

In The Know...

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Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of our new newsletter! Each quarter we will be publishing an issue containing helpful health information. From time to time we will also include a questions and answers section covering some of the questions we frequently receive. If there is a topic you would like to see covered, please let us know and we will be happy to include it in a future issue.

This newsletter will be published on our website and can also be received via email. If you, or someone you know, would like to receive new issues via email, please sign up on our website, <http://www.bpaco.com>.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this newsletter, please contact us at newsletter@bpaco.com.

What Can I Do About Stress?

Information provided by WebMD

Stress is an unavoidable part of life. While some stress is normal and even necessary, too much of it can affect your quality of life and your health. You can reduce the effects of stress by identifying its causes in your life, understanding and accepting what you can control and what you can't, and learning stress management skills.

Stress affects each of us differently, and the most effective ways to relieve it are different for each person. You can try different methods to find out which ones work best for you. Some techniques for relieving stress include:

- **Exercise.** Regular physical activity is one of the most effective stress management techniques.

"While some stress is normal and even necessary, too much of it can affect your quality of life and your health."

Please see *Stress Relief* on page 3

Cover Your Cough

Information provided by Minnesota Department of Health

Why should I cover my cough?

Serious respiratory illnesses like influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) are spread by coughing or sneezing and unclean hands. These illnesses spread easily in crowded places where people are in close contact.



How do I stop the spread of germs if I am sick?

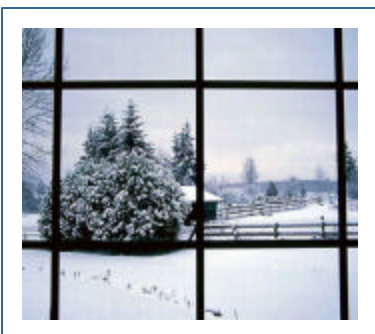
Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue every time you cough or sneeze. Throw the used tissue in a waste basket. If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve. After coughing or sneezing, always clean your hands with soap & water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner. Additionally, do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels or other personal items. Finally, stay home when you are sick.

How can I stay healthy?

Clean your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. If possible, avoid close contact with people who are sick. Also, get vaccinated! Influenza (flu) and pneumococcal (pneumonia) vaccines can prevent some serious respiratory illnesses.

Winter Blues: Seasonal Affective Disorder

Information provided by Ministry Health Care



Cabin Fever, The Winter Blues, Winter Weight Gain ... are these normal winter doldrums, or are they indicative of a more severe problem?

According to the American Psychiatric Association, 10 to 20 percent of people may suffer some level of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Often attributed to the lack of light during the winter months, SAD causes its sufferers to have recurrent long-term depression symptoms such as:

Do You Know How to Lose Weight?

By Kate Lee - CONSUMER HEALTH INTERACTIVE

Losing weight often seems an overwhelming task, especially if the number you'd like to see on that scale is many pounds away. But don't be discouraged! The latest research on obesity shows that taking off just ten pounds can be enough to lower your blood pressure, improve your blood-sugar control, and reduce your blood fats, as well as possibly spare you from sleep apnea, varicose veins, and osteoarthritis. So what's the best way to lighten your load a little? Take our quiz and find out.

- 1) Everyone has an Ideal "set-point" weight that their bodies will always try to achieve in spite of their best weight loss efforts.

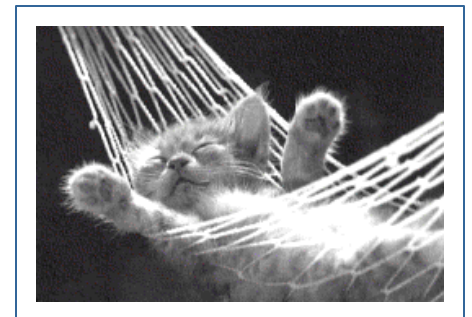
True or False?

- 2) Even if you weigh more than the government charts say you should, you're probably not at an unhealthy weight if:
 - a) You eat a low-fat, high-fiber diet and exercise regularly
 - b) You carry most of your weight in your thighs, rather than your abdomen and chest
 - c) Your body mass index (BMI) is under 30
 - d) All of the above

Please see *Weight Loss* on page 4

Stress Relief from page 1

- **Writing.** Research shows that expressing yourself in writing can be a very effective way to reduce your stress level.
- **Expressing your feelings.** Talking, laughing, crying, and expressing anger are normal parts of the emotional healing process.
- **Doing something you enjoy.** A hobby or other healthy leisure activity that is meaningful to you can help you relax. Volunteer work or work that helps others can be a powerful stress reliever.
- **Body-centered relaxation.** This includes breathing exercises, muscle relaxation exercises, massage, aromatherapy, yoga, and the traditional Chinese relaxation exercises tai chi and qi gong.
- **Mindfulness activities.** These include learning how to relax your body through self-hypnosis, meditation, imagery exercises, listening to relaxing music, and using humor to reduce stress.



Take time to relax.

Winter Blues from page 2

- Oversleeping, fatigue and lethargy
- Overeating and weight gain
- Decreased sexual interest
- Feelings of sadness or apathy
- Social withdrawal
- Difficulty concentrating

"SAD is a very real health problem affecting many Midwesterners," explains Jon Peterson, MD, psychiatrist with Saint Elizabeth's Medical Center, Wabasha, MN.

"People need to take the symptoms seriously and make lifestyle changes that will expose them to more sunlight." There is no cure for SAD, but you can minimize its effects.

- Walk outside or sit in sunlight.
- Increase the amount of light in your home
- Exercise regularly. Walk outside on sunny days during winter
- Take a sunny, winter vacation
- Reduce stress
- Visit with friends or family
- Eat whole-grain foods. Avoid sugar and carbohydrates.

For severe cases, early studies have shown that light therapy (phototherapy) using bright white fluorescent light can help. "If symptoms do not improve," says Peterson, "people should talk to their primary care providers.

Weight Loss from page 3

- 3) Ninety percent of dieters who lose weight gain most of it back within five years.

True or False?

- 4) Permanent weight loss is not realistic for:

- People who were fat as children
- People who are well into middle age
- People who have repeatedly gained and lost over the years.
- None of the above

- 5) Which is the best predictor of long-term weight loss success?

- Eating three meals a day (or being able to stick to a low-calorie diet)
- Getting less than 30 percent of your calories from fat
- Exercising regularly
- Having a strong support network

- 6) Dieting often backfires because your metabolism slows down as you drop pounds.

True or False?

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Answers: 1)False 2)D 3)False 4)D 5)C 6)True