November/December 2013

DHSS Worksite Wellness Committee

W@W

Winning @ Wellness

This Issue:

Be Healthy @ Work
Employee Buzz
Eat Smart @ Work
Move More @ Work
An Ounce of Prevention
Worksite Wellness News

Be Healthy @ Work: Stress and the Holidays

It's that time again-it's the holiday season. For many people, it is a whirlwind of activities. Holiday parties, shopping for the perfect gift, long lines in the stores, the fight for a parking space, family gatherings, too much food and not enough physical activity can consume you. While some people love the holiday season and all it brings, many others find it stressful.

What causes holiday stress?

- **Disrupted schedules.** Too much time spent decorating, shopping and entertaining can leave you short on time and feeling rushed.
- **Too much togetherness.** This is the time when extended families and old friends get together. This can be a good thing, but it can also be stressful. Some people revert back to old childhood patterns. Step back and remember who you are now. You do not have to play the role you did when you were younger.
- **Not enough togetherness.** For various reasons, some people find themselves apart from their families during the holidays. This can make people feel deserted and alone.
- **Health issues.** People who have health issues may feel stressed because others expect them to be joyous and happy when they do not feel well.

What are some things you can do to help manage stress during the holidays?

- **Acknowledge your feelings.** It is ok to feel sadness or grief about life's events. Take time to express those feelings. You cannot make yourself be happy just because it is the holiday season.

- **Reach out.** If you are feeling lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. They can offer you support. Volunteering to help others is a good way to lift your spirits and make new friends.

- **Be realistic.** Many of us have an idea of the "perfect holiday" and are disappointed when the season doesn't live up to those expectations. Remember that no one has the perfect holiday or family.
- **Set aside differences.** Accept family and friends as they are, not as you think they should be. Set aside differences to discuss at another time. Try to understand if others are feeling the effects of holiday stress.
- **Stick to your budget.** Extra financial pressures and not being able to afford the gifts you want to give can be stressful. Before you buy, decide how much money you can afford to spend-then stick to it.
- **Learn to say no.** It really is ok to say no when you are asked to do more than you can do. Saying yes to everything can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. People will understand if you cannot participate in everything. Remember, it is your holiday too!
- **Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself to get refreshed and ready to tackle your to do list. Spend 15 minutes alone, without distractions. Find something that helps you clear your mind, slow your breathing and restore your inner calm such as taking a walk, listening to soothing music, taking a bubble bath or getting a massage.

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Holiday stress and eating
During the holidays, your emotions can run high. Many people turn to food as a source of comfort during stressful times. To help control emotional eating during the holidays, keep in mind the following tips:

- **Be realistic.** It is hard to lose weight during the holidays. Instead, try to maintain your current weight.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Do not beat yourself up because you overindulged at a party. Remember that tomorrow is a new day and you can get back on track.
- **Find something else to do.** If you are feeling tempted by everything on the buffet table, go talk to friend or family member, grab a partner and head to the dance floor or offer to help hand out presents.

Fitting in physical activity during the holidays
There are never enough hours in the day during the holidays to fit in everything-especially exercise. Staying active helps burn those extra calories and release those "feel-good" brain chemicals (serotonin, dopamine and endorphins) that help with your mental and emotional states.

Be creative when fitting in physical activity-and think about what you **can** do and not what you cannot do.

- **Break it up.** Break your activity up into 10 minute sessions if longer bouts do not work.
- **Use household chores for activity.** Shoveling snow, cleaning house and using the stairs not only burn calories but keeps your house clean for holiday guests.
- **Turn shopping into a workout.** Get to the mall early and take a few laps around-that way you can map out your plan of attack. Use the stairs, not the escalator. Park further away from the entrance-just think of all the time you will save by not circling the parking lot!
- **Get your family active.** Walk through your neighborhood and look at the lights. Walk on a trail and enjoy the winter beauty. Build a snowman or make a family of snow angels. Not only will you have fun, but you will be spending some quality time together as a family.
- **Make it a social affair.** Go dancing. Offer to shovel an elderly neighbor's drive or put up her Christmas tree. Take a walk with your best friend-you can catch up and be active too!

With some planning, you can find peace and joy during the holiday season.

Resources:
http://www.webmd.com
http://stress.about.com/od/understandingstress/a/holiday_stress.htm
http://nutrition.about.com/od/calories/qt/overeatholidays.htm

"He who has health has hope. He who has hope, has everything."

~Arabian Proverb

An Ounce of Prevention:
Safely Prepare Your Holiday Meal

Holidays are times we share our kitchens with family and friends. Make it a goal this year to also share good food safety practices. Here are simple tips that all cooks in the kitchen can follow for cooking a delicious *and* safely prepared turkey.

Thawing turkeys must be kept at a safe temperature. The "danger zone" is between 40 and 140°F -the temperature range where food borne bacteria multiply rapidly. While frozen, a turkey is safe indefinitely, but as soon as it begins to thaw, bacteria that may have been present before freezing can begin to grow again. There are three safe ways to thaw food: in the refrigerator, in cold water and in a microwave oven.

Bacteria present on raw poultry can contaminate your hands, utensils and work surfaces as you prepare the turkey. If these areas are not cleaned thoroughly before working with other foods, bacteria from the raw poultry can then be transferred to other foods. After working with raw poultry, always wash your hands, utensils and work surfaces before they touch other foods.

For optimal safety and uniform doneness, cook the stuffing outside the turkey in a casserole dish. However, if you place stuffing inside the turkey, do so just before cooking, and use a food thermometer. Make sure the center of the stuffing reaches a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F. Bacteria can survive in stuffing that has not reached 165°F, possibly resulting in food borne illness.

Set the oven temperature no lower than 325°F and be sure the turkey is completely thawed. Place the turkey breast-side up on a flat wire rack in a shallow roasting pan at least 2 inches deep. Check the internal temperature at the meaty portion of the breast, thigh and wing joint using a food thermometer. Cooking times will vary. The food thermometer must reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F. Let the turkey stand 20 minutes before removing all stuffing from the cavity and carving the meat.

Refrigerate the cooked turkey and stuffing within 2 hours after cooking. Place leftovers in shallow containers and use within 3 to 4 days. Reheat leftovers to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F.

Following these cooking guidelines can help you prepare a safe holiday dinner that everyone will enjoy. For more information on safe turkey preparation check out these websites:

US Department of Agriculture
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/poultry-preparation/turkey-basics-stuffing/CT_Index

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/features/turkeytime/.

"How do you manage stress during the holiday season?"

"I do my Christmas shopping all throughout the year, starting December 26th with the after Christmas sales. I start wrapping gifts in October and have my Christmas cards all ready to be mailed out by the end of November. This gives me the whole month of December to relax and enjoy all of the Christmas festivities." **Cindy Carver, Division of Senior and Disability Services**

"I handle stress during the holiday season by ensuring that I get some sort of physical activity in every day. Just walking during my breaks at work or in the evenings with my dogs helps a lot. I also take Zumba classes at the Y and always have that to look forward to throughout the week!" **Tracy Williams, Division of Administration**

"If it is Christmas time, my 'go to' stress buster is listening to holiday music sung by children-BUT NOT CHIPMUNK MUSIC!" **Marjorie Cole, Division of Community and Public Health**

"*I keep telling myself that spring is on the way and the frenzy will be over soon!"* **Anonymous**

"*Plan ahead, and take time to spend with family."* **Molly Boeckmann, Division of Administration**

We want to hear from you for the next Employee Buzz! February is Heart Month, so we want to know ***"How do you keep your heart healthy?***" For example, "I try to do some cardio exercise each day." Email your response to **worksitewellness@health.mo.gov**. Please tell us if you do not want your name included with your quote.

Twelve Health and Safety Tips for the Holidays

Give the gift of health and safety to yourself and others by following these holiday tips.

1. Wash hands often to keep yourself from spreading germs and getting sick.
2. Bundle up to stay warm and dry. Wear layers of light, warm clothing, mittens, hats and scarves.
3. Manage stress. Don't over commit yourself. Get enough sleep.
4. Don't drink and drive or let others drink and drive. Impaired drivers put everyone at risk.
5. Be smoke-free. There is no safe amount of tobacco or secondhand smoke.
6. Fasten seat belts. Use a seat belt for yourself and all passengers no matter how short the trip.
7. Get exams and screenings. Update your personal and family health history.
8. Get your vaccinations which help prevent diseases and saves lives.
9. Monitor the children. Keep potentially dangerous food, drink and other items out of kids' reach.
10. Practice fire safety. Have an emergency plan and practice it regularly.
11. Prepare food safely. Cook foods to proper temperatures and refrigerate promptly.
12. Eat healthy and get moving. Limit your portion sizes. Be active for at least 150 minutes per week.

To sing along to *The 12 Ways to Health* holiday song, listen to a holiday health podcast or send the song to your friends and family in a holiday health-e-card, visit **http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HealthyTips**.

Eat Smart @ Work: Ravioli and Vegetable Soup

Fresh or frozen ravioli cook in minutes and turn this light vegetable soup into a main course. Look for whole wheat or whole grain ravioli in the refrigerated or frozen section of your supermarket. Tortellini can be used as a substitute for ravioli.

Ingredients:
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
2 cups frozen bell pepper and onion mix, thawed and diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper, or to taste (optional)
1 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes, preferably fire-roasted
1 15-ounce can vegetable broth or reduced-sodium chicken broth
1 ½ cups hot water
1 teaspoon dried basil or marjoram
1 6- to 9-ounce package fresh or frozen cheese (or meat) ravioli, preferably whole wheat
2 cups diced zucchini, (about 2 medium)
Freshly ground pepper to taste

Preparation:
Heat oil in a large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add pepper-onion mix, garlic and crushed red pepper (if using) and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add tomatoes, broth, water and basil (or marjoram); bring to a rolling boil over high heat. Add ravioli and cook for 3 minutes less than the package directions. Add zucchini; return to a boil. Cook until the zucchini is crisp-tender, about 3 minutes. Season with pepper.

Serving suggestion: Serve with a side salad to make a tasty and colorful meal.

Yield: 4 servings (about 2 cups each)

Source: Eating Well
http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/ravioli_vegetable_soup.html

Nutritional Information
Amount per Serving

Calories: 264
Fat: 9g
Saturated fat: 3g
Monounsaturated fat: 3g
Protein: 11g
Carbohydrate: 38g
Fiber: 8g
Cholesterol: 28mg
Sodium: 763mg
Potassium: 762mg

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

~Lao Too

DHSS Wellness Superstar

Brian Flores is a Senior Public Health Lab Scientist at the State Public Health Laboratory. He was selected as this issue's Wellness Superstar because he has a strong exercise regimen, enjoys exercise and has been active for many years. Starting as a child he enjoyed activities such as riding his bicycle. His exercise routine now varies and depends some on the weather conditions. During hot weather, he runs in the early morning, while on other days he runs during his lunch break. Brian likes to run about 2 ½ miles a day. He also lifts free weights for about 30 minutes two days a week and does pushups and about 1000 crunches per day. Brian has participated in some 5K runs.

Monitoring health is key

Brian said he works out to stay healthy. He has a family history of high blood pressure, and his father died about 13 years ago from this disease. A part of Brian's staying healthy included searching for information related to the dangers of high blood pressure. He also uses the blood pressure cuff in the Health Lab to monitor his readings.

Family ties

Brian likes to get most of his exercise during the week so weekends are free for family time. His family also enjoys being active by biking on the Katy Trail and participating in sports leagues. His daughter, Cierra, plays volleyball and his son, Ethan, plays soccer.

Brian and his family eat lots of lean meat, fruits and vegetables and less starches, breads and pastas.

A true inspiration

Coworkers have told Brian how much they admire his commitment to exercise. Five years ago a coworker told him he had lost about 30 pounds and said Brian had been the inspiration for him to get started!

Brian said one of the things he enjoys about exercising is getting outside and the many interesting sights such as cardinals and bluebirds. He has even run into a few rarer species such as a black squirrel and an albino squirrel.

Move More @ Work: Stress Relieving Desk Exercises

If you sit at a desk all day, you probably know it can make you stiff and may cause some aches, pains and stress. It is important to have some **desk exercises** that you can do throughout the day to help find some relief. Here are some good stress relieving exercises to try.

Back Stretch: a side bend can give your back a much needed mid-day stretch. Sitting straight up, at the edge of your chair, stretch your arms above your head, and interlace the fingers. Lean to one side and hold the position, then rotate to the other side and hold the position. Repeat this a few times for a good stretch.

Neck Stretch: tilt your head forward to stretch the back of the neck. Hold for a few seconds. Repeat this a few times for a good stretch. Then, sitting straight up, turn your head in one direction, hold for a few seconds and then turn the other direction.

Upper Back: sit straight up and bring one arm across your body. Your elbow should be loose. With the other arm, hold between your shoulder and elbow. Pull the arm across your body and hold. Repeat a few times with both arms for a good stretch.

Resource: http://3fatchicks.com/6-desk-exercises-to-help-relieve-stress/

Worksite Wellness News

Strive For Wellness Ambassador Update

The *Strive for Wellness* (SFW) Ambassadors meet six times per year to hear about the latest *Strive* resources and to share ideas for ways to help employees reach their wellness goals. New weekly wellness messages continue to be available through the DHSS Worksite Wellness webpage at http://dhssnet/worksitewellness/workplace.php.

Governor's 100 Missouri Miles Challenge
The *SFW* team encourages employees to take part in the Governor's 100 Missouri Miles Challenge. For more information or to log your miles, please visit http://100missourimiles.com/. **Please join the DHSS group to track your mileage with other DHSS employees.**

Regional Reach Project
The *SFW* leadership team continues to make progress in establishing additional wellness teams at locations outside of Jefferson City. Initial meetings were held with employees from the following locations.

Genesse—Kansas City
Fletcher Daniels Building—Kansas City
220 S Jefferson—St. Louis
4411 N Newstead Ave.—St. Louis
501 Lucas and Hunt—St. Louis
7545 S Lindbergh—St. Louis

Participation Agreement Reminder
For employees that signed up for the wellness incentive to receive reduced health insurance premiums, the online health risk appraisal must be completed by November 30, 2013. For more information please visit the Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan webpage at https://www.mchcp.org/.

As always, the wellness committee welcomes your ideas and encourages your participation in all DHSS and *Strive* initiatives. Please feel free to provide feedback to your committee members or ambassadors.

Sincerely,
Pat Simmons & Michelle Jacobsen
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 are: DHSS Worksite Wellness, Missouri 100 Miles and the Tackle the Flu t-shirts. **REMINDER: By wearing jeans on a Walking Wednesday, you are committing yourself to walking a total of 30 minutes at break and/or during your lunch hour.**

Exercise Classes
Start the new year off on the right foot by signing up for the exercise classes at the Wildwood campus starting in January. There will be two lunch time classes and an after work class. Watch the weekly messages for more information.

Mamm Van
Mark your calendar for **Thursday, March 20** and **Friday, March 21, 2014** for the Ellis Fischel Mamm Van. More information will follow in the weekly messages.

Blood Pressure Kits
Keep tabs on your blood pressure by utilizing the blood pressure kits in several locations across the state. For locations, click **here**.

Save the Date!
Wednesday, May 21, 2014 is National Employee Health & Fitness Day! Plan to put your walking shoes on!