



# A Healthy Outlook!

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## Managing Change

Significant organizational change can pose major challenges to all of us. Change is a constant in our lives, yet few of us give it much thought. Whether a change is desirable or not depends on who you ask! Most of us tend to resist change as it requires a degree of adaptation and loss. We often visualize change as requiring new skills (adaptation) and saying goodbye to old ways (loss). This combination can result in a period of increased stress. To handle change well requires a different way of thinking and a bit of stress management. Here are some suggestions from *The Handbook of Organizational Change*:

- ♦ **Take some ownership of the changes**—if you notice a problem with the changes, be prepared to offer workable solutions.
- ♦ **Control your attitude**—you can be negative and choose to gripe and become aggravated with changes that are upsetting you or you can throw your energy into helping to correct problems.
- ♦ **Be tolerant of management mistakes**—“zero defects” in the rollout of a change will never happen. Mistakes will occur.
- ♦ **Keep your sense of humor**—an upbeat attitude won’t stop you from getting hit by trouble, but it might help you handle it better.
- ♦ **Don’t let your strengths become your weaknesses**—abilities and strengths

that served you in the past may outlive their usefulness. Try to be flexible in terms of adjusting to changing priorities and learning new skills.

♦ **Practice good stress management**—adjusting to a new circumstance can be a drain on your energy. Focus on the things you have control over and try to let go of those you don’t. Keep up with vigorous exercise, a healthy diet, social supports, and healthy sleep habits. Try not to fret too much about things that are out of your control.

If you find that the stress caused by the changes around you is becoming unmanageable, don’t hesitate to call the EAP at 240-314-1040 for support. ▀

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## How To Optimize Cognitive Function & Protect Against Dementia

Healthy behaviors prepare the brain for learning. Learning then grows and strengthens new adaptive neural pathways.

1. **Exercise.** Morning exercise is associated with maintaining an exercise program. Exercise before difficult learning/brainstorming activities.
2. **Engage in lifelong learning to keep brain circuits sharp.** Take music lessons, start a hobby, etc.
3. **Do not smoke or use drugs.** Minimize caffeine.
4. **Moderate drinking.** No drinking is better than excessive drinking.
5. **Adopt a healthy diet.**
  - a. Avoid caloric excess; maintain normal weight. Include protein at breakfast to feel fuller throughout the day. Eating six smaller meals lowers cholesterol (e.g., between meals try veggies with hummus, yogurt, or a tablespoon of peanut butter).
  - b. Choose good carbs (whole grains, beans, vegetables, fruits), good protein (fish, lean meat, nuts, beans, eggs), and good fats (in fish, olive or canola oil, nuts, seeds, or avocados).

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- c. Have many colorful vegetables (e.g., dark green), fruits, and whole grains. Remember apples, which especially reduce risk of metabolic syndrome.
  - d. Drink lots of water (the brain is 80% water)
  - e. Eat high water volume/fiber foods (fruits, vegetables, soups, whole grains, legumes, low-fat dairy).
  - f. Spare fatty meats, fried foods, cheese, pretzels, chips, cookies, dried fruit, and processed foods.
  - g. Eat spices, which are rich in antioxidants that reduce the inflammation associated with a range of chronic diseases. Think cloves, cinnamon, allspice, saffron, fennel, oregano, cumin, garlic, rosemary, turmeric (component of curry), basil, ginger, and red and black pepper.
- 6. Take a good quality multivitamin supplement.**
- 7. Get consistent, sufficient sleep.** Aids include morning exercise, avoidance of caffeine, no or sparing use of sleeping pills, and warm milk (tryptophan). Poor sleep is associated with smaller hippocampi, diabetes, weight gain, high blood pressure, periodontal disease, and impaired mood and cognitive function.
- 8. Socialize.** Get away from the computer and digital games. Relationships that nurture change the brain.

- 9. Protect the brain.** Prevent head trauma (use seat belts, helmets for biking/skiing, mouth guards for contact sports). Stay away from toxins (lead, mercury, carbon monoxide, paints, dyes, inks, solvents, pesticides).



- 10. Treat medical conditions.** This includes thyroid, diabetes, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, cholesterol, obesity, gum disease, high blood pressure, apnea. Statins protect against cognitive decline.
- 11. Organize.** Keep written time management plans (goals, calendar, to-do lists) and lists of important information. Refer to these and revise often.
- 12. Keep belly fat down.**
- 13. Maintain healthy gums.** Gum disease is a risk for diabetes, Alzheimer's, and heart disease. Brush, floss, and eat small amounts of yogurt daily (¼ cup).
- 14. Have small amounts of dark chocolate or cocoa.** This increases blood flow to the brain.
- 15. Get some sun or use bright lights (phototherapy) daily.** This can improve mood and cognition. It also provides vitamin D.
- 16. Manage stress.** ■

## 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 or 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, mneal@mcea.nea.org, or Jackie Thompson, jthompson@mcea.nea.org, 301-294-6232.

**SEIU Local 500:**

Tracy Avey, 301-740-7100

**MCAAP:**

Edye Miller, emiller@mcaapmd.org, 301-762-8174 ■

## Tips on Recognizing Employees

Essential elements of recognizing employees, as suggested by the Government of Alberta, Canada:

- **Match** the recognition to the individual, based on how the individual would prefer to be recognized (e.g., with a certificate, with high praise).
- Directly **link** recognition to **performance** and **goal achievement**.
- Be **timely** by giving recognition as soon as possible after desired behavior.
- Always state **why** recognition is given to ensure clarity and **repeat behavior**.
- Make it **fair** by allowing all employees equitable opportunities for recognition.
- Be **creative** by using a variety of methods to recognize employees' accomplishments.
- **Involve** your team in determining what recognition it values.
- Give **ongoing** words of **praise** according to accomplishment.
- **Always** remember the golden words, "**Thank You.**"

## What Types of Food Should be Consumed for Optimum Health?

A poor diet is the number one reason why the immune system breaks down. Composed of an army of cells that search out and destroy invading viruses, the immune system is a voracious user of vitamins and minerals. Every few days, the body replaces one-fourth of all immune cells. A strong immune system can produce 10 million antibodies per hour into the bloodstream to attack viruses.

The following are six critical immunity nutrients the body needs on a daily basis:

**Copper**—a trace mineral that acts like a shot of growth hormone for white blood cells and turns them into specialized attack forces. It can be found in oysters, soy, and beans.



**Quercetin**—a natural plant chemical that disarms free radicals, which sabotage the immune system's defenses. It can be found in apples, onions, garlic, tomatoes, and peppers.

**Zinc**—responsible for producing billions of white blood cells daily. It can be found in pork, beef, whole grains, yogurt, beans, and milk.



**Vitamin E**—involved in producing cytokines, a chemical messenger that activates a host of defensive weapons to kill viruses. It can be found in spinach, sunflower seeds, eggs, peanuts, fish, margarine, and vegetable oils.

**Folate/Vitamin B12**—involved in the rapid multiplication of immune cells and also oversees that white blood cells are replicating in correct shape to fight viruses. It can be found in asparagus, orange juice, dairy products, kidney beans, and whole grains.

**Vitamin A**—important to the skin, the first line of defense for the immune system. It can be found in orange vegetables (carrots, squash, and sweet potatoes) that contain beta-carotene, which the body turns into vitamin A.

**Mushrooms** help in the production of white blood cells. Mushrooms can also help the immune system.



**Tea**—A cup of black or green tea a day strengthens the immune system. It is a source of polyphenols (antioxidants), which clean up free radicals—damaging compounds that can hurt DNA and accelerate aging. ■

**Sources:** *Prevention Magazine* and Shady Grove and Washington Adventist hospitals. The facts presented in this article are intended for informational purposes only. For additional information, please speak with your physician. Printed with permission.

## Don't Get Burned! How to Protect Your Body From Sun Damage

Every time you tan or burn, DNA damage builds up in the deeper levels of your skin. Having five or more burns over a lifetime, including childhood, doubles your chance of getting skin cancer. Other side effects of tanning and burning include premature wrinkles and age spots. Over time, the sun can age your skin, making it tough and leathery.

The sun's rays contain two types of ultraviolet light. Ultraviolet A (UVA) causes tanning, aging skin, and wrinkles. Ultraviolet B (UVB) causes sunburn. Both can cause skin cancer. You can burn on sunny days, cloudy days, and cold days.

Follow these prevention tips to prevent sunburn:

- ☀ Use only water-resistant or water-proof sunscreen. It should protect against both UVA and UVB rays and should have an SPF of at least 15.
- ☀ Reapply every two hours and after swimming or sweating.
- ☀ Wear protective clothing when possible. Always include a hat and sunglasses.
- ☀ Limit sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. This is when UV rays are strongest. If your shadow is shorter than you are, get out of the sun.
- ☀ Keep children in the shade and in protective clothing.
- ☀ Be aware that water, snow, and sand all reflect UV rays and increase your chances for sunburn. ■

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## Rethinking Drinking

Do you enjoy a drink now and then? Many of us do, often when socializing with friends and family. Drinking can be beneficial or harmful, depending on your age and health status and, of course, on how much you drink.

For anyone who drinks, this website offers valuable, research-based information. What do you think about taking a look at your drinking habits and how they may affect your health? Rethinking Drinking can help you [get started](#) (links to the NIAAA site: <http://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/IsYourDrinkingPatternRisky/WhatsYourPattern.asp>). ▀

## Ask the EAP

**Q.** Are the MCPS EAP counselors willing to talk to a professional who I am already seeing? For instance, I am working with a psychologist who I like, but I am not sure she understands certain things about my job and I think it would be helpful if she talks to you.

**A.** If you and the EAP counselor you are working with mutually decide that it would be a good idea to speak to a professional with whom you are working, that can be done as long as we have written authorization to do so.

## EAP Is Open All Summer

The EAP remains open throughout the summer months. Feel free to call us at 240-314-1040 to schedule an appointment to meet with a counselor. The summer also is a good time to check out our website: [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/eap](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/eap).

It is full of information about the EAP and the services we provide as well as about personal issues and concerns you might be experiencing.



## *A Healthy Outlook!*

*To help employees with troubling issues before they become overwhelming.*



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

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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  
[Debra\\_Tipton@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Debra_Tipton@mcpsmd.org)

Please note that e-mail is not necessarily confidential.

**“Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.”**

**—William James**



## Upcoming Events

**MCPS Cancer Support Group—We will continue to meet throughout the summer. For more information and for meeting dates and times, please contact Debra Tipton on Outlook or by phone at 240-314-1040.**

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