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ASK THE

Why do I feel like I have a pebble in my shoe?



**Heather N.
McCombs, DPM**

The classic feeling described as a “pebble in the shoe” or the “sock seam bunched up” under the toes can be indicative of a neuroma. Neuroma symptoms are most often described by women, and the symptoms are usually noticed between the third and fourth toes, which is called Morton’s Neuroma. This enlargement of the nerve occurs over time and shoe selection plays a big role in preventing or keeping symptoms in check. Avoiding sharp pointed-toe shoes and shoes with a heel more than two inches can greatly reduce symptoms. A flat shoe can help, but only if an orthotic (arch support with a neuroma lift) is worn in it. Injections are used to decrease pain; if conservative treatment fails, surgery is an option.

Heather N. McCombs, DPM, Chicago Foot Physician

No matter how much coffee I drink, I need a nap at work by 1PM. What can I do for some sustained energy?



**Dawn Jackson
Blatner, RD**

The best way to get sustained energy is to eat balanced, moderately sized meals about every five hours with energizing snacks in-between. If your meals are too big, you will get tired (think how fatigued you feel after a huge Thanksgiving meal), so eat enough to be satisfied but avoid feeling stuffed. A balanced meal is a plate with 25 percent whole grains, 25 percent lean protein and 50 percent vegetables topped with a little healthy fat, such as nuts or avocado. Energizing snacks are a combination of produce and protein such as an apple and raw almonds. To keep energy high, stay well hydrated with water and green tea throughout the day. Green tea will give you a responsible caffeine pick-me-up with about two-thirds less caffeine than coffee.

Dawn Jackson Blatner, RD, CSSD, LDN

How does winter affect sleep?



**Cathy Goldstein,
MD**

Since bright light helps set the hands of our internal clock and has alerting effects, reduced light availability in the winter may impact our sleep and how we feel while awake. Decreased morning light could cause difficulties falling asleep and waking at the desired time. This may be particularly problematic for those with a tendency toward “later” circadian preference. Sleep duration may also be longer due to prolonged darkness. In addition, reduction in daytime illumination could impair alertness. However, studies have shown conflicting results and may be confounded by our use of artificial lighting. Sleep hygiene is the key to promoting sound sleep yearlong: maintain

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daytime light exposure and activity; minimize caffeine; avoid heavy meals, exercise, tobacco and alcohol near bedtime; relax in dim light before bedtime and reserve the bed (which should be in a dark, cool environment) for sleep only – no electronics!

Cathy Goldstein, MD, NorthShore University HealthSystem Neurological Institute

My husband confessed to having an affair and I am devastated, humiliated and completely mistrustful. Is divorce inevitable?



Mary E. Doheny,
Ph.D

An affair causes anguish for any spouse. Trauma unleashes stress hormones that affect your body and inundate your mind. While you need to regain a sense of control, this is not the time to make decisions about the future. You need to care for yourself, get proper rest and nutrition, and seek comfort from loved ones. Resist the impulse to counterattack or bury your spouse in recriminations. An experienced couple's therapist can help you heal and resolve the crisis. You can gradually take stock of your marital relationship, examine this and prior relationships, and recognize your strengths and vulnerabilities. Developing a realistic understanding of yourself and your spouse can lead you to appreciate the causes of the affair. Tolerance, forgiveness and empathy can emerge at this point in the process. Though divorce may be inevitable, the crisis of infidelity can also serve as a catalyst for a healthier relationship.

Mary E. Doheny, PhD, The Family Institute at Northwestern University

Can I have a refill for my medication?



Sandra
Scheinbaum, Ph.D

A request for a medication you have received before seems simple enough, but many factors can play into a provider's decision to refill a prescription. Answering some questions will make the process smoother and assure you are getting the medication that will help most. Tell your provider whether the medication is helping you, if you've taken it as prescribed and whether you are experiencing any side effects. Make sure you mention any new medication prescribed by someone else and any over-the-counter medication. Yes, supplements count, too, and may impact the medicine's effectiveness. If you have a new provider, be prepared to answer more questions about your and your family's medical history and any allergies you have. Bring a list of all of your medications, dosages and how often you take them. This is an important step you can take in becoming an active partner in your healthcare.

Diane Asaro, RN, MSN, Director, Wellness Center at Loyola University Chicago n

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