

## EAP INFO, STRESS & MORE

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### WELLNESS OBSERVANCES

AMERICAN HEART MONTH  
 NATIONAL CANCER PREVENTION MONTH  
 2/4 WEAR RED DAY  
 2/13-2/19: NATIONAL CARDIAC REHAB WEEK

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# What is an EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SERVICES INCLUDE...

prevention, identification, intervention, and follow-up on work-related or personal concerns that affect job performance or balancing a healthy lifestyle.

## WHO HAS ACCESS TO THE EAP RESOURCES?

Services are often available not only to employees but also to employees' immediate family members or to anyone living in employees' homes.

## EAP OPTIONS IN ATLANTIC & CAPE MAY COUNTIES

- Atlanticare Employee Assistance Program: [Link to Program](#)
- Shore Counseling Employee Assistance Program: [Link to Program](#)

## HOW CAN AN EAP BENEFIT EMPLOYERS?

EAPs can help employers reduce absenteeism, workers' compensation claims, health care costs, accidents and grievances. In addition, they can address safety and security issues, improve employee productivity and engagement, and reduce costs related to employee turnover.

## WHY IS AN EAP BENEFICIAL?

Circumstances at home can spill over into work life, just as difficulties on the job can affect relationships at home. If not addressed, issues that were once minor can become more serious. EAP professionals are experienced at listening, asking the right questions, gathering information, and helping employees decide on the best course of action to take in resolving the difficulties they face.

Marital and family problems, conflicts among co-workers and managers, depression, substance misuse, work-related stress, legal and financial issues, and child and elder care needs are just some of the concerns affecting employees' well-being.

These distractions may hurt productivity and drive up costs for businesses. The health care system cannot always handle these types of issues, especially those—such as needs for financial counseling or elder care help—that are not health related. EAPs are cost-effective tools to mitigate these risks.



# Physical Effects OF TOO MUCH STRESS

Stress can be defined as the feeling of being overwhelmed or unable to cope with mental or emotional pressure. It can have mental and physical consequences. At one point or another, most people deal with feelings of stress. In fact, a study from 2015 found that 59% of adults reported experiencing high levels of perceived stress.

Here are some physical signs that you may be experiencing too much stress.

## HEADACHES

A 2015 study showed that increased stress intensity was associated with an increase in the number of headache days experienced per month. Other common headache triggers can include lack of sleep, diet, alcohol consumption, hormonal changes, and more.

## CHRONIC PAIN

Aches and pains are a common complaint that can result from increased levels of stress. Some studies have found that chronic pain may be associated with higher levels of stress as well as increased levels of cortisol, which is the body's main stress hormone. For example, one very small study compared people with chronic back pain to a control group. It found that those with chronic pain had higher levels of cortisol.



## FREQUENT SICKNESS

If you feel like you're constantly battling a case of the sniffles or other sickness, stress may be to blame. Stress may take a toll on your immune system. Studies show that higher stress levels are associated with increased susceptibility to infection.

However, stress is just one piece of the puzzle when it comes to immune health. A weakened immune system can also be the result of:

- a low-nutrient diet
- substance use
- physical inactivity

## DIGESTIVE ISSUES

Some studies have found that stress may be associated with digestive issues, like constipation, heartburn, diarrhea, as well as digestive disorders. A study from 2017 also highlights the direct connection between stress and symptoms of IBS, saying stress plays "a major role" in the manifestation and worsening of digestive symptoms.

# Healthy Pantry Staples

## YOU SHOULD ALWAYS HAVE ON HAND

Throwing together a quick, nutritious meal requires a well-stocked kitchen. However, many popular healthy foods are highly perishable and must be used within a few days, causing many home cooks to burn through their food stores quickly.

Still, you can keep a number of healthy, long-lasting staples your pantry, freezer, and fridge and use them to make nutrient-dense meals and snacks — even when you're out of your typical go-to foods.

### DRIED & CANNED BEANS & LENTILS

Beans and lentils are amongst the healthiest foods you can eat. Moreover, dried and canned beans and lentils have very long shelf lives, making them a top non-perishable food choice to keep in your kitchen.

In addition to being shelf stable, canned and dried beans and lentils are highly nutritious, offering an abundance of nutrients, including fiber, magnesium, B vitamins, and iron.

Try adding black beans, chickpeas, lentils, and kidney beans to chilies, soups, and salads.

### FROZEN FRUIT & VEGETABLES

Many fresh fruits and veggies, such as berries and greens, are highly perishable. Yet, buying these foods in frozen form allows you to always have nutrient-dense produce on hand.

Nutrition-wise, frozen fruits and veggies are comparable to fresh produce in micronutrient content, making them a healthy and convenient freezer staple

Try adding frozen greens to sautés, soups, and smoothies. Frozen berries can be used similarly to fresh berries and add natural sweetness to oatmeal, smoothies, baked goods, and yogurt parfaits.

### NUTS, SEEDS, AND THEIR BUTTERS

Nuts and seeds are nutritional powerhouses, providing healthy fats, filling protein, fiber, and an array of vitamins and minerals.

Nuts and seeds can be used in many dishes, including oatmeal, yogurt, trail mix, and salads. Nut and seed butters make excellent additions to smoothies and can be added to sauces or spread onto fruits or veggies for a quick, satisfying snack.

### GRAINS

When in a pinch, grain-based dishes like salads, grain bowls, soups, and pilafs make a great choice due to their versatility and convenience.

Plus, these grains are excellent sources of fiber and micronutrients, including B vitamins, manganese, and magnesium, and eating them may help protect against conditions like heart disease and certain cancers.



# Is it OK to Exercise

## WHEN YOU'RE SICK?

A speedy recovery is always the goal when you are sick, but it can be hard to know when it's OK to power through with your normal gym routine and when it's best to take a few days off.

Exercise is a healthy habit, and it's normal to want to continue working out, even when you're feeling under the weather.

This can be perfectly fine in certain situations but also detrimental if you're experiencing certain symptoms.

### WHEN IT'S SAFE

#### A MILD COLD

A mild cold is a viral infection of the nose and throat.

Though symptoms vary from person to person, most people who have a cold experience sneezing, a stuffy nose, a headache, and a mild cough.

Given current events, if you have a mild cold and the energy to work out, the best solution is to take a light walk outside or at home rather than engage in vigorous exercise. With the added possibility of developing COVID-19, it's even more important to maintain social distancing.

If you feel that you lack the energy to get through your normal routine, consider reducing the intensity of your workout or shortening its duration.

#### A STUFFY NOSE

Having a stuffy nose can be frustrating and uncomfortable.

If it's associated with a fever or other symptoms like a productive cough or chest congestion, you should consider taking some time off from working out. However, it's OK to work out if you're only experiencing some nasal congestion. In fact, getting some exercise may help open up your nasal passages, helping you breathe better.

Ultimately, listening to your body to determine whether you feel well enough to exercise with a stuffy nose is the best bet.

Modifying your workout to accommodate your energy level is another option. Going for brisk walks or bike rides are great ways to stay active even when you aren't feeling up to your usual routine.



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### WHEN IT'S NOT RECOMMENDED

#### FEVER

When you have a fever, your body temperature rises above its normal range, which hovers around 98.6°F (37°C). A fever can be caused by many things, but it's most commonly triggered by a bacterial or viral infection.

Fevers can cause unpleasant symptoms like weakness, dehydration, muscle aches, and a loss of appetite.

Working out while you're feverish increases the risk of dehydration and can make a fever worse.

Additionally, having a fever decreases muscle strength and endurance and impairs precision and coordination, increasing the risk of injury.

#### STOMACH BUG OR THE FLU

Illnesses that affect the digestive system, such as the stomach flu, can cause serious symptoms that make working out off-limits.

Feeling weak is common when you have a stomach ailment, increasing the chance of injury during a workout.

Although not every person who gets the flu will experience a fever, those who do are at an increased risk of dehydration, making working out a bad idea.

Though the majority of people recover from the flu in less than 2 weeks, choosing to engage in intense workouts while sick may prolong the flu and delay your recovery.

Though it's a debated topic, some researchers believe engaging in higher intensity activity like running or a spin class temporarily suppresses the body's immune response.



# Mindful Moments

## GUIDED MEDITATION FOR CHRONIC PAIN

A daily meditation for those experiencing chronic pain.



# Nourish

## HEALTHY STEAMED DUMPLINGS

Recipe From: <https://smittenkitchen.com/2020/09/tangy-braised-chickpeas/>



Celebrate  
Chinese New  
Year!

The Year of  
the Tiger

### ingredients

- 1 cup finely shredded Chinese or napa cabbage
- 1/4 cup minced fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup minced chives
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon Chinese five-spice powder
- 1/2 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 3/4 pounds lean ground turkey
- 50 pot sticker or gyoza wrappers
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- 6 cabbage leaves
- Sweet chili sauce, optional

### recipe preparation

- In a large bowl, combine the first 12 ingredients. Add turkey; mix lightly but thoroughly.
- Place 1 tablespoon filling in center of each pot sticker wrapper. (Cover remaining wrappers with a damp paper towel until ready to use.) Moisten wrapper edge with water. Fold wrapper over filling; seal edges, pleating the front side several times to form a pleated pouch. Stand dumplings on a work surface to flatten bottoms; curve slightly to form crescent shapes, if desired.
- Line a steamer basket with six cabbage leaves. In batches, arrange dumplings 1 in. apart over cabbage; place in a large saucepan over 1 in. of water. Bring to a boil; steam, covered, 6-8 minutes or until cooked through. Discard cabbage. If desired, serve with chili sauce.