

Keeping your health and well-being in the know

MyHealth TALK

April 2010

Managing Stress

“Stress is not what happens to us. It’s our response TO what happens. And RESPONSE is something we can choose.”

- Maureen Killoran, MA, D.Min., Life Coach

Improve your health by learning how to deal with stress. It’s not always easy dealing with all of the demands in your life. Being able to identify the symptoms of stress and handle it in a healthy, positive way plays an important role in your physical health.

Up to one-half of all visits to the doctor are due to conditions that are caused or aggravated by mental and emotional problems. This means that your emotional health is directly related to your physical health.

What Is Emotional Health?

Your emotional health refers to your reactions: your behavior, attitudes, thoughts and decisions regarding situations during your day. For most people, life is a daily routine of making a living, raising a family, solving problems, paying bills, taking care of physical needs, and being productive. Life is generally positive, active, and rewarding; stress in this environment can be a motivator to break records, meet deadlines, and generate new ideas. But sometimes, stress can affect attitudes, behaviors, and coping ability negatively.

Ways to Deal with Stress

1. Find Balance

There is no limit to what you can do to maintain your own mental and emotional health. Balance is important. Recognize your uniqueness, both the positives and negatives. You should make time to work, play, and relax. By setting priorities and getting tasks done on time, you will be able to cope much better with stress and problems. Without balance, you may increase stress and anxiety.

2. Know Stress Symptoms

Stress symptoms can be mental, physical, emotional and even social. Excessive alcohol or drug consumption and heavy smoking, for example, may be indicators that you have stress in your life.

3. Seek Help When Needed

Always get professional help when you need it. This is a very challenging step for some. You may need to seek help if you experience the following symptoms:

- Frequent feeling of extreme sadness
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Constant feelings of hopelessness and extreme pessimism
- Continually feel alone and helpless
- Cry easily and often for no apparent reason
- Can’t sleep or sleep too much
- Have thoughts of suicide

Take Action

Schedule 15 minutes each day to prioritize the tasks you need to complete.

At work let the following three habits guide you:

- Clear your desk of everything except what you are working on.
- Do things in order of their importance.
- When faced with a problem, solve it immediately if you can.

Schedule time each day for stress relief activities, such as meditation.

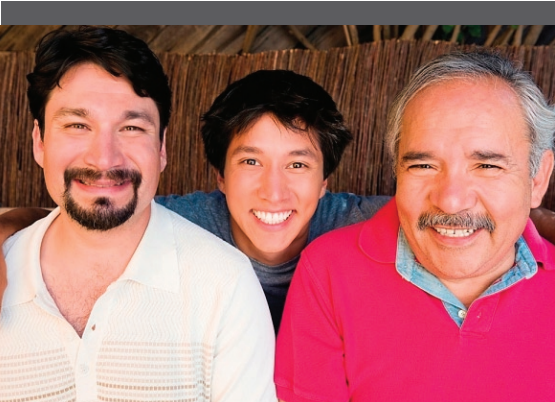
Get the rest you need before you get too worn out.

April is National Humor Month

In honor of the occasion, here are some jokes:

a POODLE AND a COLLIE WERE WALKING DOWN THE STREET. THE POODLE TURNED TO THE COLLIE AND COMPLAINED, “MY LIFE IS a MESS, MY OWNER IS MEAN, MY GIRLFRIEND IS HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH a GERMAN SHEPHERD, AND I’M NERVOUS as a CaT.” “WHY DON’T YOU GO see a PSYCHIATRIST?” ASKED THE COLLIE. “I CAN’T,” REPLIED THE POODLE. “I’M NOT ALLOWED ON THE COUCH.”

THE NURSE SAID TO THE DOCTOR, “THERE’S AN INVISIBLE MAN IN THE WAITING ROOM.” THE DOCTOR REPLIED, “TELL HIM I CAN’T SEE HIM NOW.”



Cancer: Reducing Your Risk

Cancer follows heart disease as the leading cause of death in the United States. You may feel that it is unavoidable that you will get cancer someday, but there are things you can do to decrease your risk.

1. Follow the American Cancer Society's guidelines for early detection.
2. Make sure your loved ones know the proper recommendations for early detection.
3. Eat a daily diet that includes five servings of fruits and vegetables, is low in fat, rich in whole grains and limits red and processed meat.
4. Limit your alcohol consumption. Women should limit their intake to no more than one glass of alcohol per day and men should limit their intake to no more than two glasses per day.
5. Perform the appropriate self-examinations.
6. Limit your exposure to environmental carcinogens.

CANCER: Fact, Fiction or Myth?

Q: Can one bad sunburn when you're young increase your risk of developing skin cancer?

A: YES! Skin cells mutate each time you are exposed to sun. Over time, these gradual mutations may lead to cancer later in life. Even one bad childhood sunburn can double your risk of developing skin cancer later in life.

Q: Does drinking fluoridated water cause cancer?

A: INCONCLUSIVE. Over half of Americans drink water that contains fluoride. A link between fluoridated water and cancer has been debated for several years, but a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention summarized the research on this topic. The report concluded that studies to date provide "no credible evidence" of an association between fluoridated water and an increased risk of cancer.

Q: Can men get breast cancer?

A: YES! Approximately 2,000 cases of breast cancer are diagnosed in men each year. More commonly, men can get prostate cancer. Beginning at the age of 40, men should be regularly tested for prostate cancer.

APRIL IS ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH

This month is designated as Alcohol Awareness Month to recognize the serious problem of alcohol abuse. You may initially think of underage drinkers when you think of alcohol abuse but the problem goes way beyond teenage drinking. April is a good time to focus on alcohol education so that teenagers and adults can make appropriate choices. While the majority of people do not abuse alcohol, those who do, affect everyone else, either directly or indirectly. Some demographic groups that are identified for alcohol abuse are:

- Pregnant Women* - Alcohol puts unborn children at risk for fetal alcohol syndrome
- Working Professionals* - Individuals who need multiple drinks at the end of the day to "unwind"
- Senior Citizens* - Older individuals who may drink out of loneliness or boredom

A good website to refer to is the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at the link <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov>. This site provides a multitude of information, resource links, tools, and publications.

If you have a family member or friend that you would like to help, refer them to Alcoholics Anonymous. Offer to go with them to a meeting to get them started. Additional information can be found at <http://www.aa.org>.

Source - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Driving and Alcohol Don't Mix

More than 500,000 people are injured in alcohol-related crashes every year – with over 16,000 resulting in death.

Alcohol is a factor in about 40 percent of the more than 40,000 deaths that occur each year in vehicle crashes.

One alcohol-related injury occurs every 2 minutes.

Source - AAA