April-June 2015

DHSS Worksite Wellness Committee

W@W

Winning @ Wellness

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Be Healthy @ Work: Getting a Good Night's Sleep

We have so many demands on our time—jobs, family, errands—not to mention finding some time to relax. To fit everything in, we often sacrifice sleep. But sleep affects both mental and physical health. It is vital to your well-being. Sleep helps you feel rested each day. While you're sleeping, your brain and body don't just shut down. Internal organs and processes are hard at work throughout the night.

Benefits of sleep.
"Sleep services all aspects of our body in one way or another: molecular, energy balance, as well as intellectual function, alertness and mood," says Dr. Merrill Mitler, a sleep expert and neuroscientist at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

"When you're tired, you can't function at your best. Sleep helps you think more clearly, have quicker reflexes and focus better. The fact is, when we look at well-rested people, they're operating at a different level than people trying to get by on one or two hours less nightly sleep," says Mitler. "Loss of sleep impairs your higher levels of reasoning, problem-solving and attention to detail," Mitler explains. Tired people tend to be less productive at work. They're at a much higher risk for traffic accidents. Lack of sleep also influences your mood, which can affect how you interact with others. A sleep deficit over time can even put you at greater risk for developing depression. But sleep isn't just essential for the brain. "Sleep affects almost every tissue in our bodies," says Dr. Michael Twery, a sleep expert at NIH. "It affects growth and stress hormones, our immune system, appetite, breathing, blood pressure and cardiovascular health."

Increased risks from lack of sleep.
Research shows that lack of sleep increases the risk for obesity, heart disease and infections. Throughout the night, your heart rate, breathing rate and blood pressure rise and fall, a process that may be important for cardiovascular health. Lack of sleep can cause changes in the hormones (ones that repair cells and control the body's use of energy) which can affect your body weight. "Ongoing research shows a lack of sleep can produce diabetic-like conditions in otherwise healthy people," says Mitler.

Recent studies also reveal that sleep can affect the efficiency of vaccinations. Twery described research showing that well-rested people who received the flu vaccine developed stronger protection against the illness.

How much sleep do we need?
A good night's sleep consists of four to five sleep cycles. Each cycle includes periods of deep sleep and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, when we dream. "As the night goes on, the portion of that cycle that is in REM sleep increases. It turns out that this pattern of cycling and progression is critical to the biology of sleep," Twery says.

On average, adults need seven to eight hours of sleep per night (although personal needs vary). Babies typically sleep about 16 hours a day. Young children need at least 10 hours of sleep, while teenagers need at least nine hours. To attain the maximum restorative benefits of sleep, getting a full night of quality sleep is important, says Twery. Sleep can be disrupted by many things. Stimulants such as caffeine or certain medications can keep you up.

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Distractions such as electronics—especially the light from TVs, cell phones, tablets and e-readers—can prevent you from falling asleep.

As people age, they may not get enough sleep because of illness, medications or sleep disorders. By some estimates, about 70 million Americans of all ages suffer from chronic sleep problems. The two most common sleep disorders are insomnia and sleep apnea.

Sleep disorders.
Insomnia. People with insomnia have trouble falling or staying asleep. Anxiety about falling asleep often makes the condition worse. Most of us have occasional insomnia. But chronic insomnia—lasting at least three nights per week for more than a month—can trigger serious daytime problems such as exhaustion, irritability and difficulty concentrating.

Common therapies include relaxation and deep-breathing techniques. Sometimes medicine is prescribed. Consult your doctor before trying even over-the-counter sleep pills, as they may leave you feeling unrefreshed in the morning.

Sleep Apnea. People with sleep apnea have a loud, uneven snore (although not everyone who snores has apnea). Breathing repeatedly stops or becomes shallow. Apnea is dangerous. "There's little air exchange for ten seconds or more at a time," explains Dr. Phyllis Zee, a sleep apnea expert at Northwestern University. "The oxygen goes down and the body's fight or flight response is activated. Blood pressure spikes, your heart rate fluctuates and the brain wakes you up partially to start your breathing again. This creates stress."

Apnea can leave you feeling tired and moody. You may have trouble thinking clearly. "Also, apnea affects the vessels that lead to the brain so there is a higher risk of stroke associated with it," Zee adds.

If you have mild sleep apnea, you might try sleeping on your side, exercising or losing weight to reduce symptoms. A Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machine, which pumps air into your throat to keep your airway open, can also help. Another treatment is a bite plate that moves the lower jaw forward. In some cases, however, people with sleep apnea need surgery. "If you snore chronically and wake up choking or gasping for air, and feel that you're sleepy during the day, tell your doctor and get evaluated," Zee advises.

The NIH is currently funding several studies to gain deeper insights into sleep apnea and other aspects of sleep. One five-year study of 10,000 pregnant women is designed to gauge the effects of apnea on the mother's and baby's health. Zee says this study will shed more light on apnea and the importance of treatment.

Healthy sleep tips.
According to the National Sleep Foundation, healthy sleep habits can help make a positive difference in your quality of life. Try some of the following tips to help improve your "sleep hygiene."

- Stick to the same wake time and bedtime, even on the weekends.
- Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual.
- Avoid naps, especially in the afternoon.
- Exercise daily.
- Evaluate your bedroom. Keep the temperature between 60-67 degrees. Keep it noise free and free from any light.
- Sleep on a supportive, comfortable mattress and pillow.

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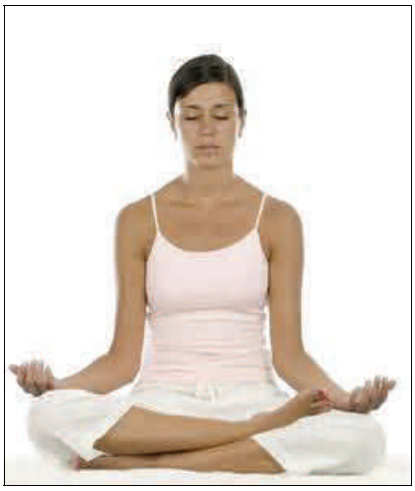
- Use bright light to help manage your circadian rhythms. They regulate the timing of periods of sleepiness and wakefulness throughout your day. Avoid bright light during the evening and expose yourself to sunlight in the mornings.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco products and heavy meals in the evening. Eating big or spicy meals can cause discomfort from indigestion that can make it hard to fall asleep. Finish eating at least two-three hours before bedtime.
- Wind down. Your body needs time to shift into its sleep mode, so spend the last hour before bed doing a calming activity.
- If you cannot sleep, go into another room and do something relaxing until you feel tired.
- Use your bed only for sleep.



Good sleep is critical to your health. To make each day a safe, productive one, take steps to make sure you regularly get a good night's sleep.

Resources:
http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/issue/apr2013/feature1
http://sleepfoundation.org

"The real opportunity for success lies within the person and not in the job."

Zig Ziglar

Worksite Wellness News

Strive For Wellness Ambassador Update

The Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan unveiled their redesigned Strive for Wellness web page during February's Strive for Wellness meeting. The new design is more user-friendly, designed with the employee in mind and provides useful information and resources on many wellness topics including: healthy habits, health incentives and managing chronic conditions.

The Strive for Wellness committee also discussed the advantages of utilizing the Disease Management Program. Employees are able to work with a nurse one-on-one to identify strategies to manage their medical condition and are eligible for reduced prescription costs. (See website for more information.)

Sincerely,
Pat Simmons & Meredith Curry
DHSS Wellness Ambassadors

Upcoming Wellness Events

Walking Wednesdays
The **1st and 3rd Wednesdays** of every month are **Walking Wednesdays**. But don't forget that if there is a ***5th*** Wednesday in a month, that too is a Walking Wednesday! Approved t-shirts to be worn are: Worksite Wellness, Tackle the Flu and 100 Missouri Miles Challenge. **REMINDER: T-shirts are not approved to be worn on Fridays.**

National Employee Health and Fitness Day
Mark your calendar for Wednesday, May 20, 2015 for National Employee Health and Fitness Day! Watch the Wellness Messages for more information.

Fit In 15
Don't forget to join the Get Moving Challenge that started on April 13th! Go to http://dhssnet/worksitewellness/getmoving.php for more information.

An Ounce of Prevention: Eating Healthy Away From Home

New menu and vending machine labeling.
In today's busy world, Americans are eating and drinking about one-third of their calories away from home. While consumers can find calories and other nutrition information on the Nutrition Facts Label on most packaged foods and beverages they buy in stores, this type of labeling has generally not been available in restaurants or visible on food from vending machines. That's why the FDA published new regulations in December 2014, requiring that calorie information be provided on restaurant menus, menu boards and vending machines. This will enable consumers to make informed and healthful decisions about meals, snacks and beverages.

Restaurants:
Beginning December 1, 2015 consumers will begin to see calories listed on menus and menu boards in chain restaurants (with 20 or more locations) next to the name or price of the item.

For self-service foods, such as foods served from buffets and salad bars, calories will be shown on signs that are next to the foods. Calories will not be listed for condiments, daily specials, custom orders or temporary/seasonal menu items.

Consumers can also find additional written nutrition information on standard menu items, including total fat, calories from fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugars and protein. This information may be found on posters, tray liners, signs, counter cards, handouts, booklets, computers or kiosks. Remind consumers to ask for it when eating out!

The FDA is also requiring restaurants to include a statement on menus and menu boards reminding consumers that "2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice, but calorie needs vary." Not everyone should consume 2,000 calories per day, though, so consumers are encouraged to visit www.choosemyplate.gov to determine personal calorie needs.

Vending machines*:*
On December 1, 2016 calorie information will also begin showing up on vending machines (for vendors who own or operate 20 or more vending machines). Consumers will see calories posted on a sign or on electronic/digital displays near the food item or selection button, unless calories are already visible on the actual food packages before purchase.

Online resource:
Learn more about the new Menu and Vending Machine Labeling regulations and download a new Consumer Fact Sheet that includes tips for using the new calorie information, as well as details about which types of foods and which establishments are required to post calorie information.

Eat Smart @ Work: Aloha Pork Chop Skillet

Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp. oil
- 4 bone-in pork chops (1½ lbs.)
- 1 each red and yellow bell pepper, coarsely chopped
- 2 cans (8 oz. each) pineapple chunks in juice, undrained
- ½ cup fat-free reduced-sodium chicken broth
- ¼ cup classic catalina dressing
- 1½ tsp. garlic powder
- 1½ cups instant brown rice, uncooked

Preparation:

1. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet on medium-high heat. Add chops; cook 5 minutes on each side or until browned on both sides.
2. Combine all remaining ingredients except rice; spoon over chops. Bring to a boil.
3. Stir in rice; cover. Cook on medium-low heat 5 minutes or until chops are done (145º F). Remove from heat; let stand 5 minutes.

Yield:
4 servings

Adapted from: http://www.kraftrecipes.com/recipes/aloha-pork-chop-skillet-91988.aspx

Nutritional Information

Amount per Serving:
Calories: 470
Fat: 13 g
Cholesterol: 75 mg
Sodium: 360 mg
Carbohydrate: 54 g
Dietary fiber: 3 g
Protein: 33 g

"Being in control of your life and having realistic expectations about your day-to-day challenges are the keys to stress management, which is, perhaps, the most important ingredient to living a happy, healthy and rewarding life."

Marilu Henner

DHSS Wellness Superstar

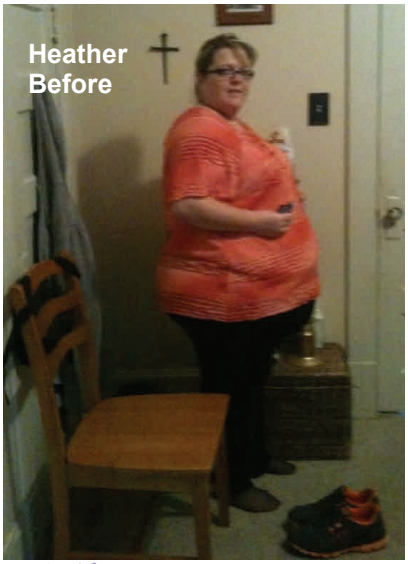
Heather Howard, a 19 year State of Missouri employee, works in the Division of Senior and Disability Services (DSDS) as an Adult Protective and Community Worker in Region 1 (Jasper County).

Heather's journey to wellness.
Heather has struggled with obtaining and maintaining a healthy eating and active lifestyle throughout her life. In February 2012, her primary care physician (PCP), suggested gastric bypass surgery. This was the second time her doctor suggested this and, at 307 pounds, she finally took the hint.

For six months, she had to visit with her PCP and document her efforts toward losing weight, undergo a full psychological evaluation, visit with an exercise physiologist and meet with a licensed dietitian.

Heather's new life.
After her surgery in November 2013, Heather's new life was off to a great start. Heather had to follow a strict diet post-surgery. For the first two weeks she could only have liquids, which were mostly protein shakes. Then Heather was able to eat pureed foods (baby foods mostly). Heather had to retrain her brain to think differently about food, but over time she was able to introduce some solid foods back into her diet. When she would feel satisfied and not full (like one would get after a Thanksgiving meal), she would stop eating. Heather's caloric intake had to be (and continues to be) monitored daily. Heather still gets cravings but she doesn't always give in anymore.

The surgery was just a tool; the real work came after the surgery: preparing and eating more nutritious meals and exercising. Heather works out regularly at her local YMCA. Prior to surgery, Heather could not even walk up steps without having to stop and take a breath. Since she has been exercising (she uses a treadmill and stationary bike), Heather has met the Governor's 100 Missouri Miles Challenge and completed her first 5K run in the summer of 2014.



Maintaining regular contact with a weight loss support group through Facebook has been another tool for success. Heather loves talking about her journey to anyone and everyone. If you would like to talk to Heather about her journey contact her through her personal e-mail at heatherhoward1171@yahoo.com.

Getting off medication.
Prior to surgery, Heather had to take medications for type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Now she only has to take daily vitamin supplements to meet her basic needs since her food intake is restricted.

Heather's results so far.
Heather has lost a total of 125.5 pounds and 54 inches in one year. She went from a shirt size of 5X to an XL. Her pant size went from a 28 to a 16. Heather feels like she still has a way to go but is committed to continue on.

Heather has been asked if she has any regrets regarding the decision she made about weight loss surgery. Yes she does…she wishes she would have done it a long time ago so that she would not have wasted away the years secluding herself from the life that she has been given.

The Employee Buzz…

"What is your favorite way to de-stress?"

"My favorite way to de-stress is exercise and playing with my three little dogs." **Sandra Hentges, MAP Program Coordinator, Bureau of Cancer and Chronic Disease Control**

"Take a walk, enjoy the scenery, pause when needed to look closer at a flower, bird, and any other things nature has to offer. One of my favorite places for a simple stroll—the Runge Nature Center." **Lana Wong, HPR I, Division of Regulation & Licensure**

"An evening out with friends, laughing and having a good time." **Lisa Branson, Rural Health Coordinator, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health**

"Staying active is one of the best stress relievers! Getting outside to exercise is very uplifting. The Zumba class at DHSS is also great because it is very upbeat and our teacher makes it fun." **Toni Steward, FAN III, Section for Long-Term Care Regulation**

"I have a few de-stressors….I like to put my head set on and listen to some upbeat tunes and go for a brisk walk on my work breaks either inside or outside depending on the weather and when my work schedule allows. I'm currently distressing a couple times a week in the evening Worksite Wellness Zumba Exercise classes. And the de-stressor I love most of all is when my 3 year old granddaughter comes for a visit. I'm lucky she lives so close so I can count on this de-stressor for sure at least once if not more a week." **Brenda Buschjost, HPR, Center for Local Public Health Services**

"Depending upon the time of year, work in my garden, take a long walk in the woods, scrapbook, go fishing or pick up a good book to read." **Anonymous**

We want to hear from you for the next Employee Buzz! ***"Where is your favorite vacation spot and why?"*** For example, **"I love going to Michigan. They have great lighthouses to visit."** Email your response to **worksitewellness@health.mo.gov**. Please tell us if you do not want your name included with your quote.

Move More @ Work: Exercise to Live Longer

Did you know that regular physical activity increases your chances of living a longer, healthier life? It also reduces your risk for high blood pressure, heart disease and some types of cancer.

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults:

- Aim for two hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate aerobic activity each week. Moderate activity includes things like walking fast, dancing, swimming and raking leaves.
- Do muscle-strengthening activities – like lifting weights and using exercises bands – at least two days a week.

Physical activity is for everyone. No matter what shape you are in, you can find activities that will work for you.

Source: **http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html**