



April Wellness Newsletter

National Health Observance

Alcohol and substance abuse awareness

Stress awareness

April's health observances are Alcohol and substance abuse awareness & Stress awareness. Check out the following UnitedHealthcare educational resources:

- [Alcohol use disorder](#)
- [Substance use disorder](#)
- [Substance use helpline](#)
- [Living with stress](#)

Substance use disorder (drug abuse)

When you hear the phrase "substance use disorder," you might also think of substance abuse, addiction or dependence. While each term is similar, they have some differences. You see, many who may misuse substances may not have a substance use disorder. That said, 21 million Americans do struggle with a substance use disorder in some capacity.¹ Their condition may not be controlling their life, but it's a health risk, nonetheless, and may be a reason to warrant getting help.² It's important to understand what substance use disorder is so you can recognize it and try to get people help as soon as possible.

What is a substance use disorder?

You might be wondering what's considered a substance. A substance is anything that has mood and mind-altering effects. Things like, alcohol, pain medications and illegal drugs. A substance use disorder is a medical condition that may affect the brain and body.³ Someone with a substance use disorder has to meet certain criteria in order to get a formal diagnosis. Some of those criteria may include the regular use of substances even though it might negatively impact that person's quality of life (like failure to meet major responsibilities or poor health).⁴

Remember, substance use disorder is a disease – not a failure of will or weakness of character.³ It can be serious and life-threatening. The good news? It may be treatable. In fact, many people can recover if they seek the proper counseling right away. Call the 24-hour Substance Use Helpline at **1-855-780-5955** / TTY 711 for information to help individuals and family members through substance use disorders, including referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups and community-based organizations.⁵



Health Tip Flier of the Month

Soothing Stress

Learning about common health topics is one way to help support your health and wellness.

Check out this month's Health Tip Flier on Soothing Stress.

[English](#) | [Spanish](#)

Consejo de salud: Alivio del Estrés

El nivel actual de estrés experimentado por los estadounidenses es un 20% más alto que el promedio global.¹ Aunque no existe una píldora mágica para reducir o eliminar el estrés, hay varias maneras de aprender a controlar el estrés en nuestras vidas.

El estrés puede afectar la salud de las

de salud física, como el muscular, enfermedad sistémica cerebral y aumento de salud mental, como trastornos de la memoria y la en su cuerpo o a lo cualquier otro mal hábito o hace más difícil

El poder del pensamiento positivo

Ver el vaso medio lleno o medio vacío indica cómo percibimos las cosas en la vida. Las investigaciones sugieren que el pensamiento negativo no solo afecta la salud, sino también nuestro nivel de estrés. Las personas que tienen una actitud optimista:

- Pueden afrontar mejor el estrés
- Tienen un mejor sistema inmunario
- Tienen menos probabilidades de deprimirse
- Contraen menos enfermedades infecciosas
- Tienen mejores hábitos de salud
- A menudo viven una vida más larga y saludable²

Health tip: Soothing Stress

The current stress level experienced by Americans is 20% higher than the global average.¹ While there is no magic pill to reduce or eliminate stress, there are several ways we can learn to manage the stress in our lives.

Stress may affect health in multiple negative ways²

Chronic stress can:

- Increase your risk for a variety of physical health problems including digestive issues, headaches, muscle tension, heart disease, heart attack, high blood pressure, stroke, and weight gain.
- Increase your risk for a variety of mental health problems including anxiety, depression, sleep problems, memory and concentration impairment.
- Cause a disease either due to changes in your body or behaviors such as smoking, consuming alcohol, or any other poor habit that people use to cope with stress.
- Suppress the body's immune system, making it more difficult to recover from illnesses.

The 3 stages of stress

Dr. Hans Selye broke the stress response into three stages, which he called the General Adaptation Syndrome.³

- Alarm Stage** – also known as "fight or flight", this stage occurs when you are frightened or under threat. Your heart rate speeds up and the body releases stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. If prolonged it can take a toll on your body.
- Resistance Stage** – occurs after the initial extreme reaction. Your body tries to adapt to the continued stress. If the stress passes, you can start to rebuild your defenses. If it becomes long-term, you move to the third stage.
- Exhaustion Stage** – is the "burnout" or overload phase. Continued pounding by stress depletes your body's reserves, which puts you at risk for disease. Facing multiple long-term stressors piles extra strain on your system and may quickly lead to exhaustion.

The power of positive thinking

Whether we see the glass as half empty or half full is an indication of how we perceive things in life. Research suggests negative thinking not only affects health, but also our stress levels. Individuals with an optimistic attitude:


- May be better able to cope with stress
- Have a better immune system
- Are less likely to get depressed
- Catch few infectious diseases
- Have better health habits
- Often live a longer, healthier life⁴

United at Work Presentation of the Month


Stress in the Workplace

Stress is defined as the body's response to the demands of everyday living. However, stress isn't a singular issue. There are different types of stressors, and we may experience multiple types of stresses at the same time, especially in the workplace.


[Click here](#) for the Stress in the workplace presentation. The goal of the presentation is to increase your knowledge and awareness of everyday stress. It will provide an opportunity for you to examine your personal and workplace sources of stress and review strategies that you may utilize to help cope and manage stress in your life.



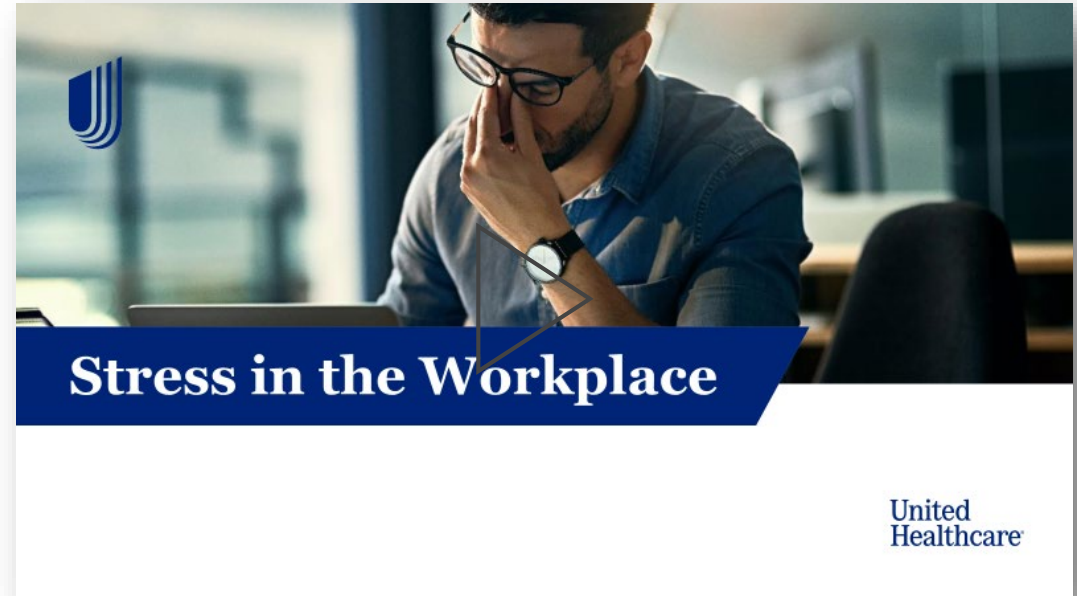
Stress in the Workplace Questionnaire



Quiz & Answers - English



Quiz & Answers - Spanish




 [Click here](#) for the entire United at Work catalog.


Next Month's Preview...



Health Observance
Mental Health Month
National Physical Fitness & Sports Month



Health Tip Flier of the Month
Recognizing burnout



United at Work Presentation
The power of positivity and affirmation