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Bright Ideas

Get your blood sugar levels tested.

Pre-diabetes is emerging as a health risk in its own right.
See page 2.

Give your feet the respect they deserve.

Looking after your feet at work involves more than just wearing sensible shoes.
See page 3.

Enjoy a healthy meal when dining out.

You can have your cake and eat it too... it's just a matter of knowing which menu options are healthier choices than others.
See page 4.

Put out your last cigarette.

Check out these 10 facts about smoking and health...some may surprise you.
See page 7.

“Commitments are like flowers in the garden. If you overplant, none will thrive.”

Dr Edward M Hallowell, Hope Health Letter.

Address Your Stress

For most of us stress is an inevitable part of the working day, but you can reduce its impact with these simple techniques.

The old adage 'everything in moderation' applies as much to stress as it does to life's little indulgences. After all, with no stress whatsoever, our lives would become far too dull.

Ongoing stress in your life can, however, contribute to major health problems. Stress has known links to heart disease and stroke, two of the top 10 killers, as well as a suspected influence on cancer.

Stress may lead to, or worsen, depression and anxiety, impair your memory, or increase your odds of getting infections like colds. It is also known to trigger flare-ups of asthma, arthritis, and gastrointestinal problems.

But what exactly is stress? Some people aptly describe stress as when you feel that the demands on you exceed your resources or control. Often this is the position you find yourself in at work when you're trying to meet deadlines or resolve problems.

If you feel your stress levels creeping up too high, try these simple, proven remedies during your working day.

- **Get moving.** Exercise is the most effective stress reliever around. If you have the time to do just one thing for yourself, make it a minimum 10-minute walk, jog, or stretch during your working day. Exercise releases endorphins, those brain chemicals that trigger positive feelings, as well as helping rid the body of damaging stress hormones.
- **Eat right.** Ensure you start the day with breakfast. An energising choice would be a protein-rich meal of eggs or smoked fish, but if you're short on time, make breakfast a simple fruit smoothie or banana. Avoid fatty foods throughout your day, as they are hard for a stressed gut to digest.

Foods high in B vitamins are nature's antidote to stress and anxiety, and those that work well as snack foods include dairy products (choose natural or low sugar yoghurt), nuts, bananas, and yeast extract products. Other good sources include eggs and leafy green vegetables, which you could include in your lunch.

- **Take a minute.** When you have just one minute to spare, try this mini relaxation: Place your hand just beneath your navel, allowing yourself to feel the rise and fall of your tummy as you breathe. Breathe in slowly; pause for a count of three; breathe out; then pause for a count of three. Continue to breathe deeply for one minute, pausing for a count of three after each inhalation and exhalation.

Main sources: HEALTHbeat by Harvard Health Publications at health.harvard.edu; and Shape and delicious magazines.

