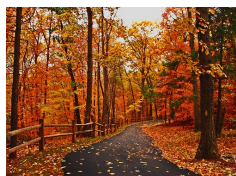


Wellness Works Coordinator's Bulletin

October 2016

Providing your wellness committee with updates and relevant health information!

Highlights from this Month's Bulletin:



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Get out there and enjoy nature!

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New Class!

Laughter is the Best Medicine

Laughter offers a number of positive organic effects on the human body. Strengthens immune system, reduces cravings and makes people more resistant to pain. Reduces the pressure, stress and increases the flexibility of muscles. Laughter is contagious and it makes you and others feel good when you are surrounded by it. Check out Danielle's **NEW** class, "Laughter is the Best Medicine" for more information on the importance of laughter in your life. To schedule this class, contact Danielle at dyale@memun.org.



Take the Office Outside



Take advantage of this beautiful fall weather and take your office out on a walk or have a meeting outside to enjoy the foliage. There is something about being in nature that is calming and good for the soul. You will find your employees more relaxed and less stressed with a nice stroll among the array of fall colors of the trees. Another good reason to get out and enjoy nature with your staff is to get in some much needed physical activity. Sitting at a desk all day is not healthy for the mind or the body so getting up and moving will help elongate those muscles and burn some calories. This will be another great way to get your staff energized and alert when they return to the office. Another outside activity that is fun and encourages team building is to plan an outdoor scavenger hunt. Get out there and enjoy nature!

**Contact Danielle to schedule
a Stretching class or
Footworks (walking) class at
dyale@memun.org.**

Brand Your Wellness Program with a Name and Logo

Naming your company's wellness program, "Anytown USA Wellness Program" is sort of like naming your baby boy "John Doe". It's generic and doesn't really give your wellness efforts their own identity and personality.

If your wellness program doesn't have its own unique name and logo, take a cue from marketers and focus on branding your organization's wellness efforts so employees easily recognize your wellness program and want to participate. That way, any time the wellness committee puts out messages or sponsors events, employees instantly know the communications or activities are part of the wellness program.

A brand may include a:

- Name
- Logo or symbol
- Catchy tagline

When thinking about branding your wellness program, you may want to consider:

- **Tone:** Make sure the name and look you give your wellness program reflect what you're trying to accomplish with your efforts. Think of words and images that evoke feelings of enthusiasm and vitality.
- **Less is more:** Go for simple words and images. You can always use a clever acronym to shorten a longer wellness program name. Basic shapes and outlines may be easier to replicate and may be more effective than intricate pictures.
- **Ask for input:** Tap wellness participants for ideas. Then, ask for feedback on proposed branding before you implement it to make sure the branding will be well received.

Branding your wellness program is a great *free* way to authenticate your program and set it up for success.

To design your logo:

- Use the many fonts, colors and clip-art images available in Word
- Hold a contest with your employees and give a prize for the best logo. As a bonus, you'll discover the creative people in your audience whom you can tap for future projects, such as posters or flyers.

Once you have your name branding in place, hold a kick-off event and really celebrate your new logo so everyone becomes aware of it. Use this kick-off event to promote other programs you have coming up.



Stressed Spelled Backwards is Dessert...

Busy with work, busy with kids, busy with social obligations, busy keeping up the house — busy, busy, busy! Regardless of where we live, the season we're in, how old we are; whether we have a houseful of kids or are kid-free, single, married, divorced or widowed — today's busy lifestyle spells **S.T.R.E.S.S.** And, the constant low-grade tension brought on by everything from mismatched socks, to worries about our jobs, and what to make for dinner tonight, causes a constant drip of the hormones adrenaline and cortisol.

And that can only mean one thing...TROUBLE!

Adrenaline and cortisol can be hero hormones if you're competing in sports, exerting high physical energy or in an emergency situation. But, if you're just driving your car, sitting at your desk, or exerting normal energy, these hormones are NOT being used most efficiently and they become corrosive to your arteries by raising your blood pressure, cholesterol and inflammation markers. We're not talking about your typical muscle tightening and stress headaches here -- we're talking about increased risk of heart disease, compromised immune system, weight gain and even depression!

Unfortunately, stress can do a number on our eating habits.

In the short-term, stress can actually suppress our appetite. However, if the stress persists, our adrenal glands continue to release cortisol, which increases our appetite. And, what types of foods do we crave? Of course...highly-processed foods high in fat, sugar and carbs. We've all been there...we reach for some chips or ice cream and, before we know it, the whole bag or carton has disappeared. How did THAT happen? These "comfort" foods earned their name for a reason...they provide comfort in times when we are angry, upset or stressed about something. And, let's face it, our association with food and comfort starts at a young age...remember those fond memories of getting our favorite ice cream or cookie after a nasty tumble off our bike or some other traumatic event?

So, yes, stress eating is a thing!

And many of us deal with it each and every day. Stress can often mean we lose sleep, exercise less, or may have an extra drink or two. These can also contribute to unhealthy eating. Losing sleep actually releases another hormone, which causes our hunger to ramp up to even higher levels. And, that's not the worst of it! While these "comfort" foods may provide some short-term comfort, they can actually increase our stress levels further. Because now that we ate a whole bag of chips, we are even MORE worried about our weight, diet and health! It is a vicious, never-ending cycle!

Is it stressing you out just reading this? It may sound like the cards are stacked against us, but there are some surefire solutions for "stress-busting" your life and managing these menacing stress hormones...without medication!

- **Reduce the stress** (sounds easy, doesn't it?!). It is obvious stress is terrible for our bodies in many different ways. So, get to the source -- identifying and managing the source of the stress can have huge benefits. But, let's be realistic, there is no way to completely eliminate stress from our lives, so there are other things we have to do to overcome the temptation of stress-induced eating.

- **Keep comfort foods out of reach.** As the saying goes..."out of sight, out of mind." You know the types of foods that you have a weakness for, so get rid of them and the temptation they provide. Instead, keep healthy munchy foods on hand.

- **Before you eat something, make it a habit to stop and ask yourself..."Am I really hungry?"** or **"Am I eating this**

to try to numb my pain or stress?" or **Is there something else I can do right now?"** Often, we are not physically hungry, but the adrenaline and cortisol trick us into thinking we are. If you are truly hungry, have a healthier option on-hand as a "go-to," such as popcorn, nuts, dark chocolate, fruit salad, or homemade granola (to satisfy the salty or sweet craving). Keeping a constant stash of cut vegetables with a dip, such as hummus, is a

GREAT way to snack, and ward off chip indulgences.

- **Eat often...**at least 5-6 meals throughout the day. If you deprive yourself of meals throughout the day and, at the same time, stress continues to build during the day, you may encounter the dangerous combination of starvation AND stress at dinner-time. This is a recipe for disaster! By eating reasonable servings of REAL food throughout the day, you can eliminate the starvation issue and it will be much easier to stay away from those tempting "comfort" foods.

- **Be mindful.** If you feel a "comfort food" urge coming on, acknowledge it, and then drink a glass of water, go for a quick walk or grab a healthy snack and see if the urge passes. Often, thirst masquerades as hunger, so a glass of water and a healthy snack can do wonders to allow the urge to pass.

- **Indulge in small portions.** Especially when you are trying to break the cycle of stress eating, go ahead and indulge, but in smaller amounts and with different foods. This can be a helpful strategy. For example, if you have a habit of indulging in chocolate ice cream at the end of a stressful day, try a piece of dark chocolate instead. You can still get the "comfort" and satisfy the sweet craving while maintaining your good health.



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Want to share this information about stress eating with your co-workers, or learn some more tips to curb the stress monsters?

Contact Abby DiPasquale at adipasquale@memun.org

Source: Eatrealamerica.com