

## Managing Stress: Helpful Hints for Healthier Workplace

Today's workplace is one that involves high levels of stress that were not prevalent decades ago. Although the economy seems to be picking up many employers have gone through significant down-sizing. Now with businesses growing, employees are responsible for duties that were previously shared by two or three different individuals. As a result, their workload has doubled or tripled, and so have their responsibilities. All these factors lead to increased levels of stress in the workplace.

Stress in the workplace is something that most everyone has experienced at some point in time. When a deadline is drawing near on a project those involved may seem tense. Today's issue is that stress has become part of the typical workday for many individuals, leading to unhealthy lifestyles. When stress is high, production is inconsistent. Some people do their best work under pressure, while others may not be able to function. Since many companies are not in the position to hire additional staff to distribute the responsibilities, effective stress relievers should be reviewed and implemented into employee programs.

Manifestations of excess or poorly managed stress can be extremely varied. While many people report that stress induces headaches, sleep disturbances, feelings of anxiety or tension, anger, or concentration problems, others may complain of depression, lack of interest in food, increased appetite, or any number of other symptoms. In severe situations, one can experience overwhelming stress to the point of burnout.



One stress reliever that has been found to be very effective is exercise. Many companies are encouraging their employees to start up a fitness program. Some companies have built gyms into their buildings, others have offered to pay memberships to fitness clubs to make it a more viable option. Many of these costs may not be realistic for smaller companies. If you are operating on a small budget you may want to encourage a fitness walk at lunch, or a group that meets after work to jog, play tennis, or attend a community aerobics class. Thirty minutes of some kind of exercise each day will do wonders in stress relief as well as improving your overall health. You will feel better physically, sleep better at night, and improve your mood.



Providing your employees with information can also help them deal with their stress in a healthy manner. Some helpful hints from the American Heart Association are as follows: take 15 to 20 minutes a day to sit quietly and think of a peaceful picture, try to accept things that you can't change, exercise regularly and limit your caffeine intake. Remember when dealing with your stress that you are in control of your emotions and by managing them better you can easily avoid unnecessary stress.

One sure way to find out what helps your employees best relieve stress is to get them involved in the implementation of the program. Find out what works best for majority of your employees and, if feasible, implement their program of choice. By helping your employees to decrease their stress levels, you will not only have healthier employees, but also a more productive work force.

# What Everyone Should Know About Fat

Fat is perceived as “the enemy,” but this is not always true. Some fats are good; some fats are bad. Focus on substituting good fats for bad ones instead of just worrying about reducing the total amount of fat.

**Saturated fats** are bad; they raise blood cholesterol more than other forms of fat. They are found in meats, whole-fat dairy products, and baked goods.

**Monounsaturated fats** are good; they reduce blood cholesterol when they replace saturated fats in a diet. They are found in olive and canola oils.

**Polyunsaturated fats** are a toss-up because they contain several different fatty acids. One type—the omega-3s (e.g., fatty fish, canola oil) - is good for us. But excessive amounts of the types of fatty acids found in safflower, sunflower and corn oil many cause health problems. They are found in fish, nuts ,seeds, and vegetable oils.

**The total fat consumed** in your diet should not be more than 30% of your total calories. Monounsaturated fats should replace saturated fats within this limit.

Be sure to read labels on the foods you consume to see what kind of fats they contain. Diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol and high in fiber are linked to a reduced risk of certain cancers, diabetes, digestive disorders and heart disease.

(Source: US Dept. of Agri. & Food and Drug Adm.)

HealthFirst Medical would like to wish our clients a very Happy Holiday Season and Happy New Year! As you prepare for 2016, please remember to up-date HealthFirst Medical with your current contacts for work injuries, physicals and drug screens. If you are changing your workers' compensation insurance, please give us your new carrier information. It is very important that we have your updated information in our computer system so you are notified and receive all the necessary papers for your claims and results for your physicals and drug screens.

## *Holiday Hours*

HealthFirst Medical Group will have limited service during the holiday season. Both the North and South Clinics will be open on **December 24 and December 31** from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for all services. After 2:00 p.m. the South Clinic will be open for **Emergency Care and Random Drug screening only**. Only the South Clinic will be open for **Emergency Care on December 25 (Christmas Day) and January 1 (New Years Day)**. Our regular schedule will resume on December 26 & January 2. If you have any questions call our office at **(562) 949-9328 or (562) 926-3440**.