



# A Healthy Outlook!

301-460-2100 • FAX 301-460-2113 • [www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/EAP](http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/EAP) • Vol. 2, No. 3

## Is it Safe to Leave the Person With Alzheimer's Disease Alone?

This issue needs careful evaluation and is certainly a safety concern. The following points may help you decide.

Does the person with Alzheimer's disease—

- become confused or unpredictable under stress?
- recognize a dangerous situation, for example, fire?
- know how to use the telephone in an emergency?
- know how to get help?
- stay content within the home?
- wander and become disoriented?
- show signs of agitation, depression, or withdrawal when left alone for any period of time?
- attempt to pursue former interests or hobbies that might now warrant supervision, such as cooking, appliance repair, or woodworking?

You may want to seek input and advice from a health care professional to assist you in these considerations. As Alzheimer's disease progresses, these questions will need ongoing evaluation. ■

Source: Adapted from *Home Safety for People with Alzheimer's Disease*, by the Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center (ADEAR). ADEAR is a service of the National Institute on Aging (NIA). The booklet is free and can be accessed on the Web, <http://www.niapublications.org/adearnia/homesafety.asp>. It can be ordered by telephone from the NIA Information Center, 800-222-2225.

## Stress: Who Has Time for It?

### What is stress?

Stress is what you feel when you react to pressure, either from the outside world (work, family, friends) or from inside yourself (wanting to do well at work, wanting to get along with co-workers). Stress is a normal reaction for people of all ages. It's caused by your body's instinct to protect itself from emotional or physical pressure or, in extreme situations, from danger.

### Is stress always bad?

No. In fact, a little bit of stress is good. Most of us couldn't push ourselves to do well at things—work, school—without feeling the pressure of competition. Without the stress of deadlines, most of us also wouldn't be able to finish projects or get to work on time.

### If stress is so normal, why do I feel so bad?

With all the things happening in the world, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Things that you can't control are often the most frustrating. Maybe you and your partner are fighting, or your social life is a mess. You can also feel bad when you put pressure on yourself—like pressure to get promoted at your job. A common reaction to stress is to criticize yourself. You may even get so upset that things that were enjoyable are now bothersome. When this happens,

it's easy to think there's nothing you can do to change things. But you can! See the tips below.

### Things that help fight stress

- Eating well-balanced meals on a regular basis
- Drinking less caffeine
- Getting enough sleep
- Exercising on a regular basis ■

\*Revised from "Stress: Who Has Time for It?" Available at [www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org).

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## EAP Offers Spring Stress Management Series

### Workshops

#### Stress and Its Impact on Your Health Thursday March 18, 2004

A practical look at the effect stress has on individuals, both mentally and physically, along with helpful strategies for listening to internal alarm systems and proactively implementing stress management techniques that can improve health, productivity, and life satisfaction.

#### Managing the Stress of Relationships Thursday April 22, 2004

Designed to help employees better understand the causes and impact of relationship stress. There also will be opportunities to share practical strategies for improving interpersonal skills that can enhance relationships, reduce conflict, and increase teamwork.

Workshops are conducted by Greg Brannen of Shady Grove and Washington Adventist hospitals. Workshops will be held at North Lake Center in Rockville from 4–5p.m. To register for one or both workshops, contact Cynthia Thompson at 301-460-2100 or on FirstClass. ■

### Group

#### Stress 101

#### Tuesday March 30, April 13 & 20, 2004

A three-session group that provides both a personal and experiential look at stress management. This group offers the opportunity to discuss personal stressors and struggles of daily life. The sessions will introduce and provide the opportunity for group members to practice stress management techniques.

The group will be held at North Lake Center in Rockville from 4–5p.m. To register for the three-session group, contact Cynthia Thompson at 301-460-2100 or on FirstClass. ■

## April: Alcohol Awareness Month

According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD), alcoholism and drug dependence are America's number one health problems.

### The scope of the problem

- There are more deaths and disabilities each year in the United States from substance abuse than from any other cause.
- About 18 million Americans have alcohol problems; about 5 to 6 million Americans have other drug problems.
- More than half of all adults have a family history of alcoholism or problem drinking.
- More than 9 million children live with a parent dependent on alcohol and/or illicit drugs.

### The consequences

- One quarter of all emergency room admissions, one third of all suicides, and more than half of all homicides and incidents of domestic violence are alcohol-related.

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## Concerned about your alcohol use?

Take our confidential self-assessment: <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/eap/self-assessment.htm>

- Heavy drinking contributes to illness in each of the top three causes of death— heart disease, cancer, and stroke.
- Almost half of all traffic fatalities are alcohol-related.
- Between 48% and 64% of people who die in fires have blood alcohol levels indicating intoxication.
- Fetal alcohol syndrome is the leading known cause of mental retardation.

### The cost

- Alcohol and drug abuse costs the American economy an estimated \$276 billion per year in lost productivity, health care expenditures, crime, motor vehicle crashes, and other conditions.
- Untreated addiction is more expensive than heart disease, diabetes, and cancer combined.
- Every American adult pays nearly \$1,000 per year for the damages of addiction.

### So what can be done?

Like other diseases, addiction can be overcome with proper treatment. Alcoholism and drug dependence are treatable and millions of people achieve recovery. If you think you may have a problem with alcohol or drugs, call the EAP. ■

Adapted from *Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Are America's Number One Health Problem*, by The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence at <http://www.ncadd.org/facts/numberoneprob.html>

## April 2–4: Alcohol-Free Weekend

During Alcohol-Free Weekend, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) extends an open invitation to all Americans to engage in three alcohol-free days. Those who experience difficulty or discomfort in this 72-hour experiment are urged to contact the EAP to learn more about alcoholism and its early symptoms. ■

Adapted from <http://www.ncadd.org/programs/awareness/index.html>

## Staff Retention and Motivation

According to an article in *Working Woman* ("Best Bosses Tell All," October 2000) there are seven habits of particular importance to supervisors with regard to addressing staff issues of retention and motivation. They are as follows:

1. Trust the team—seek the input of your staff
2. Make connections—know your staff and what's important to them
3. Respect individuality—recognize individual needs, motivational differences, and learning styles
4. Get buy-in—assume that people want to be part of a larger whole
5. Say thank you—show appreciation and acknowledge the efforts of your staff
6. Let others play—delegate
7. Take responsibility—get involved, maintain controls, have a vision, address problems. ■

## High Anxiety?

The mental disorder most likely to impact you or a coworker is the collection of disorders known as anxiety disorders. These include generalized anxiety disorder, specific phobias, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and panic disorder. Anxiety disorders that commonly affect the workplace include the fear of public speaking and the fear of flying. For more information about anxiety disorders, contact the MCPS EAP at 301-460-2100 or the Anxiety Disorders Association of America at 301-231-9350 or at their Web site, [www.adaa.org](http://www.adaa.org). ■

## Fabulous Fiber

Why is it so important to eat fiber? People who eat more fiber reduce their risk for heart disease and certain types of cancers such as colon cancer. Fiber-rich foods tend to be lower in fat and simple sugars. Fiber helps the growth of healthy bacteria in your gut, prevents the growth of harmful bacteria, and keeps your gut functioning properly. It also can be used to prevent and treat diarrhea and constipation. Fiber helps you to feel full because it's bulky and it slows the emptying of your stomach and the absorption of fats and carbohydrates. About 20–35 grams of fiber daily is a desirable intake, which is about two to three times more than the average intake in the United States.

There are two kinds of fiber and both are important for helping to maintain a healthy gut.

- Insoluble fiber: The most common fiber in our diets. Helps to bind water and keep you regular and healthy.
- Soluble fiber: Found in all fruits, vegetables, oats, and barley. There is some in other fiber foods too. It acts

as a thickener in your intestines, traps fatty substances, like cholesterol, and prevents their absorption into your body.

### What foods have fiber in them?

- Fruits & vegetables—eat at least five per day
- Whole grains—choose whole grains every day
  - whole wheat (bread, pasta, cereal, bulgur, couscous), oats and oat cereals, brown rice, barley, kashi
- Beans—part of the meat group, eat some beans every week.
  - 1 serving = 1/2 cup
  - lentils, refried beans, baked beans, pinto beans, kidney beans, garbanzo beans (aka chick peas), black beans, red beans, soy beans
- Nuts and seeds—excellent snack ideas! 1 serving = 1/4 cup
  - walnuts, almonds, cashews, peanuts, sunflower seeds ■

Article contributed by Vanessa Hart, MS, dietetic intern, Virginia Tech—Northern Virginia Dietetic Internship

## Ask the EAP

**Q.** If I come to the EAP to talk about problems I am having with my principal and the school system, will the EAP have to report it?

**A.** No. The EAP is bound by state and federal regulations to maintain confidentiality, except when necessary to intervene with serious life and death issues such as homicide, suicide, child abuse, or dependent elder abuse. Otherwise, we will speak only to someone who has a need to know something about your situation if you give us written authorization to do so. ■

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



## Upcoming Events

### MARCH

March 8–14

#### National Problem Gambling Awareness Week

National Council on Problem Gambling  
208 G Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20002  
800-330-8739, 202-547-9204  
pgaw2004@ncpgambling.org, www.ncpgambling.org

If you think you might have a gambling problem, take our confidential self-assessment  
<http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/eap/self-assessment.htm>

March 28–April 4

#### National Sleep Awareness Week

National Sleep Foundation  
1522 K Street, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20005  
202-347-3471 x205  
nsf@sleepfoundation.org, www.sleepfoundation.org

### APRIL

#### Alcohol Awareness Month

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc.  
20 Exchange Place, Suite 2902, New York, NY 10005  
212- 269-7797, 800-NCA-CALL (24-hour Helpline),  
national@ncadd.org, www.ncadd.org

April 8

#### National Alcohol Screening Day

Screening for Mental Health, Inc.  
One Washington Street, Suite 304, Wellesley Hills, MA 02481, 800-253-7658, nasd@mentalhealthscreening.org  
www.NationalAlcoholScreeningDay.org

#### Sexual Assault Awareness Month

National Sexual Violence Resource Center  
123 North Enola Drive, Enola, PA 17025  
877-739-3895  
resources@nsvrc.org, www.nsvrc.org

### MAY

#### Mental Health Month

National Mental Health Association and National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
2001 North Beauregard Street, 12th floor  
Alexandria, VA 22311  
800-969-6642, www.nmha.org

#### National Trauma Awareness Month

American Trauma Society  
8903 Presidential Parkway, Suite 512  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-2656  
800-556-7890, info@amtrauma.org, www.amtrauma.org

#### Older Americans Month

Administration on Aging, Washington, D.C. 20201  
202-619-0724  
www.aoa.gov



### *A Healthy Outlook!*

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



#### EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

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

Please note that e-mail is not necessarily confidential.

**There are too many people praying for mountains of difficulty to be removed when what they really need is courage to climb them.**

—cited in Bits and Pieces

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