

Help for Emotional Eating

Although some people eat less in difficult situations, emotional eaters may turn to food for comfort. They see eating as a way to suppress or soothe negative emotions, such as anger, fear, stress, boredom, sadness, and loneliness.

Triggers and Risks

For emotional eaters, their feelings can become tied to their eating habits so that they reach for food as a reaction to conflict, stress, or a painful situation. Triggers may include relationship problems, health issues, financial pressures, fatigue, work, or other stressors. At times, the strongest food cravings can occur when a person is at their weakest emotionally.

Emotional eating often leads to eating too much and making unhealthy choices, such as foods high in calories, sugar, and fat. Becoming overweight or obese can result, upping the risk for serious health problems, such as type 2 diabetes. For those trying to lose weight, emotional eating can sabotage even the best efforts.



FIND THE BUTTERFLY

There are three butterflies hidden throughout this issue. Can you find them all? Once you find them, email lhuchler@tsonline.com to let us know where they're located. You'll be entered to win a \$10 Wawa gift card! The winner from the "find the umbrella" game in the spring issue was Anna DiGialleonardo, ShopRite.

Taking Control

The good news is that if you are prone to emotional eating, you can take steps to regain control of your eating habits. Here's how:

- **Recognize the behavior.** Acknowledge you eat when you are uncomfortable emotionally, not just when your body needs food for fuel.
- **Choose a healthier coping skill.** If you are stressed, try a stress management technique, such as mindfulness exercises, breathing exercises, meditation, or yoga—or take a walk.
- **Call a loved one or a good friend.** Reach out if you're lonely. Develop a support network.

- **Keep a food diary.** Document how you're feeling when you eat. Over time, you might be able to see patterns that reveal the connection between your mood and food.
- **Ask for help.** If you're anxious, confide in a friend and your support network. Consider contacting your doctor or a therapist.

Remember to focus on the positive changes you're making and to give yourself credit for working toward a healthier you.

Need a Therapist?

For more information, call the Fund office at **800-228-7484**, prompt #4, for Managed Care.



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4 Surprising Health Concerns Your Dentist Might Detect

Open wide and say, “aah.” Doing so allows your dentist to check for more than cavities and gum disease. A dental visit could also reveal signs of other serious health conditions. These might include:

1 Cancer

Each year, more than 50,000 Americans are diagnosed with oral and throat cancers. Your dentist may spot red or white patches, lumps or thick tissue, or a swollen jaw. If they linger for two weeks, your provider may do a biopsy or refer you to a specialist.

2 Diabetes

Gum disease and diabetes often go hand in hand. If you have severe gum disease and other risk factors, such as a family history of diabetes, your dentist may advise you to see your health care provider for diabetes screening tests.

If you’ve already been diagnosed with diabetes, your dentist can alert you to potential signs that your condition isn’t under control. Symptoms like a dry or burning mouth, bad breath, slow-healing wounds, infections, or enlarged salivary glands can point to problems.

3 HIV

Because human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) damages the immune system, it makes you prone to other infections and can advance to AIDS. Early diagnosis is critical so that you can start medical treatment right away.

Mouth sores are among the first signs. If your dentist points them out, get tested, especially if they’re accompanied by muscle aches, sore throat, or other flu-like symptoms.

4 Osteoporosis

X-rays help your dentist see cavities, gum disease, and other problems that aren’t visible when looking in your mouth. They might also spot bone loss in your jaw—a warning sign of the bone-thinning disease called osteoporosis. If your dentist has concerns, you should talk with your health care provider about having a bone mineral density test.

Dental Plan Reminder

Just a reminder that your dental plan is now through United Concordia Dental. If you haven’t received your United Concordia Welcome Kit, please contact United Concordia at **866-851-7568**. There is no change in the dental benefits provided. Specifically, your annual maximum is the same, and all current copays and plan provisions—including limitations and exclusions—continue to apply under the United Concordia plan.

If you have any questions about your plan information, call the Fund office at **800-228-7484** or **856-793-2500**.



Water Safety Tips to Keep Summer Fun

Summer and swimming go together, but whether you swim in a pool, a lake, or the ocean, there are a few things you should keep in mind to keep you and your loved ones safe.

- Never swim alone. It's important to have someone nearby in case of an emergency. Even accomplished swimmers can experience emergency situations.
- Know your body's limits. When you feel tired, get out of the water. Even with water's buoyant qualities, if you get tired, you are at a higher risk of drowning. Remember, most drownings happen silently and quickly.
 - To avoid injuries such as a concussion, broken vertebrae in your neck or back, or a spinal cord injury, don't dive in shallow or unknown areas.

- Floaties and other plastic pool toys are not lifesaving devices. Young people who cannot swim should always wear an approved life jacket that is fitted properly, and children should be supervised at all times.
- When you are at a community pool, a lake, or the ocean, always appoint a designated water watcher. This is especially important if there are children swimming. Swim only in designated areas supervised by lifeguards.
- Never mix alcohol with the supervision of children.
- Remember that plastic or blow-up wading pools should be drained and stored in an upright position after each use. Young children can drown in as little as 1 or 2 inches of water.
- If you have a pool, door alarms, locked enclosures, fencing, and secured doors can help prevent a tragedy. According to the American Red Cross, accidental

drowning is the second leading cause of death behind motor vehicle accidents for children in the U.S. who are between 2 and 14 years of age. Always have someone in the home trained in CPR and first aid.

- No matter your age, learning to swim is one of the best ways to be safer in or around the water. American Red Cross offers First Aid, CPR, Swimming, and Safety classes for people of all ages and abilities.



For more information,

download the Red Cross Swim app at www.redcross.org/apps or search "Red Cross Swim" in the Apple App Store or Google Play.

Are You Suffering from Post-COVID?



Most people recover from COVID-19 without any long-term side effects. However, for 7.5% of adults in the United States, post-COVID symptoms continue, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

You may have heard people refer to post-COVID as long COVID, long-haul COVID, and chronic COVID, to name a few. Post-COVID is defined as symptoms lasting three or more months after first contracting the virus.

Factors Affecting Risk

Older adults are less likely to have post-COVID than younger adults,

while women are more likely to be affected than men. Groups at higher risk for post-COVID also include people who:

- Are not vaccinated against COVID-19
- Had underlying health conditions prior to infection
- Experienced more severe COVID-19 illness, especially those who were hospitalized or



problems; these conditions can last weeks, months, or years. Anyone who has been infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 can experience post-COVID conditions. Currently, there is no test that determines whether your symptoms or condition is due to COVID-19. Your health care provider considers a diagnosis of post-COVID conditions based on your health history, if you had a diagnosis of COVID-19 either by a positive test or by symptoms or exposure, and a health exam.

People who experience post-COVID conditions most commonly report tiredness or fatigue that interferes with daily life, post exertional malaise, fever, shortness of breath, cough, chest pain, fast or pounding heart, difficulty thinking or concentrating (sometimes referred to as “brain fog”), and headache. Other symptoms can include sleep problems, dizziness when you stand up, change in smell or taste, depression or anxiety, stomach pain, joint or muscle pain, and rash.

Some people may experience multiorgan effects involving many body systems, such as the skin, brain, heart, lungs, and kidneys. As a result, people who have had COVID-19 may be more likely to develop new health conditions, such as diabetes, blood clots, or neurological conditions, compared with people who have not had the virus.

At times, the symptoms may be hard to manage. Routine blood tests, chest X-rays, and other testing may show normal results. This can delay diagnosis and treatment.

needed intensive care

- Had a condition affecting their organs and tissues (multisystem inflammatory syndrome) while sick with COVID-19 or afterward

A Difficult Diagnosis

Post-COVID conditions can include a wide range of ongoing health

COVID-19 Notice

The Biden Administration ended the country’s COVID-19 public health emergency along with the national Covid-19 emergency on May 11, 2023. You may be wondering what this means for you.

Any Covid-19 claims after this date will be processed according to your benefit plan. If you do not have out-of-network benefits, check to make sure you are going to an in-network provider. If you have questions or concerns, call the Fund office at **800-228-7484**, **prompt #4** for Managed Care or **prompt #2** for Enrollment/Eligibility.

What You Can Do

If you suspect you have post-COVID, seek care from your health care provider. To prepare for your appointment, write down when your symptoms started, what makes your symptoms worse, and how often these symptoms occur. Together, you and your provider will come up with a personal medical management plan that can improve your symptoms and quality of life.

The good news is that most people with post-COVID symptoms recover within one year from the date of infection. Promising research is ongoing with the hope of finding solutions that will lead to better treatment and resolution of symptoms in the future.

To reduce the risk of post-COVID, protect yourself and others from being infected. Stay up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccinations, get tested if needed, and seek treatment if positive for the virus. Continue to avoid close contact with people who have a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 illness, and continue to practice good hand hygiene.

Teen Girls Report Record Levels of Sadness



According to a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly three out of five teenage girls felt persistent sadness in 2021, double that of boys. This represents a nearly 60% increase from a decade ago. More than one in three teenage girls reports attempting suicide in the previous year per the CDC.

Mental health is at a crisis for our youth but especially so for teenage girls. The isolation and stress from the COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated the mental health crisis. Teenage girls report higher levels of suicidal thoughts and sexual violence than boys. Cyberbullying is reported more often in girls than boys. Social media culture, online hate, academic pressure, self-doubt, impossible beauty standards on social media, and monetary difficulty all contribute to this growing trend.

The increase in sadness and hopelessness is reported across all

racial groups over the past decade. Also, teenage girls respond differently than boys to pain and confusion in the world. Boys are more likely to translate their feelings into anger and aggression, whereas girls tend to react by internalizing their stress and fear. Girls are also more likely to have eating disorders and to self-injure with actions such as cutting.

Some signs and symptoms to watch out for include:

- Withdrawal or stopping activities they usually like to do
- Changes in mood, including irritability and sadness
- Increase or decrease in appetite and sleep patterns
- Change in academic performance
- Lack of interest in most things
- Self-injurious behavior, such as cutting

Open communication with your teenager is key. Have your teen identify a trusted adult and make

sure they have access to their number. Identify who your teen will call if they are overwhelmed. Restrict social media time.

If you think your teen may have depression or overwhelming feelings of sadness, it's important to get help early. Consider a behavioral health provider if your teenager is feeling overcome with stress, anxiety, hopelessness, and depression. The most common treatment is a therapy called cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). CBT can help recognize and change negative thought patterns.

Find Help

Call the Fund's Care Management Department for names and numbers of participating behavioral health providers: **800-228-7484** or **856-793-2500, prompt #4**.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call **988** to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

A NOTE FROM YOUR ADMINISTRATOR

by Frank Vaccaro, Contract Administrator

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What to Do After an Auto Accident

When faced with an automobile accident or injury, you are often left wondering where to file claims related to the accident. The rules vary depending on the state where you live. To help you navigate which steps to take, follow the guide below.

Delaware residents: You must file for payment of disability and medical expenses, including prescriptions, through your automobile insurance carrier. No payment will be made by the Fund for any medical or disability benefits.

Maryland residents: You must file all claims for disability and medical benefits, including prescriptions, through your automobile insurance carrier. The Fund will only consider payment of such expenses after exhaustion of all automobile insurance available and then up to the stated maximums. The Fund will not pay such expenses if you fail to maintain personal injury protection coverage through your automobile carrier.

New Jersey residents: You must file all medical expenses, including prescriptions, through your automobile insurance carrier. Under the normal benefits program, the Fund shall consider for payment any minimum deductible and/or copay required by the New Jersey Automobile Reparation Reform Act. The Weekly Disability benefits will be paid by the Fund if you are disabled in an automobile accident.

Pennsylvania residents: You must file all claims for disability and medical benefits, including prescriptions, through your automobile insurance carrier. The Fund will only consider payment of such expenses after exhaustion of all automobile insurance available and then only up to the stated maximums. The Fund will not pay such expenses if you fail to

maintain personal injury protection coverage through your automobile insurance carrier.

If you have any questions, please contact the Health and Welfare Fund office at **800-228-7484**. Select **prompt #3** for the Claims Department or **prompt #4** for Managed Care.



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Safe in Summer and Beyond

June is National Safety Month, but these tips to prevent injuries and accidental deaths are useful all year round:

- Keep aisles, stairs, and walkways clutter-free, and cabinet doors and drawers closed when not in use. Pick up dropped objects.
- Slow down and take small steps when walking on wet or slippery surfaces.
- Always use handrails in stairways and take one step at a time to avoid falling. Report or repair broken stairs.
- Use nonskid floor coverings and slip-resistant pads under throw rugs.
- To reduce the risk of falls, choose footwear that has a lot of contact with the ground. This helps to distribute your body weight and reduce pressure on your feet. Look for a flat or low, wide heel and nonslip soles.
- Place frequently used items in easy-to-reach areas.
- Get seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Sleep deprivation contributes to both car and work accidents. It also ups your risk for problems like depression and heart disease.
- Do not look at your cellphone when crossing a street or negotiating traffic. Use hands-free devices to avoid glancing at your phone while driving.
- Test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors every month and replace the batteries at least once per year.
- When outside in the heat, keep yourself hydrated and remain in the shade, if possible.
- Take classes on CPR and water safety through the American Red Cross. Go to www.redcross.org to find an office in your area.

For more tips and information, log on to the National Safety Council's website at www.nsc.org.

Are we in touch?

If you are aware of any coworkers who are not receiving the *in touch* newsletter on a quarterly basis, please advise them to call the Health and Welfare Fund office at **800-228-7484, ext. 2508**.

The Fund distributes the *in touch* newsletter to present reliable, up-to-date health information, including updates about programs and benefits available to eligible participants. Call the Fund office to obtain the status of your eligibility and verify your current address.

Your ideas are important! Let us know if there is a particular topic that you would like included in your *in touch* newsletter.

Eligibility for specific benefits varies among our participants. Call the Health and Welfare Fund office to inquire about your eligibility for any of the benefits described in this newsletter. Call **800-228-7484, prompt #2**.