

# Working Well

PRINCETON EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



*Everyone faces challenges from time to time. Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is staffed with licensed clinicians who are available to help.*

## Reach Out To Us — It's Free

The EAP is an employer-sponsored counseling and referral program available to you and adult household members free of charge. Our program is designed to assist people who are experiencing personal, family, or work-related issues. We offer help so you can make the best decisions and choices.

Susan Weinstein, LCSW, SAP, CEAP, and EAP Manager says, "Counseling is an opportunity to talk about your concerns with a trained professional. It's a place where you don't have to worry about saying the wrong thing to the wrong person. It's a place where you can gain perspective, learn new skills, and strengthen existing ones."

## We Respect Your Privacy

Our service is voluntary, confidential, and personalized to each individual's needs and situation. Voluntary interactions with the EAP are completely confidential.

## How We Can Help You Individually

The EAP professional counselors will help you sort out the issues and develop a treatment plan so you can best resolve the problems you are facing. You can speak with us about a wide range of problems and concerns, including:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Substance abuse
- Legal and financial concerns
- Family and relationship issues
- Sexual issues
- Stress
- Work-related stress
- Work performance difficulties
- Parenting

We are  
here  
for you

## How We Can Help Your Organization

The EAP can help businesses and organizations, as well. We offer services in the following areas:

### Conflict Mediation

We can provide a certified conflict mediator to conduct sessions with employees and managers to resolve conflict.

### Management Consultants

We can provide training and guidance for managers and supervisors on how

to effectively use the EAP as a management tool to discuss challenging situations in the workplace.

### Traumatic/Critical Incidents

We provide Critical Incident Responses (CIRs) to help employees who have been involved in any traumatic or critical situation.

### Wellness Services

We provide seminars and lunch-and-learn sessions on topics such as Food and Mood, Stress Management, and Communication Skills. In addition, the EAP benefit includes consultations with financial professionals, as well as attorneys.

### Counseling at Your Fingertips

EAP program staff is available Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and Mondays and Wednesdays until 7:00 p.m. to answer your call or schedule an appointment. All appointments are being offered via telehealth at this time. In-person appointments are temporarily suspended but will be resumed in the future. Twenty-four hour service is also available for crisis/emergency situations. Professional help for you and your adult household members is as close as your phone. The toll free number is 1.800.527.0035.

■ For more information, visit [www.princetonhcs.org/eap](http://www.princetonhcs.org/eap) or call 1.800.527.0035.

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# Healthy Ways to Deal with Stress

## You Are Not Alone

*In our lifetime, we've never encountered a set of circumstances like we are facing with the outbreak of COVID-19. Every single person is feeling some degree of stress, but there are a number of ways to manage and minimize its impact.*



### Self-Compassion

It is important to accept the way you are feeling and be compassionate with yourself about how you are managing those feelings. If you are having a difficult moment, if you are becoming anxious or stressed, don't shut out those feelings. Sit with them for a moment and practice self-kindness. It's okay to feel the way you feel.

Jessica Levy, LCSW, Director of Outpatient Services, Penn Medicine Princeton House Behavioral Health, Eatontown, says "As you practice sitting with those feelings, say to yourself, 'Of course I'm stressed. I've never lived like this before. I can't go do the things I normally do. Nothing about my routine is in place.' Then, remind yourself, gently, that you will have these moments and it is difficult to manage through change."

### Stick to a Routine

One thing that can help manage these changes is to keep to a schedule. Follow your normal routine as closely as possible.

"For example," Levy says, "if you normally set the alarm for 6:00 a.m., jumped in the shower, made coffee, and selected your clothes for the day, continue to do those things." Maintaining some semblance of your daily routine can be helpful. It can bring you comfort.



### Focus on Your Environment

If you are working from home, create a work space you can go to — just like you would go to your regular office. The act of going to your home office each time on the workday can make you feel like you are in your normal routine.



### Keep Distractions to a Minimum

Maintain the same media restrictions you had in your workplace. If you typically can't watch a movie, listen to the radio, or spend time on social media sites, don't start doing those things now. "Constantly checking in on the news and all that's going on in the world minute-by-minute," Levy reminds us, "will only add to your stress." If you want to keep up with the news, designate a time of day — a lunch break or a coffee break — to check and get updates.

### Routines Outside of Work

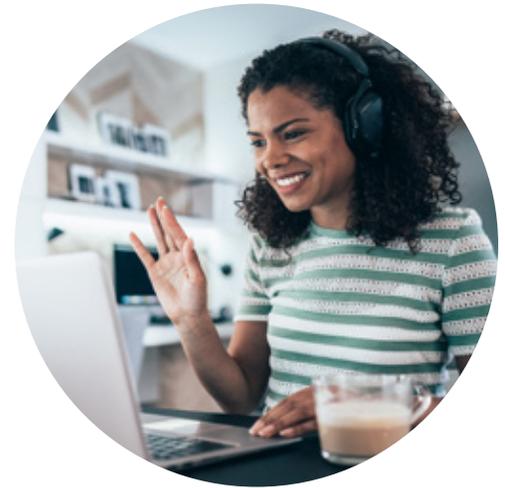
If you aren't working from home, try to keep a regular schedule as well. "If you normally go to the gym or a fitness class during the day," Levy says, "continue exercising at that time of day — whether it is a walk, a run, or a virtual fitness class."



### Remember Hobbies

Levy recommends maintaining, resurrecting, or beginning a new hobby. "Do the things you enjoy to pass the time and to keep your stress level in check."





## Self-Care

Self-care is any activity you do deliberately to take care of your mental, emotional, or physical health. Good self-care is critical for improved mood and reduced anxiety. “For example,” Levy says, “if you’re feeling isolated at home, reach out to family or friends. This unusual time is a great opportunity to connect.” Contact someone you haven’t spoken to in years — by text, email, phone call, or video chat. “Or write a letter,” Levy suggests. “A sense of connection is good for all of us in difficult times.”



### Step Away from Stress

Get outside. Take a walk around your neighborhood. And while you are walking, Levy recommends doing something creative, like a mindfulness scavenger hunt. “Look for things that begin with a certain letter of

the alphabet,” Levy says, “or for plants you didn’t see the day before, or identify birds or other animals, or stop and smell your favorite flower.”

### Remember, Self-Compassion

The goal is to get to a different space, both physically and emotionally, so you can feel some stress relief. We will all have good days and bad days during this unprecedented time, but there is no need to feel bad about how you are coping.

### No Negative Self-Talk

Instead of negative self-talk and comparing yourself to how others are coping, be kind to yourself. The only comparison to be made is how you are doing today versus how you did yesterday.

### Don’t Get Caught Up in “What If’s...”

Don’t focus on the unknowns, the speculations, and the fears of *What if...* Focus on what you do have control over. Those include:

- Turning off the news
- Keeping a positive attitude
- Following the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Doing the best you can do today

### Identifying and Addressing Stress

If stress persists despite your best efforts at sticking to a routine, distancing yourself from the 24-hour news cycle, and practicing self-compassion and self-care and you are still overwhelmed by stress, it may be time to seek professional support.

You’ll know you are having difficulty managing stress if you are experiencing any of the following:

- Increased lethargy
- Drastic changes in appetite (increased or decreased)
- Lack of interest in activities
- Increased emotional distancing
- Hyperactivity that inhibits the ability to focus
- Irrational anger

If you are experiencing any of these warning signs, contact the professionals at the Princeton Employee Assistance Program. We are here to help. And you are not alone.

■ The toll free number is 1.800.527.0035. Or, for more information, visit [www.princetonhcs.org/eap](http://www.princetonhcs.org/eap).

**“A sense of connection is good for all of us in difficult times.”**

— Jessica Levy, LCSW, Director of Outpatient Services, Penn Medicine Princeton House Behavioral Health, Eatontown.

**Princeton Employee Assistance Program**

**1.800.527.0035**

**We address a wide range of concerns, including:**

- Marital or Financial Issues
- Alcohol or Drug Abuse
- Depression or Anxiety
- Work-related Stress

A professional counselor will work with you to provide an absolutely confidential assessment of the problem, as well as a suggested plan of action. If appropriate, we will coordinate a referral to a qualified resource in your community and provide ongoing support and follow-up.

# YEARLY CHECKUPS

## Not Just for Kids

*When you were a child, chances are you went for a doctor's visit every year. These were important appointments where your doctor would check on your growth and development, administer vaccines, and make sure you were staying healthy. But did you know that yearly checkups are just as important now that you're an adult?*



Dr. Morris recommends that people under the age of 50 should visit their primary care physician every year or two. Over the age of 50, you'll need to follow your doctor's advice on how often to come in.

### Telemedicine v. Personal Visits

Penn Medicine Princeton Health physician practices continue to handle some routine appointments using telemedicine, usually via a video connection through your computer, tablet, or smartphone. This has proven effective, and we expect telemedicine to be an important service — including

annual checkups — for patients in our post-COVID-19 world. Yet there will always be tests, treatments, and other visits that must be handled in person. For those visits, Penn Medicine Princeton Health stands ready to provide the care you need, and we are taking every precaution to ensure a safe environment.

When you visit with your physician during your annual checkup, there are several things you can do to get the most out of your visit.

**TALK ABOUT FAMILY HISTORY** – Even if your doctor doesn't ask specifically about a condition, it's always a good idea to bring up any health issues that run in your family.

**DISCUSS YOUR LIFESTYLE** – The more your doctor knows about your eating, working, and exercise habits, the better they can advise you. They'll be able to discuss any restrictions you may need to follow to stay healthy and give you reliable information about issues like diet and exercise.

**BRING UP ANY MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES** – "More and more, we're talking with patients about mood and sleep and similar issues," says Dr. Morris. If you've been struggling with anxiety, depression, mood swings, sleep disturbances, or any other issues, tell your doctor. They may be able to refer you to a specialist who can help.

■ To find a physician with Penn Medicine Princeton Health, call 1.888.742.7496 or visit [www.pricetonhcs.org](http://www.pricetonhcs.org).

"Many patients have ongoing issues, but we need to see them at least once a year," says Kathryn Morris, MD, a board-certified internist at Penn Medicine Princeton Health. "This is a time for us to assess a patient's health from A to Z and address any issues as needed."

At your yearly physical, your doctor may check on several important things:

- **Reviewing and renewing medications** – If you're on a regular medication, your doctor will need to make sure it's still working well for you and that any symptoms are well-controlled.
- **Checking on ongoing conditions** – "At annual checkups, we can go over any new symptoms, as well as preventative measures you can take to stay as healthy as possible," says Dr. Morris.
- **Diagnosing new conditions** – "Many patients have found during routine exams that they have cholesterol elevation, diabetes, or heart issues that they didn't know about," says Dr. Morris. "This is when we can review and identify those problems."
- **Building continuity of care with your doctor** – "I've been working as a doctor for over 35 years," says Dr. Morris. "It is important for you to build a long-term relationship with your doctor so they know you, and your medical conditions, thoroughly."

**Princeton Employee Assistance Program**

**1.800.527.0035**

1000 Herrontown Road, Princeton, NJ 08540

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Qualified sign language interpreters  
Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)
- Provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:  
Qualified interpreters  
Information written in other languages

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You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Room 509F, HHH Building  
Washington, D.C. 20201  
1-800-368-1019, 1-800-537-7697 (TDD)

Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, servicios gratuitos de asistencia del lenguaje están disponibles para usted. Llame al 1-609-853-7490.

请注意：如果您讲中文，您可以免费获得语言协助服务。请致电 1-609-853-7490。

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## Do You Drink Alcohol? When it Comes to Medical Care, Honesty is the Best Policy



*One of the many questions doctors ask during a checkup relates to alcohol consumption, and it is not uncommon for patients to downplay their drinking when the subject arises. In some instances they may be unaware of what is considered “occasional” or “social” drinking; in other instances they may choose to intentionally mislead their physician.*

Alcohol misuse — drinking more than what is considered acceptable — is common, and is a frequent cause of preventable illness and death. In fact, the number of Americans who died from alcohol-related health conditions doubled between the years 1999 and 2016, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics.

“While it may seem like not answering the question accurately is just a little thing, it is actually an important piece of information you are holding back from your doctor,” says Priyanka Singh, MD, a primary care doctor with Princeton Medicine Physicians, Penn Medicine Princeton Health’s network of primary and specialty care doctors. “The quantity, frequency and pattern of your drinking will help determine the nature and the extent of any problem, and with proper screening and counseling adverse health effects can be treated.”

### A Physical and Emotional Impact

Consuming the equivalent of more than one alcoholic drink a day for women and two for men can lead to liver damage. It can also increase the risk of developing cancer and dementia, and trigger or heighten mood disorders and depression.

Alcohol of any amount can also have an impact on the medications you take, making blood pressure medication, heart medication, and even antibiotics, less effective, ineffective, or even toxic to your body. Over-the-counter medications and even some herbal supplements can be affected by alcohol consumption as well.

“If you are on medication of any kind, your doctor should be made aware that you drink alcohol and should be given an honest answer to how much and how often you drink,” says Dr. Singh. “That means understanding that one drink means a 12-ounce beer, 4 ounces of wine or an ounce and a half of liquor.”

Alcohol-related problems can impact both men and women, and are being identified more frequently in younger people than in the past.

“It is important for everyone to be aware of how much and how often they drink alcohol and to drink responsibly,” says Dr. Singh

■ To find a primary care physician affiliated with Penn Medicine Princeton Health, call 1.888.742.7496, or visit [www.princetonhcs.org](http://www.princetonhcs.org).