

Wellness Works Coordinators' Bulletin

October 2019

Providing your wellness committee
with updates and relevant health
information!



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Substitute this in
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Keeping Holiday Stress at Bay

Yes, the holidays are just around the corner!

And while some people look forward to the holidays all year, others see the holiday season approaching and are overcome by a sense of dread. Now may be a good time to remind co-workers to implement these tips to help manage stress this holiday season...it is never too early to start.

Set priorities. People tend to get wrapped up in trying to create perfection at this time of the year. Set reasonable goals for what you will do to celebrate. Decide in advance what is most important to you and your family, and focus your celebrations around those things. Try to avoid replicating everything your parents did when you were young. Hang on to meaningful traditions, but avoid doing something solely because it is what your mom or dad did.

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Don't over-schedule! You and your family members need downtime to enjoy this special time of the year. Be careful to choose activities based on what you want to do rather than what you think you must do.

Make a plan. Once you have decided what your priorities are for holiday celebrations, plan how you will organize yourself to get the important work done. Make a calendar and include all important dates on it (the school play, the neighbor's open house, the drive through the neighborhood to enjoy the holiday decorations, and so on). You may even want to schedule time for any shopping, decorating, baking, writing cards, or other holiday traditions that you have decided will be part of your holiday. Carefully plan your menus and do your shopping in an organized fashion, with a list. You will be much less likely to forget important ingredients and eliminate the last minute running that leaves you exhausted and frazzled.

Keep expectations realistic. It is not your responsibility to be sure that everybody has a perfect holiday, so don't put that demand on yourself. Holiday joy is something that comes from within a person—you cannot create something that is not there.

Make a budget and keep it. If gift buying is part of your holiday celebration, decide in advance what you can afford to spend this year. Create a list of all the people you will shop for and allocate a portion of your total holiday budget to each person. That is the easy part—the hard part is sticking to the budget you create! Try to think of less expensive gift options—a baking mix, a nicely framed photograph of a shared memory, or the gift of your time. Overspending during the holidays is a major source of stress, so be careful. Remember that all the gifts in the world cannot buy happiness.

Care for yourself and your family. During the holidays, when stress can really take its toll, people tend to neglect doing those things that reduce stress. You may overindulge in food and drink, and leave such things as rest, relaxation, and exercise out of your daily life. Make it a goal to change that this holiday season. Be realistic about the types and amounts of foods you choose. Avoid sugary and fat laden snacks that may give you a quick boost, but will be followed by a drop in energy. Get outside for a brisk walk and take the kids. Think about what is causing your stress, and make a plan to change the pressures you may be putting on yourself. Rest, relax, and reflect on the meaning of the season—peace!

Wellness Your Way program (Weekly Wellness Challenges) and the Importance of Statistics

It is important for us to keep statistics on a variety of our programs for many reasons. It lets us know if you enjoy the programs we are putting out to you but more importantly, it lets us know if the programs are being utilized and making a positive impact.

For any groups that have participated in any of the Wellness Your Way challenges during the first three quarters of the 2019 year, please send Amanda (anile@memun.org) your statistics (which programs you used and estimated number of participants)—a form is attached to the email along with this Bulletin. Thank you!

Cold or Allergies— *How Do You Tell?*

Before trying to decipher your symptoms, it's important to understand the difference between allergies and colds. Colds are contagious viruses that can be passed through the air, usually from the presence of the virus in another person. And, contrary to popular belief, catching a cold doesn't only happen in cold weather. Though it might feel like longer, colds typically only last about a week.

Allergies, by contrast, are your immune system's reaction to different substances, like pollen or pet dander. Like colds, allergies aren't limited to a single season. Pollen is a common trigger of seasonal allergies, but mold, food, and dust mites can also cause symptoms to pop up. Here are 5 differences that will help you tell when you have allergy symptoms, not a cold:

1. Your eyes are itchy.

Nearly every type of allergen — from dust to pollen to

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What's The Best Exercise For You?

It can be overwhelming when it comes to choosing what to do for exercise. Here are four questions that can help guide you in exploring new activities.

What's the best exercise for you? The one you'll actually do! To stay motivated and challenged, try something new. The questions below may get you thinking about what you can do to expand your range of physical activities.

1. What factors should I consider when choosing a new exercise?

Your answers may include personal enjoyment or interest, but choose something that sounds fun or that you've always wanted to try. Also consider the following:

- **Convenience** - How close to home or work is the activity? How easily does it fit into your schedule?
- **Social factors** - Do you prefer to participate with others or do you like to exercise alone?
- **Required skill level** - Can you take a class or meet with an instructor if you need to?
- **Level of physical impact** - Does the activity involve high-impact movements that may not be suitable for you?

2. What's best for you—an exercise focused on a specific part of the body, such as abs or thighs, or several kinds of exercise that use different body parts?

Abdominal exercises will help strengthen muscle and improve your posture, but will not help you spot-reduce or lose weight specifically around the abdomen. The key here is burning calories. Aerobic (cardio) exercise is the most efficient way to burn calories, and there are many different types to try, such as bicycling, jogging and working out on an elliptical machine. Cross-training, which alternates your workout routine with various exercises, can reduce your chance of injury to a specific muscle or joint due to overuse, and it can help alleviate boredom.



3. What if a new exercise I try causes pain?

Exercise that causes pain isn't beneficial and can result in serious injury. It also can crush your motivation. Stop any activity if it hurts and try something else! It's normal to experience some soreness after trying a new exercise, but not pain.

4. What steps can I take to help prevent injury while exercising?

- Warm up before exercising. Start with a less-intense (slower, easier) version of your cardio activity for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Wear proper shoes and protective gear.
- Take precautions in inclement weather. For example, if it's very cold out, dress in many layers that you can remove as you warm up, and cover your mouth so your lungs don't get irritated. Avoid jogging if it's icy and slippery.
- Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercising.
- Cool down after exercising. Do a lower-intensity version of what you did during your workout for 5 to 10 minutes, or try some general cool-down exercises.
- Get adequate sleep.

By answering the above questions, it may help you narrow in on some activities that will keep you motivated and safe.

Cauliflower Rice Full Recipe

1. Cut off the bottom of the cauliflower. Compost the scraps.
2. Break off large pieces of cauliflower florets. If you decide to grate the cauliflower by hand, do this with the larger florets. If you are putting the cauliflower through a food processor, break the cauliflower into small florets.
3. Grate (or process) the florets into a small, rice-like texture.
4. Heat up a skillet on medium to medium-low heat with olive oil.
5. Cook the cauliflower rice for 3-5 minutes, until it is tender but not mushy.
6. Serve in substitute of rice for any rice-based dish!

From Kiersten Hickman/Eat This, Not That!, July 12, 2019



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pets — can make your eyes look red or feel swollen and itchy. But colds, no matter how they're caused, typically do not make your eyes itch. If your eyes feel dry and you want to rub them often, you probably have allergies.

2. Your mucus is clear and watery.

Sneezing and runny noses are shared symptoms and can be present whether you have a cold or allergies. However, the type of mucus you have is a good indicator of what's going on. When you have a cold, your immune system works to fight off the virus, which can make your mucus become thick and green. With allergies, you may still have to blow your nose just as frequently, but your mucus should be clear and watery.

3. You're not exhausted (just annoyed).

A cold will usually make you feel run down — eager to go to bed early or lie down and rest in the middle of the day. You may even experience a low fever or mild body aches. Allergies don't tend to cause fatigue or body pain. The symptoms of allergies are generally limited to your eyes, nose, and throat, making allergies annoying, but not exhausting.



4. Your symptoms stay the same.

As a cold progresses, the symptoms tend to change every few days. You may start out with a cough but, as the virus moves through your body, you develop a sore throat, a fever, or sinus pain. When you have allergies, on the other hand, your symptoms tend to stay the same. If you notice that the symptoms you had a week ago are the same ones you have now, there's a good chance you have a case of allergies.

5. Certain situations make your symptoms worse.

Allergies are generally triggered (and worsened) by something in the environment, whereas with a cold the severity of your symptoms will remain consistent even as your environment changes. If you have seasonal allergies, for instance, you probably experience more symptoms when you're outside than when you're at home. If you have pet-related allergies, however, spending too much time inside around a cat could trigger your symptoms. Pay attention to where and when your symptoms appear—this could be one of your biggest clues to whether you have allergies or a common cold.

The takeaway? Next time you're under the weather, try to determine whether you have a cold or allergies before you reach for over-the-counter medicine. Allergy meds and cold meds work in different ways, so you'll want to be sure you're making the right choice. Drinking lots of fluids is a good idea in either case. And of course, talk to your doctor if your symptoms persist and you're still not sure whether it's allergies or a cold.

Source: Mango Health

Wondering how you can help promote healthy employees this flu season?

Consider offering the "Flu and You" class with Anne Charles (acharles@memun.org) or simply hang up posters around your worksite reminding employees about ways to reduce the spread of germs and viruses; you can find these at www.cdc.org/flu.



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