

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

All EAP services are
**completely
confidential.**

Pinching Your Energy Pennies This Winter

Old Man Winter is breathing down our necks. As the hours of daylight begin to decrease, our home energy bills will begin to increase. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that the typical family spends about \$1,300 a year on a home's utility bills. The sad truth about this figure is that much of this energy is wasted. Actually, the amount of energy wasted through poorly insulated windows and doors alone is equal to the amount of energy we get from the Alaskan pipeline each year. How can you pinch your energy pennies this year and save energy at the same time? A few inexpensive energy-efficient measures can save you from 10% to 50% on your energy bills.

- You should have routine maintenance and an inspection of your home's heating system each fall to make sure it is in good working order.
- Be sure to replace your heater's air filter monthly. It will use less energy and last longer.
- Is it time for you to update your furnace? Consider the fact that a pre-1977 gas furnace is only 50 percent to 60 percent efficient today, while a modern gas furnace can have efficiency ratings as high as 97 percent.
- If your home is heated with electricity, a heat pump can reduce your usage by 30 to 40 percent.
- Check for air leaks by holding a lit stick of incense next to openings, doors, windows and attic spaces. If the smoke moves anywhere but up, you have an air leak.
- Check your home's heating ducts for leaks. After a number of years, they can become worn or torn. The duct tape used to seal them can dry out, allowing heated air to escape into the attic or basement.
- Use caulking and weather-stripping to seal windows, doors and plumbing vents. You can buy easy-to-install foam gaskets that fit behind switch plates and prevent leaks.
- Make sure your fireplace damper is securely closed.
- You should consider having glass doors installed on your fireplace, as well as a fanpowered heat exchanger, which re-circulates the hot air.
- If your home doesn't have sufficient insulation in the attic, basement walls, crawlspaces, etc. you should definitely install some.

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Avoid the Afternoon Slump

Why not just drink some water in the afternoon if you begin to feel tired? You could be dehydrated, which can cause fatigue. In addition to drinking water, experts quoted in Health give this advice:

- Have a high-energy snack.
- Walk. It will raise your energy level.
- Go outside, especially into the sunshine, to perk up your energy and mood. ❄

STAYING WELL

Drinking Vitamin D-fortified OJ

According to the National Institutes of Health, vitamin D-fortified orange juice has joined the short list of foods and beverages that contain vitamin D.

This vitamin protects the heart. It controls the release of stress hormones that lead to high blood pressure and inflammation. It can decrease the risk of colon cancer by half. A study of post-menopausal women showed a 77% lower risk of all cancers among those who took 1,000 mg of D plus calcium. ❄

Single Shot Protects Against H1N1 and the Seasonal Flu

Earlier this year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended a “universal” vaccine program.

They want everyone six months or older to get a flu shot for the 2010 - 2011 season. Many health authorities also say the vaccine is important for teenagers with health problems.

This year’s vaccine will also protect against the H1N1 virus and two new flu virus strains. Last year, those who wanted to be protected against both the flu and H1N1 had to get two separate shots. This year, a single shot is all it takes.

Flu shots are easy to get. At most workplaces, schools, and clinics, they are free of charge. Medicare and health insurance programs usually cover the cost of the vaccine.

Retail clinics in pharmacies and grocery stores offer flu shots. That means you can get groceries, newspaper and a flu shot all in the same trip.

Immunization is especially important for people in various groups:

- Those with diabetes should get a flu shot because they are more likely than others to suffer serious side effects.
- People with asthma need to guard against respiratory infections, such as the flu, that could cause a serious asthma attack.
- Cancer patients and survivors have a higher risk for complications.
- Heart patients: the risk of dying from a heart attack increases by one-third during outbreaks of the flu and colds. Researchers at the University of Texas say coronary deaths could be reduced by 90,000 a year in the U.S. if more heart patients got a flu shot.
- People with compromised immune systems.
- School and childcare workers should make sure they are immunized. About 1/5 of the population attends school or works in a school, according to the Department of Education.

Save yourself a week of misery and lost work. Get a flu shot. If you have children, protect yourself so you don’t get the flu from them or give it to someone else.

If you do come down with the flu, stay home so you don’t spread it to others. ❄

The 10-Minute Exercise Prescription

The idea of doing the recommended 30 minutes of exercise every day keeps some people from doing any at all. But how about 10 minutes?

Researchers at Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge, La., say every bit of exercise helps. Studies show that just 10 minutes a day of low-impact exercise, such as walking, can improve your general health and reduce the size of your waistline.

That’s an important benefit because belly fat can surround your vital organs and that’s linked to higher levels of disease-causing inflammation. ❄

When Everyone Seems Happy But You: Coping with The Holiday Blues

The holidays are a time for tradition, going home, and sharing food, gifts, relaxation and good times with family and friends. At least, that's how we all expect the holidays to be. The fact that they seldom are that way is what causes so much of the "holiday blues." Add to that the demands on our time and money and it's easy to see why the holidays can leave us feeling both stressed and depressed. Here are some tips for maintaining your sanity during the holidays.

Keep it Simple

Keep your expectations reasonable so you won't feel let down. This includes your expectations of yourself. Avoid elaborate preparations that leave you exhausted or in debt. The holiday spirit is not about cooking the perfect meal or buying the perfect presents. If shopping is your biggest source of stress, try one or more of these approaches:

1. Shop from home using mail-order catalogs, or shop online.
2. Shop early or shop a little bit at a time.
3. Set a dollar limit for holiday gift buying.
4. Choose simple gifts.

Treat Yourself Right

Be kind to yourself, allowing some time for doing what you truly enjoy. Be reasonable about alcohol and rich foods. Try to get your usual amount of sleep.

Start Your Own Traditions

One source of holiday blues is the loss of meaning in many of our childhood traditions. Or perhaps families are too widely scattered to carry on family traditions. Start your own traditions that include people near you. In time, such traditions will become as cherished as those of your childhood.

Acknowledge Losses

Loss of a loved one, relationship or tradition is felt more intensely during holidays. Acknowledge the loss in some simple way, such as looking through a photo album. A holiday period following a loss is a good time to change traditions somewhat so that you're less likely to compare this season with the ones before the loss.

Watch Out for Family Strife

Holidays are not good times for resolving family disputes or confronting relatives with grievances. If disputes arise during the holidays, agree on a time in the future to resolve them when emotions aren't running as high.

Be a Volunteer

Volunteering your time is one holiday tradition that can be pursued even when family and friends are far away. Help out at a local service center or homeless shelter that offers holiday meals, or offer to drive seniors to shopping centers or holiday events.

Do Something After the Holidays

When the holiday rush is over, many people feel lost. Plan some activities for after the holidays. It gives you something to look forward to and provides a transition into the nonholiday mode.

If, in spite of everything, holidays give you the blues, and you feel you are drifting into more serious depression, talk it over with a friend, or contact your EAP. It can make an enormous difference. ❄️

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 or your EAP immediately. ❄️

Saying 'I'm sorry' to friends, but not to family

Canadian psychologists say the average person apologizes four times a week. But 46 percent of the apologies are to friends, 22 percent are to strangers, 11 percent are to romantic partners, and only 7 percent are to family members.



These are the basic types of apologies we make.

The heartfelt apology: A completely earnest mea culpa that expresses regret for the pain you inflicted.

The strategic apology: Ends a fight or stops the other person from hurting, even if you feel it wasn't your fault.

The defensive apology: A rarely effective maneuver that defends your actions as well as offering contrition.

The contingent apology: Offered if you don't know or care what you've done. "I'm sorry 'if' I've done ..."

The too-late apology: An expression of regret given days, months or years too late.

The bully apology: Given only to manipulate someone or as a token apology for bad behavior. ❄

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- You should also consider installing insulation around your hot water heater and hot water pipes.
- Remember to close curtains and shades at night to keep out drafts and open them during the day to take advantage of sunlight.
- Lowering your thermostat to 65 degrees for eight hours a day can help to save 10 percent on your heating bill. ❄

How to Use Your EAP

When help is needed call 1-800-433-2320. Cascade staff 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.

PORTLAND:
503-639-3009

SALEM:
503-588-0777

*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
www.cascadecenters.com



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