



# Wellness Works

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*Winter 2011*

## *Beat Stress and Ring in the Cheer*

Holidays can be the most wonderful time of the year or a time of whirlwind activities that add up to stress-induced meltdown. This year, try a new approach. Take preventive measures to manage your stress, eat healthier foods and sneak some exercise into your schedule.



How can you put the “happy” back in your holidays? Above all else, take it easy on yourself. You don’t have to be perfect – you’re human after all. As you approach the holidays, it’s important to know these signs of stress:

- Bad temper and moodiness
- Trouble sleeping on a regular basis
- Weight loss or weight gain
- A high level of tension – with muscle aches or headaches
- Feelings of being overwhelmed or even panic

## *Holiday Stress-busting Tips*

### **Eat Right**

- Do your best to follow a balanced eating plan.
- Enjoy a favorite holiday dessert at lunch, and then balance that with a low-fat dinner.

### **Give Yourself the Gift of Exercise**

- Take a walk in the morning before facing work and family demands.
- Suggest an ice skating outing or indoor volleyball game as part of a gathering.

### **Happy Holidays to You**

- Change one behavior at a time.
- Strengthen your support network by reconnecting with friends and family.

Sources: American Psychological Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; University of Michigan Health System

## *Is a Checkup One of Your New Year’s Resolutions?*

Having a yearly checkup is one of the most important things you can do to help stay healthy. Talk to your doctor about health screenings you will need in the new year. Make time for your annual checkup. Getting the right health screenings, tests and treatments helps improve your chances for living a longer, healthier life.



Source: Centers for  
Disease Control and Prevention



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Texas**



## Healthy Lifestyle Changes Can Prevent Heart Disease

Certain lifestyle factors play a major role in contributing to heart disease. That means you have the power to control many risk factors that can lead to this dangerous illness. Change isn't always easy, but when you get support from doctors, family and friends, you can add healthy habits to your daily routine.



Start making smart lifestyle choices now to help lower your risk. Begin with small changes:

- Have your cholesterol checked regularly. Take steps to lower it if it's high.
- Don't smoke. Smokers are more than twice as likely to have a heart attack.
- Have your blood pressure checked regularly. Take steps to lower it if it's high.
- Try to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days.
- Recognize and treat diabetes.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat healthy foods low in salt, fat and cholesterol.
- Don't drink too much alcohol. It can raise your blood pressure.

Source: American Heart Association



## Can't Weight to Get Started

Weight loss will be a breeze when you do your prep work. Put these plans into action and you'll see the pounds disappear:



- Prepare your kitchen for success. Clean out any tempting food that might make it hard for you to stay in control.
- Decide what exercise plan is right for you, and get the proper clothing or workout shoes to help keep your activity comfortable and fun.
- Gather a support system. Let family and friends know about your goals and talk to them about not tempting you with off-limit foods.
- Begin a food diary. Record each thing you eat to help you learn how much you are eating and why.
- Picture success. Keep a good outlook and tell yourself you will succeed.

Source: Mayo Clinic

## Good Night, Sleep Tight

A good night's rest is important for good health. Try these tips:

- Avoid heavy meals close to bedtime.
- Exercise each day, at least three hours before bedtime. Exercise helps make it easier to fall asleep and leads to sounder sleep.



- Stay away from caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulant and can stay in the body for three to five hours.
- Give up your tobacco products. Smoking before bed makes it hard to fall asleep.
- Shy away from alcohol.

Source: National Sleep Foundation



## Heading Off Headaches

"Oh, my aching head!" It's something all of us have felt at some point in our lives when dealing with headache pain. Headache types can be divided into three types: tension, vascular and those from serious conditions. Tension headaches make up about 80 percent of all headaches. Migraines and cluster headaches, which fall into the vascular headache type, can be very debilitating. Less than two percent fall into the third type, which includes serious concerns such as a brain tumor. Call your doctor right away if your headache pattern or symptoms change or suddenly worsen.

Want to take the pain out of your headaches?

Follow these steps:

- Visit a doctor who specializes in headache treatment.
- Keep a headache diary.
- Have reasonable expectations about treatment and see it through.
- Tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking and your health conditions.
- Keep a positive outlook.



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Headache Foundation

