

Mission In Motion

Health & Wellness Monthly Newsletter
December 2012—Stress Management



this issue

What is Stress? P.1

Tips for Stress Management P.1

Are You Feeling Holiday Blues P.2

Be Safe this Holiday Season P.2

Eat, Drink and Be Wary P.3

Outpouring of Support P.3

Cartoon Corner P.4

Up Coming Events P.4

Healthy Recipe P.4

Word Scramble P.4

What is Stress?

The body's response to a threat or demand arising from a new or changing situation is called stress. The emotional and physical experiences of stress can be caused by a complex and tense situation. Under stress, the body makes rapid psychological changes, called adaptive responses, to deal with threatening situations. In the first stage of stress, "alarm", the body mobilizes its "fight" or "flight" defenses, either to resist the stress causing factor or adapt to it. In this stage, the pituitary-adrenocortical system pours hormones into the bloodstream. The pulse quickens, the lungs take in more oxygen to fuel the muscles, blood sugar increases to supply added energy, digestion slows, and perspiration increases.

In simplest terms, stress is the opposite of relaxation. Both positive and negative aspects of life can be equally stressful. Stress comes from the external forces in our lives that push our buttons and provide extreme emotions. Although we commonly think of stress coming from the frustrations and low points in life, high points and achievements are stressful as well.

Side Effects of Stress: It's important to understand how stress can impact your day-to-day life as well as your long-term health. Here are some areas that chronic health may affect your physical and mental health:

- ⇒ Brain, Heart, Lungs, Stomach, Skin, Hair and Muscles
- ⇒ Emotions and Immune System
- ⇒ Teeth and Gums

Source: Mayo Clinic

Tips for Stress Management in the Workplace

Laughter & Fun Time—Having laughter & a fun time is probably the best way to reduce stress in the office.

Keep Your Body Moving—If you are working for a substantial amount of time sitting in the same place for hours, it is certain that you are going to experience physical stress. The answer to this problem is to keep your body moving. Stretch your arms and body at regular intervals.

Healthy Food & Lifestyles—It is not necessary that for stress relief in the office, you have to consider doing things only in the office. Your personal lifestyle also has a very significant impact on how stressed out you can be at work.

Time Management - Stress is mostly caused due to pending work. Therefore, for reducing the pending work, you need to manage time in a proper manner. Sort out all your daily office work according to the priority, & allot a particular time for each one.

Are you Feeling the **Holiday Blues?**

The holiday season is upon us! Its time to start planning holiday parties, attending family gatherings, enjoying sweet treats, and shopping for that perfect gift. Although the holidays are supposed to be a time full of joy and cheer, for many people, the season isn't so bright. The mountain of holiday tasks can seem overwhelming and stressful. A time for family and togetherness can be a time of loneliness and pain for those individuals who are away from family and friends for the holidays or who are coping with or grieving for the loss of a loved one. Anxiety about the future, reflection on past failures, and worry from too many commitments and stretched finances also tend to resurface during the holiday season.

This stress and anxiety can lead to the onset of the "Holiday Blues," a condition characterized by feelings of depression and frustration. If you're feeling the Holiday Blues, your Employee Assistance Program can offer guidance on how to cope with stress and depression so that you can truly celebrate the warmth of the season.

Tips to Avoiding the Holiday Blues

- * Have realistic expectations for the holiday season and for yourself. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do.
- * Pace yourself. Make a list and prioritize the important activities. Give yourself permission not to attend every party, celebration, or family gathering.
- * Let others share the responsibility of holiday tasks. Remember to take a few minutes for peace and quiet, just for yourself.
- * Find some free holiday activities, such as looking at holiday decorations, going window shopping without buying, or attending free holiday celebrations.

Source: Deer Oaks EAP Services



HOLIDAY BLUES



Be Safe this Holiday Season

Take a cab and send the bill to Deer Oaks, EAP.

The holidays are the perfect time to gather to gather with friends and family to celebrate the joy of the season and ring in the New Year. Deer Oaks, your EAP, encourages you to be safe this holiday season and choose a designated driver. If you find yourself in need of a ride, call a cab and send the bill to Deer Oaks for reimbursement (excludes tip). This service is available once per year per participant and covers cab fares within the metropolitan city limits.

Simply fax or email your paid receipt to:

Fax: 210-616-9887
Email: eap@deeroaks.com

Questions? Call Deer Oaks at (866) EAP-2400.





Eat, drink—and be wary

The holidays are here and that means parties, family celebrations and get-togethers with friends. Often, the festivities include drinking alcohol. While drinking in moderation is okay, it's in your best health interest not to become too "merry."

Moderate drinking is defined by the federal government's *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* as up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men. Drinking patterns are just as important as the amount. One to two drinks per day doesn't mean you can drink a "week's worth" of alcohol over a period of a few hours or a few days. The following counts as a drink:

- ⇒ 12 fluid ounces of regular beer
- ⇒ Five fluid ounces of wine
- ⇒ One and one-half fluid ounces of 80 proof distilled spirits

Celebrate better health by tapping all the wellness resources from the Personal Health Manager available to you through Blue Access for Members at www.bcbstx.com.

Source: American Dietetic Association

Outpouring of Support

There is somewhere to turn for help with a drinking problem. Have you or someone you know ever felt you should cut down on your drinking? If so, it's possibly a sign of a drinking problem. Alcohol abuse can lead to brain damage, heart failure, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure and stroke, and can contribute to impotence.

If you think you have a drinking problem or know someone else who does, you can get help from the following resources:

- ◇ Al-anon / Alateen
- ◇ Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
- ◇ National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACOA)
- ◇ National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NACADI)

If alcohol is a problem, see a doctor or other health care provider right away. And find additional support from *Ask A Life Coach*, a feature of the Personal Health Manager available from Blue Access for Members.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.





Stress FUNdamentals



BlueCross BlueShield of Texas
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Blue Cross Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company, an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

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December Health & Wellness Seminar:

Topic: Stress Management

Date: December 13, 2012

Time: 2:30—3:30 pm

Speaker : To be announced

Location: City Hall—Council Chambers

Chocolate Pudding Pies

Dietitian's Tip:

These quick-and-easy chocolate pudding pies make great desserts or snacks. Instead of using sprinkles for garnish, you can top the pies with diced fresh fruit, such as strawberries or raspberries.

Ingredients (serves 6):

- ⇒ 1 package (3 ounces) instant chocolate pudding
- ⇒ 2 cups fat-free milk
- ⇒ 6 graham cracker crusts, individual sizes
- ⇒ 6 tablespoons whipped topping
- ⇒ Sprinkles, for garnish

Directions:

In a medium-sized bowl, add the pudding and milk. Whisk until evenly mixed. Cover and refrigerate until the pudding thickens, about 5 minutes.

Spoon 1/3 cup prepared pudding into each graham cracker crust. Top each with 1 tablespoon whipped topping and garnish with sprinkles. Serve immediately.

Mayo Clinic

Cartoon Corner



Health & Wellness Seminars

January 2013—Physical Fitness

February 2013—Healthy Heart /
High Blood Pressure

(Topics subject to change)

*If you have a subject or topic that you would like more information on, feel free to make your request at 956-580-8630.

Wellness Scramble

Unscramble the letters of these words. Look for the answer next month.

ressts essl hist olihayd
eaosnn

November's scramble:
control blood sugar

Mission In Motion

Our mission is to promote health awareness and
to encourage healthy lifestyles.

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