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International Quality of Life Month



There's always something you can do to improve the quality of your life. Welcome to International Quality of Life Month. It's a simple observance and reminder that encourages people to evaluate and enhance their physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. How busy is your life? In the hustle, it's easy to overlook areas of our lives that require improvement. As humans, we tend to merely cope with life's challenges rather than actively seek change to make things better. So, engaging in self-reflection during Quality of Life Month helps remind us that being intentional in the pursuit of happiness and being proactive—taking action—rather than taking life as it comes will actually make life qualitatively better. What tweak or correction in your life might be the one that could make it more fulfilling? And how can your EAP help?

Embrace Frugality for Big Rewards

Frugality often gets a bad rap and misunderstood as meaning “cheap,” but it really means being sparing, thrifty, prudent, or economical in the consumption of resources. Frugality can promote financial stability and reduce anxiety when practiced with awareness. Could frugality be a good thing for you? When you're frugal, you avoid waste and extravagance. Finding a balance between prudent financial management and enjoying life is also crucial for maintaining mental well-being. Get started on your frugal journey by checking out the resource below and turn to your Employee Assistance Program for any sort of assistance to support your financial goals and overall wellness. (Trivia: Warren Buffett's net worth is \$142 billion, yet he only lives in a five-bedroom house with two and a half bathrooms.)



Investing in Experiences over Material Possessions

Research shows that investing in experiences leads to greater and more enduring happiness compared with purchasing material items. The belief is that experiences create lasting memories and foster social connections that contribute to longer-term happiness and personal growth. For example, you're more likely to frequently and fondly recall a camping trip experience as a child than a toy, both of which brought happiness. While possessions seem to lose novelty over time, experiences stick around and become part of our identity, and the stories we tell about them add to our sense of fulfillment. This year, try embracing new experiences and reflect on whether they truly enhance your overall happiness. If the discovery turns true, create a new habit that will enrich your life.



Respond Better in a Workplace Crisis

Workplace crises—violence, accidents, equipment breakdowns, or incidents that damage mission, function, and reputation—happen. Know how to support your organization in a crisis so that you avoid contributing to confusion and chaos through miscommunication. 1) Don't panic. To avoid panic, use a tactic called “presence of mind.” For a few seconds, focus not on the crisis but on yourself. Decide not to panic, take a few slow breaths, and count to ten slowly if needed. This helps stop the cascade of physiological reactions known as the “fight or flight” response. 2) If your organization has protocols and procedures for dealing with a crisis, be familiar with them so when a crisis happens you can act as needed. 3) Avoid sharing rumors. Increased anxiety can lead to rumor sharing as a coping mechanism and as a way of “filling in the gaps” when accurate information is scarce. 4) If safety is an issue, make it the priority in a crisis. 5) Maintain confidentiality. Don't share sensitive information about the crisis outside official channels.



Loneliness...at Work

Employee loneliness is a growing problem in the workplace. It doesn't mean being physically or remotely isolated or stuck in a back office. Workplace loneliness refers to feeling disconnected and emotionally detached from coworkers despite being surrounded by people all day. If you feel like you are simply "going through the motions" at work, lacking meaningful social connections, and experiencing a diminished desire to engage or collaborate on projects, this sense of feeling invisible or undervalued can harm productivity and mental health. Loneliness can happen when social connections don't meet our personal needs, even in busy office settings.



This often includes feeling like you can't be your true self, which makes it seem like no one really knows who you are. A recent survey found one in five employees feels lonely on a typical workday. Try this engagement fix: Decide to build relationships with coworkers rather than leaving it all up to chance. Initiate conversations and show genuine interest in others' experiences. Look for common interests to discuss. Invite a colleague for coffee or lunch. Small efforts to connect with others can make your workplace feel more supportive and reduce feelings of loneliness. Try talking to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for advice on feeling more connected at work. Remember, these feelings can sometimes be linked to depression, and your EAP can help figure out whether that's a factor in your workplace loneliness.



Make Your New Year's Resolution a Magnificent Obsession



Make your New Year's resolution a "magnificent obsession" (MO) so it drives you forward with continuous action and gives you a consuming passion for achievement. On the other hand, a goal is also important, but achieving it may require encouragement, rewards, or accountability as keys to success. An MO is fueled by intense passion—you don't need reminders to stay on course or have to revisit the "why" to reinspire and motivate you. That's because the MO itself is compelling, energizing, and nonnegotiable. To transform your goal into an MO, ignite massive passion, reexamine your "why," expand the goal's importance, link to something bigger than yourself, and tie it to a purpose that has impact for others you care about. When you feel your goal is fueled by inspiration and not self-discipline then you've got it!

Voluntary: You decide when to use the program services.

Confidential: Your personal information will not be shared with your employer or anyone in your family. Only you know when you call for assistance.

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No-Cost: Services under the EAP are available to you, your spouse/partner and your dependents under the age of 26 at no-cost.

New Year's resolutions are about achieving something that will have a positive impact in your life.

∞ **START WITH SMALL GOALS:** Giving yourself the ability to meet your goal in small steps can help you avoid discouragement along the way.

∞ **MAKE IT MEASURABLE:** For your goal to be attainable, it's important that you make it specific and measurable.

∞ **BE REALISTIC:** Set your goals according to your lifestyle and with what you will be able to achieve.

∞ **STAY POSITIVE:** Believe in your goal and try to constantly remind yourself of the benefits and the impact it will have on your life.

Whatever your goal is – the important thing is that you are on the right path to achieve it.

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WELLNESS @ MINUTE

January 2025



CERVICAL HEALTH MATTERS: UNDERSTANDING AND PROTECTING YOUR HEALTH
SCREENINGS: THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST CERVICAL CANCER
IMMUNE-BOOSTING SPINACH AND CITRUS SALAD
PELVIC FLOOR STRENGTHENING FOR CERVICAL HEALTH

CERVICAL HEALTH MATTERS:

UNDERSTANDING AND PROTECTING YOUR HEALTH

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness about cervical health, including the prevention, early detection, and treatment of cervical cancer. In this month's Wellness Minute, we explore essential steps to maintain cervical health and promote well-being.

WHY CERVICAL HEALTH MATTERS:

The cervix is a vital part of the female reproductive system, connecting the uterus to the vagina. Cervical cancer, caused primarily by persistent infections with high-risk types of human papillomavirus (HPV), is preventable through vaccination, regular screenings, and early treatment.

KEY STEPS FOR CERVICAL HEALTH:

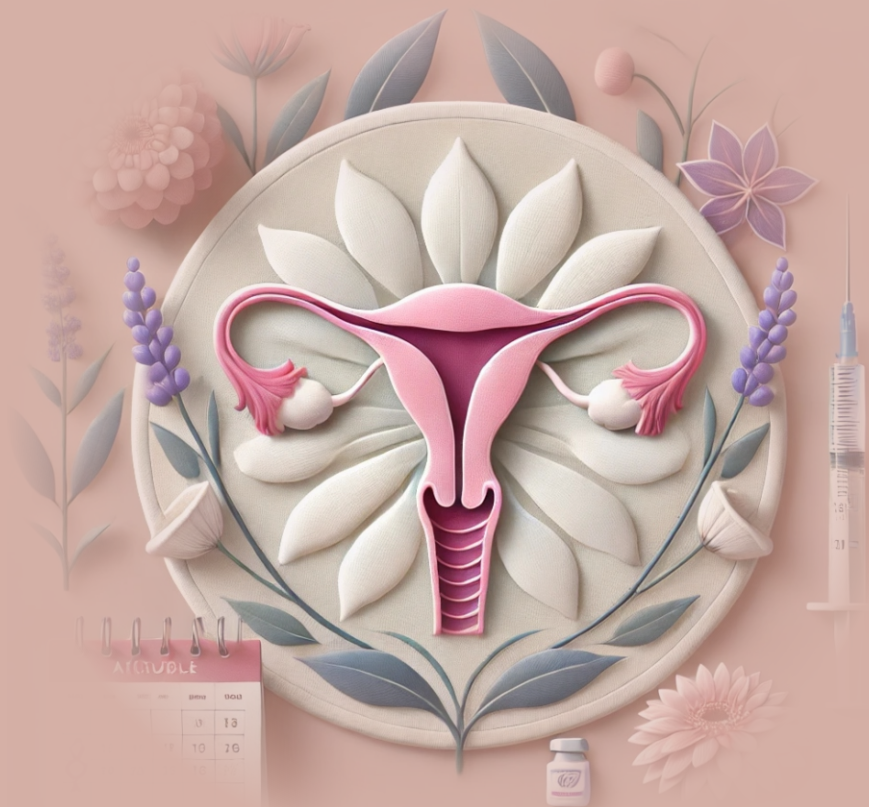
- **HPV Vaccination:** The HPV vaccine can significantly reduce the risk of cervical cancer by protecting against the most common high-risk HPV types.

- **Regular Screenings:** Pap tests and HPV tests help detect abnormalities early when they are most treatable.
- **Safe Practices:** Practicing safe sex reduces exposure to HPV and other sexually transmitted infections.
- **Healthy Lifestyle:** Maintaining a healthy immune system through proper nutrition, exercise, and avoiding smoking supports cervical health.

This January, let's emphasize the importance of regular screenings, vaccinations, and healthy habits to protect cervical health and save lives.

Sources:

1. National Cervical Cancer Coalition - Cervical Health Awareness
<https://www.nccc-online.org/>



SCREENINGS: THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST CERVICAL CANCER

Regular screenings are a critical part of maintaining cervical health. Here's what you need to know:

PAP TEST:

- Recommended for women starting at age 21.
- Detects abnormal cell changes on the cervix before they develop into cancer.

HPV TEST:

- Often used in combination with a Pap test for women aged 30 and older.
- Detects high-risk HPV infections that can lead to cervical cancer.

SCREENING SCHEDULE:

- Women aged 21–29: Pap test every three years.
- Women aged 30–65: Pap test and HPV test every five years (or Pap test alone every three years).
- Individualized: Women with certain medical histories may need more frequent testing; consult your healthcare provider.

EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES:

Cervical cancer is highly treatable when caught early. If abnormal results are found, your doctor can recommend further testing or treatment to prevent the progression of disease.

Sources:

1. American Cancer Society - Cervical Cancer Screening Guidelines
<https://www.cancer.org/healthy/find-cancer-early/cervical-cancer-screening.html>



IMMUNE-BOOSTING SPINACH AND CITRUS SALAD



Support your cervical health with a nutrient-packed salad rich in immune-boosting vitamins and antioxidants.

INGREDIENTS (2 SERVINGS):

- 4 cups baby spinach (rich in folate)
- 1 orange, peeled and segmented (high in vitamin C)
- 1/4 cup pomegranate seeds (antioxidants)
- 1/4 cup walnuts (healthy fats)
- 2 tablespoons crumbled feta cheese (optional)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon honey
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a large bowl, combine the baby spinach, orange segments, pomegranate seeds, walnuts, and optional feta cheese.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, honey, salt, and pepper to make the dressing.
3. Drizzle the dressing over the salad and toss gently to combine.
4. Serve immediately and enjoy this refreshing, nutrient-rich dish.

This salad is loaded with folate, antioxidants, and vitamin C, all of which support a healthy immune system and overall well-being.

Sources:

1. Cervical Cancer Prevention - Nutrition
<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/hpv-vaccine-fact-sheet>

PELVIC FLOOR STRENGTHENING FOR CERVICAL HEALTH

Strong pelvic floor muscles support overall reproductive health. Pelvic floor exercises, or Kegels, can strengthen these muscles, improve bladder control, and enhance circulation to the pelvic region.

HOW TO DO KEGELS:

- Identify the pelvic floor muscles by trying to stop the flow of urine midstream (do this only to locate the muscles, not as an exercise).
- Contract the muscles for 3-5 seconds, then relax for the same amount of time.
- Repeat 10-15 times per session, three times a day.

BENEFITS:

- Enhanced pelvic support for the uterus and cervix.
- Improved circulation, promoting overall reproductive health.
- Reduced risk of pelvic floor disorders.



Pelvic floor exercises are discreet and can be done anywhere, making them an easy addition to your daily routine.

Sources:

1. Mayo Clinic - Kegel Exercise
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/womens-health/in-depth/kegel-exercises/art-20045283>

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