

HP HEALTH & PRODUCTIVITY™



IHC HEALTH PLANS®
A Service of Intermountain Health Care

November 2005

Issue No. 24

Stress in the Workplace

By Sandy Patton, BS, CHES, IHC Health Plans

Every job comes with certain difficulties for employees. Some work-related challenges, mixed with feelings of inadequacy and lack of control, can lead to uncertainty and frustration, which can eventually lead to burnout. Even minor factors that are out of our control can lead to stress in the workplace. There are many unexpected events or interruptions that occur throughout the workday that can impact our stress levels (e.g., special meetings, phone calls, and/or equipment breakdown.)

Too much stress in the workplace is not the only cause for burnout. Lack of challenges and stimulating demands can create boredom. Job stress management includes finding the right balance of stimuli that will keep up a good level of interest as well as a good level of performance.¹

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports the following findings:

- Twenty-five percent of employees view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives.
- Forty percent of workers report that their job is “very” or “extremely” stressful.
- Twenty-nine percent of workers report feeling “quite a bit” or “extremely” stressed while at work.



To make matters worse, a recent survey conducted by The Gallup Organization revealed the following:

- Fourteen percent of workers felt like striking a coworker in the past year but didn't.
- Twenty-five percent of workers feel like screaming or shouting because of job stress.
- Nine percent of employees are aware of an assault or violent act in their workplace, and 18 percent have experienced some sort of threat or verbal intimidation in the past year.

Stress in the workplace can also be costly. NIOSH estimates over \$300 billion is spent annually as a result of direct medical, legal and insurance costs, absenteeism, turnover, and reduced productivity.²

Stress Is Harmful

It is well documented that our health suffers as a result of stress due to the impact it has on virtually every part of the body. Stress can increase the risk for a variety of health problems.²

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MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WEIGHT

By *Kim Barrus, BS, PMP, IHC Health Plans*



Whether you have lost some extra pounds or are just trying to keep your current weight, maintenance—keeping a healthy weight over a long period of time—is important.

Suggested principals for weight management include the following:

- **Be aware of your “high-risk” situations.** Keep a diary for a few days to find out what these situations are. Is it a bag of chips left open on the counter? A holiday buffet? A bad day at work? Awareness can help you make better decisions.
- **Don’t gain weight.** Remember that your body is built to hang on to your weight. That’s why the first strategy for staying healthy is NOT to gain extra pounds. If you do need to lose weight, do it slowly—a pound or two a week at most. Losing those extra pounds slowly is healthier and easier to maintain than any crash diet.
- **Be active every day.** Physical activity is the foundation of good health and weight control. In fact, when researchers looked at weight loss success, they found that regular physical activity is the single best predictor of success in maintaining weight loss over time.
- **Make healthy food choices, and watch your portion sizes.** Eating in a healthy way—not starving yourself or following a food fad—will help you manage your weight. And you will likely have better overall health. With a little education and awareness, you will find that healthier eating is easier than you think.
- **Make a plan that works for you.** The principles of healthy weight management won’t change. Everyone needs regular physical activity and healthy eating habits. But there is not a “one size fits all” plan. To make these ideas work for you, put them into practice in a way that fits your goals, your body, and your lifestyle.
- **Set goals.** Make sure that your goals are specific, measurable, and realistic.
- **Reward your successes.** It is important for you to reward yourself for reaching milestones. Just make sure that you don’t reward yourself with food.

Most importantly, do not make the mistake of thinking that once you have hit your goal, you will no longer need help. You may need to examine what motivates you. Make lifestyle changes that will stick for life.



2005 Health Topic Calendar

The 2005 IHC Health Plans' Health Topic Calendar is a guide for employers who are planning and implementing worksite health management programs. Below is the content for November and December of 2005. You can also visit www.ihc.com/employer/ed for the complete year. The calendar provides you with 12 monthly health topics, including resources and ideas for implementation.

SMOKING CESSATION

NOVEMBER

IHC Resources

- Call Free & Clear® (members only) at 1-800-292-2336.
- Call SmokeBreakersSM (members only) at 1-801-442-5599 or 1-801-314-2702.
- For monthly health topics, click on the Health Tips link at www.ihc.com/xp/ihc/member.

National Resources

- American Cancer Society – www.cancer.org
- National Cancer Institute – www.smokefree.gov
- CDC Tobacco Information and Prevention Source – www.cdc.gov/tobacco

Educational Materials – www.ihc.com/employer/ed

- Search the Educational Materials page for information on smoking cessation.

Implementation

- Post the Smoking Cessation flyer in your workplace. Call 1-801-442-5599 for flyers.
- Promote the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout by urging employees to participate.

PRENATAL CARE

DECEMBER

IHC Resources

- IHC Healthy BeginningsSM program (plan members only) 1-866-442-5052.
- Visit KidsHealth® at www.ihc.com/xp/ihc/primary.
- For monthly health topics, click on the Health Tips link at www.ihc.com/xp/ihc/member.

National Resources

- March of Dimes - www.marchofdimes.com
- Medline Plus - www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/prenatalcare.html

Educational Materials – www.ihc.com/employer/ed

- Search the Educational Materials page for information on IHC's prenatal program.

Implementation

- Send an e-mail to employees with links to IHC's web site to learn more about IHC Healthy Beginnings, as well as a link to the March of Dimes web site. Encourage prenatal care before and during pregnancy.

IHC Health Management Services

IHC Health Plans offers members access to health management programs and services that promote healthy lifestyles and behavior. These programs help lead your employees to a happier, healthier life through prevention of unnecessary health problems and intervention and management of problems that may already exist.

Health and Wellness Services

IHC Health Plans' Health and Wellness Services focus on *prevention* of disease by creating healthy lifestyle habits. Health and Wellness Services include the following areas:

- Smoking Cessation
- Prenatal Care
- Holiday Weigh InSM
- Summer Slim DownSM
- Walk-A-DaySM
- Catch A FlightSM
- Walking TrailsSM

- Flu Shots
- Health Topic Calendar
- Health and Productivity Workshops
- *Health & Productivity*TM Newsletter
- *Total Fitness*TM Newsletter
- Online Self-Care Services

Disease Management Programs

IHC's Disease Management Programs focus on *intervention* of existing conditions to help employees manage their condition. IHC's Disease Management Programs include the following areas:

- Allergies and Rhinitis
- Asthma
- Cholesterol
- Congestive Heart Failure
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Hepatitis C
- Hypertension
- Migraines
- Oncology

For more information on these programs, call IHC Member Services at 1-800-538-5038 or visit www.ihc.com.

Dental Health

Brushing, flossing, good nutrition, and regular checkups all play an important role in dental health. Brushing teeth properly and consistently helps to remove most dental plaque—the sticky layer of bacteria on gums and teeth that is the main cause of tooth decay and gum disease. However, brushing alone cannot remove plaque that is located in places that a toothbrush cannot reach—particularly in between teeth and between the gums and teeth. That is why regular flossing is needed. Flossing also helps remove debris in between the teeth and plays an important role in reducing bad breath. You should floss at least once a day for two to three minutes each time to be most effective.

How long should you brush your teeth?

According to the Academy of General Dentistry, the average person only brushes for two minutes a day (one minute in the morning and one minute in the evening). This is less than 14 minutes a week and 38.5 days in their lifetime. It is recommended to brush six minutes a day (three in the morning and three in the evening), which is 42 minutes a week and 122 days in your lifetime.

What is the proper way to brush?

- Place your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle against your gums
- Move the brush back and forth gently in short strokes
- Brush the outer, inner, and chewing surfaces of your teeth
- Use the “toe” of the brush to clean the insides surfaces of the front teeth, using a gentle up and down stroke
- Don't forget to brush your tongue since it harbors lots of the germs that can cause bad breath

What is the proper flossing technique?

- Break off about 18 inches of floss and wind most of it

around one of your middle fingers. Wind the remaining floss around the same finger of the opposite hand. Hold the floss tightly between your thumbs and forefingers

- Guide the floss between your teeth using a gentle rubbing motion. Never snap the floss into the gums
- At the gum line, curve the floss into a “C” shape against one tooth. Gently slide it into the space between the gum and the tooth
- Gently rub the side of the tooth, moving the floss away from the gum with up and down motions
- Repeat on the rest of your teeth

Tips for Good Dental Health

- Eat a balanced diet. Choose foods from the five major food groups:
 - Breads and Cereals
 - Fruits
 - Vegetables
 - Meat, poultry, and fish
 - Milk, cheese, and yogurt
- Limit snacks and make nutritious snack choices
- Brush twice a day
- Floss daily
- Schedule regular dental visits



IHC Self-Care Tips

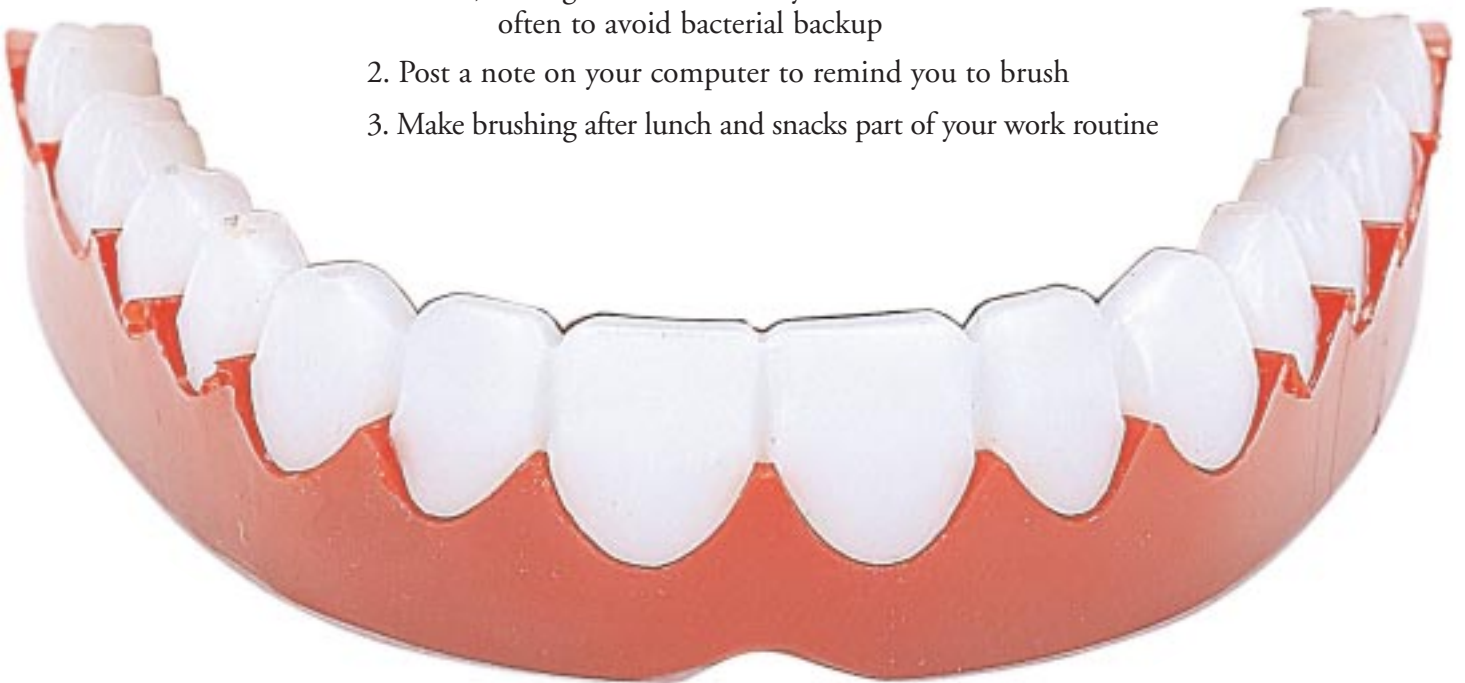


Brushing at the Office

According to a study conducted by the Academy of General Dentistry, more than three-quarter of respondents are eating twice or more a day at the workplace, while only 14 percent of respondents are brushing at work. Eating on the job is not the problem. It is the lack of brushing after those meals that can lead to dental problems. Snacking on the job and not brushing can increase the likelihood of tooth decay and gum disease. It is important to brush at the office as well as at home.

Tips to Increase Brushing at Work

1. Leave an extra toothbrush at the office
 - a) Store it in a travel container
 - b) Dry it after every use
 - c) Change the toothbrush you leave at work more often to avoid bacterial backup
2. Post a note on your computer to remind you to brush
3. Make brushing after lunch and snacks part of your work routine



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Stress can also induce certain psychosomatic symptoms, including headaches, ulcers, and upset stomach. It is important, however, to distinguish between good and bad stress. Certain types can actually be beneficial. Exciting life events, such as marriage or the birth of a child, can be stressful yet exhilarating. Signs of symptoms that negatively affect us include the following:

- Fatigue
- Anger
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Poor appetite²

If stressful situations never seem to stop, your body will not have a chance to recover. Long-term exposure to stress can disrupt almost all of your body's processes.³

Stress Management

Offering employees options to help alleviate stress can lead to a happier and more productive workforce. Not every employee will find each option appealing; therefore, it is important to offer a variety of stress management programs at each worksite. Some ideas include the following:

- Encourage employees to be active and engage in physical activity. Working up a sweat is a great way to let off steam,

and even short bouts of moderate activity like walking can reduce stress and improve mood and energy levels.

- Encourage a healthy breakfast. Eating an adequate and nutritious breakfast provides for better coping skills when dealing with stress.
- Provide lunch time education. Offer classes ("Brown Bags" or "Lunch-n-Learns") during the lunch hour on stress management.
- Provide counseling services. Let employees know where to turn in times of trouble and encourage employees to seek personal counseling to reduce job stress. If your company provides an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), it should be widely publicized.
- Heal through personal touch. Consider offering employees a monthly massage day. Massage is a wonderful way to reduce tension and stress.²
- Teach time management. Difficulty managing schedules can be a problem at many worksites. Providing employees with time management education can reduce job stress. If possible, giving employees the option of flex time scheduling is very helpful and much appreciated by those who need it.

References

1. "The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook" Martha Davis, Ph.D. Elizabeth Robbins Eshelman, M.S.W., Matthew McKay, Ph.D.
2. Wellness Council of America "Stress Management at Work, A Guide to Building and Maintaining a Successful Worksite Stress Management Program" 2005.
3. Mayo Clinic, www.mayoclinic.com.

Parent eNews

Free Online Newsletter Available for New or Expectant Parents from Primary Children's Medical Center

Whether you are expecting your first child or your third, you may have lots of questions about your pregnancy and baby. Now you can sign up to receive New Parent eNews, a free quarterly newsletter sent directly to your personal e-mail address.

The newsletter provides doctor-approved health information from the first trimester of pregnancy through birth and a baby's first two years of life. It includes topics on health, nutrition, learning, and development. You can click on links in the newsletter to read about the following:

- How to have a healthy pregnancy, including a week-by-week pregnancy calendar
- What to expect when giving birth and birthing options
- Personal birth stories shared by other new parents
- Caring for a newborn, including facts and myths about immunizations

- Communicating with and nurturing a new baby
- How becoming a parent can affect your relationship with your partner
- Issues for second-time parents and preparing siblings for a new family member
- Medical conditions that can affect newborns
- Light-hearted articles about becoming a new parent

You can also find answers to hundreds of common questions, information about development during pregnancy and after birth, and advice on when to contact your doctor.

Any new or expectant parents can sign up for the free service or preview the newsletter by going to www.ihc.com and clicking on the New Parent eNews stork logo.

ACHIEVING OPTIMAL EMPLOYEE HEALTH

Take Home Lessons from the HERO Forum

By *Tim Butler, MS, CHES, IHC Health Plans*

HERO (The Health Enhancement Research Organization) was founded ten years ago. Its mission¹ is to facilitate research that will help shift the health care paradigm from a diagnosis and treatment system to a prevention-oriented system.

HERO has instituted the “HERO Forum for Optimal Health Management.” The HERO Forum represents a select group of organizations that share an interest in best practices in health and productivity management. Biannual meetings create opportunities for networking and sharing the latest developments in the field. The September meeting focused primarily on the following two issues:

- The need for standardized economic and program evaluation metrics to a) enhance future research efforts; and b) better communicate the value of health and productivity management to key decision makers
- Best practice strategies and techniques in program implementation and outcomes measurement.

As a result of the meeting discussions, HERO will be leading an initiative to formulate a set of standardized metrics for reporting economic outcomes and conducting program evaluation. This work will be done by a HERO Forum subcommittee with input and feedback from Forum members.

A major feature of HERO Forum meetings is “Best Practice Workshops,” which provide insight

into some of the most sophisticated, cutting edge health management programs in America. While each organization’s culture and population is unique, there are an emerging set of themes that characterize the most effective health and productivity management initiatives.

Lessons from “Best Practice” companies

All of the most successful programs have executive management that view investments in human capital as essential to competing effectively in the marketplace and succeeding financially. Below is a short list of “best practice” characteristics that you can use to see how your company’s approach compares:

- Both managers and employees come to see health management as instrumental to business and economic success.
- Top management provides strong, active, visible leadership. Management sets an active example and expects others to support health management initiatives.
- Health management initiatives are integrated across all departments, especially those with a direct relationship to employee health management. Managers at all levels should be accountable for and evaluated on specific health management goals.
- Annual evaluation and refinement using predetermined outcome measures is essential.

- Health risk, medical claim, injury, and productivity data are all used in planning, goal-setting, and evaluation.
- Risk stratification is used to plan interventions along the continuum of care. Specific interventions target high-risk employees while other strategies are designed to maintain and expand the healthy, low-risk population.
- When possible, services are actively distributed to the employee population.
- When outside vendors are used, they are embraced as close, collaborative partners with clear expectations and accountabilities.
- There is a strong focus on high participation (80 percent or better). Many companies are using external incentives such as cash, prizes, or enhanced benefits. Other companies, such as Dow Chemical, are able to achieve very high participation rates without relying on external incentives because the company culture is so powerfully supportive of health management initiatives.
- Management and other stakeholders receive regular reports, and program successes are frequently shared with both management and staff.

If you would like to learn more about the research and development work being sponsored by HERO or if you are interested in opportunities for becoming a HERO Forum member, visit www.the-hero.org.

References

1. <http://www.the-hero.org/about/index.htm>

HOLIDAY WEIGH INSM

The goal of the Holiday Weigh In is to encourage your employees to maintain or lose weight over the holidays—a time of high temptation. To accomplish this, employees form a team consisting of four to six people. Then teams work together to maintain or lose weight during the holiday season.

Here is how the program works:

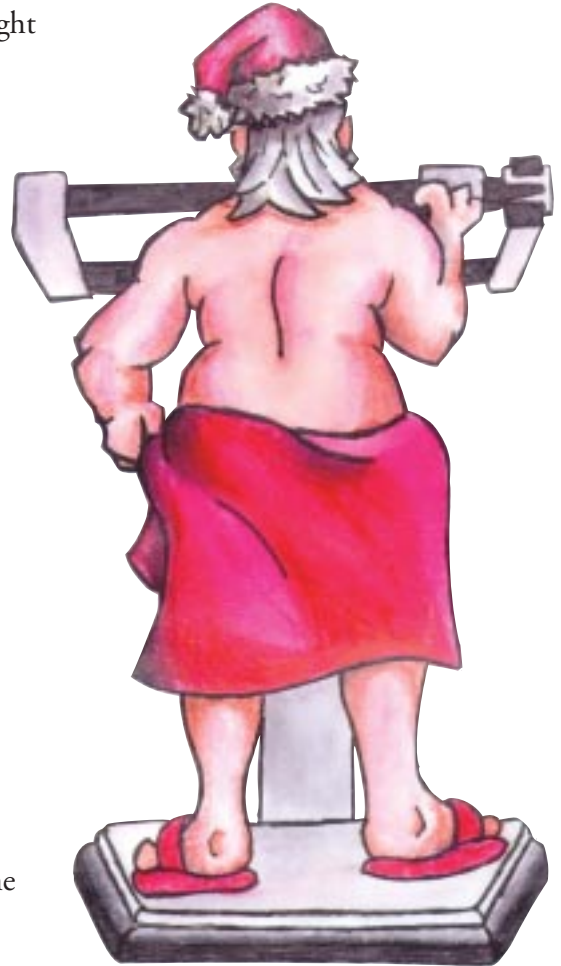
1. Employees form a team of four to six coworkers.
2. Weigh-in. Teams turn in one group weight by a designated date.
3. Encourage employees to work hard to try and lose weight during the program.
4. Weigh out. Teams turn in a final group weight by a designated date.

The program includes all forms needed to implement the Holiday Weigh In at your worksite, including those listed below:

- Weigh in/out forms
- Marketing posters
- Educational materials
- Program evaluations

The complete program is available by visiting www.ihc.com/xp/ihc/documents/hp/holidayweighin.pdf.

Encourage employees to join the program and work hard to avoid the temptations and weight gain associated with the holiday season!



Past Issues

(all available at www.ihc.com)

September 2005

- Antibiotic Resistance
- Fad Diets
- Women and Heart Disease
- Smoking Cessation
- Self Care – Office Workout Tips

July 2005

- Recognition Award
- Diabetes
- Self Care – Dining Out Tips
- Benefits of Walking

2005 Health Promotion Services & Contacts

- IHC Health Management Services1-801-442-6759
- SmokeBreakersSM1-801-442-5599
(group smoking cessation program)
- Free & Clear[®]1-800-292-2336
(individual phone-based smoking cessation program)
- IHC Healthy BeginningsSM1-801-442-5052
(healthy pregnancy program)
- or toll-free1-866-442-5052
- www.ihc.com