



A Healthy Outlook!

301-279-3197 • FAX 301-279-3756 • www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/EAP Vol. 1, No. 3

A Holiday Message from Your EAP

With so many additional responsibilities during the holidays, it's easy to forget to do the necessary things that keep us healthy. Below are some tips and ideas on how to handle the holiday blues and take care of yourself.

Remember that the EAP is available for short-term counseling and/or referrals to community services. If holiday stress is getting you down, please contact the EAP at 301-279-3197 for a confidential appointment. Have a healthy holiday season!

Surviving Holiday Stress

- * Say no to events that you don't want to attend and carefully choose the holiday events you do attend.
- * Keep up healthy activities. Rest when you need to. Be aware of your alcoholic intake. Exercise.
- * Realize that the media does not paint an accurate picture of what the holidays really are for most of us.
- * Do not overplan your holiday activities. Leave time for spontaneity.
- * If you have children, think about ways you can engage them in the holidays without having to spend lots of money.
- * If you fear being alone during the holidays, plan in advance how you will spend the days.
- * Try to avoid major family/work confrontations during the holiday season. It's the time of year when emotions are heightened and most of us are more on edge than usual.
- * Acknowledge that feelings of sadness, unhappiness, depression, or melancholy are normal; and they may be worse during the holiday season.
- * Try to maintain your boundaries with family and friends who are expecting a lot of you during the holidays. Set limits.
- * Allow yourself to have fun! ❄️



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What is Problem Drinking?

Alcohol problems occur at all educational and social levels and in every age group. Ask yourself the following questions. If the answer to any of them is yes, you may want to examine how alcohol is affecting your health, safety, job performance, and relationships with others.

1. When under pressure at work, do you calm down with a drink at lunch?
2. Do you ever have hangovers?
3. Do family quarrels occur most often after you've had a drink or two?
4. Does your family think you drink too much?
5. Have you ever injured yourself or another person after drinking?
6. Are you often on (and off) the wagon?
7. If you drink regularly, do you know how much you spend at the liquor store or in restaurants, or do you avoid the calculation?
8. Do you avoid situations where it would be impossible for you to get a drink if you wanted one?
9. When pouring yourself the second or third glass of wine or beer, or mixing the additional highball, do you reassure yourself that you deserve it?
10. If you know you have to drive home in an hour, do you have a second drink anyway?

Do you have a problem?

Maybe you have a problem, and maybe you don't. If you do, the odds are great that you are denying it. Denial of the negative effects of alcohol in your life is another typical symptom of an alcohol problem.

What to do

Recognizing that there is a problem is the first step toward recovering from problem drinking. The next step is seeking help from doctors or therapists who deal with alcohol problems and recovery. If you think you or a family member might have a problem with alcohol or other drugs, your EAP can help you. The EAP is strictly confidential and EAP counselors are specially trained to help people get the right help for an alcohol or drug problem. Why not call an EAP counselor today!

Are You a Member of Your Sick Leave Bank?

Are you insured against the possibility of an extended illness that results in a long period of personal illness leave?

The sick leave banks in MCPS are cooperative efforts of the employee associations and MCPS. Their purpose is to ensure that employees have paid leave available in the event of a sustained disability. Each employee association has its own sick leave bank with its own rules. However, they are all alike in that, in exchange for a small annual sick leave donation, they offer their members paid sick leave for eligible illnesses when the member has exhausted his/her own sick leave.

The enrollment season, waiting period, and length of sick leave bank grant differ, based on the particular association. To inquire about the sick leave bank for which you are eligible, contact the following person at your employee association.

MCEA

Mary Neal
301-294-6232
mneal@mcea.nea.org

MCCSSE

Kelley N. Woodruff
301-948-8766
woodruff@seiu500.org

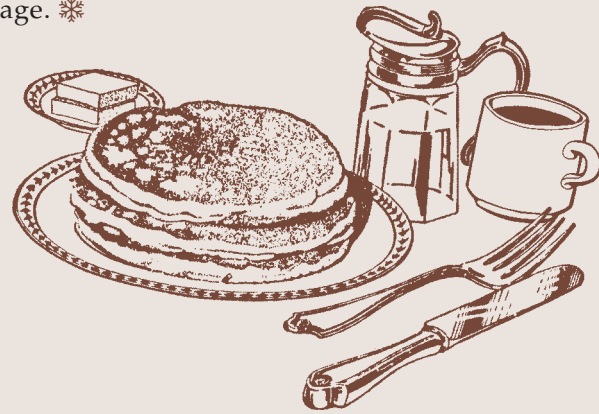
MCAASP

Edye Miller
301-947-4721
edye_miller@fc.mcps.k12.md.us

Eat Breakfast to Lose Weight

Calories you consume early in the day are most likely to be used by the body as energy, while those consumed later in the day seem bound to be stored as fat. The body uses those daytime calories to support the many demands of the body for energy during the day. At night, as you sleep, the body is working less. Consequently, the excess calories are not needed as energy to fuel many activities. Therefore, those calories end up

being added to your fat supply. By shifting some of your caloric intake to the “day shift” (from dinner to breakfast) you can affect how your body uses those calories—either for work or for storage. ❁



The Winter Blues

Do the dark days of winter have you feeling down? Some people find winter invigorating and exciting. But many look outside and see only cold, bleak days. All of us can get that sad feeling from time to time. If you’ve been cooped up in the house for some time, you understand it—the blues of winter. For some people, the chill of winter matches their mood. Most often, their mood lifts with better weather. But long-term problems can develop if the blues continue for too long.

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is the name given to depression that occurs with the long, dark days of winter. It is a serious disorder that also can cause physical changes. Depressed people may have drastic changes in their eating and sleeping habits and in their sex lives. Also, they may experience indigestion, constipation, or headaches. If you are feeling down for no apparent reason and your blue mood doesn’t lift after a few days, your eating or sleeping habits change dramatically, or you have trouble getting out of bed to face the day, you

may be suffering from SAD. The good news is that depression is treatable. Seek professional help either by consulting your family doctor or by calling the EAP. If you notice these symptoms in friends or family members, encourage them to seek help. Clinical depression isn’t something you can just snap out of, and it can occur at any time. ❁

Ask the EAP

- Q.** My father, who is 84, is having memory difficulty. Can the EAP assist me in finding someone who can conduct an evaluation? He lives far away.
- A.** Yes. The EAP can assist you with finding a source of help. Although your father does not live with you, you are facing the problem of finding services. This makes it appropriate for the EAP to help you. Eldercare issues faced by adult children are increasing dramatically. The EAP is here to help you.

Do you have a question for the EAP? Send us your questions via FirstClass or the pony to Jeff Becker.



Upcoming Events

December

December 1 is World AIDS Day

Visit <http://www.avert.org/index.html>

Site for information on World AIDS Day

This site provides lots of AIDS-related information

January

January is Glaucoma Awareness Month

Visit <http://www.preventblindness.org>

February

February is American Heart Month

Visit <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1200000>

Information on events to recognize American Heart Month

February 23–March 2 is National Eating Disorders Awareness Week

Visit <http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org>



“There is more to life than increasing its speed.”

Ghandi

How to Find a Good Health-Related Web Site

There are many health-related Web sites out there in cyberspace. Some are good, others are not so good. Below are some sites we have found to be particularly valuable.

<http://www.webmed.com/>

Links to many other Web sites, plus many articles

<http://www.drkoop.com/>

Good general information, and a good source for information on prescription medications

<http://www.healthatoz.com/>

A broad range of medical information

<http://www.healthcentral.com/home/home.cfm>

Many articles on health-related topics

<http://www.healthfinder.gov/>

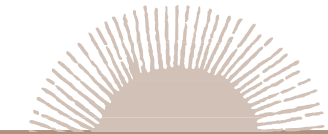
A good link to government sites and databases

www.merck.com

Merck manual online and searchable

www.healthscout.com

Many articles with current information ❄️



A Healthy Outlook!

To help employees with troubling issues before they become overwhelming.



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

SPECIALISTS: Debbie Tipton

Robyn Rosenbauer

Jeff Becker

Employee Assistance Program
@ Maryvale

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. Please note that e-mail is not necessarily confidential.