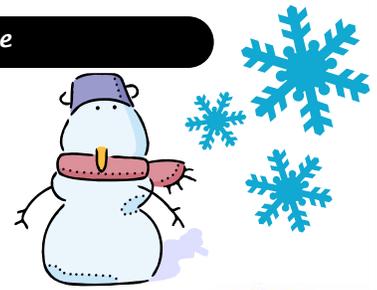


EAP NEWS



Inside Issue

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Time Management | 2 |
| Winter is Coming Soon | 2 |
| Holiday Safety | 3 |
| Recipe | 4 |
| How to Use Your EAP | 4 |

The EAP is a free service for you and your eligible family members.

All EAP services are completely confidential.

Shopping, Buying Encouraged By Brain Activity

There's a reason why you go to the store for one item and come back with five or six. Shopping boosts your mood and makes you feel good.

That's the conclusion of Gregory Burns, author of "Satisfaction: The Science of Finding True Fulfillment" (Henry Holt).

Burns writes that "recreational shopping" and "retail therapy" have a real chemical reward.

Shopping triggers release of brain chemicals that give you a shopping high. It's genetic. With holidays coming soon, science has new information that could help you keep spending in line and help you understand the highs of buying and the lows of buyer's remorse.

Blame your buying partly on the brain chemical dopamine. It plays a crucial role in our mental and physical health

and is associated with feelings of pleasure and satisfaction. Dopamine is released when we experience something new, exciting, or challenging.

Shopping can be all of those things, according to Burns, an Emory University neuroscientist. Dopamine is like a fuel injector for action, he writes. It urges you to seal the deal, even though you may never use the item. Once you have it, however, you get a let-down feeling.

To make better shopping decisions, experts recommend:

- * Buy only what's on your list.
- * Use cash or debit cards to keep you from buying things you can't afford.
- * Window-shop when stores are closed or your wallet is at home.
- * Don't shop with friends or relatives. The novelty puts you at a higher risk of buying things you don't need. ○

SAD: Let The Light In

During the dark days of winter, many people develop signs of depression that are tied to the changing amount of daylight. This type of depression is called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

The symptoms of SAD can appear gradually or suddenly, and may be mild or severe, according to the American Psychiatric Association (APA). Symptoms can include fatigue, lack of interest in regular activities, withdrawal from social relationships, a craving for high-

carbohydrate foods and weight gain. Symptoms usually ease or disappear when spring arrives.

Up to 80 percent of people with SAD are women, most of them in their mid-20s and mid-30s. People who work long hours inside buildings with few windows or during long periods of cloudy weather also may develop SAD, the APA says.

(Continued on page 3)

10 Tips For Time Management

- * Make a list, prioritize and check things off as you get them done.
- * Review your list from time to time. Is everything on that list necessary?
- * Ask yourself, "What's the best use of my time right now?" Then do it!
- * Be willing to sacrifice "perfection" to get things done.
- * Learn to say "no" to demands that don't benefit you.
- * Whenever possible, delegate!
- * Don't waste time on minor decisions.
- * Arrange your work time to keep interruptions to a minimum.
- * Be realistic about what you can accomplish during a given period. When is your energy at its peak? Plan your work for those times and use your less energetic times for leisure or a nap.
- * Not all time management tips work for all people. Which tips from this list have you found helpful in the past? Which ones are you willing to use today to help you manage your time? Do you have any of your own time management secrets to add to the list? ○

Winter Is Coming Soon!

If you've always thought skiing looked fun, but couldn't afford the years of training it takes, here's a better choice for you and your friends.

With snowshoes you can enjoy the winter scenery and have fun from the start. For beginners a few lessons can help, but lessons are not necessarily needed. The experts say, "If you can walk, you can snowshoe."



It's the easiest way for people of all ages to enjoy a winter snowfall. It can be as easy or as rigorous as you like, and it's always gentle on the body's joints.

Snowshoeing has been around for more than 6,000 years and was one of the earliest forms of transportation in Scandinavian countries. Since the early times, however, snowshoes have evolved dramatically. Last year, some 5 million people went snowshoeing.

No wonder. It burns up to 420 calories an hour. You don't need a lift ticket, and you can do it on a golf course.

There are a number of styles available, but snowshoeing expert Carl Heilman says all modern snowshoes work. The important choice is size.

An 8-inch by 30-inch size is good for people weighing up to 170 pounds. A 9-inch by 30-inch size is for those up to about 220 pounds, and a 1-inch by 36-inch size is best for larger people.

Beginners might want to rent snowshoes or borrow a pair to determine whether it's a style they like.

According to Heilman, walking in the snow on snowshoes can be one of the most enjoyable things you've ever done. It gives the walker a chance to enjoy the beauty of nature, hiking through pristine snow. ○

Walking in the snow on snowshoes can be one of the most enjoyable things you've ever done.



(SAD continued from page 1)



If you have mild symptoms of SAD, you may find relief by increased exposure to light, says the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI). You can increase your exposure by taking long walks outdoors, or rearranging your home or workspace so that you are near a window during the day. Regular exercise and stress management techniques also can help.

If your symptoms are more severe – they affect your daily life – talk to your health care provider about light therapy, also called phototherapy. If you have suicidal thoughts, seek help immediately through your nearest emergency room or your health care provider.

Box With Benefits

Light therapy provides the body with more light, which can elevate mood and help adjust the body's circadian rhythm, or the biological internal "clock." Light therapy is administered with a device called a light box, which, to be effective, should sit on a desktop or table, and the light should be emitted above the line of sight, NAMI says. A safe light box should contain white fluorescent light bulbs or tubes and be equipped with protective screens that block ultraviolet rays.

For light therapy to be effective, the light

emitted must be of a high intensity, ideally 10,000 lux (a unit of illumination). This is 50 to 100 times stronger than the lighting in a typical living room at night.

The key to the success of light therapy is that the light must enter the eyes, not the skin, NAMI says. People who are using light therapy are usually advised to sit in front of a light box with their eyes open for a set amount of time every day, ranging from 30 minutes to two hours. Research has shown that light therapy is most effective when used upon waking, perhaps because circadian rhythms are best reset during morning hours.

Light therapy may work by suppressing production of the hormone melatonin, which helps control sleep. Researchers are also studying the effects of light therapy on serotonin and dopamine, two chemicals in the brain that play a role in depression. Light therapy may also be used along with antidepressant medication.

Depression And Shift Work

Night shift workers may also experience better health with light therapy. Because people on this shift work at night and sleep during the day, their circadian rhythms are interrupted. This can contribute to sleep disturbances and health problems, such as gastrointestinal and cardiovascular diseases. Light therapy can help relieve symptoms. ○

If you have mild symptoms of SAD, you may find relief by increased exposure to light.

Do A Holiday Fire Safety Check

Each year, we hear of home fires occurring during the holiday season. Sometimes lives are lost. Sometimes an entire home is lost to flames. And visions of little ones whose presents are gone can generate a longing to help.

Holiday fires are not inevitable. Use this advice to keep them from happening.

* Have a working smoke detector (test it) just outside the kitchen, near bedrooms, and on every level of your home.

* Place a chemical fire extinguisher near the kitchen range and make sure everyone knows how to operate it.

* Degrease the top of the stove, the oven, broiler, and range hood. Grease can ignite and cause a fire.

* When preparing a big dinner, make sure only one high-wattage appliance is plugged into an outlet or a circuit. If you have the microwave, coffee pot, electric fry pan, and toaster running at the same

(Continued on page 4)

(Fire Safety....continued from page 3)

time, you could be in danger.

* If it's very cold and you decide to use an electric heater, be sure it is not positioned near anything flammable including curtains and decorations. Unplug it when you go to bed.

* Don't overload circuits with lighted decorations. Plug decorations into a power strip that will shut off if overloaded and has a surge protector.

* When opening gifts, handle wrappings with care. Never allow combustible wrappings to pile up near a heat source. Make sure no one is smoking near such flammables.

* Be smart with candles. Put them out when you will not be nearby. Don't place a candle inside a bookshelf.

* Never burn gift wrappings or a natural Christmas tree in your fireplace. It could cause a flash fire or a chimney fire. ○

Cranberry Almond Bread

- 2 C flour
- 1/2 C sugar
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 egg
- 1/2 C milk
- 1/2 C butter, melted
- 2 tsp. almond extract
- 6 oz. sweetened dried cranberries
- 1 T sugar
- 1/4 C sliced almonds

Preheat oven to 375°F. Grease an 8 1/2 x 4 1/2 x 2 inch loaf pan.

Combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in a medium mixing bowl. Set aside.

Combine egg, milk, butter, almond extract and sweetened dried cranberries in a medium mixing bowl. Add to dry ingredients; mixing just until the dry ingredients are moist. Spread batter in loaf pan. Sprinkle with sugar and almonds. Bake for 1 hour or until a cake tester inserted into center of loaf comes out clean.

How to Use Your EAP

When help is needed call the office location most convenient for you. The office coordinator will ask for your name, employer and a brief description of your presenting concern. If an emergency exists you will be given immediate assistance. If your situation is not an emergency, you will be offered telephone assistance and/or in-person sessions to complete an assessment and make a referral for treatment if needed.

Meetings with your counselor are completely confidential. Your employer will not know you have used the EAP. No one will be provided any information about you without your written consent. Exceptions would occur only in the event of you being considered dangerous to yourself or someone else.

At the first appointment you should be prepared to give the counselor some background information to assist in formulating an action plan. Many people find it helpful to prepare a list of things they wish to discuss at each session. ○



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If you live outside the Portland/Willamette Valley areas, call the toll free number listed below. You will be referred to a mental health provider in your area.

1-800-433-2320
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