



# Employee Enhancement Newsletter

*Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program*

October 2016

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## Gather and Share Your Family Health History

If you are concerned about a disease running in your family, collect your family health history and talk to your doctor at your next visit. A doctor can evaluate all of the factors, including family health history, that may affect your risk of diseases and can recommend ways to reduce that risk.

### **Knowing your family health history can benefit you at any age.**

Holidays and other special occasions offer opportunities for your family to share a meal—and your family health history. You and your family members share genes, and you may also have similar behaviors, cultures, and environments, each of which may affect your risk of developing health problems. Family health history takes all of these factors into account. Everyone in your family can benefit from knowing your family's health history and sharing this information with his or her doctor:

**Before and during pregnancy**—If you are a woman with a family health history of a birth defect or genetic disorder, like sickle cell disease, you might have a higher risk of having a baby with this condition. Knowing your risk is important so that you can find and address potential health problems early. There may also be steps you can take to reduce your risk, such as taking folic acid to help prevent spina bifida. Remember to collect family health history from the baby's father, too.

**Children**—Many genetic disorders are first detected in childhood, and knowing about a history of a genetic condition in your family can help your child's doctor find and treat the condition early.

**Young adults**—A family health history of chronic diseases like diabetes or heart disease can mean that you should start screening tests earlier. For example, if you have a family health history of early onset heart disease, it is recommended that you start cholesterol screening at age 20.

**Adults**—Family health history can help your doctor decide what screening tests and other interventions you need and when. For example, if you have a grandmother, aunt, mother, or sister who had breast cancer before age 50, you may want to talk to your doctor about whether cancer genetic counseling might be right for you.

**Older adults**—If you are one of the older members of your family, you may know more about diseases and health conditions in your family, especially in relatives who are no longer living. Be sure to share this information with your younger relatives so that you may all benefit from knowing this family health history information.

No matter what their ages are, everyone in your family can benefit from a healthy lifestyle, such as eating healthily, being physically active, and not smoking.

## *Online Seminar Reminder*

### *Better Health through Screening*

#### **When:**

Available on-demand  
starting October 18, 2016

#### **Where:**

[www.deeroakseap.com](http://www.deeroakseap.com)





## Gather and Share Your Family Health History continued...



Are you ready to collect your family health history but don't know where to start? Here's how!

### How to Collect Your Family Health History

The surgeon general's My Family Health Portrait is a free Web-based tool that can help you and your family collect and organize family health history information: <http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory/>. My Family Health Portrait allows you to share this information easily with your doctor:

- **The first step is to talk to your family.** Write down the names of blood relatives you need to include in your history. The most important relatives to include in your family health history are your parents, brothers and sisters, and children. Next, you may want to talk to grandparents, uncles and aunts, nieces and nephews, and half-brothers and half-sisters.
- **Ask questions.** To find out about your risk for chronic diseases, ask your relatives about which of these diseases they have had and when they were diagnosed. Questions can include the following:
  - Do you have any chronic diseases, such as heart disease or diabetes, or health conditions such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol?
  - Have you had any other serious diseases, such as cancer or stroke?
  - How old were you when each of these diseases was diagnosed?
  - What is our family's ancestry – what country did we come from?
  - For relatives who have died, be sure to ask about cause and age of death.
- **Record the information.** Write this information down, and be sure to update it from time to time. To organize the information in your family health history you could use a free Web-based tool such as My Family Health Portrait (above).
- **Share family health history information with your doctor and other family members.** Your family health history can give you an idea of your risk for chronic diseases like cancer, heart disease, and diabetes, but it is not the only factor to consider. If you are concerned about diseases that are common in your family, talk to your doctor at your next visit. A doctor can evaluate all of the factors, including family health history, that may affect your risk of some diseases, and can recommend ways to reduce that risk.

My Family Health Portrait lets you know your risk (increased or not increased) for diabetes and colon cancer based on your family health history and other risk factors. Even if you have a high-risk family health history of diabetes, colon cancer, or another condition, that does not mean that you or your family members will definitely get that disease. It is important that you talk to your doctor about steps that you can take to lower your chances of getting the disease. You have already taken the first step by learning about your family health history!

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (Updated 2015, November 16). Gather and share your family health history. Retrieved January 13, 2016, from <http://www.cdc.gov/>*

## Secrets to a Successful Life



What do America's elder citizens say about living a happy, healthy, and successful life? A Cornell University professor, Karl Pillemer, asked hundreds of seniors and gives their advice in his book 30 Lessons for Living: Tried and True Advice from the Wisest Americans.

- **Take risks to avoid regret.** People in their 70s, 80s, 90s, and beyond endorse taking risks when you're young, contrary to a stereotype that elders are conservative. They say that you are much more likely to regret what you didn't do than what you did. Say yes to opportunities.
- **Make the most of a bad job.** Pillemer said, "Remember that many of these folks who grew up in the Great Depression had bad jobs early on—in fact, their bad jobs make our bad jobs look like good jobs! They found, however, that they learned invaluable lessons from these less-than-ideal work situations. You can learn how the industry works, about communicating with other employees, about customer service.
- **Choose excitement over money.** Choose a career for its basic value rather than how much money you will make. Our elders are keenly aware of how short life is, and they think it's a mistake to waste precious time in work you don't like. According to our elders, you need to be able to get up in the morning excited about work, so choose your career with that in mind.
- **Regrets?** Embrace travel, especially when you are young.

**Health-e headlines™**

*Flying makes my teeth hurt..*

If you're planning on flying within a few days after a dentist appointment, let your dentist know so he or she doesn't perform any procedures that could make your teeth sensitive to air pressure changes, advises Dr. Michael Tischler, a dental expert.

**Health-e headlines™**

*What's the equivalent of 100 calories...*

when you're thinking about chocolate? The foodies at the Loyola Center for Fitness say try this without killing your diet: 5 Hershey's Kisses, 30 plain M&Ms, or 3 Dove Dark Chocolate Hearts.

**Health-e headlines™**

*An EAP Reminder*

*Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can Help You Find Your Balance.*

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members.

If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.



DEER OAKS EAP SERVICES



# Clinician's Corner..

*Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team*



As I sit to write this post, I struggle to stay focused because of all of the stressors that I have met thus far today. I woke up early for a meeting only to have the other participant no-show. One of my computer programs is broken and I need it for a deadline (today, of course). All the while, a part from my dishwasher just flew off mid-cycle. So, I know that once I'm finished working from home for the day, my afternoon will entail mopping up water and re-washing all of my dishes by hand while I try to track down the repair person.

What better time, then, to focus on gratitude?

Several years ago, I stumbled across the power of gratitude as a tool to help improve mood, attitude, and overall life satisfaction. I've found that it can be so easy to get into the routine of stress, deadlines, dealing with negative people, and feeling overwhelmed. This then creates the tendency to actually look for these things, so the perception becomes that we only see those things that we dread, fear, or even just dislike.

The trick is to change the routine by going out of your way to find gratitude, even in the smallest doses. Some studies even suggest that ending each day by finding three things for which you were grateful and either writing them down, noting them in your mind or saying them out loud can lead to significant improvements in your happiness.

In addition to my stressors today, I took my dogs for a walk and caught an unbelievable sunrise, felt the crisp air of Fall, and have two very adorable puppies curled on my lap as I type. These are all small things, but I notice that even as I essentially force myself to find things for which I am grateful, I don't have as much of a negative outlook on the rest of my day. So often gratitude gets the focus during Thanksgiving, at which time I'm already inundated with holiday stress, making it that much more difficult to find the time to express gratitude – talk about ironic!

So, I invite you to try on an attitude of gratitude for the next few days. Frustrated with a co-worker (or spouse, or child, or in-law)? Stop and find one attribute of theirs that you appreciate. List three things for which you are grateful at the end of the day. Challenge yourself to find gratitude as many times in one day as you can. The object is not to ignore negative aspects of your environment, but to notice that there are also a lot of positives - sometimes you just have to look a bit harder for those. Happy gratitude hunting!

By:

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# How To: Know When It Makes Sense to Rent vs Buy a New Home



While homeownership makes great financial sense for many Americans, in some cases, and for some people, renting a home or apartment is actually a better idea. How do you determine if renting makes more sense, at least in the short term? Following are some factors to consider.

## Your lifestyle

Owning a home is a huge responsibility, and depending on your lifestyle, you may actually prefer to rent. Owning a home means that you are responsible for all of the repairs, yard work, and maintenance for the home. Depending upon your lifestyle, it may be in your best interest to rent.

In addition, if you think that you can't commit to a specific location for a period of at least a few years, owning a home for only a short period of time may end up costing you money. Homeownership is best for those who will live in their home for at least a few years, because selling a home can be expensive due to potentially decreasing home values, closing costs, and Realtor fees. People likely to move in the near future are usually better off renting.

## Where you live

If you live in an area where home prices are declining, it may be beneficial to continue renting until prices bottom out. In some areas, rental rates are much more reasonable than home prices, and renting may be the best financial option.

## Your financial situation

Depending upon your financial situation, it may be beneficial to delay purchasing a new home. If your credit report and credit score are less than optimal, taking some time to fix your credit and improve your score is a good idea, and will ultimately save you money on your mortgage later.

When evaluating whether to rent or own, keep in mind that interest and taxes on the mortgage of a primary residence is generally tax deductible. This fact can make home buying much more attractive.

## About Money Management International

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