January 2021

Tips to Help you Live Well ... into 2021 and Beyond!

- If you can’t pronounce it, maybe you should reconsider eating and/or drinking it.
- Extra virgin olive oil is one of the healthiest fats on earth. It contains heart-healthy monounsaturated fats and is very high in antioxidants.
- Avoid negative talk. Your attitude towards your body and yourself contribute a lot to your overall health.
- Accept what you can’t control – study after study have shown over time stress can contribute to depression, anxiety, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, heartburn, and many other health problems – including intensified allergies and increased susceptibility to colds and flu.
- Increased stress causes an increase in cortisol – which is good in short bursts but not when you’re bathed in cortisol from chronic stress. Over time, constant exposure to stress leads to elevated cortisol which impacts our bodies ability to regulate inflammation.
- Chronic lack of sleep causes inflammation, elevates blood pressure and heart rate, and affects glucose levels which leads to a much higher stroke risk.
- Tart cherries are one of the few natural food sources that contain a high amount of melatonin, which is a chemical that controls the body’s internal clock that regulates sleep.

This month’s message courtesy of Michelle Urbanek RN, AAH Health & Wellness Promotion Program Coordinator.

Advocate Aurora EAP offers free, confidential assistance for you and your household family members.

Start the year off right...check in with an EAP counselor today!

800.236.3231
Finding that Temporary Normal for Work

As things continue to rapidly change, finding a new normal for work will be an evolving process. An assertive language skill set is important to ensure everyone’s needs are being met while maintaining respect and dignity for all.

Assertiveness is a key communication skill that provides clear information in a manner that upholds dignity and respect for all involved. It is important to remember that assertive is neither aggressive nor passive. Applying this skill set will allow you, and others to:

1. Communicate what information you are looking for.
2. Communicate your needs for clarity around processes and/or projects being asked of you.
3. Clearly communicate your boundaries.
4. Share how you are doing overall (physical, mental and emotional well-being are important factors when it comes to being a productive employee).

The most important thing about establishing a new normal is to remember that we are all in this together and nobody has gone through what we are all currently experiencing.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

1. Everyone is doing their best to make the best of the situation as it challenges us and continuously evolves.
2. Gentleness, patience, kindness, and respect are of utmost importance.
3. When emotions and stress are heightened, people often grant themselves permission to be harder on others or on themselves. Make every effort to avoid this. It makes everything much harder and stresses already overloaded emotional states.

This month’s message brought to you by WELCOA.org/covid19 employee education packet.

If you’d like additional support, please call us at 800.236.3231.

Advocate Aurora EAP offers free, confidential assistance for you and your household family members.
March 2021

Managing Anxiety

There is no right or wrong emotional response to the global pandemic the world is experiencing. Due to the multiple unknown factors during this crisis, many people are feeling anxious. It can be challenging to avoid feeling fear and uncertainty when many things are outside of your control.

Your mental and emotional well-being are as important as your physical well-being. If you are feeling routinely panicked and unable to find a feeling of calm, please seek support through your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or reach out to your primary care physician.

Here are some tips to respond to your feelings of anxiety and fear:

1. **MINDFULNESS**: Mindfulness is the practice of being present and paying attention. Everyone will be multi-tasking more than usual during this time of uncertainty. As often as possible, create time to do just one thing. For example, close out your email when working on projects so you can focus without distraction. If possible, take a few minutes each day to be silent and let your mind, body and soul rest.

2. **STRETCHING**: Being quarantined in your house can make you feel cramped. Stretching can take a few minutes and make your body feel more expansive and release physical tension.

3. **5-4-3-2-1**: Take a moment to notice five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, one thing you can taste. This practice can bring you back into the present moment and bring awareness to your body. This practice is helpful when you find yourself processing all of the potential outcomes and current unknowns or feel your thoughts spiraling.

4. **GRATITUDE**: Pause and give energy to being thankful. What are you grateful for? This practice helps even if you don’t say them out loud. Gratitude is a powerful skill in your toolkit. It is a very helpful response to feelings of scarcity and comparison and has been shown to lead to higher levels of happiness.

The best way to respond to your emotions is to first acknowledge them so that you can respond accordingly. Emotions are not right or wrong. They are simply information. You can notice your feelings, acknowledge what is happening for you and respond kindly and gently with yourself.

*This month’s message brought to you by WELCOA.org/covid19 employee education packet.*

If you’d like support in talking through anxiety concerns, please call us at **800.236.3231**.

Advocate Aurora EAP offers free, confidential assistance for you and your household family members.