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Top 10 Ways to Stay Healthy During Tough Times



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## Top 10 Ways to Stay Healthy During Tough Times

Let's face it. These are tough times for many people. But we know that tough times don't last, and it's VERY important to make sure you stay healthy during any sort of difficult or challenging period in your life.



All too often, however, people make bad situations worse by neglecting to do the things they need to do to maintain their health during a challenging time. And this neglect can have long-term implications. For example, not caring for yourself today can actually jeopardize your retirement years, because damage you do to your body during your working years often begins to surface only when your working days are over.

- The person who is carrying too much weight today may have a host of medical problems in the years to come, including cardiovascular problems, adult-onset diabetes, joint and skeletal issues, etc.
- The individual with diabetes who fails to control his/her blood sugar today must often face the possibilities of the loss of eyesight, problems with kidney function, and the amputation of limbs down the road.
- Individuals with uncontrolled high blood pressure may not realize it, but every day that high blood pressure is damaging their arteries, their heart, their kidneys, and their eyes. They may not see the symptoms of this damage today, but it's happening and they will see the effects later in life unless they do something.
- People who don't exercise tend to age at a faster rate and invite a host of medical problems for later in life.

It's always important to ensure you're doing all you can TODAY, so you can enjoy the benefits today AND in the years ahead. And it's especially important—even critically important—to keep healthy during difficult periods in your life.

# Here are 10 things to keep in mind to ensure you stay healthy but they'll also help you cope during the tough periods.

## 1 Don't skip your medical checkups.

Make sure you catch medical problems early and address them. Gulfstream coverage pays for your annual checkups, so you pay little or nothing. Health problems caught too late typically lead to much more expensive and trying treatments. So, if you haven't had an annual physical in the past 12 months, schedule one today!

## 2 Take any medications exactly as prescribed.

You need to take your medications exactly as prescribed for them to have the intended effect. Not taking them or cutting back on them can lead to more serious, and potentially expensive, problems. For example, not taking your cholesterol medication properly could affect your heart's health and lead to heart disease and even heart attack. Don't try to "save" money by cutting back on prescriptions. "The first wealth is health" as Ralph Waldo Emerson once said. If you want to save money on medications, talk to your doctor about options such as using generics or other lower-cost, but equally effective, medications. Also, if you are currently on maintenance medication, use your mail-order program. This will save you money and time.

## 3 Make time for exercise.

Exercise has many benefits, including helping your heart, your lungs, your joints, etc. As reported by the Cleveland Clinic, adding in a moderate amount of exercise three to five times per week can improve your heart health, improve your heart disease risk factors, and improve your strength. Exercise also has tremendous mental benefits that can help you cope during tough times. It can help relieve stress, allow you to sleep better, and improve your sense of overall well-being because you feel good about yourself.

## 4 Get enough sleep.

One of the casualties of tough times is sleep. Our bodies need sleep to properly recover and prepare us to face the challenges of each day. Make sure you allow enough time for a good night's sleep. It will help you through difficult times in ways you may not realize. Inadequate rest impairs your ability to think, manage stress, and maintain a healthy immune system. Over time, a general lack of sleep can pose costly hazards to your health.

## 5 Remember to relax.

Relaxation is especially important during tough times. Whether you feel stressed in your life or have it under control, relaxation has health benefits for everyone — you simply need to make the time. Finding just 15 minutes in your day to practice relaxation techniques can improve how you react to stressful situations by slowing your heart rate, lowering blood pressure, slowing your breathing rate, increasing blood flow to muscles and organs, and reducing muscle tension.



during challenging times. Not only will they keep you healthy,

## 6 Watch your alcohol intake.

In difficult periods, people sometimes increase their intake of alcohol to help them “escape” their troubles. But all they get is a headache, and the troubles are the same (or worse). Moderation is key when it comes to alcohol consumption. While moderate alcohol consumption has shown some health benefits, excessive drinking can take a toll on your health. At the end of the day, don’t drown your worries in alcoholic beverages. If you’re healthy, stick to one or two “servings” per day — that’s a 12 ounce beer or a five ounce glass of wine.



## 8 Keep close to friends and family.

Studies have shown that nurturing relationships is one of the most important things you can do during difficult periods. It helps you put troubled times in perspective and reminds you of all that you have. So, go call a family member or friend, get involved in your community, and work on making your relationships the best they can be.

## 9 Ask for help when you need it.

It’s important to ask for help if you feel you need it. As problems arise, talk to a family member, a friend, a colleague and ask them for their perspective and advice. Don’t “go solo” during tough times. The great thing about asking for help is that you’re most likely to get it. People are more willing to help you than you might think.

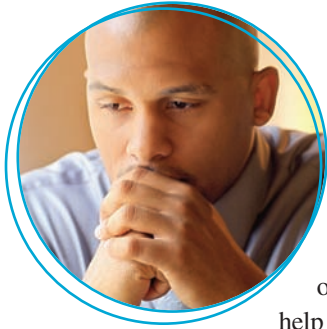


## 7 Make sure you eat a healthy diet.

It’s important to continue healthy eating during stressful times, so you get all the benefits that this type of nutrition provides. Eating healthy not only improves your body’s functions, but also helps with weight management (a major risk factor for many medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, etc.).

## 10 Use resources that are available to you.

There are many resources that can help you. Turn the page for details on specific resources.



# Employee Assistance Program

Gulfstream provides you with an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through Optum Health Behavioral Solutions by United Behavioral Health that can help you with emotional and wellness services. You and your family members are eligible to receive up to eight clinical visits per year through this benefit. Whether you or a family member struggle with depression or substance abuse or need help with child care or elder care issues, Optum Health has resources for you. They include help with:



- Depression, anxiety and stress
- Substance abuse
- Workplace problems or conflicts
- Child and elder care issues
- Relationship difficulties and marital problems
- Domestic violence
- Eating disorders
- Balancing work and life issues
- Anger management
- Coping with grief and loss
- Compulsive spending or gambling
- Medication Management

To access Optum, call 866-743-6551.

Following even a few of the tips provided here can definitely make a difference in your overall health and well-being. They serve as an important reminder during difficult times that you can make it through and come out the other end happy and healthy. So, start making small changes today and take one day at a time. It will pay off in the future.

# The first wealth is health.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)



“Partners 2 Health” is the companywide initiative for employees and their families to work together with Gulfstream to achieve a healthy life and reduce healthcare costs. Under this partnership, Gulfstream will supply the resources (medical plans and health-related information) and families will make informed decisions (taking into consideration that health guidance) to maintain or improve their health. In addition to substituting for the preposition “to” (“Acting as partners will lead to better health”), the “2” signifies the two partners (employees and Gulfstream) and the two phases (short-term and long-term) of everyone’s health. Additionally, the “2” represents the two goals of the initiative — the primary goal of better health and the secondary goal of lower healthcare costs.