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Wellness Matters

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Your Healthy Body

Protect Your Health: Emergencies

Are you prepared for an emergency? Disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and earthquakes can strike with little or no warning. To be sure you and your family are prepared, now is the time to create emergency kits that you can use if you need to evacuate your home or if you get trapped in your home for several days.

Evacuation Kits: Prepare an emergency backpack and stash in a safe place to grab and go when needed:

- » A gallon of water per person; nonperishable foods
- » Can opener, plastic cups, and eating utensils
- » Flashlight and extra batteries
- » Battery-operated radio
- » Change of clothing
- » Contact information for family plus a relative out of state
- » First-aid kit
- » Personal ID and insurance cards
- » Personal hygiene items and hand sanitizer
- » Maintenance medications

In the event your family is separated during evacuation, plan a meeting place well ahead.

Homebound Kits: These kits are useful when unable to leave



your home for several days due to a crisis. Place the following in a specified area:

- » Three gallons of water per family member
- » Canned food for three days
- » Pet foods and supplies
- » Toilet paper; hygiene items
- » Unscented bleach
- » Blankets
- » Books, games, and other forms of entertainment
- » Paper and pencils
- » Battery-operated radio and television
- » Flashlight; first-aid kit

Be prepared to call 911 if necessary. Finally, as in all emergencies, remain calm so you can think and react clearly.

Holiday Blues?

If you feel worn out or down during the holidays, you're not alone. Many of us experience a stressful overload of holiday parties, traditions, shopping, and meals; the post-holiday letdown can be even worse.

Try these three simple tips to overcome the blues:

Hit the gym: exercising causes your body to release endorphins, which can help you feel more positive.

Be mindful: focusing on the "here and now" can help you appreciate seasonal celebrations and family time; take in events in the moment.

Give back: helping others is proven to improve your mood, especially if you are feeling lonely.

Qualified Life Events

While you are generally only allowed to change your benefits elections during the open enrollment period each year, certain life events provide an exception. Those life events allow you to change your benefits elections in the middle of the plan year if certain requirements are met. The following are examples that may allow you to change your benefit elections during a plan year:

- » Birth or adoption
- » Change in insurance coverage
- » Change in employment status
- » Death in the family
- » Dependent child reaches limiting age
- » Divorce or annulment
- » FMLA-related leave
- » Legal separation
- » Marriage
- » Spouse loss of other coverage

Please notify the Benefits Office immediately if you experience any life event changes to avoid any interruption or error in your benefits.



Healthy & Delicious

New Year = New Fad Diets

January 1 signals a new calendar year, and for many of us, a “new year, new me” mentality. According to Business Insider, getting in shape is consistently the most popular New Year’s resolution in the United States, but turning to a ‘fad’ diet is not healthy.

What’s a fad diet?

Fad diets typically promise quick weight loss, often through unhealthy and unbalanced dieting. A diet can be considered a fad if it:

- » Claims to help you lose more than 1-2 pounds per week
- » Promises that you’ll lose weight and keep it off without giving up fatty foods or starting an exercise program
- » Bases claims only on “before and after” photos
- » Limits your food choices and encourages you to eat only a specific type of food

What are the dangers of fad diets?

Fad diets can lead to things like gout, poor athleticism, heart disease, and—ironically—poor, long-term weight-loss control. Instead, make lifestyle changes that encourage more portion control, exercise, and a well-balanced diet. Keep in mind that forming healthy dieting practices now will keep you on track with your long-term weight-loss goal.