Wellness Without Walls

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NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

April 3-9, 2023. During the first full week of April each year, **A**merican **P**ublic **H**ealth **A**ssociation brings together communities across the United States to observe National Public Health Week as a time to recognize the contributions of public health and highlight issues that are important to improving our nation. *Continued below…*

"BE ON TOP OF YOUR STRESS, NOT UNDER STRESS."

April is Stress Awareness Month

Since the pandemic began there has been a lot of uncertainty due to the continuous changes caused by Covid-19. Everyone has experienced additional stress in their lives that impacts physical, mental and emotional health.

How you manage your stress is up to you, but we will offer up some tips on various ways to cope with stress in a healthy way.

Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the COVID-19 pandemic repeatedly (or any stressful news) can be upsetting. Try a crossword or sudoku puzzle, or read a new book.

Take care of your body. This can help you cope with stress and feel more energized. You can take deep breaths, stretch or go for a walk. Exercise if you can and get plenty of sleep. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals and avoid alcohol and drugs.

Make time to unwind. Try to do activities you enjoy.

Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling. Try to do this as a face to face conversation if you can. Connect with a loved one.

If any of these steps require changes to your routine, diet, activity level, or medication, talk to your healthcare provider.

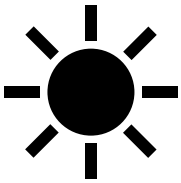
National Public Health Week

Where we live impacts our communities' health. Everyone can make their community healthier, stronger and safer! It's a week to recognize that everyone should lead healthier lives no matter where they live or work.

How can you make your community (or workplace) healthier?

Think about how you can support and include others to have a positive effect on the mental and physical health of others. Maybe you need support yourself? No matter who you are, you can find safe, fun ways to get active — to move your way. Click here or scan the QR code to use the Move Your Way Activity Planner tool for ideas on how to be healthier and more active.

Exercise Tips for Everyday Living:



- **Take the stairs** at work or **walk around the hall** during your lunch or break.
- Exercise releases endorphins, which relieve stress and boosts your mood.
- Try some stretches for your upper back and shoulders.
    - Stand up straight. Reach your right arm across your body.
    - Place your left hand on your right elbow and apply pressure to stretch.
    - Repeat for each arm, holding the stretch for 10 to 30 seconds.

Try this simple at home exercise routine for an additional challenge:

- Warm up your body with light cardio activity until you break a sweat and increase your heart rate.
- Pick two exercises (or four for more challenge/variety)
    - Push Up, Sit Up, Leg Raise, Wall Sit, Squat to Chair (or without chair), Lunge, Plank, (if you have Dumbbells: Bicep Curl, Shoulder Press)

- Perform each exercise for 10 repetitions. Rotate through each exercise in order and rest in between as you need to (if you're breathing hard, muscles burning, weight feels heavy).
- Do as many rounds of each exercise as you can in 5 minutes (or 10-20 minutes for a longer session).

Healthy Eating Tips for Busy Professionals:

Most of the time when we think of eating healthier we think of getting on a diet or a meal plan. A "diet" is simply what you naturally eat on a regular basis. We form our diets throughout our lifetime based on our likes, dislikes and even what we ate growing up. And for most of us our emotions and stress levels can impact what we choose to eat on any given day. It can be difficult to stick to a plan, especially if you don't see any changes.

Remember to Utilize County Work Benefits through EAP:

http://www.theeappremium.com

- You don't have to be enrolled in County Insurance to access Employee Assistance Program.
- Once logged in you can access resources such as the Wellness Center, Emotional Wellbeing and more.

There are two things you can do to make it work. **First**, *shift your focus from the outcomes to the actions*. If your goal is to lose weight, and you focus only on that, you will be disappointed if it doesn't happen the way you expect it to. Instead, *focus on what you can control, your actions*. The actions you take have a direct impact on the outcomes you see. We know that we can't directly cause a weight loss of 3 pounds or 2 pounds. But what we can do is consistently act with behaviors that will lead to 1 pound or 2 pounds of weight loss. Making your goal "walking for 20 minutes three times each week" instead of "losing 2 pounds each week" will build positive reinforcement, is much more attainable, and lead to greater satisfaction when you handle the things you can control.

Second, *make one small change every 14 days.* An example of this would be to drink a glass of water every morning before coffee or breakfast instead of attempting to drink a gallon of water every day. This will get you started on hydration for the day without facing an insurmountable goal. That doesn't mean you shouldn't drink a gallon of water, but simply taking one step at a time from where you are. You might also try setting your fork down in between bites or adding a serving of protein to your breakfast each day. When these small acts are practiced for several weeks they will add up to improved health outcomes

Super Shake Recipe

For a quick and convenient meal that fills you up and boosts your energy try this!

Add to blender in this order:

¼ cup nuts (your choice – skip if allergic)

2 handfuls fresh greens (spinach or kale)

½ cup plain Greek yogurt

½ cup fresh/frozen fruit or berries

½ cup to 1 cup of your preferred liquid. Try milk, almond milk, water (or other)

OPTIONAL Ingredients:

1 scoop of protein powder that suits your digestion (vanilla mixes well with any flavor)

Ice Cubes can be added if you prefer a thicker/colder drink.

This recipe will make enough for two servings. It can be stored in a mason jar and used within 24 hours. Be sure to shake or blend it up again if you are saving it for later.

over the long term. Smaller steps are sustainable, more so than making a complete 180 in your lifestyle. These small steps should be related to your overall goal.

Shifting your focus and making small changes each week will add up to big changes to improve your health. This method is more sustainable in the long term than a complete overhaul that shocks your system for six to twelve weeks. The choices to live healthy are within you if you choose them. And asking a friend or family member to partner up with you for support will increase your success.

Done with COVID-19? Additional Ways to Help Cope with COVID Fatigue.

Dealing with the ongoing global pandemic has worn us all down, especially those who have had a significant role in responding to the pandemic. We have already covered several ways to handle your stress. Here are a few more:

- **Talk about your frustrations**
  - Don't ignore your frustrations or feelings, they don't go away on their own. Find someone to talk to – family, friend, professional help even. If you hold your feelings in they will eventually all come out and you won't have as much control as you would dealing with them as they come.
- **Engage in constructive thinking**
  - We can't change the situation we are in as easily as we can adjust our thoughts about the situation. Love yourself and others in the moment with positive thoughts and words.
- **Take it day by day**
  - Don't look too far ahead or measure where you are today based on a very big goal. Look at the little thing you can do today to take one step towards improved health.
- **Be compassionate with yourself**
  - Don't expect perfection or wallow in your mistakes. Remember to give yourself some grace and know that it is ok to not have all the answers.
- **Find things to look forward to**
  - Walking with a friend, repeat a favorite book or tv series, gather your family for trivia night.

Wellness Myths and Facts

Myth: Stress is the same for everybody.

Fact: Stress is not the same for everybody, nor does everyone experience stress in the same way. Stress is different for each and everyone of us. What is stressful for one person may or may not be stressful for another; each of us responds to stress in an entirely different way.

Myth: I have to find the right superfoods to transform my diet.

Fact: No single food will transform your diet. But these tips can help: Eat a wide variety of minimally processed whole foods. Eat slowly until you are 80% full. Preparing food ahead of time makes healthy food choices easier. Think better, small improvements when done consistently, add up to big change.

Myth: White potatoes are unhealthy.

Fact: Often labeled unhealthy, white potatoes are restricted by many people who want to lose weight. Too much of any food can lead to weight gain, white potatoes contain many nutrients like magnesium, potassium, fiber and vitamin C.

Myth: Egg yolks are bad for you.

Fact: The yolk contains almost all of the nutrients such as choline, b vitamins, and zinc while the egg whites contain the protein. Cholesterol is naturally occurring in your body and is made by the liver for proper body function. The real issue is underlying inflammation with elevated cholesterol. A diet low in vitamins/minerals, fiber and protein and high in processed foods, sugars, and low-quality saturated fats can cause inflammation. References [1, 2, 3, 4.]

Myth: I don't have time to be active or exercise.

Fact: Okay, okay, it's more of an excuse. But the fact is that even 2 minutes of activity can have health benefits. If you can spend a minute or two multiple times throughout the day, like walking in the hall to get away from your workstation or using the stairs, then you are one step closer toward making time to be active.

Send your questions or ideas for future newsletter topics to healthinfo@alleganyco.gov – Health Department Website

Physical Activity Quiz

Answer the questions to test your knowledge!

1. **Immediate Health Benefits of physical activity include:**
   a. Reduce Anxiety
   b. Lower BP
   c. Improve Sleep
   d. All of Above
2. **The recommended amount of aerobic activity for adults is:**
   a. 100 minutes wk/medium to hard intensity
   b. 100-200 minutes wk/medium to hard intensity
   c. 150-300 minutes wk/medium to hard intensity
   d. 200-350 minutes wk/light to medium intensity
3. **Children aged 3-5 years should have active play (light, medium, or hard intensity) for at least 3 hours per day:**
   a. True
   b. False
4. Increased _____ **behavior** increases risk of heart disease and _____ **blood pressure**. Move more and _____ **less** to help offset these risks.

Answers: 1. D; 2. C; 3. True; 4.sedentary, high, sit.

Allegany COUNTY New York