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Wellness Matters

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Good Health

Managing Pandemic Anxiety

The topic of safely returning to in-person work, school, and other activities is being discussed constantly. The country's re-opening, especially coinciding with the spread of the Delta coronavirus variant, can cause uncertainty and anxiety for many. How can you cope with these feelings—identified as *pandemic re-entry anxiety*?

What is Re-entry Anxiety?

Re-entry anxiety is an overall uneasiness or uncertainty about returning to the way things were before the pandemic. These feelings may be triggered when meeting socially with friends and family, going back to the workplace, or pursuing other aspects of social interaction.

Managing Your Anxiety

Different people have different coping strategies, but there are some common ways everyone can cope with re-entry anxiety. If you're feeling anxious, consider the following coping tips:

➤ **Start small** and gradually

build up to more significant social interactions. Don't rush into anything.

- **Set boundaries** by letting others know what you're comfortable with. There's no need to apologize for not wanting to do something, so explain how you feel and also be respectful of others.



- **Make a post-pandemic bucket list** to shift your thinking from anxious to positive. A lot has changed due to the pandemic, but you can focus on the new possibilities.
- **Do what makes you happy**, even if only for a few minutes

each day. Engage in something fulfilling for yourself regularly.

- **Take care of yourself** and set aside time every day to decompress.

Relax and Reset

One way to lower anxiety is regular meditation with deep breathing. When we are anxious, rapid, shallow breathing from the chest can result in increased heart rate, dizziness, and muscle tension. Breathing from the abdomen or diaphragm can help. Try these exercises:

- **Equal breathing:** from a sitting or lying position, inhale and exhale for the same amount of time—try four seconds.
- **Mindful breathing:** direct your mind's attention to your breathing.
- **Slow breathing:** You normally take 10-20 breathes per minute; try 10 or less per minute.

Burn Awareness

Most burns are only minor injuries. It's common to get them from hot water, a curling iron, touching a hot stove, or prolonged, unprotected exposure to the sun. However, some types of burns are very serious and require medical treatment. Here is a guide to help you determine when to seek help for a burn.

Types of Burns

There are several types of burns. The following are some of the most common and contact causes:

- Thermal: open flames, steam, hot liquids or surfaces, and other heat sources
- Chemical: household or industrial chemicals
- Electrical: electrical sources or lightning
- Radiation: sun, tanning beds, sunlamps or X-rays

Burn Severity

To distinguish burn severity, determine the degree and the extent of damage to the body's tissue. There are four main classifications for burns:

1. First-degree: This is the least serious type of burn and occurs when only the outer layer of skin is burned. It will look red with swelling and pain.
2. Second-degree: These are more serious burns that are divided into two subcategories: partial thickness (which injures the first and second layers of skin) and full thickness (which extends to deeper layers). Blisters develop and the skin takes on an intensely reddened, splotchy appearance with severe pain and swelling.
3. Third-degree: These burns injure all skin layers and the tissue under the skin. The burned area can be either black or white and will appear dry. There will be no pain after the initial injury.
4. Fourth-degree: While most of the public does not recognize the fourth degree, it is the correct term for burns that go beyond the skin and extend into muscle and bone.

If you suspect a burn is more severe than the first-degree, seek immediate medical attention.



Healthy & Nutritious

Cholesterol and You

Did you know one in three American adults has high cholesterol? Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in your blood. Your body needs it to build cells, but too much can pose a problem. Cholesterol travels through the blood on proteins called lipoproteins, of which there are two types:

1. LDL (low-density lipoprotein): known as **bad cholesterol**, LDL makes up most of your body's cholesterol. High levels of LDL cholesterol can increase your risk for heart disease and stroke.
2. HDL (high-density lipoprotein): known as **good cholesterol**, HDL absorbs cholesterol and carries it back to the liver to be flushed from the body.

Bad cholesterol can be elevated by certain factors, including obesity, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, smoking, excessive alcohol use, and family history. High cholesterol usually has no symptoms, so it's best to have a screening every four—six years at minimum and discuss risks with your doctor. And add food like fatty fish, citrus fruits, beans, oats, and nuts to your diet to help improve your cholesterol numbers.