

WHAT IS A CHRONIC DISEASE?

Chronic disease: A disease that persists for a long time. A chronic disease is one lasting 3 months or more, by the definition of the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics. Chronic diseases generally cannot be prevented by vaccines or cured by medication, nor do they just disappear.

The causes (risk factors) of chronic diseases are well established and well known; a small set of common risk factors are responsible for most of the main chronic diseases. These risk factors are modifiable and the same in men and women:

The biggest risk factors for these conditions are things you often can't control, including age, family history, and genetics, but studies have suggested incorporating the following habits into your life style could slow or prevent onset:

- **Manage stress** levels. Get support from family and friends during rough spells and consider regular meditation.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Limit consumption of things like alcohol, caffeine, artificial sweeteners, and highly processed foods.



Unhealthy diet
Physical inactivity
Tobacco use

These causes are expressed through the intermediate risk factors of raised blood pressure, raised glucose levels, abnormal blood lipids, overweight and obesity. The major modifiable risk factors, in conjunction with the non-modifiable risk factors of age and heredity, explain the majority of new events of heart disease, stroke, chronic respiratory diseases and some important cancers. The relationship between the major modifiable risk factors and the main chronic diseases are similar in all regions of the world.

- **Routine exercise.** Exercise has a number of physical and psychological benefits.
- **Get Adequate Rest.** Make sure you are getting 7-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep every night.
- **Drink plenty of water.** (8-10 glasses a day)
- **Talk to your doctor about getting regular screenings.**
- **Routinely** monitor your blood pressure.



TOWARDS BETTER PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC DISEASES:

In the U.S., 70 percent of all deaths are due to chronic disease. Three conditions – cancer, heart disease and stroke – account for about half of these deaths. In combination with diabetes, arthritis and a few other conditions, these chronic diseases impair almost half of all adults in the two countries.

Although chronic diseases are among the most common, serious and costly health problems, they are also among the most preventable. The leading causes of chronic diseases are; Lack of physical activity, Poor nutrition, Tobacco use, and Excessive alcohol consumption.

Over the coming months the Wellness Champion Newsletter will review specific chronic conditions and how LDC members and their Families can modify their risk factors to prevent or lessen the negative effects of certain chronic diseases.

For more information on chronic diseases go to myLDCBenefits.com



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BACK AND FOOT PROTECTION

Common causes of back pain at work

- **Force.** Exerting too much force on your back such as by lifting or moving heavy objects.
- **Repetition.** Repeating certain movements, especially those that involve twisting or rotating your spine.
- **Inactivity.** An inactive job or a desk job can contribute to back pain, especially if you have poor posture or sit all day in a chair with inadequate back support.

Preventing back pain at work

- **Pay attention to posture.** When standing, balance your weight evenly on your feet.
- **Lift properly.** When lifting and carrying a heavy object, lift with your legs and tighten your core muscles. Hold the object close to your body. Don't twist when lifting. If an object is too heavy to lift safely, ask someone to help you.
- **Modify repetitive tasks.** Use lifting devices, when available, to help you lift loads. Try to alternate physically demanding tasks with less demanding ones.

Listen to your body. If you must sit for a prolonged period. Periodically walk around and gently stretch your muscles to relieve tension.

Foot Pain and Causes

Although mild foot pain often responds well to home treatments, it can take time to resolve. Your doctor should evaluate severe foot pain, especially if it follows an injury.

Causes

Injury, overuse or conditions causing inflammation involving any of the bones, ligaments or tendons in the foot can cause foot pain. Arthritis is a common cause of foot pain. Injury to the nerves of the feet may result in intense burning pain, numbness or tingling.

Call your doctor if you:

- Have persistent swelling that doesn't improve at all after two to five days of home treatment
- Have persistent pain that doesn't improve after several weeks
- Have burning pain, numbness or tingling, particularly involving most or all of the bottom of your foot

Self-care

If your foot pain is due to an injury or overuse, it will often respond well to rest and cold therapy. Avoid activities that can worsen your foot pain, and put ice on your foot for 15 to 20 minutes several times a day. Over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medications will also help with pain and may help with healing. If you are unsure of the cause of your foot pain, or if it is widespread or involving both feet, and particularly if you have diabetes, see your doctor before trying home remedies.

WHAT DOES A WELLNESS CHAMPION DO?

- Serve as an ambassador and resource to your Local Union to help build a culture of wellness and job safety
- Encourage members to participate in wellness events sponsored by the Health and Safety Fund

HOW CAN I GET IN TOUCH WITH THE WELLNESS CHAMPION FOR MY LOCAL?

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Coming this Spring!

Join us to participate in the **Stride Kick Streak Challenge***.

Contact your local's Wellness Champion or call the Health and Safety Fund at 215-765- 2014 ext. 1235 or 1236 for more information.

We invite you to a day of fun and fitness at our **Family Health Expo***.

Contact your local's Wellness Champion or call the Health and Safety Fund at 215-765- 2014 ext. 1235 or 1236 for more information.

Join your Wellness Champions and the LaborerStrong Team and ride in the **American Diabetes Tour De Cure***.

Contact your local's Wellness Champion or call the Health and Safety Fund at 215-765- 2014 ext. 1235 or 1236 for more information.

THIS MONTHS FAVORITE APP - MY FITNESS PAL

We live in a world of temptation, cheap pleasures, stress, and convenience. All of which can affect our diet and health. MyFitnessPal is a mobile app and website that gives you a wealth of tools for tracking what and how much you eat, and how many calories you burn through activity. Of all the calorie counters I've used, MyFitnessPal is by far the easiest one to manage, and it comes with the largest database of foods and drinks. With the MyFitnessPal app you can fastidiously watch what you eat 24/7, no matter where you are.