



## CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Chronic conditions are defined as conditions that last one year or more and require ongoing medical attention, and may limit physical activity or other aspects of daily living. The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP) highlights seven major chronic diseases that are prevalent in the United States:



From www.cdc.gov

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has also expanded this list to include Obesity, Oral Disease, and Stress.

### Heart Disease and Stroke

Heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases are responsible for 1 in 3 deaths in the United States. High blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, diabetes, and smoking are all risk factors for heart disease. About 70% of people who have their first heart attack also have high blood pressure, often raised by a diet high in sodium.

### Cancer

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States. Leading risk factors for cancer include smoking, too much UV radiation from the sun, being overweight, and drinking too much alcohol. Smoking alone can cause cancer in your larynx, mouth and throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, color, cervix, pancreas, and stomach.

### Diabetes

More than 30 million people in the United States have diabetes, and about 1 in 4 are unaware that they have it. Further, more than 84 million people have a condition known as prediabetes, and about 90% of them don't know they have it. People at higher risk for Type 2 Diabetes are individuals who are overweight or obese, are 45 years old or older, and are physically active less than 3 times a week.

## PREVENTION

The above chronic diseases clearly affect the lives of Americans on a mass scale. Although genetics can have an effect on the prevalence of chronic diseases, many of the conditions can be prevented by modifications to lifestyle. In fact, the CDC has identified **four behavior-based risk factors** that most commonly contribute to chronic diseases: **Smoking**, **Unhealthy Diet**, **Physical Inactivity**, and **Excessive Alcohol Consumption**. Modifying the frequency with which you perform these actions can greatly improve your health and reduce your risk for of being diagnosed with chronic conditions.



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### The Power of Prevention:

- By 3 months after you have quit smoking, heart attack risks drop and lung function improves. After one year, excess risk for heart disease drops by 50%.
- Diet and exercise with about 150 minutes of physical activity per week can prevent or delay Type 2 Diabetes, even in adults who are already at risk.
- A 12 to 13-point reduction in systolic blood pressure can reduce the risk of fatal cardiovascular disease by 25%.
- Regular cancer screenings, such as mammograms and colorectal exams, allow for early treatment of cancer-related symptoms and instances.
- Early diagnosis and management of arthritis, including self-management of physical activities, can decrease pain, improve function, and maintain productivity.

## BRACE YOURSELVES... (PUNS)

- ◇ I've been to the dentist many times, so I know the drill.
- ◇ Be kind to your dentist; he has fillings too.
- ◇ A bad dentist gets on everybody's nerves.
- ◇ My dentist appointment is at tooth-hurty.
- ◇ My dentist and manicurist always fight tooth and nail.
- ◇ Shouldn't dental x-rays be called tooth pics?



## TO TELL THE TOOTH...

- ◇ 27% of adults in the United States have untreated tooth decay.
- ◇ 46% of all adults aged 30 years or older show signs of gum disease.
- ◇ Generally, complete tooth loss among older adults has declined, though disparities exist among different populations.
- ◇ Oral cancer is most common in adults older than 55 years who smoke.



# DENTAL HEALTH

We all know that the upcoming holiday season is about family, reconnecting, creating memories, and, perhaps most of all, **FOOD!** There's no denying that:

On **Halloween:** almost 3 billion dollars will be spent on candy, and you just might have to help yourself to a Snickers (or nine) from your child's haul (**have no shame; 72% of parents admit to having sticky fingers**).

On **Thanksgiving:** 46 million turkeys will be eaten in the United States. As well, 77 % of Americans will eat mashed potatoes or green beans as a side dish, and 72% of Americans will have apple pie or pecan pie (**pie one, get one free**).

On **Christmas:** 1.7 billion candy canes will be produced, and 90% of them will be purchased on the 3rd week of December. Chestnuts will roast, sugar plum fairies will dance, and 85% of children will expect *someone* to eat Santa's cookies (**if you need assistance with all that cookie-eating, please contact [nathan.villasenor@seta.net](mailto:nathan.villasenor@seta.net)**).

Despite all these (completely necessary) opportunities to enjoy the sweeter side of life, recall that health organizations often classify oral diseases as chronic medical conditions. This means that our preventative dental care must be ongoing and consistent. **Follow these tips to maximize oral health:**

**EXAMINE** your teeth, gums, and tongue regularly for any new or unusual pain, bumps, sores, or smells.



**BRUSH** your teeth, gums, and tongue at least twice a day. Brush in small circles at a 45° angle towards the gums.

**FLOSS** between your teeth regularly. Floss reaches all the food in tight spaces that your toothbrush can't.



**SCHEDULE** regular appointments with your dentists at least once every 6 months; they're the experts!

## Anxiety and Depression



It is certainly common to experience occasional anxiety. This passing anxiety, often surrounding novel or mysterious circumstances, is not what qualifies as an “**anxiety disorder**”, however.

An anxiety disorder is a chronic mental condition that is **persistent, uncontrollable**, and often **overwhelming**. Often, it interferes with everyday tasks and actions.

Similarly, it is common to experience sadness, even for days at a time, especially if there is a life event that has occurred that is saddening. However, temporary sadness is not what we refer to when we speak of “**major depressive disorder**”.

Major Depressive Disorder is the most commonly diagnosed of a variety of depressive disorders. Those who are diagnosed with clinical depression have bouts of sadness that are **severe, persistent**, and **long-lasting**.

**Depression and anxiety disorders are different**, but they share symptoms of nervousness, irritability, insomnia, and concentration difficulties. An individual may experience both in their lifetime. **Both are serious and warrant professional help.**

## Seasonal Affective Disorder



**Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)** is a type of major depression that, as its name implies, is concurrent with the **changing of the seasons**. Typically, bouts of depression begin to occur in the late fall and early winter, and last until spring or summer. **A full diagnosis from a mental health expert is required**, meaning the pattern of seasonal major depression must be observed for at least 2 years. This is often paired with clinical therapy. **Common symptoms include:**

- \* Feeling hopeless or worthless
- \* Low energy
- \* Feeling depressed most of the day, every day
- \* Having frequent thoughts of death or suicide
- \* Low energy and difficulty sleeping
- \* Feeling sluggish or agitated

Greater distance from the equator, family history, younger age, and comorbid depression or bipolar disorders are **common risk factors for SAD**.

## Your Rights:

It is your right to share or not to share your experience with anxiety, depression, or other mental or physical illnesses with your employer. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) protects you from job discrimination if you do decide to disclose your concerns.

SETA's Human Resources team is reliable and professional. Feel confident in knowing you have support and resources available to you.

*SETA's Wellness and Safety Newsletter (2019)*

*Prepared by the SETA Wellness Committee*

[www.seta.net/staff-resources/wellness-safety-awareness-program](http://www.seta.net/staff-resources/wellness-safety-awareness-program)

**Contact us: [wellness@seta.net](mailto:wellness@seta.net)**

### REFERENCES:

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