

Employee Wellness Counts!

Newsletter May 2020



Upcoming Events

May

Skin Cancer Awareness

June/July

National Safety Month

August/September

Biometric Health Screenings

Waist Incentive Program



Working Remotely During COVID-19

We all have learned a new word, "Coronavirus and COVID-19" unfortunately we have all experienced it's wrath across our nation and into our homes. Our daily living routines are disrupted causing added anxiety, stress and strain physically, mentally, and financially. It is completely natural for this disruption and uncertainty to lead to anxiety and stress.

Many employees have transitioned to working at home. Working from home may sound like a good idea at first, however for some employees it may be more challenging than once thought. For many parents, this means working from home while their children are also present.

Now more than ever, we all must take care of our mental health and well-being. As we protect ourselves against potential exposure to the Coronavirus, keep in mind that social distancing does not mean social isolation.



Post Effects of Social Distancing

The current COVID-19 orders for social distancing have likely created some unforeseen challenges. Educate yourself regarding why you or someone you know who may be experiencing a multitude of symptoms and mood changes may help mitigate behaviors affecting their condition management and overall wellbeing.

Understanding What is Really Happening

Routine: Almost everyone's normal routine has been disrupted. The result, at a minimum, is a relative drop in dopamine and serotonin, especially during the morning hours. This in turn leads to a cascade of other physiological and behavioral changes.

Logistics – simply speaking working from home requires less energy

Physical encounters – less sensory stimulation (unless you have house full of kids)

Mental demands – stimulation of driving in traffic, running errands, navigating the office, meetings, etc.

Sleep Cycle: Temptation to stay up later and sleep in, if only by 30 or 45 minutes – disrupts normal sleep wake cycle.

Drop in dopamine and serotonin have an immediate effect on energy level and motivation

Reduction in physical activity (ability to exercise restricted), further reduces dopamine, serotonin, endorphins, etc.

Nutrition: Impacted on multiple levels

Cost – if income has been affected

Procurement – depending on perceived level of threat associated with grocery shopping

Mood – drop in mood can result in poor judgment regarding food choices (cooking vs. convenience, healthy options vs. comfort food) and portion size (binging due to stress or boredom)

Physical Activity: Change in daily calorie expenditure and intentional exercise.

Daily calories (Kcal or energy) burned is generally going to be less – as a result of the change in routine (discussed above)

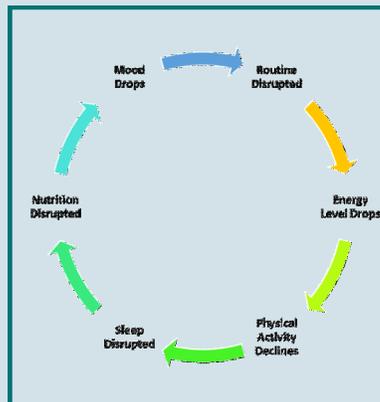
Exercise – intentional exercise routines involving gyms, pools, recreation centers and parks have been disrupted

Mood: All of the above will impact mood and mental health

Decrease in serotonin, dopamine, endorphins and melatonin

Stress results in an increase in cortisol and further decline in neurotransmitters

Can lead to a deficiency in GABA and loss of coping tools.



How do I maintain my health & wellness?

Keep a regular schedule: Create and maintain a routine and schedule. Set up a designated space for you and each family member to work and learn.

Stay connected: Stay connected with family, friends, and support systems using technology like FaceTime, Skype, Google hangout and other video-based options. Talk about your fears and concerns with people you trust.

Keep your immune system strong: Make a commitment to staying strong by:

- Washing your hands with soap for 20 seconds (or 2 happy birthdays!)
- Getting enough sleep
- Eating well and staying hydrated
- Taking vitamins

Exercise & stay active: This is not only good for your physical health, but your mental health too. Periodically, get up and move around your home.

Set boundaries on work schedule: When working from home, be sure that you are working reasonable hours. It can be tempting to work more while you have your work at home, however it can also be taxing on your health and well-being, so stick to a schedule with healthy boundaries.

Take care of your mental health: The county's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a great way to reach out for confidential support.



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