

Tools for Life – Weekly Health & Safety Meeting

The logo for Apollo Mechanical Contractors is contained within a dark blue oval. The word "Apollo" is written in a white, cursive script font. Below it, the words "MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS" are written in a white, sans-serif, all-caps font, flanked by two horizontal white lines. Underneath that, the tagline "Building People Who Build Great Things" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

— MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS —
Building People Who Build Great Things

Home Healthy - Home Safe

Date: December 2022

Family Wellness Pt. 3 – Family Vacations

At first thought planning a family vacation may seem stressful and costly, however many scientific studies have proven the benefits of planning and taking a vacation as a family. The University of Pittsburgh Department of Psychiatry, found, that men with regular annual vacations had a lower risk of death in the 9-year study than those who did not take a vacation. In fact, they were 32 percent less likely to die from heart disease.

The Framingham Heart Study compared the data about people who took a vacation at least twice a year and those who didn't take a vacation for several years. The women who didn't take vacations were 8 times more likely to develop coronary heart disease or have a heart attack.

Studies at the Marshfield Clinic and the University of Pittsburgh's Mind and Body Center concluded taking vacations contributed to better mental health and positive emotional levels and less depression. An internal study at Ernst & Young found that for each additional 10 hours of vacation employees took, their year-end performance ratings improved 8 percent.

The psychological benefits of family vacations have as much to do with alleviating the negative impacts of stress as the continued enjoyment of the vacation.

HEALTHY OR SAFETY REMINDER: Even the anticipation of laughter or recalling fun times increases serotonin and reduces stress.

How does a vacation relieve stress?

- Releases oxytocin which is responsible for the feeling of trust, empathy, love, and wellbeing.
- Contributes to the development of serotonin. Serotonin is another important chemical and neurotransmitter because it contributes to happiness, well-being and helps regulate the body's sleep-wake cycle. There is a link between low serotonin and depression.
- Researchers say the feel-good chemical, dopamine, is released when we have done fun things and have positive experiences together. The brain is rewarded by creating a sense of euphoria or the high you feel on vacation.

Due to dopamine and serotonin release, the benefits of vacation together include improved immune functioning, stress relief, increased tolerance for pain, improved cardiovascular health, reduced anxiety, and improved mood. In fact, some research indicates, that the anticipation of an upcoming vacation can be more exciting than being on the trip itself. So put that family vacation on the calendar and start looking forward to some rest and relaxation.