

# WELLNESS WORKS!

*Fuel for Change...Fuel for Life*

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## STRESS MANAGEMENT

# Coping With Stress

*University of Pittsburgh Medical Center*

Stress affects your mind, body, and overall health. When you are feeling stressed, changes may occur in your body:

- Your blood pressure may increase.
- Your heart rate rises.
- Your immune system does not function as well.

Your body's response to stress could lead to illness.

You can control your stress level by practicing simple relaxation techniques to train your mind to lower your response to the tension. By using relaxation techniques regularly, you can lower the amount of stress hormones in your blood. This will help you protect yourself from the harmful mental and physical effects of stress.

### Breathing

Breathing provides oxygen to your bloodstream and body. When you breathe in, you inhale oxygen. When you breathe out, you exhale carbon dioxide. Your diaphragm (DIEeh-fram) is a sheet-like muscle that separates your stomach (abdomen) and your chest. Your diaphragm works to help you breathe in and out. When you inhale, the diaphragm lowers, your stomach pushes out, and your chest cavity swells. This gives the lungs more space to expand into and increases the amount of air that you can inhale.

### Chest Breathing vs. Abdominal Breathing

As we get older, our breathing gets shallower, and most of us use only the upper parts of our chest to breathe. When you breathe from your chest, you inhale about a teacup of oxygen. Instead, you should breathe from your abdomen. When you breathe from your

abdomen, you inhale about a quart of oxygen. The more oxygen you inhale, the better.

How you breathe also affects your nervous system. Chest breathing makes your brain create

shorter, more restless brain waves. Abdominal breathing makes your brain create longer, slower brain waves. These longer and slower brain waves are similar to the ones your brain makes when you are relaxed and calm. So, breathing from the abdomen helps you relax quickly.



### Practice Abdominal Breathing

It may be easier to practice abdominal breathing

when you're lying down. With practice, you should be able to do abdominal breathing anywhere.

1. Put your right hand on your abdomen, at the navel (belly button), and put your left hand on the center of your chest. You may find it helpful to close your eyes.
2. Inhale through your mouth more deeply than usual, and pay attention to your abdomen. If you are breathing from your abdomen, you should feel your abdomen rise as your lungs fill with air. The hand on your chest should move only slightly. If your chest rises

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### Welcome!

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the "Wellness Works Newsletter," compiled and published bi-monthly by the Carroll Wellness Council, to offer healthy living tips, information and "Fuel for Life."

Keep an eye out for exciting events and contests debuting in 2005.

For any topics or issues that you would like to learn more about please e-mail the Council at [wellness@carrollfuel.net](mailto:wellness@carrollfuel.net).

## Coping With Stress...continued

more than your abdomen, then you are breathing from your chest.

3. To change from chest to abdominal breathing, exhale all of the air in your lungs. Keep pushing the air out. When you feel like you can't exhale any more air, pause. Then inhale slowly. When you breathe this way, you push the air out from the bottom of your lungs, and create a vacuum that will pull in an abdominal breath when you inhale.
4. Do steps 2 and 3 again, but this time, breathe in through your nose. Breathing through your nose is better than breathing through your mouth because your nose:
  - warms the air
  - filters the air
  - adds moisture to the air
  - lets you breathe in more air



### Mini Relaxation Exercise

A mini relaxation exercise can help you reduce stress and tension immediately. The important part of these exercises is to focus on your breathing. During the exercises, try to breathe from your abdomen. You should feel your stomach rising about an inch as you breathe in, and falling about an inch as you breathe out. Remember, it is impossible to breathe from your abdomen if you are holding your stomach in. Relax your stomach muscles. You can do these exercises with your eyes open or closed.

There are a variety of mini relaxation exercises. Choose the one that works best for you.

The following mini relaxation exercises were adapted from the Mind/Body Medical Institute in Boston, Massachusetts.

*"A mini relaxation exercise can help you reduce stress and tension immediately."*

## You Make The Call:

Facility	Total Cost	100/80 Plan Co-Pay	Average Wait
Emergency Room	\$300.00	\$75.00	2 ½ Hours
Urgent Care Center	\$190.00	\$15.00	90 Minutes
MinuteClinic	\$45.00	\$15.00	15 Minutes

How Much Is Your Time and Money Worth to You?

### ● Exercise #1

Count very slowly to yourself. Count from 10 down to 0. With the first abdominal breath, say 10 to yourself; with the next breathe, say 9, and so on. If you start feeling light-headed or dizzy, slow down the counting. When you get to 0, see how you are feeling. If you are feeling better, great! If not, try doing it again.

### ● Exercise #2

As you inhale, count to 4 very slowly and say to yourself "1,2,3,4." As you exhale, count backwards very slowly and say to yourself "4,3,2,1." Do this several times.

### ● Exercise #3

After each time you inhale, pause for a few seconds. After you exhale, pause again for a few seconds. Do this for several breaths.

### When to Practice

You can practice the mini relaxation exercises almost anywhere, in any situation, including when you are:

- waiting in line or stuck in traffic
- put on hold during an important phone call
- bothered by something someone has said
- overwhelmed by what you need to accomplish
- in pain.



## FITNESS / WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

### Weight Management

LEARN—The LifeStyle Company

If your New Year's resolution is to lose weight, set realistic and attainable goals. According to a survey by the American Dietetic Association, 40 percent of Americans make a New Year's resolution to lose weight. If you have resolved to lose weight in 2005, you will be most satisfied with your results if you set clear and realistic goals that you have a good chance of attaining. A good starting weight-loss goal is 10 percent of your current weight. This may not sound too exciting, but think how you will feel if you set and reach this goal as opposed to setting a 25 percent weight-loss goal that you don't reach—and give up all weight loss efforts.

Whether or not you lose more weight, a 10 percent weight loss is an important achievement. Clinical studies have shown that this



amount of weight loss improves many important health factors, including blood pressure and cholesterol. After you lose 10 percent of your starting weight, you can set a new goal to lose more weight, 10-15 pounds at a time. You need to set realistic weight loss goals in order to achieve them.



### Personal Wellness Goal:

**Make physical activity a regular part of your day!**

Physical activity helps relieve stress and makes you feel good. It will help you be more productive and sleep better. Physical activity is also good for your health. It helps you achieve and maintain fitness and lowers your chronic disease risk. Being active for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week will reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke.

# SMART HEALTH CARE CHOICES

## Ten Ways to be Medicine-Wise

*National Council on Patient Information and Education*

The more than 100,000 over-the-counter (OTC) drugs that you can buy without a prescription all have one thing in common: they are serious medicines that need to be taken with care. That's why it's important to Be Medicine-Wise every time you buy and use an OTC drug. Here are ten simple ways to get the most from your OTC medicines:

1. Always start by reading the label—all of it  
Reading the label will help you decide if you have selected the right product for your symptoms, understand the dosing instructions, and are aware of any warning that may apply to you.
2. Look for an OTC medicine that will treat only the symptoms you have  
The formulations of OTC drugs are very specific and should not be mixed and matched.
3. Know what to avoid while taking an OTC medicine  
Like prescription medicines, some OTC drugs can cause side effects or reactions. Read the label to see what to avoid while you are taking an OTC drug.
4. When in doubt, ask before you buy or use an OTC medicine  
Taking an OTC medicine safely is too important for guesswork. If you have questions, ask your

pharmacist or doctor.

5. Take the medicine EXACTLY as stated on the label  
When it comes to OTC medicines, more is not better! Taking too much of a nonprescription medicine can be harmful. Only take the recommended amount and at the exact intervals stated on the label.
6. Use extra caution when taking more than one OTC drug product at a time  
Many OTC medicines contain the same active ingredients, which means you may be getting more than the recommended dose without even knowing it. Always compare active ingredients before taking more than one OTC medicine at the same time.
7. Don't combine prescription medicines and OTC drugs without talking to your doctor first  
Sometimes combining drugs can cause adverse reactions or one drug can interfere with the other drug's effectiveness. Al-



8. Make sure that each of your doctors has a list of all the medicines you are taking  
This includes not only prescription medicines but also any OTC drugs and dietary supplements that you may be taking.
9. Always give infants and children OTC medicines that are especially formulated for their age and weight  
Unless labeled otherwise, adult-strength products should not be given to children; doing so could result in accidental overdosing. To be safe, don't cut adult tablets in half or estimate a child's dose of an adult-strength liquid product.
10. Don't use OTC medicines after their expiration date  
Dispose of all medicines promptly after their expiration date and be careful not to throw them away where children or pets may find them.

### Spotlight On:

#### 10k-A-Day!

Carroll Independent had 54 employees participating in the 10k-a-Day program.

- ◆ The average steps per participant was 454,210.
- ◆ Carroll's top three walkers were Vander Wagner, Will Williams and Mark Phelps.
- ◆ The top team was team #6: Andrea Crowder, Julie Engle, Vic Peranio, Lauren Shapiro, Vander Wagner, and Matt Wrisk.

Thank you to all that participated and Great Job!

## DIET / NUTRITION

### Fast Food with a Low Fat Flair

*womentodaymagazine*

For those of you who frequent the pick-up windows, check out these helpful hints for lower fat fare:

#### Burgers and Fries

They had it right in the beginning when they came out with small burgers. Common sense tells us that the bigger the burger, the more saturated fat – the kind that your liver loves to make cholesterol out of. It's no surprise that the added cheese, bacon, mayonnaise and special sauces serve to top the fat off. Helpful hint: choose your toppings wisely. Ketchup, mustard, lettuce, tomatoes and pickles offer no extra fat.

Same rule applies for fries: the smaller the better. Don't be fooled by the "fried in vegetable shortening" ads. Like beef fat, shortening provides plenty of saturated fat. The best potato choice? Go for the baked version and load it with salsa. And don't forget to eat the skin.



#### Chicken and Fish

The rules are pretty simple here. If you're going for the deep-fried versions, you're in for a lot of fat. While chicken nuggets might be chosen every so often, a grilled, roasted or broiled piece of chicken or fish would be your best bet. Like the burgers, it's what you put on top that determines the total fat content. Helpful hint: if your favorite fast food doesn't offer a grilled version, ask to have it included on the menu. Menu choices are driven by consumer requests!

#### Subs, Wraps and Pitas

Subs can make for a healthy, low fat sandwich when prepared on whole grain buns smeared with a little mayo, oil, butter or cheese. Go for the cooked turkey or chicken breast versus the processed meat fillings. Feel free to load your sub with lettuce, onions, tomatoes, peppers, mustard and pickles.

Wraps are sweeping the US. Just to watch out for the dressings and sauces. Helpful hint: ask that your wrap be prepared with half the fat.

#### Salads

Most fast food places offer a decent sized salad that can substitute for a meal. The trick here is to choose a salad with lots of color – plenty of reds, orange and rich greens. A topping of grilled chicken or a toss of sunflower seeds packs a little protein, while a breadstick rounds the meal off. Helpful hint: you control the amount of dressing that goes on your salad. Ask for the low calorie types or use half of the regular versions.

So there you have it. A quick, healthy, energizing lunch is available at most fast food restaurants. You need only to consider your options, and modify your choices to make them as lean as you wish. Final hint: ask for some nutrition information when you place your order. Many restaurants now have these facts available.



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*Fuel for Change...Fuel for Life*

## Healthy Recipe Contest

The Carroll Wellness Council  
Wants Your Recipes!

As part of the Council's commitment to making the right choices for improving employee health, the Carroll Wellness Council is holding a Healthy Recipe Contest. Recipes will be judged on nutritional value and taste. The winning recipe will be printed in the next *Wellness Works* newsletter. The top three will be posted on the Wellness Website—*coming soon!*



Just submit your healthy recipes to [wellness@carrollfuel.net](mailto:wellness@carrollfuel.net) or in person to Lauren Shapiro by February 28, 2005.

Give us the recipe for Grandma's favorite healthy meal and let us be the judge!

**Are you Interested in the Carroll  
Wellness Council?**

**Do you have some interesting  
Wellness ideas for 2005?**

**We Want Your Suggestions!**

**Please submit your ideas to:  
[wellness@carrollfuel.net](mailto:wellness@carrollfuel.net)**

**Or in person to:  
Lauren Shapiro, ext. 5461**