

MY employee newsletter

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Did You Have a Panic Attack?

About 25% of people will experience a panic attack during their lifetime. A panic attack can strike any time or place. You could suddenly awaken at night to sheer terror. It's not a heart attack, but you might think you are having one, with total fear of losing control. A rapid irregular heartbeat, extreme anxiety, trembling, dizziness, and inability to catch your breath are classic symptoms. Symptoms often resolve in about ten minutes; the event by itself is not symptomatic of an anxiety disorder or mental health condition. Still, if you have a panic attack, talk to your medical provider to rule out health issues and gain reassurance.

Learn more: Mayoclinic.org [search "panic attack"]

Poor Sleep and Type 2 Diabetes

Sleep quality affects insulin resistance and has an impact on glucose tolerance. It can therefore be a risk factor for diabetes. Poor sleep quality happens if you awaken too frequently, causing loss of deeper sleep periods. The other clue to poor sleep is a lack of that "refreshed feeling" after sleeping all night, even though you may have "slept" for eight or nine hours. Are you sabotaging sleep? Culprits: 1) Late-night snacking; 2) Anxiety; 3) Too hot or cold room temperature; 4) Bedtime smartphone use; 5) Alcohol nightcaps; 6) Caffeine; 7) Irregular sleep schedule; 8) Exercising before bedtime; 9) Artificial light/non-darkened room; 10) Sleep apnea.

Source: www.niddk.nih.gov/ [search "poor sleep"]

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Feeling gloomy in winter is a common complaint, but some people are affected far more than others. Although not a distinct illness, seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression with feelings of sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, and sluggishness that you can't shake. When any type of depression interferes with social and occupational functioning, take a few minutes to get an assessment. Start with your employee assistance program to get the right source of help.

Learn more: www.nlm.nih.gov [search "seasonal affective disorder"]

Don't "Psychologize" Friends and Coworkers

Do you "psychologize" your friends? Psychologizing is analyzing others in psychological terms—theorizing or speculating about their decisions or behaviors. To help cement a more trusting and helpful relationship with a coworker, discard this habit. Instead, practice empathy. For example, "Mary, that was a tough decision. How do you feel about it?" This approach will elicit stronger insight versus hearing what psychological dynamics you believe are affecting them. Plus, you'll avoid the retort, "Stop analyzing me!" Acknowledging someone's difficult experience, pain, or discomfort naturally precludes a judgmental response. It takes practice if you don't communicate naturally this way. However, the affirming reaction will reinforce this communication skill, and you'll appear less judgmental.

Are You Avoiding Critical Preventive Healthcare?

Many preventive health screenings for men and women are unpleasant, but don't let this be the reason you put them off, especially ones that could save your life. Which of these 14 common health screenings do you need right now based on your gender, lifestyle, and/or family history? Talk to your doctor if in doubt. 1) Hepatitis C screening: an infection that kills more people than any other. 2) Osteoporosis screening: to prevent bone fractures, mostly in older people. 3) Blood pressure screening: to prevent cardiovascular disease-related deaths. 4) Lipid panel: high cholesterol contributes to stroke and heart attacks. 5) Diabetes screening: about 1 in 10 U.S. residents has it—a third don't know it. 6) Sexually transmitted infection screening: chlamydia is the most common STI nationally. 7) Human papillomavirus (HPV) screening: 43 million infections in 2018; causes 70% of cervical cancers. 8) Clinical skin examination: prevents skin cancer, the most common cancer. 9) Pap smear: helps prevent cervical cancer. 10) Breast cancer screening: mammograms reduce breast cancer deaths by nearly 40%. 11) Colon cancer screening: the second-most common cancer (men/women combined.) 12) Low-dose CT scan (lung cancer): early detection reduces the high risk of death; 13) Alcohol use disorder (AUD) screening: a recognized brain disease; early detection and treatment can arrest the illness; 14) Depression screening: early identification leads to more effective treatment and reduced suicide risk.

Don't Take Cold Weather Casually

Cold weather injuries affect thousands of people each winter. Frostbite and hypothermia are the most common. Working outside at 20°F with wind blowing at 20 mph will cause frostbite on your nose, ears, chin, fingers, or cheeks in two to three minutes. (It's a myth that it takes much longer.) Frostbite can also be caused by touching very cold metal or liquids. Hypothermia is the other cold injury and strikes when your body temperature starts dropping and continues to do so faster than your metabolism can regenerate body heat. Fact/warning: Many college students have died of hypothermia in cold weather after abusing alcohol. Unable to detect symptoms while under the influence or unconscious, they succumbed to the cold outdoors.

Learn more: www.athletico.com [search "cold weather injuries"]

New Year's Resolution Tip: Better Planning

Are you a serial defaulter on your New Year's resolutions? An estimated 80% of people give up by February. Don't be a statistic. Try better planning. One well-touted approach is to set S.M.A.R.T. goals. S.M.A.R.T. stands for making your goal specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. If your resolution is to reduce your pre-diabetic fasting glucose A1C score of 6.1, make it specific. For example, shoot for 5.7. Talk with your doctor. Is it achievable? Check. Is it realistic? Check. Measurable? Check. Now, choose the time period for achievement. Three months? Check. Now build your strategy and tactics. They might include exercise, diet, and better sleep. Measure your progress. A third of North Americans are diabetic, so this might be a good goal for you if you don't already have one. Get checked!

Source: Centers for Disease Control

Manage Stress Right Now: Start Sooner, Procrastinate Less

Procrastination is about putting off the pain of starting a project. A visual image of the work often adds to this avoidance. To intervene, focus away from the vision of the work, and onto the vision of completion or success. Then, visualize smaller steps to make it easier to start. For even more motivation, divide small steps into even smaller steps. The Nike slogan "Just Do It!" is well hyped, but it may not stir you to act. Modifying this slogan to "Just Start Small" or "Just Do a Few Minutes" may easily kick-start you to act sooner, and if you do, continuing on to finish the job is more likely. Try it, and discover if it is a game changer for you.