

Nik's Healthbeat



By
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When the stock market is taking a nose dive, people are losing jobs by the hundreds of thousands; the last thing on your mind may be your health. Ironically, if you are not healthy, neither the stock market nor the job could mean much to you. Despite the fact that these events have a predicable impact on our overall health, we need to take a few simple steps to avoid any serious complications. The most important asset that we need to protect is our health. And the good news is that we can be in control of our health, no matter what status the economy is in.

We need to have two quarters of negative economic growth in order for the government to declare that we are in a recession. That is six months of negative growth. You do not need to wait for that long time when your retirement fund has lost a third of its value and you have no job and you are close to your retirement. That is a recession for you.

During a recession, people jump off buildings, marriages fault, and families split apart.

Long before the economy enters a recession, people start losing their jobs. With the loss of jobs, they lose their income and healthcare coverage. When people do not have money to put food on the table, all healthcare related matters take a back seat. This includes routine check-ups, medicines, and proper diet. People avoid going to a doctor until a

condition gets worse and forces them to go to an emergency center. Invariably, that will increase the healthcare costs. If you cannot meet your doctors' office fees, have a frank discussion with your doctor and explain the situation so that you may get medicines to get you through 3 or 6 months. Check with your doctor to see your expensive medicines can be replaced with more economical generic medicines. Over 90% of the medicines that I prescribe in my practice are generic. Most of these medicines cost around \$10 per three months supply. The best way to avoid any additional financial burden is to continue to take your medicines if you have chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, or kidney problems.

During an economic downturn, people have less money that cuts down on bad habits such as drinking and smoking. Some studies have shown that during period of wide spread unemployment; there is a reduction in the incidence of deaths from heart attacks. Maybe, this is as good a time to shed your smoking and drinking habit.

People tend to go off special diets, as the foods become more expensive and unaffordable. They may settle for cheap unhealthy foods. Memberships in health spas and fitness centers may drop and people may get lazy. Now, this is a good time to indulge in inexpensive exercises such as jogging and walking. Since you have all day long, now you have no excuse for your exercise. While you are outdoors, you might as well take-up that lawn work which you were not able to do because of your hectic schedule before. That will also cut down on the number of hours that you have to argue with your spouse. You don't have to wait until the spring to clean

your house. The recession is here, and the broom stick is yours.

Due to lack of funds, people may be forced to put off their elective or cosmetic surgery. This is a good time to reevaluate yourself and determine whether you really need that surgery or was it your financial situation or social status that was enticing you to have that cosmetic surgery. Don't worry about your cynical friends. Maybe, they are in a worse situation than you are.

Recession can certainly take your nerves on a test drive like never before. Anxiety, fear, frustration, lack of trust, temperament, anger, and depression are common during these periods. Bankruptcies and foreclosures also can fuel your negative emotions. It helps to ventilate your frustrations with friends and family members. Join a support group of peers and friends (call it a recession support group) to exchange ideas on dealing with these challenging times. We may resent the fact that we have to lower our standards which were artificially inflated during good times. It is natural to take our emotions from one extreme to another. It is reflected in the way the stock market behaves (irrational exuberance or panic pessimism). In fact, stock market is a very good example of our extremes of behavior in all directions. It also teaches us to swing away from such extremes and be content with modest expectations and moderation in your behavior which will come a long way during these demanding times.

One way to shield yourself from the daily barrage of toxic and volatile news is it to stay away from day to day, minute to minute "Breaking News," played out on the TV 24 hours a day.

Recession And Your Health

You may also learn a few stress relief techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, relaxation, and yoga.

Children suffer more during these times as they do not understand why their parents are not able to provide them the comforts that they were accustomed to. Educating the children about the finance and balancing the budget is important.

High gas prices means there is less driving and thus less air pollution. This may be a benefit to lung patients.

Streamline your expenses so that you have money for food, clothing, and healthcare. Renegotiate with your creditors so that you have enough money to stay healthy.

Seek professional for credit counseling, debt consolidation, healthcare assistance, or mental health if needed. Do not believe that you can solve all the problems, when all your family members say that you need help. It pays to listen.

Some men may not be able to handle the embarrassment of losing a job or having a financial crisis. Some may go into isolation which will only make the situation worse. It is better to confide your emotions with your loved ones, than to put them through a rough time of seeing you battling a serious mental illness which sometimes may need hospitalization. It is not your fault that you are going through a recession. There are millions of people who have lost everything they had. A recession can only last so long. Things will get better, and you want to be there when the clouds clear and the sun begins to shine again.

Marital rules and roles may change if one spouse loses a job. If you are a man, learn changing diapers or be prepared to listen to your wife's music. If you co-operate, it may reduce undue friction in your

relationship. It is hard enough losing a job; imagine losing a relationship on top of that.

You may consider group purchases with your friends and neighbors to save money. It is good time to see what else you can do with your life. Keep yourself busy with any type of part-time work to cut down on your boredom, isolation, and at the same time generate some revenue. Even having a conversation with your friends and neighbors could shine light upon an opportunity that could change your life.

Perhaps, you don't need five cups of expensive coffee per day. It's not good for your health anyway. You might learn to make your own coffee at home. You don't know how? Mix a cup of skim milk with a teaspoon of coffee powder and a teaspoon of sugar or Splenda, and cook it in the microwave for 2 to 3 minutes. Now, your coffee is ready.

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Visit www.sugarlandheartcenter.com for a more information.

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