

Benefits Bulletin – December 5, 2016

OSSTF District 7, Bluewater

Teachers' Bargaining Unit

Stephen Lau, Vice-President

FeelingBetterNow®: Stress management at your fingertips

Dr. Sam Ozersky, AB, MD, FRCP(C)
Article Courtesy of OTIP

Stress at work may be one of the few guarantees in life, aside from death and taxes. A 2010 survey found that over 1 in 4 people (that's 3.7 million Canadians), considered most days to be 'quite a bit' or 'highly stressful', with the majority attributing work issues as the leading cause. Teachers unfortunately are not exempt. According to a 2008 survey of Ontario teachers, one of the most commonly cited reasons as to why teachers left the profession was stressful working conditions.

FeelingBetterNow®, a confidential and anonymous mental health management program, provides members with the tools to cope with the stressors of a challenging workplace. Accessible on a PC or mobile device, FeelingBetterNow® is available to members and their families through the OTIP long term disability (LTD) plan, at no charge.

Developed by a team of psychiatrists, counselors and family doctors, FeelingBetterNow® offers Your Toolbox which includes helpful solutions and information on stress reduction, which members can quickly access by logging in at:
www.feelingbetternow.com/otip.

Here are some stress-busting strategies YOU can try:

1. **Learn about stress:** When things get tough, our first response is often to head to Google and search for information about stress. While that's helpful if you know what you're looking for, most people are not mental health experts, and it can be challenging to separate the signal from the noise. Low-content "listicles" like "10 Best Ways to Beat Stress" usually provide obvious information and are primarily designed to garner website page hits and sell ads. Your Toolbox's Stress Reduction knowledge base was developed by psychologists who distilled leading research on the causes of

stress and created bite-sized summaries with key information to help you take action.

2. **Develop a systematic approach:** You can access free ebooks in the Stress Reduction toolbox that use proven principles to tackle stress, develop coping mechanisms and integrate them into your daily routine.

3. **Use mobile tools:** Search "stress reduction" in your app store's search box and you'll see hundreds of results. Downloading and evaluating even a handful of these apps can be time-consuming and yes, stress-inducing! FeelingBetterNow® takes the guesswork out of the equation and provides a shortlist of free, high-quality apps (for iPhone and Android) that have been reviewed and curated by its Clinical Advisory Board. These apps include progressive muscle relaxation, breathing exercises, guided meditation and more.

Everyone experiences stressful situations, and they can certainly be rooted in circumstances outside of work (family, legal, financial, etc.). Good time management, sleep and dietary habits can greatly limit the impact of stress on a member's physical and mental well-being. If left unaddressed however, stress can increase the risk of developing more serious conditions like anxiety, depression and substance abuse, as well as chronic health problems such as heart disease, ulcers and migraines. Members can take their first steps towards protecting themselves by going on FeelingBetterNow® today.

Start using FeelingBetterNow® right away at no charge.

How to sign up:

1. Visit www.feelingbetternow.com/otip.
2. Click "Create an Account".
3. Under Organization, start typing OSSTF, and then select OSSTF/FEESO from the list.
4. Type in a user name and password.

Members can email FeelingBetterNow® at support@mensante.com for assistance.

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Mythbuster: Are brand name drugs better than generics?

Article Courtesy of OTIP



Myth: Brand name drugs are safer and more effective than generic drugs.

Fact: Generic drugs are every bit as safe and effective as brand drugs. In fact, they are equivalent to the brand version in dosage, safety, strength, quality, the way they work and the way they're taken.

Generic drugs are simply unbranded pharmaceutical products. They use the same active ingredients as the original brand formulation and work the same way in the body, so they have the same therapeutic benefits but cost less.

Saving money with generics

Brand name drugs are offered at a higher cost in order to allow the company that conducted the research and development of the new drug to recover its investment. This means that generic drugs cost less because the effectiveness of the brand drug has already been established through clinical testing and years of patient use. As a result, Health Canada and regulatory bodies around the world agree it's scientifically unnecessary to repeat that same level of testing for the generic drug. The savings are substantial and are passed along to you in the form of lower prices.

In fact, generic drugs cost an average of 60% less than their brand counterparts, which means they can potentially save you money on additional out-of-pocket expenses that your drug plan doesn't cover.

Choosing generic over brand name drugs

Not all brand drugs are available in generic form. Brand drugs are developed under patent protection for 20 years, so generic drug companies must apply to Health Canada to sell a generic version of a drug after the brand drug's patent(s) expires. The best way to find out if a prescription drug is available in a generic version is to ask your doctor or pharmacist. Next time you visit your pharmacist to fill a prescription or are prescribed a medication by your doctor, consider asking the following questions:

- Is this prescription for a generic drug?
- Is there a generic version of my drug available?
- Can I substitute my medication with the generic?
- How much will I save under my prescription plan if I switch to a generic?

To learn more about generic drugs, visit www.choosinggenerics.ca. If you have a question about your drug coverage under your benefit plan, consult your benefits booklet or contact an OTIP Benefits Services Representative at [1-866-783-6847](tel:1-866-783-6847).

10 Tips for Safe Travel

The time leading up to a vacation—especially that last check before you leave for the airport— can be both exciting and stressful. Inevitably, it seems, you board the plane, sit down and realize you've forgotten something. As inconvenient as this may be, if you are aware of and remember to do the following 10 things, you'll spend less time worrying about the "what ifs" and more time enjoying your vacation. Visit www.otip.com/article8 to read the full article.

