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Do you remember the feeling you had when a teacher or professor announced a pop quiz in school? That sudden jolt of fear that caused your heart to flutter was probably experienced by everyone in the room. While these sudden jolts of anxiety are common, if you are constantly stressed or anxious these can be indicative of a more serious underlying condition.

Your Anxious Heart: The Effects of Stress

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Don’t be an April fool with alcohol! Not only is this good advice, it’s also the theme of an annual collaboration between the Hamilton Area Community Coalition (HACC) and Community Memorial Hospital (CMH).

CMH Celebrates #NationalDoctorsDay on March 30

Whether it’s the joy of caring for a newborn or the pain of comforting those in their final days, a physician’s work is both rewarding and admirable. Physicians are at the top of millions of healthcare decisions everyday and rely on years of training and practice to lead their teams to provide exceptional patient care. On Doctors Day, March 30, Community Memorial Hospital celebrates those who dedicate their lives to helping others live the most healthy lives possible. President George Bush, in a statement proclaiming National Doctors Day in 1991 stated “More than the application of science and technology, medicine is a special calling, and those who have chosen this vocation in order to serve their fellow man understand the tremendous responsibility it entails. Common to the experience of each of them, from the specialist in research to the general practitioner, are hard work, stress, and sacrifice.” The first Doctors Day was celebrated in 1833 in Winder, Georgia. Dr. Charles B. Almond’s wife, Eudora, wanted to have a day to honor physicians and to commemorate the first ether anesthetic for surgery having been completed on March 30, 1842-Doctors Day was born. “Community Memorial Hospital is proud to celebrate each of our physicians on Doctors Day. We are grateful for their service and sacrifice, and inspired by their leadership and dedication”, states Sean Fadale, President and CEO of Community Memorial Hospital. Join us on March 30 as we celebrate #NationalDoctorsDay!

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Conditions that are associated with heart palpitations and anxiety attacks include coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, and heart valve or heart muscle problems. Heart palpitations and anxiety attacks are usually interrelated and can occur simultaneously. Board certified cardiologist Raymond Carlson, MD, who oversees the cardiology department at Community Memorial Hospital recognizes the importance of coordinated care in every facet of your cardiac care and rehabilitation, including behavioral health, diet, exercise, and medication to create better pathways to prevention and treatment. Stress reduction and anxiety management are just two examples of the care coordination with Primary Care available at the CMH Family Health Center, where Carlson and his team of diverse experts practice. There, patients can expect non-invasive diagnostic testing with seamless connection to Family Practice, Community Memorial Hospital services and if necessary, the Crouse Health network of services.

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THE SYMPTOMS OF BOTH HEART PALPITATIONS AND ANXIETY ATTACKS ARE ALSO VERY CLOSELY RELATED. THESE CAN INCLUDE:

- Racing of the heart
- Breathing difficulties
- Feeling weak, faint or dizzy
- Chest pain
- Sense of terror or impending death
- Shortness of breath
- Sense of impending death

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT PROLONGED STRESS AND ANXIETY ON YOUR BODY?

- Vigorous physical activity: Vigorous activity can trigger palpitations or anxiety. Be sure that you are not overexercising yourself while you exercise and consult with your physician if you are experiencing heart palpitations during exercise.
- Monitor substance intake: Certain substances such as caffeine, nicotine, alcohol and illegal drugs can cause your heart anxiety. Be sure to limit your caffeine and alcohol intake and do your best to avoid nicotine and illegal drugs altogether.
- Medical conditions: Certain medical conditions, such as thyroid disease, low blood sugar, dehydration, anemia and low blood pressure can cause heart palpitations and trigger an anxiety attack. Be sure to monitor any pre-existing conditions and discuss ways to stabilize these conditions with your physician.
- Hormonal changes: Menstruation and pregnancy can cause heart palpitations, which may be a sign of anemia. Ask your physician about the signs of anemia and what you can do to combat it.
- Medications: Medications such as diet pills, herbal supplements, decongestants and asthma inhalers can cause heart palpitations. If you experience any of the above symptoms, such as racing of the heart, dizziness or breathing difficulties, be sure to alert your physician immediately.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Don’t be an April fool with alcohol! Not only is this good advice, it’s also the theme of an annual collaboration between the Hamilton Area Community Coalition (HACC) and Community Memorial Hospital (CMH). Last April 1st, over 70 teens attended the first ever co-sponsored masquerade dance and were entertained by national motivational speaker/comedian Dr. Matt Bellace about natural highs. The goal of the event was to provide teens with a pro-social opportunity to have fun in a safe environment and to offer an empowering message encouraging positive life choices. Using his professional background in neuroscience and his love of comedy, Dr. Bellace explained how our brain can produce the happy chemicals which have a similar effect to feeling high – without the risky consequences. Bellace explained that, “There are many types of proven natural highs. Running long distances, for example, releases opiates in the brain and allows runners to experience a sense of euphoria.” Meanwhile, Dr. Travis Hall, a psychologist at Community Memorial Hospital, had the opportunity to speak to the parents of some of the youth, who were dancing the night away upstairs, about having difficult conversations with kids about the dangers of substance abuse. Feedback from teens attending the event has been overwhelmingly positive. “I had a much better time than I expected,” said one tenth grader.

“The HACC is empowering youth, parents and the community to work together and reduce the impact of substance abuse in the Hamilton community, ” says Melissa Cassulus, Program Coordinator for HACC. “We are committed to building a safe and healthy community environment in which our young people can reach their fullest potential and thrive”, she added. The HACC is funded in part by the Drug Free Community (DFC) Program, a grant program which requires the coalition to work towards two goals:

1. Establish and strengthen collaboration among communities, public and private non-profit agencies; as well as federal, state, local, and tribal governments to support the efforts of community coalitions working to prevent and reduce substance use among youth.

2. Reduce substance use among youth and, over time, reduce substance abuse among adults by addressing the factors in a community that increase the risk of substance abuse and identifying the factors that minimize the risk of substance abuse.

Coalitions receiving DFC funds are expected to work with leaders within their communities to identify and address local youth substance use problems and create sustainable community level change through environmental strategies.

Diane Chase, Senior Director Clinical Services at Community Memorial Hospital sits on the HACC Steering Committee and explained that the hospital is committed to helping the HACC achieve its goals. She has seen firsthand the effects that drug and alcohol abuse have on a community by the patients who present to the hospital. “This is important work, and the hospital is proud of the partnership between the two organizations to encourage our youth to refrain from using alcohol and drugs in order to live a healthy lifestyle”, said Chase.

www.hamiltoncoalition.com

Teens attend the Don’t Be An April Fool with Alcohol event on April 1, 2016. Pictured are the teens listening to national speaker Dr. Matt Bellace.