Health Matters 10-Minute Challenge – Week 1: Managing Stress

What is Stress?
Stress is a normal reaction to the demands of life. Your brain is hard-wired with an alarm system for your protection. When your brain perceives a threat it signals your body to release a burst of hormones that increase heart rate and raise blood pressure. This “fight-or-flight” response allows you to deal with the threat. Once the threat is gone, your body is meant to return to a relaxed state. Unfortunately, the stressors in our modern world like traffic, deadlines, and nonstop communications can prevent your alarm system from shutting off.

Watch this short video to learn more about what stress is, how it affects the body, and what you can do about it.

Managing Stress
Practicing stress management can help your mind and body adapt to stressors. Strategies that build resiliency such as engaging in physical activity; seeking support from friends, family, or co-workers; smiling and laughing; taking a break to breathe; and being mindful can help you reset your stress alarm system. Like most skills in life, stress management takes PRACTICE! Start small by adding a few techniques, like the 10-Minute (or Less) Tasks, each day.

Learn More
- Fight Stress with Healthy Habits
- Social Readjustment Scale
- Stress Smarts Quiz
- TED Talk: How to Make Stress Your Friend

Need Support?
Idaho’s Employee Assistance Program provides confidential, short-term counseling services for benefit eligible employees and their dependents. You can call 1-877-427-2327 anytime with concerns such as marital, relationship or family problems; stress, anxiety and depression; grief and loss, job pressures and substance abuse. Benefit eligible employees and their dependents may receive 1 to 5 visits per person per plan year with no copayment required.

Don’t Forget!
Keep track of each time you complete a 10-Minute (or Less) Task related to stress management, moving more, or eating smart. You are not required to complete all of the tasks. This challenge is about progress, not perfection! If you are feeling overwhelmed by all of the tasks, try focusing only on stress management this week.

Questions?
Email Health Matters or call 208-854-3066.