



Healthy Habits

The newsletter for busy Cal employees who want to improve their health!

April 13, 2009

WEEK 8

Understanding Stress

Stress is a normal and necessary part of life that prepares us for taking action, commonly called the *flight or fight response*. Stress can sometimes be motivating or even exciting. For many, though, stress has become a part of everyday life, and this ongoing, prolonged presence can have serious impacts on our physical and mental health.

It can be difficult to make the connection between ill health and stress. The first step is to recognize the more common signs and symptoms of chronic stress:

- Frequent headaches and stomach upset
- Sleep problems
- Forgetfulness, anxiety, irritability, anger
- Burnout, decreased productivity, or a loss of focus

We can't always eliminate sources of stress, but we can learn ways to help cope with or manage stress. See the list of *Daily Tips for Managing Stress* and make those part of your healthy habits.

It is also important to remember that you are not alone. Talk with your supervisor or colleagues, if appropriate, friends and family members or a professional from CARE Services. It can be very helpful to talk with others.

Daily Tips for Managing Stress

From CARE Services

- **Schedule breaks.** Try taking short walks around your building to re-energize.
- **Think positive.** Share several positive things that happen each day with family or friends.
- **Seek out humor and laughter.** Laugh with colleagues, talk about funny movies, do something silly!
- **Breathe deeply and slowly.** Close your eyes and take deep slow breaths. Say "relaxation come in" as you breathe in and "stress go away" as you breathe out.
- **Take a vacation break several times a day.** Close your eyes and visualize a favorite vacation spot, thinking about what makes it special.
- **Get enough sleep.** Develop a nighttime routine to get at least 8 hours of sleep.
- **Find more tips** for managing stress on the CARE Services website at:

<http://uhs.berkeley.edu/facStaff/CARE/stressbusters.shtml>

CARE Services: 643-7754

Announcements

Beyond Stress Management

Wednesday, April 29, 12:10 pm - 1:30 pm, Tang Education Center. Enroll at the UCB Learning Center.

CARE Services counselors will explore strategies to help you develop your own sense of full engagement, create more satisfaction, and minimize difficulties.