

DECEMBER 2021 | ISSUE NO. 9

THE ADVOCATE

Health tips and resources for MCG employees and their families



The end of the year can always bring about temptation to over-indulge in our habits, both positive and negative. This month, our Advocates are sharing their best tips on how to finish out 2021 strong, keeping you and your family healthy and safe this December.

SMART SWAPS

We all want to indulge in our favorite treats during the holiday season but too much of a good thing can leave us feeling overly-stuffed. Try these swaps to feel your best while you make the most of time with family and friends!

Instead of: Candy

Try: Frozen Fruit

Excess sugar throughout the day can lead to increased risk of heart attack, stroke, and Alzheimers disease. As an alternative, try freezing grapes, pineapple or berries. It tastes like candy and you get the satisfying feeling of eating them one piece at a time!



Instead of: Chips

Try: A Healthier Crunch

Chips are high in fat, calories and sodium. Try satisfying your salty crunch craving with healthy nuts, roasted chickpeas, pumpkin seeds or plain popcorn. You could even get creative and make some veggie chips with what you have in your fridge!

Instead of: Ordering Takeout

Try: A DIY Pizza Night

Pizza is the one food that people who struggle with obesity report eating most frequently. If you do order out for pizza, request a thin crust and skip the fatty meats. Go for plain cheese or veggies. Even better, make your own for a healthier alternative! Start with a store-bought crust, or even an English muffin or tortilla. Next spread a layer of no-sugar-added pizza or spaghetti sauce followed by a layer of part skim mozzarella. Top with some oregano and your favorite vegetables.

Got questions about healthier choices this holiday season? Contact Florey Miller at x6410

SPICE UP THE SEASON

Everyone loves traditional holiday favorites, but if you're looking to bring something new to the table, try this Thai Cabbage Slaw, which pairs great with chicken or steak!



Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 3 tbsp rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp fish sauce
- 1 tsp water
- 1 tbsp creamy peanut butter
- 1 tsp chili paste with garlic
- 6 cups shredded napa cabbage
- 2 cups shredded red cabbage
- 1 cup red bell pepper strips
- 1 cup shredded carrot
- 2 tbsp chopped dry-roasted peanuts
- 1 tbsp fresh cilantro
- 1 tbsp fresh mint

Instructions:

- Combine the first 7 ingredients in a large bowl. Whisk until blended. Add cabbage, bell pepper and carrot. Toss gently to coat and marinate in the refrigerator for 1 hour. Stir in peanuts, cilantro, and mint just before serving.

WAIT, I THOUGHT CARDIO WAS GOOD FOR ME?

Excessive cardio actually has a counterproductive effect on the body. Putting too much emphasis on a blood-pumping sweat session for your workout routine can negatively impact stress hormones, such as cortisol. Spiking cortisol levels has been linked to sleep disorders and increased stubborn belly fat. Overuse of the same muscles leads to too much muscle breakdown, and without enough recovery time, you are in a constant state of muscle loss. This slows your metabolism and potential weight loss goals as well as places you at higher risk of injury. Excessive exercise and muscle loss can also put a lot of strain on the kidneys.



So how do you know if you are doing too much cardio? Look for these symptoms.

- Have trouble falling asleep at night
- You are always sore
- You feel run down vs energized from your workout
- You work out every day but you cannot lose weight or you may notice you are gaining weight instead

Limit your cardio training to no more than five 30-minute moderate intensity sessions per week or no more than two higher intensity sessions. In addition, Manatee County provides some excellent free resources to keep your exercise routine on track! **As an alternative to cardio, you could:**

- Consult a MYC trainer to learn a strength routine to implement along side your modified cardio training.
- Meet with an MYC Registered Dietitian to put a proper nutrition plan together to repair any hormonal concerns and maximize your physical wellbeing results.

Want to maximize your fitness routine? Contact Allison Minardi at x3667

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!

The holidays can be an exciting time, full of travel and family events. Make sure that when you are making your plans, you check your prescription bottles to ensure you have enough medication to get you through your vacation.

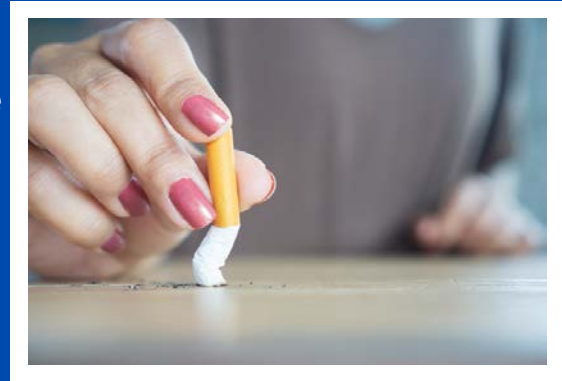
If you need an early fill call Vanessa Rene at 941-748-4501 ext 6418 and she can help you with a vacation override.



We invest in a holistic wellbeing approach and offer programs and services in the areas of physical, emotional, financial, community, and career health. When each of these areas are well, our employees are able to bring their best selves to work and help us make Manatee County a premier place in which to live and work and play.

SMOKING WITHOUT LIFTING A FINGER

Everyone knows that firsthand smoke - smoking, vaping, or using oral nicotine products - can pose a risk to the user's health. Did you know that secondhand and thirdhand smoke can be most dangerous to the littlest members of the household?



Secondhand smoke is the combination of smoke from the burning end of a nicotine product and the smoke breathed out by the user. Thirdhand smoke happens when secondhand smoke settles on surfaces in a home, like carpet and is absorbed through skin or the mucous membrane. Studies have found that second and third hand exposure is just as deadly as first hand, particularly for small children and pets, who spend a lot of time on the floor and may lick, or put things in their mouths out of curiosity.

Secondhand and thirdhand smoke contains thousands of chemicals, at least 69 of which cause cancer-even for your pets! Children exposed to these chemicals are at a higher risk of health issues such as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, Respiratory Infections, Ear Infections, Learning or Behavioral Problems, and severe asthma.

We are ready to help you quit! Contact Vanessa Rene at x6418.

USING HEALTHCARE RESOURCES WISELY

Primary Care



See your primary care physician!

Your primary care physician has same-day and next-day appointments available. Less wait time!

Not feeling up to driving to the doctor's office? Try Teladoc, a benefit of the MYC health plan!

Urgent Care



- Cuts & Scrapes
- Cold/Flu with High Fever
- Strains & Sprains
- Sore Throat with Fever
- Stitches
- Dehydration
- Frequent Painful Urination (UTI)

Emergency Care



Life-Threatening Conditions

- Inability to Urinate
- Coughing or Vomiting Blood
- Mental Confusion
- Severe Shortness of Breath
- Chest Pain; Numbness; Difficulty Speaking
- Sudden Loss of Consciousness

WHAT IS HOLIDAY HEART?

Holiday Heart is the occurrence of an irregular heartbeat or atrial fibrillation after bouts of acute binge drinking. This episodic condition can even occur in healthy individuals who don't have underlying heart disease. Excessive alcohol can cause an electrical disturbance in your heart.

Even one night of binge drinking – that's more than five drinks in under two hours for men, and more than four for women – has been linked to increased risk for heart conditions.



All of the other financial and social stressors, disruptions in sleep, and poor diet that often occur during December's holiday season can further compound the negative effects of binge drinking. Alcohol-induced Holiday Heart can present with the following symptoms which require medical attention:

- Dizziness
- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Loss of consciousness

In contrast to acute binge drinking, regular binge drinking causes severe damage to the heart. Chronic exposure to ethanol causes cardiac cells to change. When ethanol is metabolized, acetaldehyde builds up in heart cells. Along with a variety of other metabolic byproducts, chronic exposure to such chemicals causes oxidative damage, mitochondrial dysfunction, cell death, and lowers the effects of cardioprotective molecules. Additionally, chronic exposure to ethanol alter the way heart cells synthesize proteins and transport calcium – proper transmission of calcium enables your heart to beat.

Decide for yourself and please party responsibly this December – and always!

HEART WATCH

According to the American Heart Association, there is a sharp uptick in cardiac events during the winter holiday season, and the greatest number of fatal heart attacks occur between December 25th and January 1st than at any other time of the year.



**American
Heart
Association®**



Save the Date!

WHAT: Cook Once, Eat Twice (Or More!): A LIVE Cookalong with Florey Miller, Manatee Your Choice Registered Dietician/Nutritionist and Polly Pitchford, Aetna Health Promotion Specialist

WHEN: January 26, 2022 6-7:30 pm

WHERE: Zoom/Your Kitchen!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Hosted by Polly Pitchford, this live class will teach you how to prepare chicken and to use leftovers in new and exciting ways! Each participant will get recipes and shopping lists ahead of time. This is the first in a new series of Cookalongs presented in partnership with Sarasota County.

For more information or to register, visit www.ManateeYourChoice.com/Cookalong

A MESSAGE FROM LESLI

Well that's a wrap!

As I look back on this past year, I have reflected on a blog that I wrote in January that was my message to ushering in 2021. The message that I shared was of hope and encouragement. In my message I encouraged each of you to start your day with a few deep breaths, take the time to give thanks for all that is good in your life and use the resources available to you to help make 2021 your best year yet! My charge to you was to stop focusing on the chaos around us and to start to focus on yourself. As this year ends, I hope that you were able to do just that.

Have we eliminated the chaos? NO! What we have done is learned to be resilient and to continue to manage through challenging times. Hopefully you have taken the time to focus on yourself and move towards being your best self. This is a daily challenge for all of us but remember, you are resilient, you are here, and people depend on you and the job that you do for this county.

Blessings to you as you approach these last two weeks of 2021. Please find time for yourself and make the time to enjoy your family and friends. 2022 is upon us and great things are expected of each one of us. At EHB we are excited for the new year and we can't wait to join you in your wellbeing journey.

Lesli L. Strickland

Employee Benefits Manager

Up to \$600 can be YOURS in 2022!

Hiip

Introducing the Health Improvement & Incentive Program (Hiip), a program designed to improve health using resources already available to members on the MYC medical plan. You'll earn incentive dollars when you invest in your health!

www.ManateeYourChoice.com/Hiip

\$100

Blueprint Labs
Automatically earn Health Bucks for completing Blueprint Labs in 2022.

\$100

Get to Know MYC
Complete this scavenger hunt where you'll search our website and learn more about all the resources available to you.

\$100

**Prescription for Health Zero
(0 Risk Factors)**
Automatically earn for zero risk factors on 2021 Blueprint Labs.

\$50

**Prescription for Health Lite
(1 Risk Factor)**
Based on 2021 Blueprint Labs, complete a short form about your results and review available resources on the MYC website.

\$300

**Prescription for Health Full
(2+ Risk Factors)**
Meet with an Advocate to review 2021 Blueprint Labs and choose an area of health to improve with a custom prescribed program.

\$100

Happy Mind
Complete a short survey about resiliency in the face of stress and then chat with a LAMP Advocate about your responses.

\$100

Happy Body
Visit the fitness center to complete a face-to-face session with a Fitness Advocate focused on posture and balance.

**Health Bucks earned in 2022 are applied to your 12/22 paycheck.
Program registration begins 1/1/22. Don't miss out!**