well like produce, lean proteins and whole grains.
- 2. Reclaim your eating routine:** Start the day with a good source of protein and carbs like a yogurt parfait or oatmeal with nuts and berries, followed by a lunch and dinner to [curb those cravings](#) and keep you energized throughout the day.
- 3. Avoid the New Year Cleanses:** Cleanses may help you feel successful temporarily, but [they may slow your metabolism](#) and lead to weight regain once finished. Rather, focus on including nutritious foods into your current diet.

Meet Your Dietitian

"Hi! I'm Maddie and I have a passion for sustainable nutrition that tastes just as good as it makes you feel!"

As your ThriveOn wellness consultant, you'll also see me throughout the year running healthy lifestyle programs, on-demand workshops, and more! I look forward to meeting you all soon!"

January Recipe

[Crock Pot Chicken Pot Pie Soup](#)



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Schedule a nutrition counseling session with Maddie by visiting [this link](#).