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Fatigue & Your Health

We all feel tired occasionally, but constantly feeling tired (known as fatigue) is the state of extreme tiredness which can be a symptom of an underlying medical condition. It can be described as a lack of energy and motivation both physically and mentally. Fatigue is a very common complaint and it is important to remember that it is a symptom not a disease. Fatigue appears gradually and about 20% of Americans claim to have fatigue so severe it interferes with living a normal life.

Most of us need around eight hours of quality sleep to be productive in our day to day lives – some may need more, some may need less.

Tips for Reducing Fatigue:

Quantity & Quality of Sleep :

- Have a regular bed time and wake-up time
- Do quiet activities before bed if you're not sleepy, try to avoid screen time

Proper Nutrition:

- Get the recommended Daily Value of vitamin and minerals
- Eat balanced meals and snacks
- Drink plenty of water

Regular Exercise:

- Choose an enjoyable physical activity
- Do what you can and then try doing a little more each day
- Try calming activities such as yoga

Relaxation:

- Try to avoid stress and stressful situations
- Do what you find relaxing: read a book, sit outside, listen to music

Balance Work and Personal Life:

- Spend your time off from work with family, friends, or doing activities you enjoy
- Limit the amount of work you bring home

Source: eMedicine Health

DID YOU KNOW?



When you yawn your brain releases dopamine which allows you to think more clearly and have better concentration. This is why you'll often see athletes yawn before their performance!



TELEMEDICINE: DOCTOR ON DEMAND

****New Harvard Pilgrim Health Benefit effective July 1, 2016! This program allows members to speak with a doctor during a virtual or video visit using a smart phone, tablet or computer with camera capabilities. Members will still pay their applicable PCP visit copay. Referrals are not required.****

What is telemedicine?

- Telemedicine is a virtual or video visit with a doctor that involves the delivery of clinical services through interactive audio and video providing real-time communication between the provider and patient.

How will Harvard Pilgrim members access Doctor on Demand?

- Members can access a secure telemedicine app using their smartphone or tablet. The app is free to download. They can also use their computer if there is camera capability. After registering and completing the screening process, members will be connected to a Doctor on Demand provider within minutes.

What telemedicine services does Doctor on Demand provide?

- Examples of the types of conditions treated through telemedicine services include conjunctivitis, flu, sinus infection, rashes, and upper respiratory infections.

Is telemedicine available for patients of all ages?

- Yes, telemedicine is available for both pediatric and adult care. A parent must be present with members under the age of 18. **It is not offered to Medicare patients.**

What is the process to log in for a telemedicine visit?

- After setting up an account in the app, the member enters a short description of the reason for the visit, what symptoms they have been experiencing or medications they are currently taking, allergies and any current medical conditions. They can also indicate which pharmacy they would like prescriptions sent to if needed.

What is the cost for telemedicine services from Doctor on Demand?

- It is the same as their PCP visit copay.

Source: Harvard Pilgrim

The Health Risks of Working the Night Shift

In the United States there are about 8.6 million people who work the "night shift." According to the National Sleep Foundation, a night shift worker is not someone who works nights, but someone who works outside of the traditional 9 to 5 schedule. Working the graveyard shift, as some call it, could take a serious toll on an individual's health.

Shift work has become more popular in certain occupations, such as nurses, doctors, police officers and truck drivers. Experts say that this type of work could have a serious impact on the individual's lifestyle that comes with the demands of shift work.

When it comes to lifestyle, people who do shift work are more likely to have sleep loss and altered sleep patterns. This may lead to feelings of loneliness since the job cuts off time with family and friends. The social isolation takes a psychological toll lowering positive the mood hormone—serotonin.

Being awake at odd and irregular times interferes with the body's biological rhythms and disrupts the body's internal clocks. Disruption of internal clocks can have long term effects on the body, including cardiovascular disease, obesity, and mood disorders.

When working the night shift, the risk of developing cardiovascular disease can rise by as much as 40% and can increase the longer a person works the night shift. Poor diet and lack of exercise are common among shift workers and are linked to obesity and diabetes.

The risks of working the night shift may seem daunting. It is important to keep the risks in perspective and if you work the night shift. Here are some things you can do to reduce your risks: eat well, exercise, get enough sleep, and see your doctor regularly.

Source: WebMD

DON'T EAT YOUR FEELINGS!

When life stresses us out or we are faced with a difficult situation, it's common to turn to food to help cope. Most of the time it's your mind playing a game on us. Emotional eating is a way to suppress or soothe negative emotions such as stress, anger, fear, boredom, sadness or loneliness. Typically there is a trigger for emotional eating. It is often caused by major life events or everyday stress. Some major life events that may trigger emotional eating could include relationship conflicts, losing a loved one, work stress, over exhaustion, financial issues and health problems. It's very common for food to serve as a distraction during stressful times.

TIPS AND TRICKS TO HELP AVOID EMOTIONAL EATING:

Keep a Food/Mood Diary—Write down what you eat, how much you eat, when you eat and what your mood is when you are consuming those foods. Over time you might see patterns that reveal a connection between what you eat and how you feel.

Practice Stress Management—When you feel a sudden food craving and you aren't hungry, get outside for a brisk walk, do a breathing exercise or practice some yoga to relax you.

Check Your Hunger—Is your hunger physical or emotional? If you just ate an hour or two before and you don't have a rumbling stomach, chances are you're not hungry. Give the craving some time to pass.

Get Support—Lean on family and friends to help you cope when you're feeling down.

Fight Boredom—Instead of reaching for a snack when you're not hungry, distract yourself with a healthier behavior such as taking a walk, reading a book, calling a friend or listening to music.

Take Away the Temptation—If you know that it's going to be a rough week, stay clear of buying the hard to resist comfort foods you're typically used to buying. This will take away the urge to eat them if you don't have them accessible!

Healthy Snacking— If you're feeling hungry between meals, stick to low-fat, low-calorie snacks such as fresh fruit, vegetables, or low sugar granola bars.

Learn From Setbacks- It's okay to have an episode of emotional eating. We are all human! If you happen to splurge one day, forgive yourself and start fresh the next day. Try to learn from your experience and make a plan for how you can prevent it in the future.

Source: MayoClinic

PUMPKIN BANANA PECAN BREAD

Source: Skinnytaste



Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 cups white whole wheat or all-purpose gluten-free flour
- 1 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 1/2 tsp pumpkin spice
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 4 tbsp butter, softened
- 1 cup light brown sugar, not packed
- 4 large egg whites
- 1 1/2 cups pumpkin puree
- 1 1/4 cups (3 medium) ripe bananas, mashed
- 1/2 cup unsweetened apple sauce
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup chopped pecans
- baking spray

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Pumpkins are a good source of vitamin A which helps your body fight infections, viruses and some diseases. Plus it is packed with nearly **20%** of the recommended amount of daily vitamin C which could help you recover from colds faster!

Nutrition Facts:

Servings: 24 (2 loaves) • Size: 1 slice • Points+: 4 pt • Smart Points: 4
Calories: 146 • Fat: 5 g • Carb: 27 g • Fiber: 2 g • Protein: 3 g • Sugar: 16g
Sodium: 116 mg • Cholesterol: 5 mg

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°. **Grease** two 8×5 inch loaf pans with baking spray.

In a medium bowl, **combine** flour, baking soda, pumpkin spice, cinnamon and salt with a wire whisk. Set aside.

In a large bowl **cream** butter and sugar with an electric mixer. **Add** egg whites, pumpkin, bananas, apple sauce and vanilla. **Beat** at medium speed until thick. **Scrape down** sides of the bowl.

Add flour mixture and pecans, then **blend** at low speed until combined. **Do not over mix.**

Pour batter into loaf pans and **bake** on the center rack for 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Let the pan **cool** at least 20 minutes, bread should be room temperature before slicing. Makes 2 loaves.

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