

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

ROBBINSVILLE HEALTH DEPARTMENT ■ ■ ■ FALL 2011

THRIVING (NOT JUST SURVIVING) IN THIS ECONOMY!

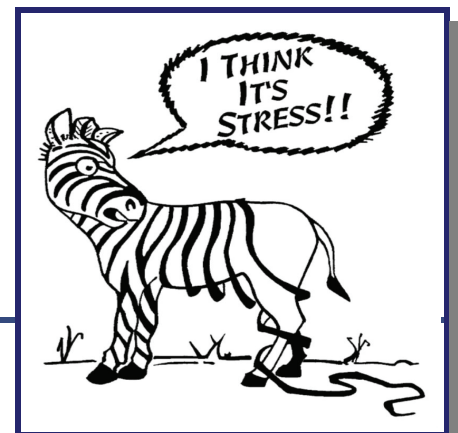


ECONOMIC STRESS can be triggered by events that affect your family's income and budget. However, even when your own financial security is not in immediate danger, the fear of not being able to pay basic bills can **feel** just as stressful as it actually happening. Constant negative news reports and experiences of others can add to an increased sense of overall stress.

Common symptoms of economic stress can include increased blood pressure, headaches, trouble sleeping, digestive problems, decreased immune function, unexplained weight gain or loss, and increased anxiety or depression.

Because so many of the factors impacting financial health are beyond our control, it's easy to feel helpless. Below are some basic strategies to control economic stress:

- **Prioritize and plan.** Difficult economic times are scary, but they are also a good time to look at the state of your finances. Make a realistic budget ... identify items you *need* (the essentials) to include and those you *want* (the extras) to include each month.
- **Communicate.** Connect with family and friends who can provide emotional support and problem-solving strategies.
- **Do what you can, then let it go.** You can't control the state of the economy, and even personal financial issues may take time to change. Limit "worry time" to one or two designated times each week, and then refocus your energies.
- **Get moving.** Aerobic exercise - any activity that raises your heart rate - is an effective way to lift your mood, increase energy, sharpen focus, and relax both the mind and body. Try to walk for 30 minutes on most days of the week.
- **Eat heathy.** Choose complex carbohydrates in fruits, vegetables and whole grains to avoid the "sugar crash" that follows eating too many refined (junk food) carbohydrates.
- **Stay proactive.** Inventory and sharpen your current skill set. Take the time to investigate and develop new skills that can help secure your current employment or make you more marketable for a new job.
- **Think positive.** Your thoughts are powerful tools, both negative and positive - they impact the way you behave and feel. Focus on your strengths rather than the difficulties, on possibilities rather than fears.
- **Keep a sense of humor.** Staying stressed is no laughing matter. It's important to find a reason to smile each day!



STRESS OVERLOAD

If you or someone that you know is having difficulty coping with day-to-day life, the support of family and friends may not be enough.

In fact, it is a sign of strength to seek the assistance of a medical or mental health professional. See the last page for resources to help you manage during these difficult economic times.

STAYING FIT ON A BUDGET

EXERCISE is a key factor for maintaining and improving both physical and mental health. If you have a preexisting medical condition or have been sedentary, talk with your health care provider before you begin any exercise program.



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERYDAY OPPORTUNITIES

- Step it up. Walk for 30 minutes on most days of the week, whether it's around your neighborhood or in a local mall. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Be energy "in-efficient" and sneak in extra steps whenever you can.
- Make household chores a workout. Mow the lawn, weed the garden, rake the leaves or shovel snow. Vacuum, mop the floor, clean the windows, scrub the tub ... everything counts as exercise as long as you're moving.
- Have fun. If you have children or grandchildren, join them for a game of tag or a bike ride. Go to the park and push a swing. Dance. Wash the car together. Walk the dog.

BE A SAVVY SHOPPER

- Shop around. Check the Robbinsville Recreation Department for low cost exercise classes. Mercer County Community College's Fitness Center has low membership fees - call (609) 586-4800 ext. 3738 or 3758 for more information.
- Do a *Google* search on the internet to find websites dedicated to your specific interest. Visit your public library to borrow an exercise video or DVD before you invest in your own.
- Trade videos or DVDs with a friend so that neither of you gets bored doing the same workout over and over again. Find a personal trainer who'll let you share the cost of a session with a friend or two.
- Buy it used. Some sporting goods stores specialize in used equipment. Check out listings in the local newspaper or online at *eBay*.

ROBBINSVILLE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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David Fried ▪ Mayor
Robert Hary ▪ Health Officer

- Some products aren't worth buying, no matter how low the price. Don't buy herbal supplements or equipment that promise fitness benefits overnight without a healthy diet and real exercise.

CONSIDER MODEST INVESTMENTS

- Dumbbells are small, hand held weights that strengthen your upper body.
- Resistance tubing offer weight-like resistance to build muscle strength.
- Old fashioned jump ropes or hoola hoops can give you a great cardio-vascular workout.
- Videos or DVDs can guide you through an exercise or yoga routine that fits your current fitness level.



EATING WELL ON A BUDGET

BEFORE YOU GO SHOPPING



- **USE COUPONS** for items you usually buy. Resist buying extra items just because you have a coupon. Check newspaper ads or flyers for any in-store specials.
- **MAKE A LIST.** Avoid impulse purchases. Keep a shopping list on the refrigerator ... and then stick to it.
- **DON'T SHOP HUNGRY.** If you don't have time for a snack at home, pick up a healthy treat when you first get to the market like peeled baby carrots or mini rice cakes to eat while you're shopping.
- **COMPARE COST VS. CONVENIENCE.** If you don't have the time to prepare meals yourself, buying the ingredients won't save you money. Pre-made or prepared foods cost more but won't be wasted.

AT THE MARKET

- **SHOP SMART** during off peak hours when you will be less rushed and can make better decisions. Put frozen and refrigerated items in the cart last – at home, store these foods properly so that they don't spoil.
- **SIGN UP FOR YOUR SUPERMARKET'S DISCOUNT CARD** for additional savings. Ask for a rain check – it's worth the wait at the courtesy counter when there's a super sale.
- **USE THE UNIT PRICE** to check the "cost per unit". Don't be deceived by packaging: sometimes small sizes are more economical than jumbo packs.

- **SHOP THE PERIMETER** of the store first where you'll find the basics for a healthy diet (fresh produce, meats and dairy). Avoid the inner aisles where the temptation of less healthy processed and prepared foods lurks.
- **STOCK UP.** Buy extras of non-perishable items that you usually eat when they're on sale. When buying foods that can spoil, don't buy more than you will use before the expiration date ... even if it's on sale.
- **BUY FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES** in season. Canned or frozen produce can be just as nutritious as fresh, and a good idea if fresh produce will spoil before you can use it.
- **WANT A TREAT?** Watch for sales, wait for a coupon, or try the store brand when you buy chips, cookies, crackers, soda, etc.



WHEN YOU GET HOME

- **COOK ONCE, EAT TWICE.** Plan meals with recipes that can be doubled (or tripled) easily to save money and time. Serve one meal, then label and freeze the others for a later date. This works well when "family size" packs of lean meat or poultry are on sale.
- **EAT YOUR LEFTOVERS.** Have today's dinner as part of tomorrow's lunch. Use leftovers for sandwiches or mix with frozen vegetables and broth to make a hearty soup. If eating leftovers doesn't seem very glamorous, think of it as another way to recycle!
- **EAT AT HOME.** Frequently eating out can be a budget-breaker. Even spending just \$5 twice a week on a Value Meal adds up to more than \$500 per year.

NEED A LITTLE HELP?



Do you know someone who has lost their job, lost their health insurance, is experiencing a crisis ... or is just having trouble making ends meet? Resources are available to help in these difficult economic times!

HEALTH CARE

Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund

www.nj.gov/humanservices/cicrf ■ (800) 335-3863

FamilyCare (insurance)

www.njfamilycare.org ■ (800) 701-0710

Henry J. Austin Health Center

www.henryjaustin.org ■ (609) 278-5900

HiTops Health Center (13-26 year olds)

www.hitops.org ■ (609) 683-5155

University Medical Cntr. at Princeton - Outpatient Clinic

www.princetonhcs.org ■ (609) 497-4240

MEDICATION

PAAD for Aged & Disabled

www.njpaad.gov ■ (800) 792-9745

Rx4NJ (Partnership for Prescription Assistance)

www.rx4nj.org ■ (888) 793-6765

Rx Outreach

www.rxoutreach.org ■ (800) 769-3880

EMERGENCY FOOD

Crisis Ministry of Princeton and Trenton

www.thecrisisministry.org
(609) 921-2135 ■ (609) 396-9355

RISE (formerly Community Action Service Center, Inc., Hightstown)

www.rise-community-services.org
(609) 443-4464

ENERGY ASSISTANCE

LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program)

www.utility-help.com
(800) 510-3102

NJ SHARES (help with short term financial problems)

www.njshares.org ■ (866) 657-4273

NJ Lifeline Credit Program

www.state.nj.us/health/senior/benefits/lifelinedetail.shtml
(800) 792-9745



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Addictions Hotline

www.AddictionsHotlineofNJ.org
(800) 238-2333

Self Help Group Clearinghouse

(800) 367-6274

Psychiatric Emergency Hotline

(609) 396-4357 (adult services)
(609) 396-6722 (youth services)

Family HelpLine

(800) 843-5437

Domestic Violence

Statewide Hotline
(800) 572-7233

WomanSpace (Mercer County)

www.womanspace.org
(609) 394-9000 (24/7 hotline)