

ESSENTIALS *for* HEALTH

Is Your Job Hurting Your Heart?

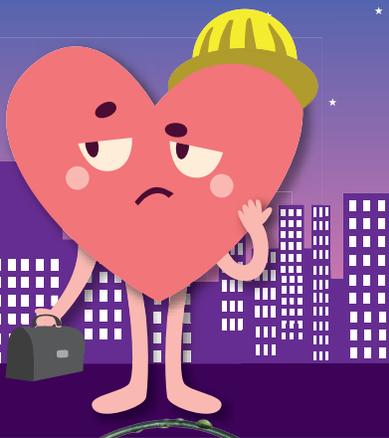
* It's a 24/7 world and 15 million Americans do not work a traditional 9-to-5 job. This is especially true of healthcare workers and first responders. Although these employees provide a valuable service to the rest of us, working nights or rotating shifts can take a toll on workers' health. Studies have shown an association between shift work and serious medical problems, such as heart disease. In fact, there's even a name for this condition: Shift Work Disorder.

How does shift work affect your heart health?

Your body produces melatonin, a chemical that makes you drowsy. The amount of melatonin in

your body increases in the evening and stays high throughout the night. When you work the late shift, it can suppress the production and timing of melatonin, throwing off your circadian rhythm, or your internal clock. This 24-hour circadian clock affects brain wave patterns, hormone production, cell regulation and other biological activities. Subsequently, many shift workers don't get enough sleep, or fail to get good quality sleep. Furthermore, our cardiovascular system is sensitive to time. The majority of heart events, such as heart attacks, occur early in the morning.

story continued on reverse side



Talking to Children About Cancer

It's the conversation no parent wants to have. However, if you are diagnosed with cancer, it's important to keep the channels of communication open and share age-appropriate information with your child.

What happens when you don't talk?

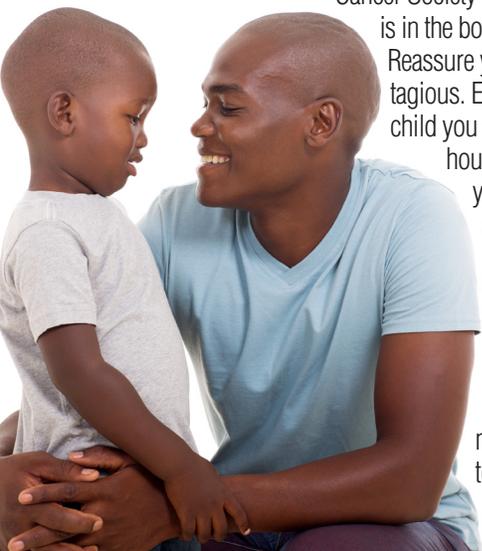
Children sense when something is amiss even if they are not old enough to understand what's going on. Because they have vivid imaginations, they will fill in the missing blanks. They will assume that what you won't tell them is just too terrible to talk about or that they are in some way responsible for the bad thing that has happened. Furthermore, if your child learns about your illness from someone else, she can lose trust in you.

Having the talk

Pick a time when you are relaxed, use simple language and prepare for lots of questions. The American Cancer Society says children need to know the name of the cancer, where it is in the body, how will it be treated, and how their lives will be affected. Reassure your child that the cancer is not his/her fault and is not contagious. Encourage questions and answer them honestly. Tell your child you will keep him/her updated as things change. Maintaining house rules and schedules will help reassure your child that you are still in charge. Some children act out, become clingy, and have trouble in school. This is normal—for a while. If the disruptive behavior persists, seek professional help.

"Are you going to die?"

This may be the hardest question of all, especially if your child knows someone else who died from cancer. Rehearse your response. Tell your child that cancer is serious, but not hopeless, and that your doctors are doing the very best to help you get better.



SUPER SPINACH SALAD

Blueberries and spinach contain powerful antioxidants that may help prevent cancer.

Ingredients

- ▶ 6 oz baby spinach
- ▶ 1 cup blueberries
- ▶ ½ cup toasted walnuts
- ▶ ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ▶ 1 teaspoon maple syrup
- ▶ ½ tablespoon Dijon mustard
- ▶ 2 tablespoon lemon juice
- ▶ Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation

1. Combine in large bowl spinach, walnuts, and blueberries.
2. To prepare dressing, whisk mustard, syrup, olive oil, lemon, salt, and pepper.
3. Toss dressing over salad to coat.



High-Tech Glasses for Your Health

The future is now when it comes to wearable technology in healthcare. Although Google Glass pioneered smart glasses, other companies have released their own version of these hands-free computing devices and software experts are developing apps to add value and usability to smart glasses.

Doctors and medical facilities are conducting pilot programs to see how wearable technology might improve healthcare while ensuring patient privacy and confidentiality.

Here are just a few ways you might see smart glasses at work in healthcare:

Real-time access to data. Your doctor can access your medical records and view other critical information while engaging with you.

Collaboration and consultation. Doctors can seek out expertise from specialists located anywhere in the world, even live-streaming medical procedures to their colleagues to request immediate input.

Improve patient care. High-tech glasses can give patients reminders to take medicines or electronically send blood pressure and other vital health data to the patient's doctor for patients that require close monitoring.

Job Hurting Your Heart continued from front

Protect your heart

If your job requires shift work, you probably can't simply find another job. However, you can take steps to minimize the potential harms.

- Try to align your shift with your natural rhythms. If you're a night owl, work the night shift. If you're a morning person, work the early shift.
- Take melatonin to reset your internal clock if you need to adjust to an irregular schedule (be sure to discuss this with your doctor).
- Use light therapy to shift your sleeping patterns, using bright light upon waking and dim light before bedtime.
- Keep the same sleep/wake cycle, even on your days off.
- Engage in regular physical activity, drink plenty of fluids and eat small, frequent meals.
- Shoot for seven to nine hours of uninterrupted sleep daily, regardless of what time of day you actually sleep.

Spinal Curvatures

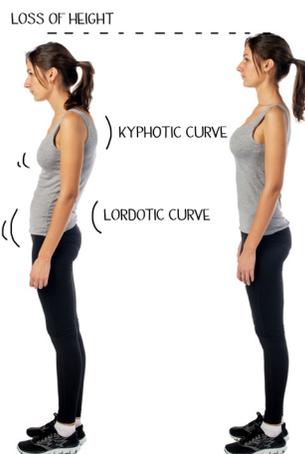
Chances are, you grew up hearing your mother or your physical education teacher admonishing you to stand up straight and to take your posture seriously. Some people, however, have an abnormal spinal curve that makes good posture a challenge.

Kyphosis. A normal, healthy spine has a gentle S curve. Kyphosis describes an exaggerated outward curvature of the spine. The classic case of kyphosis is an elderly woman with a severe hunchback, called a dowager's hump. However, less severe cases of kyphosis are common in adolescents as well. These incidents of postural kyphosis are generally not associated with structural spine abnormalities and may not require treatment.

Kyphosis in older adults is generally due to osteoporosis, a skeletal disease caused by low bone mass density. Adults with osteoporosis—especially women, for whom osteoporosis is more common—are at increased risk for serious fractures. In fact, roughly two million fractures annually are due to osteoporosis. Smoking, drinking alcohol, lack of exercise, low body weight (less than 127 pounds), and estrogen deficiency in women all decrease bone density. Osteoporosis is largely preventable with diet and exercise, but without treatment, it can worsen over time.

Scoliosis. Scoliosis, a sideways curvature of the spine, is common in children, although the elderly can also have scoliosis. It's more likely to be severe in older adults, due to arthritis or disc disease. Contrary to common folklore, you do not develop scoliosis from carrying heavy things or from poor posture.

Bone Mineral Density Testing is recommended for women 65 and older and men older than 70. Talk to your doctor about screening if you have an underlying disease, take medications that increase your risk for osteoporosis, or if you've already had a fragility-related fracture.



Got Stones?

Kidney stones and gallstones both develop when hard lumps form in the kidneys and gallbladder. Stones come in all sizes, from as tiny as a grain of salt to as large as a golf ball. You can have one stone or many, and your stones may be smooth or have jagged edges. Small stones often do not cause symptoms. In fact, many people pass small kidney stones in their urine without realizing it. If a gallstone gets stuck in a bile duct or a kidney stone blocks your urethra (and thus the flow of urine), it causes severe pain and potential complications if the blockage persists. What you eat and drink plays a role in whether you will develop kidney stones or gallstones.

Your two kidneys filter your blood to produce urine. The gallbladder stores bile and digestive enzymes, which your liver and pancreas produce.

Preventing gallstones and kidney stones

- Consume a diet low in refined carbohydrates and high in fiber and plant-based proteins, such as beans, peas, lentils, and soy.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight or obese is a risk factor for gallstones. If you lose weight, do it slowly. Rapid weight loss is also a risk factor for gallstones.
- If you're prone to kidney stones, limit your consumption of fish, shellfish, and meat (especially organ meat), which can cause uric acid to accumulate and form stones. Oxalate, a substance found in nuts, rhubarb, spinach, and wheat bran, can also produce kidney stones.
- Monitor your sodium intake. Avoid fast food and canned or packaged food products, which are high in sodium. Limit high-salt condiments and seasonings.
- Drink plenty of water to flush your kidneys.

