



**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEMS**

Two Metroplex Drive, Suite 500 (35209)  
Post Office Box 830724 (35283-0724)  
Birmingham, Alabama  
(205) 879-1150 • (800) 245-1150  
Fax (205) 879-1178

**Volume 2, Issue 3  
March 2006**

**Inside this Issue**

**1**

**National Nutrition Month**

**The Art of Laughter**

**2**

**Marriage 101**

**Calcium Quiz**

**Give It Up**

# Behavioral Health Systems EAP Newsletter

## National Nutrition Month

Good nutrition is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Even though you are aware of this fact, unhealthy eating habits, such as overeating or not choosing foods wisely, may develop.

Consider times when you have made poor choices, either in what you've eaten or how much, and determine if you were eating because you were hungry or in response to an emotion.

Choosing unwisely because you are hungry may be resolved by planning appropriate snacks and meals, taking the time to eat on a regular schedule, and not keeping unhealthy items on hand.

Emotional eating may be harder to define. When you eat, ask yourself if you are hungry or using food to mask a feeling such as boredom, fear, loneliness, or anxiety. Once you've identified the feelings that prompt you to eat, you are able to work on the root of the negative emotion instead of using food as a "band aid."

### Healthy Eating Tips

Emotional eaters can benefit from developing a schedule and sticking to it. Build your schedule to fit the times that you are hungry. You may need several mini-meals in a day rather than the traditional three. Planning when and what you'll eat prevents constant, unhealthy snacking.

Always eat at the table. Stop what you are doing and concentrate on

the meal. Watching tv or doing other things while eating prevents you from enjoying each bite and noticing when you are full.

Contrary to what you may have been told as a child, it isn't necessary to eat everything on your plate. Stop when you are full!

If you find that you are unable to cope effectively with the emotions that have triggered your unhealthy eating patterns, contact your BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150.

## The Art of Laughter

*Adapted from "Kicking Your Stress Habits" by Donald A. Tubesing, PhD, MDiv*

Laughter heals hurts, releases tension and gives you a new perspective. Laughter releases endorphins to the pleasure center of the brain. In short, laughter is good medicine.

Creativity and humor share a common root: the ability to see and appreciate the incongruities in life. Your reaction to any situation can be either "isn't it awful" or "isn't it funny." It's your choice.

Try these tips for appreciating the humor in life instead of allowing stress to overwhelm you:

**Don't try to be funny.** Notice life's little inconsistencies, tell others about them and see what happens.

**Change complaints into jokes.** When you hear yourself complaining, force yourself to retell the tale in a way that makes it laughable.

## Exercise your imagination.

Practice creating humorous situations in your mind and painting colorful mental pictures.

Remember that often the stress we experience isn't from our circumstances, it is in how we perceive the situation. Experiment with these methods of viewing your world and see if your outlook on life changes.

## Marriage 101

All marriages, whether of fifty days or fifty years, require effort and commitment. Marriages evolve over time as the marriage partners evolve. Solutions that work today may be inadequate for even next month, much less one, five or ten years from now. For the long term health of the marriage, couples must continually communicate their needs, brainstorm the best solution, and develop plans for action.

Remaining sensitive to your partner's goals and respectful of your differences are important elements in creating "win/win" solutions. If one partner "loses", the marriage loses. Any conflict that you walk away from feeling the "winner" is a loss for the marriage, as is feeling that you are the "loser" in all conflicts with your spouse. Instead, strive toward victory for the marriage by finding solutions that make both partners feel like winners.

Outside a second hand shop:

We exchange anything – bicycles, washing machines, etc. Why not bring your wife in and get a good bargain?

## Calcium Quiz **Ca** what's your calcium intake?

Did you know that calcium does much more than strengthen your bones and teeth?



Research has shown:

People with higher calcium intakes generally weigh less and have less body fat.

■ You can lower your blood pressure by eating a diet high in fruits, vegetables, and lower fat dairy products.

■ Dietary calcium may decrease your risk of developing colon cancer.

■ You can decrease your risk of developing kidney stones by consuming a calcium-rich diet.

Calcium also plays other important roles in the body such as in blood clotting, muscle contractions, nervous system functioning, and the heart beating.

Take the calcium quiz to see if you are getting enough calcium at [http://www.dairycouncilofca.org/activities/quiz/acti\\_calc\\_main.htm](http://www.dairycouncilofca.org/activities/quiz/acti_calc_main.htm)

## 5 Things to Give Up For Lent

The forty days of Lent, or any forty day period, is a great time to develop new behaviors. The positive results just may motivate you to continue past the forty day period. Give up one of the following habits, or one of your

own choosing, for forty days and see how much better you feel.

- 1. Caffeine** – you may find that after the initial withdrawal from this stimulant you have more sustained energy throughout the day without the highs and lows that come from the “pick me up.”
- 2. Television** – Find out how much time you'll have for those things that you just never seem to get around to if you aren't spending time in front of the TV.
- 3. Negative self-talk** – What we say to ourselves is just as powerful as what we say to others. Pledge to stop telling yourself “I'm stupid,” “that's just my luck,” or “I can never do anything right”. This kind of self-talk may be keeping you from succeeding.
- 4. Elevators** – Take the stairs for forty days. You may be surprised at how much energy you have and your toned muscles may convince you that exercise is definitely the way to go.
- 5. Eating on the run** – Make eating at the table a priority. By not eating at your desk, in the car, or while doing other things, you are less likely to overeat, eat because of boredom, or make unhealthy food choices. Plus, the time you spend at the table can be valuable time to catch up and laugh with your coworkers or family. You may find that these breaks in your day refresh you and that you are more productive than when you were eating on the run.

