March-April 2016

Winning@Wellness

Save Your Vision

For many people, good vision means good eye health, but that may not always be the case. Regular eye exams can catch problems before it's too late. If you are age 40 or older and have not had a recent eye disease screening, the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends making an appointment for an eye exam. It is an essential step toward preserving vision and keeping eyes healthy and there is no better time than now! **Note:** If you are covered by UMR insurance a yearly eye exam is a covered benefit. Contact MCHCP for specific coverage allowances.

For more information, including nine ways you can help protect your vision, visit Healthy Vision: Make it Last a Lifetime.

Sources: American Academy of Ophthalmology and CDC

Sleep Awareness Week™

Sleep is essential to feeling refreshed and rested, and is an indispensable part of a healthy lifestyle.

From March 6-12, the National Sleep Foundation will celebrate Sleep Awareness Week to raise awareness regarding the health benefits of sleep and its importance to safety and productivity.

For more information on sleep problems and disorders visit the National Sleep Foundation.

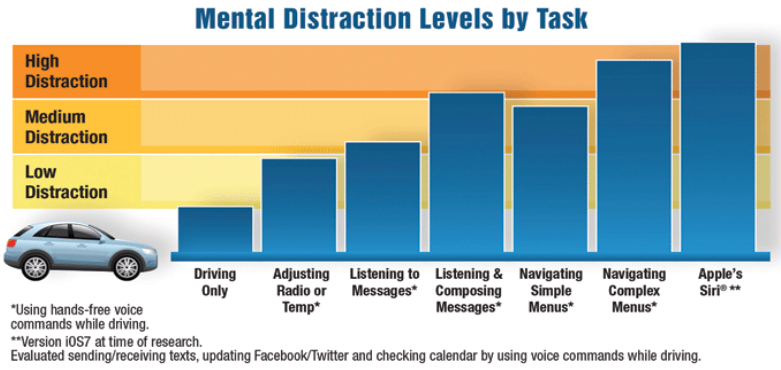
Dump the Distractions

How do you measure something that you can't see, feel, or hear? When it came to assessing how well drivers were paying attention to the road while using various hands-free devices, the University of Utah research team led by psychology professor David Strayer analyzed reaction times, brain activity, eye movements, and other factors linked by prior research to distracted driving.

When the dangers of using a cellphone, texting, and fiddling with devices while driving started becoming apparent about a decade ago, many people assumed that hands-free technology could offer a safe way to stay connected "behind the wheel". A growing body of research is now showing that such an assumption might, in some cases, be creating a false sense of security. In the most significant attempt to date to assess distractions caused by voice-controlled communication and navigation features in cars, test subjects using such systems showed measurable declines in their ability to drive safely. A few even crashed.

For more information on inattention behind the wheel read the full article at Southern Traveler.

Source: Automobile Association of America (AAA)



Tax Time is Here!

A 2014 survey* sponsored by the American Psychological Association found that 64% of Americans cited money as a significant source of stress. Money is also consistently among the top causes of marital contention. What tax season does is shine a great big spotlight on the issue. Money takes center stage at tax time, even if you might have been able to push it out of your mind the rest of the year.

The DHSS provides an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to all staff and dependents. If you are looking for help with taxes, personal finance, or other financial topics the DHSS EAP provides free, confidential assistance. Services are provided by the independent firm ComPsych and can be accessed online at GuidanceResources Online. Assistance with other topics including *wellness*, *relationships*, *legal issues,* and *lifestyle* are is available through the EAP.

**Stress in America*, February 4, 2015

Volunteering Is A Great Natural Stress Buster

Can volunteering really help you cope with the stress of every day life? For many of us who have volunteered or are currently volunteering, the answer is emphatically "yes!" For those who have never tried it, you may wonder why such volunteers react so favorably. What do the research studies say about volunteering? What physical advantages can you personally enjoy? What types of volunteering are available? For answers to these questions and more visit Natural Stress Busters.

Italian Vegetable Hoagies

This delightfully easy, and somewhat messy, sandwich packs a punch with sweet balsamic vinegar, artichoke hearts, red onion, provolone cheese, and zesty pepperoncini.

For complete ingredients and preparation instructions visit Eating Well.

Source: American Heart Association

Did you resolve to eat healthier in 2016? Are you being challenged when it comes to keeping this resolution? Be kind to yourself. Real behavior change is hard. There are days when you will succeed and others when you will fail. On the days you fail, treat that as an opportunity to learn about what to do in the future rather than as a reason to give up. You really can succeed with your New Year's resolution. For some practical, easy tips to help you eat right in 2016 visit the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.