



# A Healthy Outlook!

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## Holiday Stress

The holiday season is upon us. As a result, many people experience a higher level of stress than usual. You may find yourself rushing around from place to place, engaged in activities such as going to a party or searching for the perfect gift for someone. This hectic pace is what frequently causes people to become overwhelmed and stressed. Here are some tips to help manage the holiday season stress:

- Don't put health last on your list. There is so much to do during the holiday season that some things will

have to be put on the back burner—don't put the care of your body on the back burner.

- Get your regular amount of sleep. Maintain your nighttime routine, even at the busiest of times, to help you get the sleep you need and to help fight fatigue during the day.
- Exercise. This is a natural stress reducer and can help you sleep better at night
- Keep your eating habits as regular as possible. All the seasonal gatherings will offer you many tempting foods to enjoy but try to be reasonable. Don't choose this time of year to go on a diet.

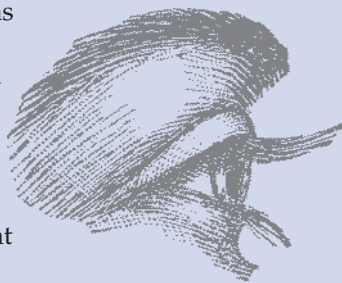
With all the treats available, your weight will probably not go down but your stress levels will go up.

- Keep your plans realistic. Remember to think about the demands of your regular schedule before adding holiday events. Underestimate how much you can do in one day and overestimate how long it takes to do your daily tasks.
- Take a moment to relax. Remember to take time for yourself. Set aside time for yourself to do something you enjoy—read a book, listen to your favorite music, or just sit quietly.

Taken from *Holiday Stress Beaters*

## Avoid Eyestrain

Of all the hazards employees face at work, eyestrain is frequently ranked as one of the most serious concerns. It has been suggested that many eye problems come directly from long periods of time looking at a computer monitor, as well as other issues that affect the amount of moisture and quality of the air in an office environment. Here are some steps suggested by Ronald Harwin and Colin Hayes in *Healthy Computing: Risks and Remedies Every Computer User*



*Needs to Know—*

- To stimulate tear formation and lubrication, blink regularly
- Make a point of washing your eyes whenever you visit the restroom
- If your eyes are chronically dry, use tear substitutes

If you have concerns about your eyes, please be sure to contact your doctor to discuss this and to get an appropriate referral, if needed.

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## Healthy Holiday Tips

The holiday season is well upon us once again. The hustle and bustle of the season can sometimes cause us to forget the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Holidays only add to our already busy, hectic, and stressful schedules. Remember moderation and balance will help you maintain a healthy lifestyle and still enjoy the parties, dinners, and family gatherings. Here are just a few tips to keep you on the healthy track during the holidays:

\* Eat a low-fat, high-fiber snack before going to a holiday celebration—a

piece of fruit, raw vegetable, or even a small sandwich on whole wheat bread.

- Do not skip meals because it can cause you to be too hungry and overeat.
- Eat low-fat meals and snacks during the day so you can enjoy a special holiday treat.
- Drink plenty of water and choose sugar-free or reduced calorie beverages.
- Watch your portion sizes!
- Avoid standing by the buffet line or the hors d'oeuvres table—it's too tempting. Move around and mingle with friends and family.
- Nibble on fruit, vegetables, and broiled shrimp rather than cheese cubes, chips, creamy dips, and desserts. These

choices are healthier & more filling.

- Offer to bring a low-fat hors d'oeuvre, entrée, or dessert.
- Keep moving through regular daily exercise and an active leisure time.

Always keep in mind that the holiday season is not all about food; most important, it is about enjoying memorable times with family and friends. Have a happy and healthy holiday season.

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

## Parties and the Social Scene

Parties or “get togethers” are a major part of the high school social scene. They can be an enjoyable way for kids to meet and socialize. However, without proper planning and careful supervision, parties can be a disaster waiting to happen. The following guidelines will help you keep parties both safe and more fun.

### What to do when the party is at your house

Before the party:

- Set the ground rules. Your son or daughter needs to know what to expect.
- Limit party attendance. Curb the “open party” situation.
- Designate the “off-limits” rooms in your house.
- Know your legal responsibilities and share them with your child.
- Set a time for the party to end.
- Remove any family liquor from areas accessible to party guests.
- Invite other couples to help chaperone.

At the party:

- Be present and visible. Don't be pressured into staying out of sight.
- No smoking, no alcohol, no drugs.
- No leaving the party and then returning.
- Open cans or containers cannot be brought into the party.
- Never allow anyone you suspect is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs to drive. Call their parents, a cab, or ask a sober adult to drive them home.
- Don't hesitate to call police if unwanted guests refuse to leave.

### What to do when the party is elsewhere

- Call the host parent to be sure that a parent will be present and get assurance that alcohol or drugs will not be permitted.
- Know how your child will get to and from the party.
- Discuss the possible situations your adolescent might encounter and how to handle them. Provide him/her with

information on how you can be reached should he/she want to leave early.

- Establish clear, firm rules against driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol or riding with someone who has been drinking or using drugs.
- Be awake for your child's return or have him or her wake you. This gives you the opportunity to assess whether or not your child has been using drugs or alcohol.

*Information taken from A Parent's Guide for the Prevention of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use, Suburban Hospital Healthcare System*

### Quote

*“And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years.”*

Abraham Lincoln

## Are You Satisfied With Your Family Life?

The Family APGAR is a five-item scale that has proven to be a valid and reliable measure of an individual's satisfaction with his or her family life. If you feel that you are not very satisfied with your family life and want to talk about it, please contact the EAP at 301-460-2100.

**Family APGAR Questionnaire**  
Directions: For each item, check only one space. For purposes of this questionnaire, the word "family" refers to the individual(s) with whom you usually live.

	Almost always	Some of the time	Hardly ever
I am satisfied with the help that I receive from my family when something is troubling me.			
I am satisfied with the way my family discusses items of common interest and shares problem solving with me.			
I find my family accepts my wishes to take on new activities or make changes in my lifestyle.			
I am satisfied with the way my family expresses affection and responds to my feelings such as anger, sorrow, and love.			
I am satisfied with the amount of time my family and I spend together.			
<b>Total</b>			

Scoring: Almost always = 2 points, Some of the time = 1 point, Hardly ever = 0 points  
The scores on the five questions are then totaled.  
A score of 7–10 suggests a highly functional family.  
A score of 4–6 suggests a moderately dysfunctional family.  
A score of 0–3 suggests a severely dysfunctional family.

Source: Smilkstein, G., Ashworth, C., & Montano, D. (1982). Validity and reliability of the Family APGAR as a test of family function. *Journal of Family Practice*, 15: 303–311.

## Healthy Anger versus Problem Anger

Everybody gets angry once in a while. For most people, their anger tells them something is wrong. They figure out what is bothering them and determine whether it is worth taking action to change the situation. If not, they are able to let their anger go. Here is how the healthy anger chain works. My anger—

- tells me that I have a problem,
- tells me that I need to think about it,
- signals that I may need to say or do something, and
- tells me to check out the results of what I say or do.

Enter the person who has an unhealthy anger—

- My anger tells me everything is a problem.
- I constantly think about it.
- I come on too strong with what I say or do.
- I ignore the bad results and fail to change my actions.
- I won't let go of my anger.

Familiar? Call the EAP and make an appointment. Learn how to express your anger in a healthy way.

Based on information taken from, *Angry all the Time: An Emergency Guide to Anger Control*, Ron Potter-Efron, M.S.W.

## Managing Your Time

A major contributor to stress is the mismanagement of time. To make the most of your time, work to gain control over these time wasters—

- Telephone interruptions
- Ever-shifting priorities
- Ineffective delegation
- Drop-in visitors and socialization
- Too many meetings
- A disorganized work environment
- Inability to say 'no'
- Indecision
- Procrastination
- Ineffective communication
- Perfectionism.



## Ask the EAP

**Q** I'm having a conflict with a co-worker. How can the EAP help me?

**A** "Conflict with a coworker" is one of the more common reasons people cite for using the EAP. The EAP can help by giving you the chance to

explain the situation to an objective third party. Sometimes the mere telling of your story allows for new thinking about a situation. After hearing what's going on and what you've already tried, the EAP can help you consider some different options. These might include

both external (e.g., other resources available within MCPS) and internal approaches (e.g., behavioral or attitudinal changes on your part).

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



## Upcoming Events

### December

#### National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month

For more information, contact the coalition at 240-247-6004 (in Silver Spring) or on their Web site at <http://www.ncadd.com/3dmonth/index.htm>

### February

#### American Heart Month

For more information, contact the American Heart Association 7272 Greenville Avenue at 800-242-8721 (in Dallas, Texas) or go to their Web site at [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

### 2/9-2/15

#### National Children of Alcoholics Week

For more information, you can reach the National Association for Children of Alcoholics at 888-554-2627 (in Rockville, Maryland) or go to their Web site at [www.nacoa.org](http://www.nacoa.org)

### 2/23-3/2

#### National Eating Disorders Awareness Week

For more information, you can call The National Eating Disorders Association at 206-382-3587 ext. 19 (in Seattle, WA) or go to their Web site at: <http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>



## *A Healthy Outlook!*

*To help employees with troubling issues before they become overwhelming.*



#### EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

SPECIALISTS: Debbie Tipton  
Robyn Rosenbauer  
Jeff Becker

EAP at North Lake Center  
15101 Bauer Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20853  
phone: 301-460-2100  
[www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/EAP](http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/EAP)

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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](mailto:Debra_Tipton@fc.mcps.k12.md.us).

Please note that e-mail is not necessarily confidential.