

Health *bulletin*

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COUNTDOWN TO **OPEN** ENROLLMENT

The open enrollment period is the designated time each year during which you can make changes to your existing coverage, or elect or change coverage for your spouse, domestic partner, and/or children. If you anticipate that your or your family's health needs will be changing next year, now is the time to take action:

- ✓ Review the new open enrollment guide thoroughly to see what's new, and refresh your plan knowledge. (You can request a booklet from your human resources department or pick one up at a meeting.)
- ✓ Share the guide with your family, if appropriate.
- ✓ Attend an open enrollment meeting to ask questions and get answers.

APRIL IS STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

Are you feeling stressed? While some stress is normal, too much stress can impact your physical health and emotional well-being. We all have experienced stress at work. However, home lives can bring us just as much, if not more, stress. Common causes of stress in the home include finances, family relationships, chronic illnesses, and life changes. Unfortunately, regardless of where stress originates—at the office or at home—we tend to take it with us wherever we go.

This month gives you a great opportunity to assess the sources of stress in your life and learn about effective coping skills that will reduce the levels of stress you experience on a daily basis.

Signs of Stress:

- Constantly overwhelmed
- Strained relationships
- Poor work performance
- Overly emotional
- "Little things" set you off frequently
- Insomnia
- Fatigue
- Headaches/backaches
- Rise in blood pressure

Stress Management Strategies:

- Treat your body right. Eating right and exercising can increase your tolerance to stress.

- Set realistic goals. Do what is possible and carry on.
- Set and re-set your priorities. Take care of important and difficult tasks first and eliminate unessential tasks.
- Take one task at a time. Divide large projects into smaller tasks and make "to-do" lists.
- Take 5. Taking a short break can help slow down your mind long enough to improve your ability to deal with stress later.
- Learn how to relax or meditate. Studies show that just 10 to 20 minutes of quiet reflection or meditation a day can bring relief from chronic stress and increase your tolerance to it.
- Give yourself a break. No one is perfect. Striving to be the best in everything will lead to worry, anxiety and failure.
- Learn to say "no". Slow down and be honest about what you can comfortably do.

