‘Tis the Season to Be Stressed Out

The holiday season can be less than joyous if deadlines and commitments keep you feeling stressed and anxious. Here are a few tips to help you overcome some of the most common stressors this winter:

- **Manage your own expectations.** Try to avoid having to control everything. Be flexible and realistic and try to appreciate the fact that perfection is not a requirement. Ask yourself: What difference will this make one year from now?

- **Don’t try to do too much.** Fatigue, over scheduling and taking on too many tasks can dampen your spirits. Learn to say no, delegate as much as possible and manage your time wisely. Try to focus on what really matters to you, and stop spending energy in other areas.

- **If the holiday blues have set in:**
  - Make time to take care of yourself. Exercise. Even just a brief walk after a meal can lift your spirits.
  - Grab some sunlight when you can. As little as 20 minutes per day has been shown to boost one’s mood.
  - Give back. Check with local organizations for ways you can help those in need this holiday season.

- **Don’t overspend.** Sticking to a budget can help relieve holiday spending guilt.

- **Avoid the post-holiday let down.** When the obligations finally stop, try to carve out a day of rest for yourself to re-energize and welcome the new year with a positive attitude.

- **Learn forgiveness and acceptance.** Practice letting go of negative feelings and taking time to appreciate people and situations for who and what they are.

- **Tap into your support system.** Friends and family may provide comfort during this stressful season. However, if you need an objective ear so that you can vent openly and freely, you can always contact the Members Assistance Program (MAP). With MAP, you and your covered dependents can receive five **FREE** (no deductible, no coinsurance) confidential sessions with a counselor who will listen objectively, guide you to solutions or refer you to another professional for help. Call ComPsych when you need support at 888-860-1566. Counselors are available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

Let Us Know If Your Status Changes

The Fund Office is your source for information, so keep us informed, too! Help us keep our information current by calling us at 312-787-9455, Option 3, if you:

- **Move to a new address, get a new email address or change your phone number**
- **Need to add or remove a dependent from your coverage**
- **Need to change your beneficiary information**
Your dental benefits include 100% coverage for two oral evaluations and cleanings each year when you visit a Delta Dental provider. Regular check-ups are your best defense against tooth decay and gum disease, but do you know what to do if you’re hit with an unexpected dental emergency? Delta Dental of Illinois provides the following advice:

**Toothaches** – Keep food away from a painful tooth. Rinse your mouth with warm water after eating and floss carefully. If your jaw is swollen, place an ice pack on the cheek that hurts. Do not use heat or aspirin. Toothaches can have many causes, such as gum disease, a cracked tooth or a new filling that doesn’t fit your bite correctly. See the dentist soon, especially if swelling is present.

**Broken Tooth** – Rinse your mouth with warm water to clean the area and soothe the tooth. Place an ice pack on the cheek nearest the injury to help keep the swelling down. See your dentist as soon as possible.

**Knocked-Out Tooth** – Find the tooth immediately! Pick it up at the top (or crown) and be careful not to touch the tooth root. If you can, put the tooth back into its socket and gently hold it in place while biting down. Otherwise, put it in a glass of slightly salted tap water or cold milk without cleaning. Take the tooth to your dentist, preferably within 30 minutes of the injury, and they may be able to place it back into your mouth.

**Mouth Sores** – Avoid acidic foods, such as oranges and pineapples, which can sting sores. Often, sores in the mouth are canker sores, which are small ulcers. Call your dentist if your mouth sores persist for more than two weeks. Lumps or white patches in or around your mouth may indicate a more serious problem, so see your dentist immediately.

Avoiding Hospital Readmission

A hospital stay can be a traumatic event for patients and their families. As a patient or caregiver, your focus is on getting necessary medical treatment, not what happens after the hospital stay. Yet studies show that as many as one in five patients who have been released from the hospital will have to return within 30 days of discharge. While some of these readmissions are unavoidable, here are some steps you can take to reduce your chances of a return visit.

- **See a discharge planner.** You or someone who is caring for you should do this at least a day before discharge so your family, your doctor or the hospital can arrange for services you’ll need at home.

- **Get a discharge summary.** Ask for a clear written statement of what you should do when you get home—for example, how active you should be, and when you can shower, drive a car, return to work, and resume your normal diet. Ask about what problems or warning signs to look for, and what you should do if they occur.

- **Keep important numbers handy.** Make a list of your physicians, pharmacy, etc. so that you have them in case of emergency.

- **Get a discharge list of medication.** Ask about drugs you started in the hospital that you should continue when you get home, including their purpose and side effects, and if you should resume or eliminate drugs you were on before your admission. For new prescriptions, you may want to ask your doctor if a generic alternative is available to reduce your co-payment costs.

- **Get late test results.** Make sure your doctor has test results that were done while you were in the hospital, especially those within the 24 hours before discharge. Consider asking for copies of the results so you can give them to your doctor. Also, find out what follow-up blood or imaging tests you’ll need after you leave.

- **Schedule an appointment with your doctor.** It should be about a week or two after your hospital stay, although in some cases, it might be sooner to check the healing of surgical wounds.

**Participant Services**

**Health Benefits:**  
Phone: 312-787-9455/Option 3  
Fax: 312-951-1515

**Retirement Benefits:**  
Phone: 312-787-9455/Option 4  
Fax: 312-951-3986

**Contributions & Collections:**  
Phone: 312-787-9455/Option 5  
Fax: 312-787-3212

**Administration:**  
Phone: 312-787-9455/Option 7  
Fax: 312-951-2996

**Website:**  
www.crccbenefits.org