



# EAP NEWS

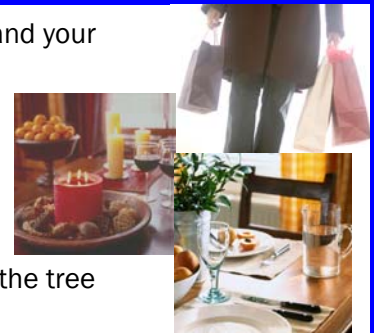
*The EAP is a free service for you and your eligible family members.*

*All EAP services are completely confidential.*

## Holiday Safety Tips

There are many, simple steps you can take to keep you and your family members safe this holiday season.

Did you know each year, holiday season fires take hundreds of lives, injure thousands of people, and cost millions in damage?



### Fire Safety:

- Add water to a live tree's stand every day. Discard the tree when it dries out.
- Don't use holiday light that have cracked cords or sockets. Check instructions for the number of strands that can be hooked together.
- Don't leave candles unattended.

### Travel Smarts:

- Have the car serviced and checked out well before starting.
- Tell others where you will be and when to expect your return.
- Don't forget the cell phone charger.
- Wear shoes with non-slip soles.
- Carry jumper cables or a battery charger, a big flashlight and some hand tools. Have an empty gas can, paper towels and disposable ponchos in your vehicle. Bring water and snacks for yourself and your passengers.
- In a cold climate, have blankets and extra clothes available. Have a small shovel in case you get stuck in snow.

### Shopping Savvy:

- Park in a well-lighted area, and secure your vehicle.
- When parking, put valuables away.
- If you carry packages to your car, don't lock them in the trunk and leave. Drive to another store or to another parking space before continuing to shop.

### Food Safety

The American Dietetic Association says there's no need to cool leftovers before you put them in the refrigerator. Warm food won't raise the temperature in the refrigerator. If you leave food out at room temperature, guests could later snack on it and get sick. \*

## Making Sense of the Government Moves

The federal government has been making many moves as of late to try to shore up the credit log jam and the mortgage crunch that has been happening over the past several months. These moves can be hard to understand, especially if you are trying to relate it to your personal situation. There is help available...

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"Ho-hum," you might say. You already know that the streets are icy and the sidewalks are slippery too, what else is there? Plenty, according to Harvard Medical School. Read on.

- **Heart problems and strokes.** There is a well documented rise during winter. In some places, the winter-summer difference is up to 70 percent, say researchers in Canada, but heart attacks and strokes rise even in Los Angeles County. So bundle up, keep your house and car warm, and get enough rest.
- **Flu.** Viruses spread easily when people are inside and in close contact. Experts think the cooler air and less daylight are also involved. Flu shots help to avoid flu, and they decrease heart problems and strokes by half. January is not too late to get a flu shot.
- **Snow shoveling.** Two minutes of shoveling brings the heart rate to the upper limit for safe aerobic exercise. If you are not in good shape, don't shovel snow. You could hire someone to shovel for you—maybe a neighbor.
- **Seasonal affective disorder (SAD).** For up to two percent of Americans, winter blahs become clinical depression. Light therapy lamps help, but getting outside in daylight for one hour is as effective as 2 1/2 hours under artificial light.
- **Hypothermia.** When the body temperature falls below 95, the heart beats irregularly and kidneys begin to fail. Brain function slows, so people may not realize the danger they are in. It can occur even in mild weather. Wet clothes wick heat from the body. Alcohol is often involved. Hypothermia requires immediate medical attention.
- **Frostbite.** Cold temperatures constrict blood vessels near the skin. Your hands, feet, ears, and nose become more vulnerable to frostbite. Frost nip is when the skin becomes red and swollen. With frostbite, ice crystals may form in and between cells. Mild cases can be treated with rewarming. Start with cool or luke warm water. If the affected area is large or affects muscle, get expert medical attention.
- **Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.** The danger is greater in winter. About 500 Americans die from unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning each year. Many more feel sick because of low-level exposure. To avoid CO poisoning, keep your furnace maintained and buy a carbon monoxide detector. \*

### Hassled and Harried? Get More Done with this Good Advice

Facing a day's work or one big project can be daunting. With so much to accomplish in a limited time, the early plan is a vital starting point.

Making a list is a well-known strategy. It sounds simple, but deciding what to include can be tricky.



The all-day list shows tasks, large and small, that you want to accomplish that day. Numbering them in the order of importance or when you will do them can help. It's OK to include small tasks. You won't forget to do one, and crossing them off makes you realize that you're moving forward.

*(Continued on page 3)*

*Every minute you spend planning will save you as many as 10 minutes in execution.*

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The project list is different. It helps you think on paper. Adviser Brian Tracy says working from a detailed list keeps you on track. The visual record of accomplishment and constantly referring to it can increase your productivity by 25 percent or more. Be disciplined in your approach, he cautions.

For a project, Tracy says you should regularly ask yourself these questions:

- **What am I trying to do?**  
Clearly define the goal and outcome. If you are working with others, make sure everyone knows the desired results.
- **What are my assumptions?**  
Alec McKinzie, author of *The Time Trap* says, "Errant assumptions lie at the root of most failures." What are your assumptions about the situation, the actions of others, and the underlying motives of key players?
- **What if what you believe turns out to be not true?**  
Always be willing to question your most cherished assumptions. Decide what you will have to do differently if your current approach fails.

A written plan of action, says Tracy, is the key to high productivity. \*

## What You Can Do to Fight SAD

Darker days make you feel logy? The condition has been called "cabin fever" and the "winter blues." More specifically, it's seasonal affective disorder (SAD). To some degree, it affects millions of North Americans, especially those in northern climes.

New research at Loyola University's Stritch School of Medicine indicates that it is a physical disorder first. Reduced exposure to light could cause a biochemical imbalance in the brain.

Those with mild to moderate cases begin to notice the symptoms in the fall. Here are some things they can do to get a more upbeat outlook:

- Get outside for 30 minutes a day. Go out at mid-day when you can.
- Doctors at [emedicinehealth.com](http://emedicinehealth.com) recommend taking a multivitamin that includes magnesium, B complex and minerals. They suggest avoiding caffeine and practicing stress management.
- Walking and aerobic exercise can improve mood and strength.

People with more serious cases of SAD say the deep winter is hard to handle. They sleep more but still feel tired. They may gain weight and feel irritable or depressed. There are established treatments for SAD. In light therapy, patients sit near a special lamp called a light box or wear a visor outfitted with a bulb for a prescribed period of time each day.

Dawn light stimulators are easy to use. These light machines create a sunrise-like atmosphere in the morning.

Some doctors prescribe antidepressants for the condition. Seasonal mood changes should be taken seriously and discussed with a doctor. If not treated, they can become more serious in years to come. \*



*Loyola University researchers think SAD may be a genetic leftover, the human equivalent to hibernation.*

Though October is the recommended month for flu shots, November and even December can provide protection. January is the peak month for influenza, but cases continue to appear as late as May, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



The 2008 formula protects against three new strains of the influenza virus. It includes the two Australian strains that showed up late last year and the type B virus first seen in Florida in 2006.

Each year, up to 35,000 Americans die from the flu and its complications. Getting a flu shot significantly reduces the risk of being infected.

Everyone who wants to avoid one to two weeks of misery should get a shot. Children under age five and adults with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, chronic bronchitis or heart disease are at high risk for complications. Immunization is especially important for them and for people who work in hospitals, nursing homes and clinics.

The flu shot usually causes no reaction. Some people experience tenderness at the injection site. A few report traces of flu-like symptoms for a day or two, but you can't get the flu from a flu shot. \*

*(Government... Continued from page 1)*

Cascade EAP has partnered with Enhanced Benefits Group to assist you with all of your home ownership needs. Whether you are looking to buy, sell or refinance your home, this program can benefit you. Free, no obligation consultations are available.

Talk to a pre-screened mortgage broker about any of the recent moves by the government and how they can help you in your personal situation. A quick phone call to Enhanced Benefits Group at 1-866-505-3244 can answer most of your questions and you can receive expert advice on what to do. Take advantage of the help that is available, go to an expert. All at no cost or obligation to you. \*

**Please direct your questions or comments regarding this newsletter to this address:**

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**PORTLAND:  
503-639-3009**

**SALEM:  
503-588-0777**

**CORVALLIS:  
541-757-3013**

If you live outside the Portland/Willamette Valley areas, call the toll free number listed below. You will be referred to a mental health provider in your area.

**1-800-433-2320  
www.cascadecenter.com**

## How To Use Your EAP

When help is needed call 1-800-433-2320. The office coordinator will ask for your name, employer and a brief description of your presenting concern. If an emergency exists you will be given immediate assistance. If your situation is not an emergency, you will be offered telephone assistance and/or in-person sessions to complete an assessment and make a referral for treatment if needed.

Meetings with your counselor are completely confidential. Your employer will not know you have used the EAP. No one will be provided any information about you without your written consent. Exceptions would occur only in the event of you being considered dangerous to yourself or someone else.

At the first appointment you should be prepared to give the counselor some background information to assist in formulating an action plan. Many people find it helpful to prepare a list of things they wish to discuss at each session. \*