Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

Nutrition for Everyone

These days, a wealth of nutrition information is at your finger tips. From diet books to newspaper articles, everyone seems to have an opinion about what you should be eating. It's no secret that good nutrition plays an essential role in maintaining health.

While you already know it is important to eat a healthy diet, you may find it more difficult to sort through all of the information about nutrition and food choices. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has compiled a variety of resources to help you start healthier eating habits.

Healthy Weight

Understanding the Energy Equation

Whether you want to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight, it's important to understand the connection between the energy your body takes in (through the foods you eat and the beverages you drink) and the energy your body uses (through the activities you do). To lose weight, you need to use more calories than you take in. To maintain a healthy weight, you need to balance the calories you use with those you take in. No matter which results you want, eating a healthy diet and being physically active can help you reach your goal.

Getting the Most Nutrition Out of Your Calories

There is a right number of calories for you to eat each day. This number depends on your age, activity level, and whether you are trying to gain, maintain, or lose weight. You could use up the entire amount on a few high-calorie foods, but chances are, you won't get the full range of vitamins and nutrients your body needs to be healthy.

Choose the most nutritionally rich foods you can from each food group each day-those packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other nutrients, but lower in calories. Pick foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products more often.

Online Seminar Reminder

Eating your Way to Wellness

When:

November 18, 2014

Where:

www.deeroaks.com

Webinar Times (CDT):

11:00 AM to 12:00 PM
1:00 PM to 2:00 PM

Public Employee Benefits Alliance

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Nutrition for Everyone

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Finding Your Balance Between Food and Physical Activity

Becoming a healthier you isn't just about eating healthy—it's also about physical activity. Regular physical activity is important for your overall health and fitness. It also helps you control body weight by balancing the calories you take in as food with the calories you expend each day.

- Be physically active, at a moderate intensity for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- Increasing the intensity or the amount of time that you are physically active can have even greater health benefits and may be needed to control body weight. About 60 minutes a day may be needed to prevent weight gain.
- Children and teenagers should be physically active 60 minutes every day, or most every day.

Fruits and Vegetables

"Eat your fruits and vegetables." You've likely heard this statement since childhood. Research shows why it is good advice:

- Healthy diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases.
- Fruits and vegetables also provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that are important for good health.
- Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories and are filling.

Need some new ideas for adding more fruits and vegetables to your daily diet?

Check out the CDC's Nutrition for Everyone at http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/index.html for tips, recipes, and more! You can find easy ways to add more fruits and vegetables into your daily eating patterns. Visit the fruit and vegetable of the month pages to find seasonal fruits and vegetables, preparation tips, and great recipes.

Not sure how many fruits and vegetables you should be eating each day?

Use the CDC's fruit and vegetable calculator. Here you can calculate your fruit and vegetable recommendations based on your calorie needs for your age, sex, and activity level. This site also has helpful tips and photographs of 1/2 cup and 1 cup fruit and vegetable examples.

You can also visit http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/index.html to find more information about vegetable subgroups and tips and ideas for fitting healthy foods into an overall eating plan.

With these helpful tips, you will soon be on your way to adding more fruits and vegetables into your healthy eating plan.

Some of this information was adapted from the following source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005, 6th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2005, and Finding Your Way to a Healthier You: Based on Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (Reviewed 2006, December 4). Nutrition for everyone. Retrieved January 11, 2007 from http://www.cdc.gov

Get your Healthy Game Day On

The excitement of football, and even the activities and feelings of anticipation leading up to games, can be unhealthy in ways many do not realize, according to Jody Gilchrist, a cardiac nurse practitioner at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Critical matchups, tight games, and crushing defeats can trigger adrenaline that reduces blood flow to the heart and other muscles and increases heart rate and blood pressure. Over time, these high levels of stress hormones can hurt your heart—even though a football game may be deemed good stress.

Adding to the effects of stress on the body would be unhealthier foods at the tailgate party, and heavier eating and drinking during the game. Not a winning combination.

Here are some tailgating tips:

- Help minimize stress by watching the game with people you enjoy.
- Knock out a few pushups and situps during commercial breaks.
- Chew gum or squeeze a stress ball to reduce anxiety and control your emotions.
- Take a brief walk at halftime, or if you are attending the game, take a walk around the stadium or to another section to meet a friend.
- Manage your net dietary intake by planning ahead and making healthier choices at other times of the day in anticipation of splurging a bit during the game.
- If tailgating at the stadium, try to conserve calories earlier in the day.
- If tailgating at home, consider using vegetables in place of chips for dips, and substitute Greek yogurt for sour cream or cream cheese dips.
- Because sodium causes fluid retention—something especially bad for heart patients—a good rule of thumb is to avoid foods that have more than 1 mg of sodium per calorie. At about 0.5 mg of sodium per calorie, natural foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables generally contain much less, so opt for them whenever possible.
- Do your best to avoid soft drinks, which are extremely high in sodium.

In the end, your health will win—even if your team does not.

Health-e headlines ™

Go green in the office

Green" offices with plants make staff happier and more productive than "lean" designs stripped of greenery, new international research shows. In fact, enriching a stark office with plants could increase productivity by 15%. Investing in landscaping may pay off through an increase in employees' quality of life and productivity, they said. Analysis into the reasons why plants are beneficial suggests that a green office increases employees' work engagement by making them more physically, cognitively, and emotionally involved in their work.

Health-e headlines ™

Experience Trumps Stuff

Should you buy that new couch or take a vacation to Colorado? Science says that you'll get the most enjoyment out of your dollar by taking the trip. A new Cornell University study shows that the enjoyment you'll get from that "experience" purchase may begin even before you go. The researchers discovered that people thinking about impending purchases, such as ski passes or concert tickets, have higher levels of happiness than those who anticipate spending money on stuff.

Health-e headlines ™

An EAP Reminder

Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can Help You Find Your Balance.

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members.

If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.

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Clinician's Corner..

Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team

Deer Oaks EAP Services

Eating Your Way To Wellness

Have you ever found yourself thinking or saying, "I may as well go off my diet during the holidays, what's the point?" or, "I'll start again in January. I'm only doomed to fail if I keep going now." Many of us are easily lured into thinking that the holidays, and our holiday eating patterns, should be all or nothing. In other words, we completely abandon any attempts to eat relatively healthfully, or there are those of us who try to do so much prevention that we end up "yo-yo-ing" from attempting to avoid any indulgences that we end up overeating anyhow.

These types of all-or-nothing thoughts can be damaging to any attempts to make major life changes, whether during the holiday season or not. To help avoid this sabotaging self-talk, consider the following tools you can try:

1. Develop a realistic goal, and break it down into even smaller goals. During the holidays, weight maintenance is a great goal. Or, instead of focusing on the actual pounds, set small activity-related goals such as walking 15 minutes, maintaining your gym routine, or counting steps with a pedometer. Realistic goals increase the likelihood of success overall i.e. it may be nice to drop 20 lbs in December, but is it realistic?

2. Elicit support where you can. See if family members or coworkers are interested in navigating through the holiday season as healthfully as possible and join together. Having someone else to be accountable for, and to keep you accountable, can help you stay on track more successfully.

3. Visualize success. Before going to a holiday gathering, imagine what tempting treats may be at your avail. Instead of avoiding these altogether, make a plan for what foods you will allow yourself to indulge in, and how much you can eat without feeling guilty. Practice (even in your mind) ensures good progress.

4. Practice mindfulness. The pace of the holidays tends to be a rapid one, and so our eating habits tend to follow suit. Whether we are eating very quickly to rush from one errand to another or stopping by a fast food restaurant, try to slow yourself down. Instead of ordering your first and favorite menu item, take some time to scan your choices to see if there is a relatively healthy choice. Or, try to slow down the movements you take when eating. Put your utensils down between bites, and chew slowly. This will allow your body to send the "full" signals to your brain as opposed to eating so quickly that the signal only reaches your brain after you've gone overboard.

5. Don't punish yourself. Striving for perfection towards attaining your goals is not only psychologically unhealthy but can lead to further failures. If you slip up, take a brief moment to process where and how you did so, and then use that for prevention in the future.

Remember that professional help is always available. Deer Oaks offers online tips, tools, and articles to help achieve a healthful holiday season. Or, consider speaking to one of our counselors 24/7 to develop a personalized plan for your holiday health goals.

By:
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Deer Oaks EAP Services

Establish Personal Financial Priorities

When you are recovering from a personal setback, you'll likely find yourself having to establish financial priorities so that you'll know where to focus your effort and resources. Not all of your household debts will equally impact your family. Your first payment priorities should be all bills associated with your essential needs, including utilities, food, mortgage or rent, and insurance. While you can most likely find ways to save on all of these bills, by cutting back and negotiating lower rates, paying them is extremely important.

If you become unemployed, you may have the right to extend your medical coverage through the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). Under COBRA, your insurance payments will likely be significantly higher than they were when you were employed, but they will be lower than similar coverage obtained on your own. Having appropriate health insurance coverage is essential because a medical emergency could devastate your finances.

The government also offers programs, such as Medicaid, for people with low incomes. Also, check with your local state government about health insurance programs.

The following is an example of how you might prioritize your financial obligations:

- First priority debts likely include your rent or mortgage, tax liabilities, insurance premiums, auto loans, and utilities.
- Second priority debts may include other secured loans through financial institutions, such as a car loan.
- Third priority lenders may include retailers, hospitals, doctors, credit card issuers and other unsecured creditors.

Remember, each person will have his or her own unique list of priorities. Realize that just because a category of debt is listed as a third priority, does not mean it isn't important. It simply means you need to contact and make payments to the higher priority creditors first.

After you decide what your priorities are, review your budget and determine which bills you are unable to fully pay. Then, contact your creditors to discuss your situation. Explain that you want to pay your bills but due to your setback, are unable to. In some situations, you may be able to get a new payment plan.

About Money Management International

Money Management International (MMI) is a nonprofit, full-service credit-counseling agency, providing confidential financial guidance, financial education, counseling and debt management assistance to consumers since 1958. MMI helps consumers trim their expenses, develop a spending plan and repay debts. Counseling is available by appointment in branch offices and 24/7 by telephone and Internet. Services are available in English or Spanish. To learn more, call 800.432.7310 or visit www.MoneyManagement.org.