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BecauseWeCare

Healthy Ideas For A Healthy Workplace



A House, a Mouse, and a Makeover

At age seven, Cassandra Okvath was diagnosed with leukemia. It didn't take long for her to realize that hospitals are no place for children – and that she needed to do something about it.

“She thought kids should see pictures of Big Ben or lions and tigers and feel like they're going on vacation, not a month-long hospital stay,” says Jennifer Christian, manager of the Blood and Marrow Transplantation Unit (BMT) at University Medical Center Tucson (UMC).

Kassandra started making necklaces to raise money to make over the unit, but after the girl in the bed next to hers died, she decided she needed faster results. So, she sent her ideas and a request to ABC's Extreme Makeover program.

To the amazement of her parents and the hospital, the show's producers took on the project. Not only did they enlist the help of the Walt Disney Company to renovate the unit, but they also performed their construction “magic” on Kassandra's family's home!

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The BMT's six pediatric rooms were redecorated with Disney themes and characters: Timon and Pumbaa, Lilo and Stitch, Nemo, Buzz Lightyear, Cinderella, and 101 Dalmations. The unit's consult room (which Kassandra called the “bad news room”) was designed around Mulan, a character representing courage. The unit was also given TVs and computers with mouse ears, Game Boys, Disney movies, and toys and costumes matching each room's theme.

Christian says that several pediatric patients have told the staff they don't feel as sick as they did before the makeover. She adds, “There's no science to back it up, but the same day we moved kids into those rooms, their white counts all went up.”

Since then Kassandra and her family have established a foundation to continue helping UMC, other hospitals, and children with cancer. *-Jeff Silver*

Uncle Sam Cares: **NEW** Government Health Guidelines

Looking for a new tool to help you live a healthier life? Look no further than the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005. These new guidelines were released earlier this year by the federal government to help Americans make healthier choices and to enhance their longevity and quality of life. Key areas of focus include diet, exercise, and weight control.

Highlights of the report include the following tips:

- Maintain a healthy weight. Start by cutting back on portion sizes (especially of foods high in fat and added sugars) and by adding more physical activity to your day.
- Be active for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. This will help ensure your overall physical and psychological health.
- A balanced exercise regimen is important. Include cardio activities to burn fat, stretching for increased flexibility, and muscle-building calisthenics or resistance training for greater strength and endurance.
- Choose a variety of colorful fruits and veggies every day.
- Aim for half of your grain servings each day – cereal, bread, rice, pasta – to be whole grains. Look for whole wheat, pumpernickel, rye, or oatmeal as the first ingredient on the label – this is a good sign that the product is a good source of good-for-you fiber.
- Limit the amount of saturated fat you eat by cutting back on red meat (beef, pork, and lamb) and high-fat dairy products.
- Limit salt intake to less than 2,300 mg (about one teaspoon) of salt per day.
- Consume no more than 300 mg of cholesterol each day.
- If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages, these should be limited to one drink per day for women and two drinks daily for men.



Allergies Be Gone!

The most common allergic condition in the United States is allergic rhinitis, better known as hay fever. Airborne particles, often called environmental allergens, cause about 20 percent of people to suffer from allergies. If you have seasonal hay fever, you may be allergic to pollens released by trees, grasses, or weeds. If you have year-round hay fever, you may be sensitive to indoor allergens such as dust mites, cockroaches, mold, or pet dander. Symptoms may include runny nose, itchy or watery eyes, congestion, and frequent sneezing.

Here are some things you can do to help decrease your exposure to airborne allergens in the home and workplace:

- Dust regularly. Wear a dust mask if you're allergic to dust mites.
- Close doors and windows and use air conditioning instead.
- Remove carpets or rugs from your room; hard floor surfaces don't collect dust as much as carpets do.
- Don't hang heavy drapes, and get rid of other items that allow dust to accumulate.
- Change your clothing after being outdoors.
- Stay indoors on sunny, windy days.
- Avoid damp areas, such as basements, if you're allergic to mold, and keep bathrooms and other mold-prone areas clean and dry.
- Use a dehumidifier to reduce indoor humidity.
- Use a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter.
- Avoid mowing the lawn or raking leaves, which stirs up pollen and molds. If you can't avoid these chores, you might try wearing a mask.
- Wash sheets and blankets in water heated to at least 130 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Vacuum carpets weekly with a vacuum cleaner equipped with a small-particle or HEPA filter.
- Use special covers to seal pillows and mattresses if you're allergic to dust mites.
- Consider removing bedroom carpeting if you're highly sensitive to dust mites.
- Keep family pets out of certain rooms, like your bedroom, and bathe them regularly if they are allowed to come in the house.

Lunch: Know Before You Grab 'N Go



In these days of dueling dietary theories, what exactly is a healthy lunch? Carbs? No carbs? Healthy fats? No fat? Americans remain as confused as ever about what food choices to make. They want healthy items, but they don't want to sacrifice convenience and taste.

The "grab 'n go" lunch items sold by restaurants, grocery stores, and convenience stores are popular and quick but may not be the healthiest choice available – and many of them sound healthier than they are. For example, which item has less calories and fat – a loaded burrito or a tuna salad wrap? An average tuna salad wrap has 610 calories and 30 grams of fat, whereas an average loaded burrito has 440 calories and 18 grams of fat.

A grilled chicken Caesar salad sounds healthy. But depending on its size and how much dressing it has, it may have 517 calories and 33 grams of fat. Hot dogs remain popular grab 'n go items and are

found in nearly every convenience store – some packing as much as 550 calories and 34 grams of fat.

Everyone knows at least one coworker who seems to subsist on a can of soda and a bag of chips for lunch. Why not have a healthier grab 'n go serving of sushi? A nine-piece California roll has 289 calories and 5 grams of fat. Add an apple and a handful of baby carrots, and you've only added 80 more calories – but loads of healthy nutrients.



CLICK HERE for more information about healthy eating for your busy lifestyle.

Grief in the Workplace: Helping Coworkers Cope

A 2002 Grief Recovery Institute study revealed that workplace grief costs US employers more than \$75 billion a year in reduced productivity and increased workplace injuries.

If you're an employer, what can you do to support a grieving employee? Make your employee aware of company or community resources that offer grief counseling. Paid bereavement leave is another way to help, as is sending a company representative to memorial services if appropriate.

If you're the manager or coworker of a grieving employee, you can show your support by acknowledging the loss, either in person, with a card, or both. Offers to provide meals may also be welcomed at this time.

While each employee will grieve differently, having support in coping with a loss will help tremendously in the healing process.



Trying to eat healthy can be a challenge, but trying to eat well on a budget can seem nearly impossible. Don't fret. Whether you're feeding a big family or just yourself, here are some tips to make the most of your food purchasing dollar:

Do the math. Closely compare prices when grocery shopping. Big bulk items do not always mean greater cost savings. Watch your local paper for weekly specials and use coupons.

Plan ahead. Use the sale ads to plan your meals on a weekly or monthly basis. Remember to keep meals healthy!

Do your homework. Use the Internet, cookbooks, and ideas from friends to discover new recipes that feature inexpensive and nutritious ingredients.



CLICK HERE for a health-conscious sample shopping list.



Pineapples' Healthy Benefits Are Welcome Indeed

The refreshing pineapple – which originates from South America, not Hawaii – has long been a symbol of hospitality. When included as part of a nutritious diet, pineapple can even help you roll out the red carpet for good health!

Ice cream alternative. Fresh pineapple can be blended in a food processor and frozen as a delicious rival to ice cream – with just a fraction of the calories.

Healthy dessert. Pineapple is an excellent alternative to sugar. It can be juiced, dried, candied, and used in baking.

Delicious seasoning. Pineapple makes a superb accent to many meats and seafood items.

Good medicine? Pineapple contains bromelain, an enzyme that breaks down other proteins and is used as a meat tenderizer. (Just don't make gelatin with fresh pineapple – it won't set!) Bromelain is purported to have a variety of health benefits. Some believe that it has anti-inflammatory properties; others believe it is a useful digestive aid. While the jury is still out on exactly what health benefits bromelain may deliver, eating pineapple is still a delicious way to get more fruits into your day.

Scrumptious CARROT CAKE

Cake:

1 1/3 cups sugar
 1 cup natural apple sauce (no sweetener added)
 1/2 cup buttermilk
 1 tsp. vanilla
 2 cups all-purpose flour
 1 tsp. baking powder
 1 tsp. baking soda
 1 tsp. salt
 1 cup crushed pineapple, well drained
 2 cups carrots, finely grated
 1/2 cup walnuts, chopped and toasted
 6 egg whites
 Cooking spray

Frosting:

8 oz. low-fat cream cheese, softened
 1 cup marshmallow creme
 1 cup powdered sugar
 1 tsp. vanilla

Preheat oven to 350°.

To prepare the cake:

Combine sugar, apple sauce, buttermilk, and vanilla in a medium bowl and mix well.

Sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a separate bowl. Slowly add to the creamy mixture.

Add crushed pineapple, carrots, and walnuts, blending well.

In a mixing bowl, beat egg whites. Fold gently into batter.

Spray a 9 X 12-inch pan with vegetable cooking spray and spread batter evenly in pan.

Bake for 40 to 45 minutes. Cake is done when a knife or toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Allow to cool 10 minutes before moving to cooling rack.

To prepare the frosting:

Combine cream cheese, marshmallow creme, powdered sugar, and vanilla in a mixing bowl and blend well.

Place cake on a serving platter.

Spread frosting on cooled cake.

*Approximate per serving:
 218 calories; 5 grams of fat*



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In the Next Issue

- Hike through History
- Perils of Cosmetic Surgery
- Nutrition during Pregnancy

Articles contributed by Lisa Bade, Virginia Ng, David Noel, and Liz Taylor.

All content for BecauseWeCare is provided by the American Cancer Society.

Meeting the growing consumer and employee demands for increased health services on the job, the American Cancer Society Workplace Services program provides corporate tools and resources to initiate or enhance existing employee health and wellness services.

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