



A Healthy Outlook!

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MEDICATION Matters

ACCORDING TO A SURVEY conducted by the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA), nearly 75 percent of consumers admit



they do not always take their prescription medications as directed. The NCPA also estimated that the economic impact of patient non-adherence is \$100 billion annually in increased hospitalizations, doctor visits, lab tests, and nursing home admissions. Key findings of the survey include the following:

- ◆ **49 percent** forgot to take a prescribed medication.
- ◆ **31 percent** failed to fill a prescription they were given.
- ◆ **24 percent** took less than the recommended dosage.
- ◆ **11 percent** had substituted an over-the-counter medication instead of filling the prescription they were given.

Some quick tips for taking medication:

- ◆ **To avoid potentially dangerous drug interactions**, tell your doctor about any other medications you are taking. This includes over-the-counter drugs like pain relievers or herbal medicines.
- ◆ **If a medication is causing unpleasant side effects**, work with the health care team to figure out how you might eliminate or minimize the effects.
- ◆ **Keep a daily written record** of when you take your medication and bring it with you to doctor appointments.
- ◆ **Use a weekly pillbox** with separate compartments for each day of the week and different times of the day to help keep your medications straight.
- ◆ **Try taking your medicine at the same time of day** so it becomes a routine.
- ◆ **Try to link taking your medicine with a particular activity**, such as brushing your teeth.
- ◆ **Take doses exactly as prescribed** and be sure to refill prescriptions on time.

Information from the American Heart Association: www.americanheart.org. Provided courtesy of Wellness Proposals. For more information go to <http://wellness-proposals.com/>.

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Ask the EAP:

Q. How much does it cost for me to use the EAP?

A. There is no cost to employees who receive counseling and other services provided by the EAP. All efforts will be made to ensure that costs for outside treatment and professional services that can result in personal expense will be covered by your health insurance. EAP staff will work with you to identify the best available outside treatment program and services that are in line with your individual finances and in a location that works for you.

Send your questions to Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org

Helpful Tips for COPING WITH GRIEF

◆ **Grief is a normal response to loss.** A number of difficult emotions are associated with grief—feeling numb, shock, sorrow, loneliness, fear, guilt, and anger. People who are grieving may be in pain (physically and emotionally), have trouble sleeping, lose interest in eating or activities, and have difficulty concentrating and making decisions.



◆ **Feelings of grief often progress in different stages.** Every person grieves differently. For some people, intense feelings—sometimes called the “throes of grief”—can last quite a while. People who are grieving may go through five stages, including denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Grief may not involve all of these and they do not necessarily occur in order.

◆ **It can be difficult to distinguish grief from depression.** Grief and depression have a number of symptoms in common. However, people who are grieving often have both good days and bad days. Their emotions can be like a roller coaster ride, with a variety of different feelings. In most cases, grief improves slowly over time.

◆ **During periods of grief, the support of others can be very important.** If you are dealing with loss, lean on people close to you. Friends and family members probably want to help, but they might not know how best to do so. Reach out to loved ones and be honest about what you need—whether it is companionship, just to talk, or something more.

◆ **Join a support group for people who are grieving.** A support group can be a valuable resource. Sharing your grief with others who have experienced a similar loss can help you feel grounded, more normal, and less alone. Look for information about area support groups at your local hospital, hospice, counseling center, or church.

◆ **Talk to a therapist or grief counselor.** If you are feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope with your grief, make an appointment with a mental health professional or an experienced grief counselor. A trained therapist or counselor can help you work through your feelings, one on one or in group therapy, to foster healing.

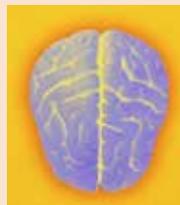
◆ **Take care of your physical health.** When you are grieving, you will feel generally better and start to heal faster if you take good care of yourself physically. Get enough sleep, eat right, and exercise regularly. Avoid the temporary numbing effects of alcohol and do not use medications unless prescribed—alcohol and drugs can prolong your recovery period.

◆ **Get engaged in something—mentally and physically.** People who are grieving often lose interest in activities they normally enjoy. Give yourself time—someday you will feel like yourself again. As you move through the grief process and begin to feel better, you will slowly find it easier to return to—and enjoy—your daily life.

◆ **Plan ahead for possible “grief triggers.”** If you have experienced a loss and are grieving, it is normal and to be expected for certain days, places, events, people, memories—and sometimes even songs, smells, and tastes—to remind you of your loss and wreak havoc with your emotions. In time, you will find a way to deal with difficult reminders.

◆ **Draw comfort from your faith, if you can.** Faith can be a powerful source of strength and comfort. If you follow a religious tradition, engaging in meaningful spiritual activities such as prayer, meditation, and religious services can help you heal. If your grief causes you to question your faith, spiritual guidance may be helpful.

From the Health Communities website (www.healthcommunities.com/). Printed with permission.



Enhance Your EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

To develop a more POSITIVE MINDSET, do the following:

- ◆ **Remember your good deeds.** Give yourself credit for the good things you do for others each day.
- ◆ **Forgive yourself.** Everyone makes mistakes. Learn from what went wrong, but do not dwell on it.
- ◆ **Spend more time with your friends.** Surround yourself with positive, healthy people.
- ◆ **Explore your beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life.** Think about how to guide your life by the principles that are important to you.
- ◆ **Develop healthy physical habits.** Healthy eating, physical activity, and regular sleep can improve your physical and mental health.

Adapted from U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration.

5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW About the Science Behind Depression and Complementary Health Approaches

DEPRESSION is a medical condition that affects about 1 in 10 adults in the United States. Depression can be treated with conventional medicine, including antidepressants and certain types of psychotherapy. For more information on depression, visit the National Institute of Mental Health Website. Still, many people turn to complementary health approaches in addition to conventional treatment. Although complementary approaches are commonly used and readily available in the marketplace, many of these treatments have not been studied rigorously for depression. This is why it is important that you understand the benefits and risks of these complementary approaches to make informed decisions about your health.

1. Some studies suggest that omega-3 fatty acid supplements may provide a small improvement along with conventional treatment, such as antidepressants, in patients with major depressive disorder (MDD) and in depressed patients without a diagnosis of MDD. However, a lot of questions remain about how, or if, omega-3 supplements work in the body to produce such an effect.

2. Although some studies of St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) have shown benefits similar to standard

antidepressants for depression in a limited number of patients, others have not. Research has shown that St. John's wort interacts with many medications in ways that can interfere with their intended effects, making its safety risks outweigh the benefit of any use of St. John's wort.

3. Current scientific evidence does not support the use of other dietary supplements, including SAMe or inositol, for depression.

4. Some studies on mind and body practices, when used along with standard treatment for depression in adults, have had modestly promising results. For example, there is limited evidence that music therapy may provide an improvement in mood. In addition, studies indicate that relaxation training is better than no treatment in reducing symptoms of depression, but is not as beneficial as psychological therapies such as cognitive-behavioral therapy.

5. Take charge of your health—talk with your health care providers about any complementary health approaches you use. Together, you can make shared, well-informed decisions.

Article from the NIH National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. For more information go to <https://nccih.nih.gov/>.

HEALTHY OUTLOOK TIP: Breathe and Feel Less Stressed

IF YOU JUST SLOW DOWN YOUR BREATHING and relax your shoulders it will reduce the stress you feel. It is easy to do. If you are feeling stressed, close your eyes briefly and say the following to yourself in your mind "I am breathing deeply and my shoulders are relaxed." Open your eyes and take another deep breath. You should start to feel less stressed if you do this at least three times during the day.

BOOKS for Separating or Divorcing Couples

- ◆ Fisher, Roger, & William Ury. 2011. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. A classic in the field of conflict resolution explaining how to identify interests, separate the people from the problem, and work to create options that will satisfy all participants.
- ◆ Kranitz, Martin A. 2000. *Getting Apart Together: The Couple's Guide to a Fair Divorce or Separation*. A comprehensive guide for couples wanting to divorce cooperatively, authored by an experienced family mediator.
- ◆ Marlow, Lenard. 2003. *The Two Roads to Divorce*. A comparison of mediation and litigation and ideas on how to avoid the hazards that turn the divorce process into a nightmare, by a mediator and former litigator.
- ◆ Mercer, Diana, & Wennechuk, Katie Jane. 2010. *Making Divorce Work*. Tools and inspiration to renegotiate your relationship with your spouse, including keys for resolving conflict and practices to keep you sane, provided by two mediators.
- ◆ Trafford, Abigail. 2014. *Crazy Time: Surviving Divorce and Building a New Life*. A compassionate account by the journalist/author of weathering her own divorce, and an exploration of the emotional rollercoaster ride through divorce, based on research and the experience of hundreds of divorced men and women.

Online Resources

- ◆ *High Conflict Institute*, www.highconflictinstitute.com. Institute founded by Bill Eddy, a mediator, attorney, and social worker. Provides consultations, books, and free articles and videos for effectively engaging with high conflict, angry people, and hostile e-mail and texts.

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CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

TO SUPPORT OUR CAREGIVERS, MCPS EAP offers a Caregiver Support Group designed to provide helpful resources and establish connections among the caregivers within our MCPS community. The monthly meetings are held from 4:15–5:30 p.m. at 45 West Gude Drive. Guest speakers present on important topics related to caring for a loved one. The next meeting is **Wednesday, September 14, 2016** in the Aspen Room. All are welcome to attend.

Upcoming Events:

Dealing with Difficult People and Situations: A TWO PART SERIES

DO YOU EVER FEEL DEFENSIVE, frustrated, or helpless when dealing with difficult people or situations? Do you want to learn how to respond to people who may attack, blame, withdraw, or sabotage? If you learn these skills you can feel less drained and exhausted in these situations. Join us for an interactive two-part mini-series to learn practical and useful strategies on how to deal with situations and people that “press your buttons.” Each session will cover new material and useful strategies. You are welcome to attend one or both sessions. Sessions will be held on **Thursday, September 22, 2016, and Thursday, October 20, 2016**, at 45 W. Gude Dr. in the Aspen Room from 4:15–5:15 p.m. **Seating is limited.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, RSVP or to register, please contact the EAP by phone at 240-314-1040 or via e-mail at eap@mcpsmd.org

MCPS Observes National Depression Screening Day **OCTOBER 6**

NATIONAL DEPRESSION SCREENING DAY (NDS) is recognized annually on the Thursday of the first full week in October. It is dedicated to raising awareness and screening people for depression and related mood and anxiety disorders. The MCPS EAP will conduct screenings for depression, generalized anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder on **Thursday, October 6, 2016**, National Depression Screening Day. The screenings take about 30 minutes and are available for you and your family members. National Depression Screening Day is the nation’s oldest voluntary, community-based screening program that provides access to validated screening questionnaires and referral information for treatment.

Call 240-314-1040 to schedule an appointment for screening.

GREETINGS from new EAP Specialist Jennifer Alfonso, MBA, MSW, LCSW-C

“I am excited to be part of the MCPS community. I come to MCPS with more than 20 years of consulting experience. My professional background includes providing EAP services to individuals and organizations; acting as clinical director for an anger-management program; serving as a mediator for workplace disputes; providing counseling for individuals and couples; consulting with supervisors on employee issues; and delivering more than 2,000 workshops to both the public and private sectors. It’s my philosophy that everyone has the ability to change, and I look forward to being part of that change with the MCPS employees. ”

Books for Separating or Divorcing Couples

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- ♦ **Maryland’s Peoples Law Library**, www.peoples-law.org. An online law library providing legal and self-help information on Maryland and federal law, including family law and mediation.
- ♦ **New Beginnings**, www.newbeginningsusa.org. A support and discussion group for separated and divorced men and women in Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Virginia.

Information provided by the Mediation Office of John Speigel, J.D. and Donna Duquette, J.D. For more information about their services go to www.mediationoffice.net. They are located in Rockville, Maryland. Printed with permission.



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 Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org

Please note that e-mail is not necessarily confidential.

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