



# Employee Assistance Program Newsletter

The EAP is available on line at [www.milwaukee.gov/der/eap](http://www.milwaukee.gov/der/eap)

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Depression and Stress
- Healthy Eating
- Personal Finances
- Alcohol/Substance Use

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## DEPRESSION

Everyone has ups and downs and sadness is a normal part of life. However, depression is different from normal sadness because it interferes with your ability to get through everyday life.

Someone struggling with depression may find it hard to focus at work, concentrate/think clearly, sleep, eat and find enjoyment in things they had always liked.

Feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and worthlessness may leave one with poor energy and no

sense of relief in sight.

Depression can affect anyone and everyone no matter gender, age or ethnic background. However, the following risk factors have been linked to depression:

- Isolation/loneliness
- Lack of social outlets/support
- Recent stressful life experiences
- Family history of depression
- Marital/relational

problems

- Early childhood trauma/abuse
- Financial strain
- Chronic medical problems
- Alcohol/substance use.

Remember that depression is both very real and treatable. Consult a medical doctor, mental health counselor or **EAP Coordinator, Cris Zamora at 414-286-3145** for a free and confidential consultation.

## PRACTICAL WAYS TO REDUCE HOLIDAY STRESS

Tips for less holiday stress include:

- Shop early
- Use lists and calendars to stay organized
- Set attainable decorating goals.
- Delegate chores.

- Allow guests to bring items.
- Rent funny DVDs and videos to keep people occupied.
- Give yourself extra time.
- Stick to your finan-

cial budget.

- Avoid impulse buys
- Be flexible with timing, food, and schedules to reduce holiday stress.
- If you drink, do not over-indulge.

## YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

The brain, like our other organs, is affected by what we eat and drink. There are some important nutrients for brain development and function, but they can only work properly if a wide range of other nutrients are also available in the right amounts and in proportion to each other.

Despite fads and commercials promising immediate results, there is no "magic bullet" or single nutrient that holds the key to mental health and well-being. A combination of nutrients that include the following are most com-

monly associated with good mental health and well-being:

**polyunsaturated fatty acids** (particularly the *omega 3 types found in oily fish and some plants*);

**minerals**, such as zinc (in whole grains, legumes, meat and milk), magnesium (in green leafy vegetables, nuts and whole grains), and iron (in red meat, green leafy vegetables, eggs and some fruit); and vitamins, such as folate (in green leafy vegetables and fortified cereals), a range of B vitamins (whole grain products, yeast and dairy products), and

antioxidant vitamins such as C and E (in a wide range of fruit and vegetables).

The diet that would give us the right amount and balance of these nutrients would contain: lots of different vegetables and fruit, a wide variety of whole grains, nuts, seeds and legumes, and some occasional oily fish, lean meat and dairy products.

Source:

<http://www.sustainweb.org/foodandmentalhealth/about/>

*"The brain...is affected by what we eat and drink."*

## EVERY DAY EXERCISE

The following is a list of every-day calorie burn activities:

- Shopping:** Pushing a cart through the store, bagging your own groceries, taking them to the car and returning the cart burns 243 calories.
- Laundry:** 30 minutes of folding can burn 72 calories.
- Vacuum the carpet:** 20 minutes of vacuuming will burn 56 calories.
- Cleaning up the snow:** Thirty minutes of shoveling snow burns 202.5 calories.
- Cooking dinner:** You'll burn 74 calories during the 30 minutes spent cooking the meal.
- Mopping:** 30 minutes of mopping the floor will burn 153 calories.
- Smooching.** Yup, 30 minutes of kissing burns 36 calories. That's two Crystal Light Popsicles!



## DIET MYTH

**Myth:** Fatty Foods equals rapid weight gain.

**Fact:** Many people throw in the towel on their diet after eating that piece of Holiday pie.

Remember weight gain is a slow process. One

needs to eat an extra 3500 calories to gain one pound of body fat (and vice versa for losing it).

Daily fluctuations of a couple pounds is normal and mostly due to water weight, which will resolve itself over time.

The important thing is to not get disappointed and give up. A lot of people feel guilty and think they've blown their diet if they eat rich foods.

For long-term weight control, balance high-fat foods with healthy food and activity.

## CREATING A PERSONAL BUDGET

The first step in creating a budget is to determine how much and to whom you are spending your money.

1. Gather all your expenses, receipts and bills over a month.
2. Create a budget worksheet that has a line down the middle. On the left side record all expenses that are **Fixed**. These expenses often do not change from month to month and include items like: rent/

mortgage, loan(s) vehicle insurance, property tax, medications etc. Now, on the right side of the budget worksheet write down all of your **Variable** expenses. Examples include: utility bills, food/groceries, entertainment, gasoline, clothing, phone etc.

3. The third step is to identify **Essential** vs. **Non-essential** items from your budget worksheet. It is easier to focus on modifying **Variable** expenses

as likely candidates for your **Non-essentials**. If cuts or modifications must be made, looking at your Variable expenses is usually the safer place to start. Make needed adjustments and monitor your progress for a couple of months. Remember, a budget worksheet is a work in progress and may require periodic checks to ensure you're on track!



## AVOIDING OVERDRAFT FEES

**“Available Balance”:** Many financial institutions are now posting “*available balance*”, which generally reflects the money you have in your account available to you, but a common trigger of overdraft fees occurs when the transaction is actually posting and misses transactions that come in at the end of the day or checks.

**“Envelope system”:** Create a budget and divide your spending habits into several categories. Put the cash allotted for each category into an envelope for that category. Use the cash in the envelopes and once you run out of cash, that's it!

**“Overdraft Protection”:** is a program in which your main account is linked to a secondary

account (like your savings account, or a line of credit). If your main account is overdrawn, money can be pulled from the secondary account and you don't get slapped with an overdraft fee.

Beware that some have monthly fees or charge each time you use it. It pays to research these first.

*“ Available Balance may not reflect transactions that come in at the end of the day or checks”*



## CREDIT QUESTION AND ANSWER

**Q.** How can I get a free credit report?

**A.** The only legitimate place to order your free credit reports is from the [AnnualCreditReport.com](http://AnnualCreditReport.com) Web site, calling 877-322-8228, or fill-

ing out the Annual Credit Report Request Form and mailing it to:

*Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281.*

Other sites may advertise “free” credit reports, but look out! They may also trick you into paying for credit monitoring services you don't need.

[http://www.federalreserve.gov/consumerinfo/fitips\\_creditscore.htm](http://www.federalreserve.gov/consumerinfo/fitips_creditscore.htm)

The EAP is available on line at [www.milwaukee.gov/der/eap](http://www.milwaukee.gov/der/eap)

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**Employee Assistance Mission Statement**

*It is the mission of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist employees who develop behavioral/medical problems that may directly affect their work performance, and to provide Key personnel with policy and procedural guidelines for the management of these problems.*

**Labor Management Employee Assistance Program Steering Committee**

*The City of Milwaukee Employee Assistance Program is guided and overseen by a Joint Labor and Management Steering Committee comprised of representatives from major departments and unions.*

*The Employee Assistance Program is operated by the City of Milwaukee Department of Employee Relations with the assistance of the Joint Labor and Management Steering Committee.*

## WELLNESS...YOUR CHOICE MILWAUKEE PROGRAM

Please remember to complete your health assessment.

Learn about your health status by taking this **free** health screening and assessment with ongoing access to a dedicated health professional.

**Important dates:**

March 1st: Deadline for lab work to be completed.

March 31st: Deadline for Health Assessment to be completed.

For more information, visit

<http://city.milwaukee.gov/der/WellnessYourChoiceMilwaukee.htm>

or call

262-253-5157.



## SUBSTANCE ABUSE MYTHS

1. **“Overcoming addiction is all about will power”:** Sheer will power is not enough. Prolonged exposure to substances alters the chemical make up of our brains that cause strong cravings and the compulsion to use.
2. **“Addiction is a disease so there is nothing you can do to change it”:** Yes, addiction is a disease but just like other diseases it can be addressed through treatment, medication and a healthy life style.
3. **“You have to hit Rock-Bottom before getting better”:** While it is true that the earlier one begins to live healthier the better—recovery can begin anytime.
4. **“You can’t force someone into treatment...they have to want it to get better”:** Many people that enter treatment have done so because of some sort of pressure (family, employment, Court, spouse, finances etc). Although under pressure or protest, sobriety may offer a chance for things to clear-up enough to allow for insight and self-motivation later on.
5. **“Treatment didn’t work before...some cases are just hopeless.”:** Recovery is a process and with possible set backs/relapses. A set back should not be viewed as a failure but a sign to get back on track.