



Ron D. Myers
Fire Chief

North County Fire Authority Health & Wellness Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 5

Sept. 2013

Topics:

- **Post Traumatic Stress**
- **Post Traumatic Growth**
- **Healthy Recipe**

Safety Tip

Get Sleep!

Adults require 7-8 hours per day.

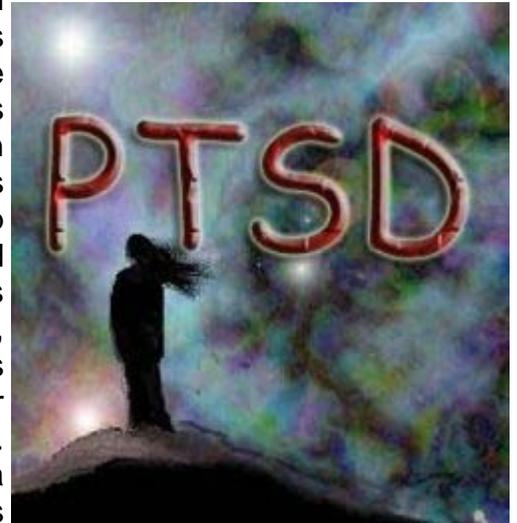
Workout Tip

Piece your workout together.

Ten minutes morning, noon, and night can give much of the same benefit as 30 minutes all at once.

Post Traumatic Stress

We have heard the term Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which is defined as a mental health condition triggered by a terrifying event. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event. As we witness tragic events such as 9/11, Boston Marathon bombings or the array of public mass shooting events, many develop increased stress, anxiety and depression. Although larger events often trigger mass PTSD sufferers, other tragic events such as unexpected death, terminal illness or violent crimes can affect all of us. Today, many studies are showing a move from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder to Post Traumatic Growth.



Post Traumatic Growth

Post traumatic growth is based on the personal experiences we encounter or experience in a stressful situation. Sometimes this is a wake-up call to ground ourselves and take inventory of our priorities. The term "everything happens for a reason" can be seen as having a hopeful and positive outlook to an unfortunate event. Once an event occurs, the process of grieving: denial, anger, bargaining or reasoning, depression and acceptance is a normal emotional and physical response to an event. The post traumatic growth is how we learn from our experiences to improve our lives, relationships and outlook on life. Growth is a learning benefit.

Post Traumatic Growth cont.

Holding onto stress can lead to physiological dysfunction. Examples include rapid heart rate, headaches, kidney disorders, hypertension, gastrointestinal disturbances and mental disturbances. How do you best decrease your own stress? You can exercise, sleep, take a vacation, talk to friends and family, use herbal non-caffeinated teas, take medications as prescribed, change perceptions, have a positive attitude, eat healthy and letting go of resistance. Lastly one may choose to seek professional counseling or group support.

The new construct of emotional health is translating reactions to positive learning experiences and positive emotional healing. Take life experiences, whether positive or negative, and spin the situation to benefit you as a better person. Always remember to take care of yourself.

Healthy Recipe

Fennel, Porcini & Chicken Cacciatore

Yields approximately 8 serving

Ingredients

- 1/2 ounce dried porcini mushrooms
- 1 c. boiling water
- 2 tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 12 boneless, skinless chicken thighs, trimmed of fat
- 1 large green bell pepper, seeded and cut into rings
- 1 large onion, halved and thinly sliced
- 1 large fennel bulb, trimmed, halved, cored and thinly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbs. minced fresh rosemary
- 2 tsp. grated orange zest
- 1 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
- 3 tbs. red-wine vinegar
- 3/4 c. dry white wine
- 2 tbs. tomato paste

- 1 tsp. salt

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Place mushrooms in large bowl, pour boiling water over them & let soak.
3. Heat oil in large skillet over med.-high heat. Working in batches, brown the chicken on all sides, 40-5 minutes. Transfer chicken to baking dish.
4. Reduce heat to medium and add pepper & onion to the pan, cooking until soft, about 3 minutes. Stir in fennel, cooking until wilted, another 3 minutes.
5. Add garlic, rosemary, orange zest, thyme cook for 30 seconds, stirring constantly. Pour in vinegar and cook for 1 minute., scraping any browned bits. Remove from heat.
6. Drain the mushrooms,

reserving the soaking liquid. Rinse the mushrooms, then coarsely chop. Stir them into the pan along with the soaking liquid, wine, tomato paste & salt. Return to the heat, bring to a simmer. Pour mixture over chicken & cover with foil.

7. Bake in the oven until bubbling, 45 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes. Serve.

Recipe provided by EatingWell.com



Wildland Incident Management Teams' Health and Workplace Stress

During a 4-year period, investigators from the UM Lab, supported by MTDC, evaluated IMTs and their members. The study focused on the health of team members, including their physical health, coronary heart disease (CHD) risk factors, and stress in the workplace.

Research findings indicated that team members shared similar CHD risk factors with the general U.S. population (2.6 risk factors for team members, 2.8 for the general population). Almost half of the team members reported high cholesterol levels and/or were taking cholesterol-reducing medications. Of team members, 59 percent were overweight, and more than a quarter (26 percent) of overweight individuals were categorized as obese.

Data from this research suggests the need for risk-reduction interventions, both at fire camp and away from fire camp, particularly for individuals whose job descriptions allow little or no physical activity while on team assignment or at their home units. Regular physical activity improves physical health, increases mental function, reduces stress, and also reduces the risk of acute coronary problems or stroke.

Prolonged stress can lead to physical symptoms in the body (upset stomach, headaches, eye strain). MTDC used multiple, diverse assessments to better understand the role that stress plays for team members and how they cope with it. For example, we analyzed saliva samples for salivary cortisol, a biophysical marker of stress. Results placed team members within normal ranges, suggesting that those tested did not experience any significant physical stress at the time of sampling.

Findings from these assessments indicate that team members fell within normal ranges regarding perceived workplace stress and that they coped well with the stressors they faced. When categorized by years of experience on an IMT, members with less than 5 years of experience reported significantly less stress than members with 5 to 10 years of experience and those with more than 10 years of experience. Future studies may be required to better understand this finding.

The 4-year investigation into IMTs resulted in a much better understanding of the health and fitness of team members, the role that stress plays and the sources of stress, and how team members cope with stress. Additional studies carried out during an IMT assignment would provide a more longitudinal perspective on many of the issues identified in this research.

Article from the *Wildland Firefighter Health & Safety Report* (Missoula Technology & Development Center) - Spring 2013
<http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/pdfpubs/pdf13512811/pdf13512811dpi100.pdf>

Palmer, C.G.; Gaskill, S.E. (both of the University of Montana); Miller, T.; Domitrovich, J.W. (both of MTDC). 2007 to 2009. These studies were conducted under the memorandum of understanding between MTDC and the UM Lab.