



A Healthy Outlook!

301-279-3197 • FAX 301-279-3756 • www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/EAP Vol. 1, No. 5

Living Well in Summer

Summer means outdoor living—sports, swimming, gardening, barbecues, and picnics are all part of what summer's about. Like so many things in life, there can be a downside, but not if you heed some simple advice to avoid summer's scorn. Here are some tips on how to enjoy summer and keep health problems at bay.

- * **Avoid insect bites.** Use insect repellent and avoid scented products and bright clothes. Wash repellent off before coming indoors. Watch out especially for bees and wasps. If bitten, remove the stinger with your fingernail, or scrape it away with a straight edge—a credit card works well. Wash the bitten area with soap and water and apply a cold compress or anti-itch medication.
- * **Prevent food poisoning.** Use plenty of ice in your cooler; serve food in a shaded area; and don't let food that should be refrigerated sit out for too long. Use good judgment and your nose. If there is any doubt about spoilage, throw it out!
- * **Stay away from poison ivy.** Poison ivy changes its appearance with the seasons. Know what it looks like. Calamine lotion and hydrocortisone cream can alleviate the itch. Severe cases may warrant a trip to the physician.
- * **Protect against sunburn.** Apply a sunscreen, with an SPF of at least 15, 30 minutes before going out into the sun. Sunscreens come off in the water and with sweat—even the waterproof brands aren't foolproof, so reapply frequently. Wear a hat and sunglasses and try to avoid being out in the sun during peak hours.
- * **Drink water.** Dehydration is a serious threat in hot weather. Drink six to eight glasses daily to stay hydrated.
- * **Keep your shoes on.** Going barefoot puts you at risk not only for cuts that can lead to infections, but also for getting blisters and painful stubbed toes.

Even with the best care and safeguards, you still may experience a summer-related health problem. If you have any doubts about your ability to treat it, call your physician for advice, or go the nearest emergency room if necessary. Also, keep the poison control number handy-1-800-222-1222. ★

Based on information from UConn Health Center.

We're Moving!

The EAP will be moving to a new office during the summer. Here's our new address and phone number:

The EAP at North Lake Center
15101 Bauer Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20853
301-460-2100.

We will remain open except for the days immediately surrounding the move and will continue to answer our phones and/or return messages even while moving. For up-to-date information about the exact date of the move, call us at either our current number, 301-279-3197, or the new one, or check out our Web site: <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/eap> ★

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Angry at Work

Here are some tips for reducing anger in the workplace, as suggested by Ronald Potter-Efron MSW, Ph.D., author of *Letting Go of Anger*:

- Remember this is only work, not life and death.
- Most emergencies are false ones—don't panic.
- Leave your home anger at home and your work anger at work.
- Take a time out before you lose your control.
- Stay respectful—avoid personal attacks.
- Be clear, direct, and specific about what you want.
- Find someone you can talk with when you're upset.
- Practice acceptance—don't interfere just because someone does things differently than you.
- Better a little anger now than a whole lot later. ★

What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar disorder, also known as manic-depression, is a mood disorder characterized by dramatic mood swings. These mood swings range from extreme highs (mania) to low or irritable moods (depression). It is estimated that 2.5 million Americans have this disorder. Symptoms of a



manic state include increased energy and activity levels, irritability, racing thoughts, rapid talking, decreased need for sleep, and unrealistic beliefs in one's ability and powers. A person's behavior during a manic episode is often reckless, leading to spending sprees, rash business or money decisions, and sexual indiscretions. Symptoms of the depressive phase may include loss of interest or pleasure in activities once



enjoyed, a low or irritable mood, change in appetite or sleep pattern, fatigue, and thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts.

Most people with bipolar disorder can be treated effectively with medication. A psychiatrist can help individuals find the right medication or combination of medications to aid them in their recovery. It is suggested that those with bipolar disorder receive guidance, education, and support from a mental health professional to help them survive personal relationships, maintain a healthy self-image, and ensure compliance with his or her treatment. Support and self-help groups also are available for people with this disorder.

Don't know where to start to find help? Call the MCPS EAP at 301-279-3197.

Based on information provided by the National Mental Health Association. ★

Ask the EAP

Q. Are EAP services available during the summer?

A. Yes. EAP staff are 12-month employees, so counselors are available for assessment, referral, and short-term counseling services throughout the summer. Procedures to see us remain the same as during the school year. Just call 301-279-3197 if you would like to make an appointment to see a counselor.

Do you have a question for the EAP? Send us your questions via FirstClass, Outlook or the Pony to Jeff Becker.

"Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

How Sleepy Are You ?

This simple questionnaire can help you determine if you're suffering from excessive daytime sleepiness. Just rate how likely you would be to doze off in any of the following situations. The scale ranges from 0 to 3 (0 meaning you'd never doze off or fall asleep in a given situation and 3 meaning there is a good chance you'd nod off). To get your score, add up the numbers you put after each situation. This scale is a tool to help you identify how sleepy you are during the day, which is a symptom of many sleep disorders.

Choose the most appropriate number for each situation:

- 0—Would never doze
- 1—Slight chance of dozing
- 2—Moderate chance of dozing
- 3—High chance of dozing

Situation—	
Sitting and reading	_____
Watching television	_____
Sitting inactive in a public place (e.g., theater or meeting)	_____
As a passenger in a car for an hour without a break	_____
Lying down to rest in the afternoon	_____
Sitting and talking to someone	_____
Sitting quietly after lunch (when you've had no alcohol)	_____
In a car, when stopped for traffic	_____

Your Score

A score of less than 8 means that you're not suffering from excessive daytime sleepiness. A score of 10 or more means you may need to think more about your sleep. If your score is 15 or more, please share this information with your physician, describing all of your sleep-related symptoms.

Remember, true excessive daytime sleepiness is almost always caused by an underlying medical condition that usually can be diagnosed easily and treated effectively.

Source: Murray W. Johns, M.D., director of the Sleep Center at Epworth Hospital or *A Woman's Guide to Sleep*, by Joyce A. Walsleben, Ph.D. ★

Communicating with Your Preteen and Teen Fosters Self-Respect

Internal control helps preteens and teens make safer decisions, but high self-esteem is what allows them to believe in and stick by their good choices. A child with a positive self-image will most likely have the courage to resist peer pressure to drink or use other drugs. In order to encourage our children not to pursue these activities, it is important to build strong relationships with them, based on mutual respect.

Make time for your son or daughter. Find an activity you enjoy doing together and pursue it.

Listen, really listen. Because parents have so much to do and so little time, they often try to listen while doing other tasks. Put your tasks aside so your child knows that you're really paying attention. Don't do all the talking or give long lectures.

Encourage independent thinking. Help your children practice making decisions on their own. Let them know that it is okay to act independently.

Praise your children for who they are, not just for their accomplishments. Whenever parents are quicker to praise than criticize, children feel good about themselves, and they develop the confidence to trust their own judgment.

Give adolescents responsibility for their own problems. Allow your children to experience the consequences of their behavior, even though these consequences may be uncomfortable or embarrassing.

Encourage outside interests. Children who are involved in afterschool activities and sports develop friendships and interests that will help to keep them away from alcohol and other drugs. Adolescents who learn to have fun, as well as cope with stress in healthy ways, will be less likely to turn to substances to relax.

Based on information from *A Parent's Guide for the Prevention of Alcohol, Tobacco, and other Drug Use*, Suburban Hospital Healthcare System. ★

Upcoming Events



June is National Safety Month

Get information on the following safety issues at <http://www.nsc.org/nsm/>:

June 1–7: Driving Safety Week

Learn how to protect yourself, your passengers, and other drivers. Get information about distracted driving and other driver safety issues.

June 8–14: Home & Community Safety Week

Find out how to protect the elderly from falls in the home, and create a safe community for your family and friends.

June 15–21: Preparedness Week

Get information on how to prepare for emergencies at home, at work, and in your community.

June 22–30: Workplace Safety Week



July is National Anti-Boredom Month

Get information at <http://www.boringinstitute.com>



August is National Minority Donor Awareness Month

Get information at http://www.marow.org/NEWS/RELEASES/message_life091599.html

REGULAR ACTIVITY

Get Regular Physical Activity and Stay Ahead of the Game

Here are some of the pluses of regular physical activity:

- Helps you handle stress
- Boosts your enthusiasm and optimism
- Helps you release tension, so you can relax and sleep
- Helps to lower your blood pressure
- Helps to raise your HDL—“good” cholesterol
- Helps to lower your LDL—“bad” cholesterol
- Reduces your risk of heart disease and stroke
- Improves blood circulation throughout your body ★

Contributed by Susan E. Ghelman, R.D., L.D., food service supervisor, Division of Food and Nutrition Services.

Another Good Reason to Check Out Our Web Site!

You can now find past issues of *Healthy Outlook* on our Web site. The site has been revised recently. Check out the new look and let us know what you think!

Go to <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/eap/>

Published by the Employee Assistance Program
Produced by the Office of Global Access Technology

2371.03 • ELECTRONIC GRAPHICS & PUBLISHING SERVICES • 24K • 5.03



A Healthy Outlook!

To help employees with troubling issues before they become overwhelming.



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Important Notice: Information in *A Healthy Outlook!* is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional. For further questions or help with specific problems or personal concerns contact your employee assistance professional. You may contact us or send your questions and comments to

Debra_Tipton@fc.mcps.k12.md.us.

Please note that e-mail is not necessarily confidential.