

Healthy Living Newsletter

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Live, Take Charge, Change

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Author: Chris Hunkler



Holiday Time: Preparing for Work Stress

Balancing your family's expectations with work commitments and social obligations can make this the most stressful time of the year. Before the season gets too busy, try these strategies for reducing holiday stress in the workplace.

Plan – Create a calendar for the holiday period, noting who will be at work on which days.

Prioritize – If a task can be held for completion in a week or two, set it aside.

Keep it simple – One reason for holiday stress is the desire to make everything “perfect.” Lower your stress level by simplifying your holiday plans.

Organize your workplace - If you are going on vacation, organize your desk before leaving. Label files so that others can find information easily and leave a list of projects that you are working on. If something needs to be done in your absence, leave written instructions.

Take care – Eat balanced meals, get plenty of sleep, avoid alcohol, and exercise regularly.

Source: www.achievesolutions.net



Healthy Holiday Eating Tips

Before You Go

Aim for weight maintenance rather than weight loss – Focus on holding steady and minimizing weight gain. Go ahead and give yourself permission to indulge a bit. One day here and there “off the diet” is not going to make you overweight, but do not go overboard.

- **Eat before you go** – Before heading out the door, eat a small meal or have a light snack. Having some food already in your stomach keeps the metabolism revved up and gives you a slight feeling of satisfaction, which will help guard against overeating later.
- **Keep exercising** – Maintaining or even slightly increasing a regular schedule of physical activity will help decrease your appetite, keep your metabolism stoked, and give you a little caloric leeway to allow you to sample that sweet treat.

Once You're There...

- **Drink lots of water** – Sipping on a glass of cold water or ice though out the event is a good way to keep you feeling full, stave off dehydration, and consuming too many high-sugar, high-salt goodies. Extra water also helps to flush out the excess sodium you consume during rich meals.
- **Practice portion control** – At appetizer tables, choose two or three of your favorites and put them on a small plate or a napkin. Then, walk away. When you are done with your food, throw away the napkin or take your plate to the kitchen. Avoid large plates. At a buffet, cover most of your plate with vegetables and fruits. Then find room for smaller portions of high-calorie main dishes.
- **Eat slowly** – Eating and chewing food slowly gives the stomach time – usually about 20 minutes – to tell the brain it is feeling full.
- **Drinks** - If you decide to have a drink, limit yourself to one or two. Also, choose wisely-a gin and tonic has 155 calories for 7.5 fl oz, while the same size frozen strawberry daiquiri has a whopping 450 calories. Alternate alcoholic beverages with nonalcoholic, calorie-free drinks such as flavored seltzer or choose wine spritzers, which are half wine and half seltzer.
- **Enjoy yourself** – Allow yourself to enjoy other people (family, friends, co-workers, even new faces), the meaning of the season, personal reflections, renewed spiritual dedication, holiday games, and the fun and memories that you are blessed to have. Food will always be available, but loving relationships are both fragile and temporary.

Sources: www.menshealthlibrary.org & www.weightwatchers.com



Holiday Pet Poisoning Prevention Tip

During the busy holiday season, we often forget about our pets. Dogs are especially prone to poisoning as they can and often eat almost anything.

Do not allow your dog to eat chocolate. Chocolate contains an ingredient called theobromine, which acts very much like caffeine. Too much theobromine can cause vomiting, diarrhea, nervousness, restlessness, excitement, tremors, seizures, and even coma.

Portable and Space Heaters

Place space heaters at least three feet (one meter) away from anything combustible, including wallpaper, bedding, clothing, pets, and people. Never leave space heaters operating when you are not in the room or when you go to bed. Do not leave children or pets unattended with space heaters.

Source: www.ou.edu



Helmets Save Lives in Winter Sports

The following are simple safety tips:

- Purchase and always use sport-specific helmets or protective head gear.
- Do not participate in sports when you are ill, tired, or have consumed alcohol.
- Do not participate in sports when the weather conditions pose a hazard.
- Skate only in designated areas, and check for cracks and debris.
- Obey all posted signs and warnings on ski slopes, sledding hills, and skating rinks.

Source: www.healthfinder.gov



Toy Safety Shopping Tips



Under 3 Years Old:

- Children under 3 years tend to put everything in their mouths. Avoid buying toys intended for older children, which may have small parts that pose a choking danger.
- Never let children of any age play with un-inflated or broken balloons because of the choking danger.
- Avoid marbles, balls, and games with balls that have a diameter of 1.75 inches or less.
- Children at this age pull, prod, and twist toys. Look for toys that are well-made with tightly secured eyes, noses, and other parts.

Ages 3 through 5:

- Avoid toys that are constructed with thin, brittle plastic that might easily break into small pieces or leave jagged edges.
- Look for household art materials, including crayons and paint sets, marked with the designation "ASTM D-4236". This means that the product has been reviewed by a toxicologist, and, if necessary, labeled with cautionary information.

Ages 6 through 12:

- For all children, adults should check toys periodically for breakage and potential hazards. Damaged or dangerous toys should be repaired or thrown away.
- If buying a toy gun, be sure that the barrel or the entire gun, is brightly colored so that it is not mistaken for a real gun.
- If you buy a bicycle for any age child, buy a helmet too and make sure that the child wears it.
- Teach all children to put toys away when they are finished playing so they do not trip over them or fall on them.

Source: www.cpsc.gov

How to Help the Elderly at Christmas

- **Spend time with them.** Elderly individuals are often lonely due to the fact they have little interaction with others during the day. Many elderly people just enjoy conversing with others, and you stopping by just to chat can make their day.
- **Bring them holiday goodies and gifts.** Making or purchasing a gift is a great way to show an elderly individual that you care about them and they have not been forgotten.
- **Offer assistance in decorating their house for the holidays.** Although many elderly individuals would like to have a Christmas tree or lights on their house to enjoy for the holidays, they can not because of physical limitations. However, you must remember to help them take down decorations after the holidays as well since they will not be able to do it.
- **Take them with you to holiday activities.** If you and your family are attending a holiday musical production or just driving around your neighborhood to look at Christmas lights, invite an elderly friend or neighbor along to enjoy it with you.
- **Assist them with holiday shopping.**

Source: www.ehow.com

Infectious Diseases

- As many as 76 million Americans get a food-borne illness each year. Of these, about 5,000 die as result of their illness.
- Infectious diseases cost the United States \$120 billion a year.
- Salmonella infections are responsible for an estimated 1.4 million illnesses each year.

Sources: www.cdc.gov & www.mayoclinic.com



Office Exercise 101

If you travel for work, plan ahead. Exercise does not need to go by the wayside when you are traveling. If you are stuck in an airport waiting for a plane, grab your bags and take a brisk walk. Choose a hotel that has fitness facilities – such as treadmills, weight rooms, or a pool – or bring your equipment with you. Jump ropes and resistance bands are easy to sneak in a suitcase. Of course, you can do jumping jacks, crunches, and other simple exercises without any equipment at all.

Source: www.mayoclinic.com



Traveling with Children

The holiday season is many times highlighted by long trips to see family and friends. These trips can be especially tough on children. Stopping along the way makes the trip easier and less tiring for them and more of an adventure too. Also, bring along a few favorite books or soft toys to keep the little ones occupied. The trip will seem to go faster for them, perhaps lessen the number of times they ask, “Are we there yet?” and better enable you to keep your attention on driving.

Source: www.trafficsafety.com



Hand Washing

One of the simplest and most effective methods to help protect against the spread of infectious diseases is hand washing. This is true during the entire year, but especially during the holiday season with the various parties and meals.

- Wet your hands with warm, running water and apply liquid, bar, or powder soap. Lather well.
- Rub your hands vigorously together for at least 15 to 20 seconds.
- Scrub all surfaces, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer.
- If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet.

Remember: If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. The CDC recommends choosing products that contain at least 60 percent alcohol.

Sources: www.cdc.gov & www.mayoclinic.com

Tips for Healthier Mid-Air Meals

Planning ahead is harder as security concerns have put tighter restrictions on what travelers can bring with them. The Transport Security Administration (TSA) only allows liquids, and semi-solid food containers (such as pudding, Jell-O, peanut butter, etc.) in containers less than 3 ounces in size.

Order ahead – If you do find yourself on a meal-service flight, most airlines offer alternative menus such as low cholesterol, vegetarian, etc, that are available if you order ahead.

Pack protein and nuts – If you pack your own food, you have total control over what you eat. Stick with high-protein, high-fiber choices that help make you feel fuller, longer. Almonds, string cheese, and apples all travel well in a carry-on, and are permissible in security lines.

Pester the flight attendants – For water, that is. A steady supply of water will prevent altitude dehydration and keep you walking up and down the aisle to the bathroom – something you should be doing on long flights anyway.

Source: www.weightwatchers.com



Are You Getting Enough Sleep?

There is increasing evidence from sleep researchers that chronic lack of even a few hours of sleep a night can result in significant health consequences. These include an increased risk of accidents, fatigue that makes you prone to depressive symptoms or not enough energy to exercise, and even chemical changes that stimulate your brain to eat more salty and sugary foods.

Adults need seven to eight hours of sleep each night, while teens should sleep about nine hours a night. School-aged children require 10-11 hours a night, and children in preschool need between 11-13 hours a night.

Source: www.healthfider.org



Crash Statistics

The most dangerous part of the workday for any employee is the time they spend in their vehicle.

- Every five seconds a crash occurs.
- Every seven seconds a property damage crash occurs.
- Every 10 seconds there is a traffic-related injury.
- Every two minutes there is an alcohol-related injury.
- Every 12 minutes someone dies in a roadway crash.
- Every 31 minutes an alcohol-related fatality occurs.

Source: www.trafficsafety.org

StairWELL Campaign

There are 1440 minutes in every day...schedule 30 of them for physical activity



Whole Grains A to Z

Wild Rice – It is technically not a rice at all, but the seed of an aquatic grass originally grown by indigenous tribes around the Great Lakes. The strong flavor and high price of wild rice means that it is often consumed in a blend with other rices and grains. Wild rice has twice the protein and flavor of brown rice, but less iron and calcium.

Source: www.wholegrainscouncil.org

Family Caregivers Reference

Agingcare.com –
The Community for Caregivers
www.agingcare.com



Impaired Driving

Celebrations are part of our lives and sometimes they include alcohol. This tends to be even more true during the holiday season. Do not let your celebrations include impaired driving.

- Alcohol impaired driving accounts for about 40 percent of fatal crashes.
- About three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their life.
- Nearly 1.5 million people are arrested each year for driving while intoxicated (DWI). Two-thirds of all drivers arrested for DWI are first time offenders.
- A DWI/DUI conviction on a person’s driving record may prevent them from getting a job, receiving a promotion, or even result in job loss.
- Nine out of 10 insurance companies automatically cancel the policy of a driver convicted of a DWI/DUI violation.
- If you are impaired, make the safe choice – ride with a designated driver, call a taxi, stay where you are, or call a sober friend or family member. Making the safe choice could save your life.

Source: www.trafficsafety.org



Learning to Laugh at Yourself

Laughter is a good social tool. It can ease tense situations and improve relationships. But the benefits do not stop there. It is well known that the sheer physical act of laughing – even when you fake it – can improve mental and physical health. Studies have found that a two-minute belly laugh is equal to 10 minutes on a rowing machine in terms of boosting your heart rate. A good laugh also:

- Relaxes muscles
- Deepens breathing
- Elevates oxygen levels
- Numbs pain by stimulating endorphins
- Heightens energy
- Reduces tension
- Alleviates depression
- Boosts your immune system

If you can not find something funny to laugh about, then fake it, say humor therapists. Your body can not tell the difference between a fake laugh, and a real one and in most cases, you will end up laughing naturally.

According to the “Facial Feedback” theory, a person who forces a smile soon begins to experience the pleasurable feelings associated with that expression.

Source: www.achievesolutions.net