



KEEPING YOU INFORMED

The Stimulus Package...Changes Regarding COBRA Continuation

Do you have questions about the Stimulus Package? We are available to help!

The Stimulus package, which was enacted as the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (ARRA) temporarily reduces the premium for COBRA coverage for eligible individuals.

Who is eligible under this program?

An "assistance eligible individual" is the employee or a member of his/her family who:

- is eligible for COBRA continuation coverage at anytime between 9/1/08 and 12/31/09;
- elects COBRA coverage; and
- is eligible for COBRA as a result of the employee's *involuntary* termination between 9/1/08 and 12/1/09.

What are some circumstances when an employee is not eligible?

- If an employee's termination of employment was due to gross misconduct, the employee and any dependents would not qualify for COBRA or the premium reduction.
- Those who are eligible for other group health coverage (such as a spouse's plan) or Medicare, are not eligible.
- This does not apply to employers with less than 20 total employees.

How does this plan work?

Eligible individuals pay only 35% of their COBRA premiums for up to 9 months and

the remaining 65 % is reimbursed to the employer through a tax credit. The premium reduction applies to periods of health coverage beginning on or after 2/ 17/09 and lasts for up to 9 months for those eligible for COBRA during the period beginning 9/1/08 and ending 12/31/09.



Be aware that premiums paid between 9/1/08 and 2/1/09 are not eligible for the premium reduction.

If you have additional questions, please contact us at (253) 851-4408 and we would be happy to assist you.

It Is That Time Of Year Again... Time For Spring Cleaning!

This is a great opportunity to get rid of items you do not need and to get organized.

Get rid of the clutter! Start by doing a quick survey of what you need to go through and organize. Remember not to forget areas such as junk drawers (yes, we all have them), medicine cabinets and storage areas.

Next make note of areas in your home that are especially disorganized and think of ways that you could eliminate the clutter. If you always have trouble finding your keys in the morning, maybe having a bowl to keep them in near your door would prevent the time spent looking for them each day.

This is also a great opportunity to give your items to those who could use them. Do you have a business suit that no longer fits that someone looking for a job could use? Or baby items that a new mom would love to have? There are many organizations

that would find a good use for your unneeded items while providing you a tax credit, allowing you to de-clutter your home and get organized.

Happy Cleaning!



5 Tips for Keeping Healthy & Losing Weight~

As spring arrives and the sun comes out from behind the clouds, many of us are thinking more about increasing our activity, losing weight and improving our overall health. Here are some tips to help you obtain your goals.

1. Do not skip meals but commit to a set time each night when you will stop eating. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Consider something with whole grains and protein. Commit to a set time each night of that you will stop eating. This will prevent overeating and will keep your total daily calorie intake lower.

2. Exercise...Exercise...Exercise. Make an attainable goal for yourself. What can you fit into your busy schedule that you can commit to long term? For example, take a 30 minute walk before going to work or at the end of your day three times a week. Remember some exercise is better than no exercise, so do what will work with your schedule and build from there.

3. Understand and Read Food Labels. Products marked as "low in sugar" does not mean they are low in fat or calories.

4. Decrease the sugary drinks and increase your water intake. Consider cutting out soda from your diet or sugar from your morning coffee. Drinking water with lunch vs. soda will increase you daily water intake while decreasing you're out of pocket lunch costs.

5. Make this a family activity. If other members of your family are involved in healthy eating and exercise, it is more likely that all of you will be successful.

Most importantly be realistic, set achievable goals that you can live with for years, not just for weeks!



We Can Help! Call or Visit Us Today.

Toll-free: 1-800-644-2568 or on the web at www.olympiccrest.com