

National Health Observances

December

National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month

Safe Toys & Gifts Month

World Aids Month

Week of December 1-5

Older Driver Safety Awareness Week

Week of December 10-17

Human Rights Weeks

Week of December 14-20

Gluten-free Baking Week

December 16-December 24

Hanukkah

December 25

Christmas Day

December 26-January 1

Kwanzaa

What is the EAP?

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL** service that can assist you and your eligible family members with **ANY** personal concern, large or small.

Employees and family members can call Cascade 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We can help! Call Cascade to schedule an in-person appointment or get the resources you need. For more information, please call us at:

800.433.2320

www.cascadecenters.com



this issue

What is the EAP **P.1**

Help for the Holiday Blues **P.1**

Apps to Help You Budget **P.2**

Winter Greens Salad **P.2**

Help for the Holiday Blues

The holidays are just about here again. And with them can come a range of stresses and anxieties, among them: holiday shopping, holiday finances, family stress, mailing seasonal cards, attending parties and the tendency to neglect everyday routines at this time of year -- such as eating right and exercising. These can lead to the phenomenon known as holiday depression or the holiday blues.

Will your holiday be blue?

According to the National Mental Health Association (NMHA), depression peaks over the holidays. The unrealistic expectations of the season, time and financial pressures, missing loved ones and reflecting on past events as the year comes to an end all contribute.

During the holidays, a person can experience depression, loneliness, sadness, isolation, anger and abnormal sleep. Those who don't experience depression can experience other symptoms such as headaches, tension, fatigue, excessive drinking and over-eating.

It is also common to feel a holiday let down after the holidays are over. The hectic holiday period, and the feeling of being physically and emotionally drained can leave you with the sense of loss or frustration, and then that can turn into the blues.

The holiday blues can range from mild sadness during the holidays to severe depression, and they are often a normal reaction to life situations.

Disagreement over the term

The holiday blues are not a diagnosable clinical disorder. In fact, there is no agreement among

mental health experts as to whether the phenomenon actually exists, because there is no increase in the number of people who seek mental health services in November and December.

Holiday blues should not be confused with clinical depression. Clinical depression is a disorder that may need to be relieved with medication, while the holiday blues could require something as simple as a good listener. Clinical depression, however, can be triggered in a number of ways at or just after the holidays.

There is also a tendency to link the holiday blues with seasonal affective disorder (SAD). SAD, however, is a diagnosable disorder that is caused by fewer hours of sunlight during the winter. Although people with the holiday blues can also be afflicted with SAD, the two are not directly related. Patients with SAD suffer the symptoms not only throughout the holiday season, but also throughout the autumn and winter seasons.

Keeping the blues away

The holiday blues may be alleviated with something as simple as getting enough rest. People actually lose sleep during the holidays and end up shortchanging themselves, so the brain needs to recuperate. Consequences of not getting enough sleep might be cloudy thinking, irritability and inability to deal with everyday stress.

Other ways to help ease the blues are to eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables and to start exercising. Also, make an effort to be more positive.

Continued on page 2



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Winter Greens Salad

Ingredients:

- 8 cups mixed winter greens, such as frisée, arugula, mustard, and beet greens
- 2-3 baby carrots, peeled and thinly sliced on the diagonal
- 1 handful fresh flat leaf parsley and/or cilantro sprigs
- 2 tbsp dried cranberries
- 2 tbsp shelled pistachios

Apple Cider Vinaigrette:

- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 small shallot, minced
- 1 teaspoon Dijon-style mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

Prepare vinaigrette. Combine vinegar, shallot, mustard, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Whisk in oil in a steady stream to emulsify.

Wash and dry the salad leaves. Place in a large bowl. Scatter carrots, parsley, cranberries and pistachios over the leaves.

Pour dressing over salad and toss to combine. Serve immediately.

Serves 4-6.

(Holiday Blues....Continued from page 1)

Tips to ease the blues

If you are experiencing holiday blues, try to decrease or alleviate them by doing these things:

- Talk to someone honestly.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Stick within your normal life routine as much as possible.
- Stick to a realistic budget.
- Establish realistic goals and expectations.
- Do not label the season as a time to cure past problems.
- Find time for yourself.
- Enjoy free holiday activities.
- Try to celebrate the holiday in a different way

The holiday blues can be quite common, but if you are feeling especially down -- for example, your sleep or your appetite is affected, contact your regular physician or visit the National Mental Health Association online at www.nmha.org for help and guidance. If you are thinking about suicide, call your health care provider immediately.

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Apps to Help You Budget

Ever wonder where your money goes? You're not alone. Many people have a passive approach to personal finances, which can lead to an endless cycle of earn it, spend it, wonder-where-it-went. Fortunately, there is a tool that can be used to track your income and expenses, allowing you to gain control of your finances: a personal budget. A budget, sometimes called a spending plan, is an outline of anticipated income and expenses that can be used to track actual cash flow and set spending goals.

Budgeting may not be fun, but neither is running out of money before you've paid all the bills. With a bit of time and effort, you can use a budget to take charge of your financial situation. There are dozens of mobile apps that help you do just that. Here, we take a look at three of them (available on both iOS and Android).

Goodbudget - Goodbudget is a personal budgeting app based on the envelope budgeting method. With the envelope system, you put cash into different envelopes, earmarked for certain expense categories, such as "Groceries" or "Entertainment". Once the money is gone from that envelope, you have to wait until next month to refill the envelope and spend in that category. With Goodbudget, you can see your budget, track your envelope and bank balances, sync 2+ devices so you can track with friends and family, record your expenses, schedule future and recurring transactions and check your envelope balances before spending.

Level Money - A relative newcomer to the personal finance app space, Level Money is an award-winning app that acts as a mobile money meter. On the first day of each month, Level Money "fills up" with your estimated income (based on your spending history), subtracts your recurring bills and a savings rate (such as 7%), and any remaining money is what you have to spend. The app breaks this down on a daily, weekly and monthly basis to help you stay on track. Level Money connects to your credit, debit and banking accounts, and each transaction adjusts the money meter correspondingly so you can see, in real-time, if you are in the black or if you're overspending.

Mint - The award-winning Mint Personal Finance app allows you to track, budget and manage your money in one place so you can see where you're spending and where you might be able to save money. Once you open an account, you can add your bank, credit, loan and retirement accounts. Mint then automatically pulls in and categorizes all of your transactions, so you don't have to enter your own transactions (you can enter cash transactions manually). Mint creates a starter budget based on your spending history for up to three months, and you can add to and customize the list as you see fit. You can also set up bill reminders and alerts to make sure you pay all of your bills on time.

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