



Healthy Spring De-clutter

For centuries, many cultures have embraced the annual ritual of spring cleaning. To prepare for Passover, Jewish families follow an ancient home cleansing practice. Persian families celebrate their New Year which falls on the first day of spring with a top to bottom scrub, and the Scottish "New Years Cleaning" on Hogmanay is a practice now widespread in Ireland and New Zealand. Here in the US, we clean in the spring because it's practical - spring is the best time for cleaning because it's warm enough to open doors and windows - but not warm enough for bugs.

Does spring cleaning have anything to do with health? Surprisingly yes. Aside from the obvious - clearing out dust, mold and stale crackers creates a healthier household - but did you know that clutter and excessive "stuff" can make your weight loss efforts harder, cause stress and even depression, or lead to accidents such as slips, trips and falls?

If you are like most busy executives, at work you're likely to see a stack of files, piles of professional journals and some crumbs on your desk. At home, you may have a workshop filled with plans and tools, or a kitchen stuffed with gadgets, books and interesting foods to try. That's because people with clutter are also generally creative and have numerous interests. However, the medical field now knows that excessive disorder is an obstacle in the quest for health. While chronic disorganization is not yet a medical diagnosis, doctors are beginning to understand that nagging health issues can be resolved through a "prescription" of organization.

For example, digging through a messy desk looking for an important paper is always somewhat stressful. And if you can't find it, you may sleep less and begin to worry more about other items you may have misplaced or forgotten. This added stress from chaos can lead to overwhelming feelings which may even precede depression. Further, because disorganization leads to stress, and stress raises cortisol, your blood sugar is increased. This in turn results in increased insulin, making you hungrier and more prone to derail your diet.

So where should you start? Plan to tackle small projects daily or procrastination may follow. In 15 minutes you can clean your pantry of junk food and expired items. Another day, spend 15 minutes setting up a family station to organize incoming paperwork and bills. While moving everything



to the garage may seem like a good idea – storing clutter just leads to more stress. Each time you work through a room – look at an object and ask yourself – do I love this item? Do I use this item? If not – who could benefit from having this item? It may be a family member or even a favorite charity.

The doctors at Executive MD are available to discuss any concerns you may have about your health and struggles you may have with clutter. If you feel depressed, overwhelmed or worried that disorder may be making you unhealthy – call us for recommendations.

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