

Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado

SPACE OBSERVER

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Vol. 62 No. 14

JFSCC tracks Tiangong-1's reentry over the Pacific Ocean

By Major Cody Chiles

JFSCC Public Affairs

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — U.S. Strategic Command's (USSTRATCOM) Joint Force Space Component Command (JFSCC), through the Joint Space Operations Center (JSpOC), confirmed Tiangong-1 reentered the Earth's atmosphere over the southern Pacific Ocean at approximately 5:16 p.m. (PST) April 1, 2018.

The JFSCC used the Space Surveillance Network sensors and their orbital analysis system to confirm Tiangong-1's reentry, and to refine its prediction and ultimately provide more fidelity as the reentry time approached. This information is publicly-available on USSTRATCOM's website www.Space-Track.org.

The JFSCC also confirmed reentry through coordination with counterparts in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom.

"The JFSCC works alongside government, industry and international partners to track and report reentries, to include today's Tiangong-1 reentry, because the space domain is vital to our shared international security interests," said Maj. Gen. Stephen Whiting, Deputy Commander, JFSCC, and Commander, 14th Air Force. "One of our missions, which we remain focused on, is to monitor space and the tens of thousands of pieces of debris that congest it, while at the same time working with allies and partners to enhance spaceflight safety and increase transparency in the space domain."

The JFSCC, in conjunction with the 18th Space Control Squadron, is committed to promoting a safe, stable, sustainable, and secure space environment through space situational awareness information sharing. The command shares space situational awareness information and services with government and non-U.S. government entities that need to transit through and operate safely within the space domain. The JFSCC also shares SSA information with partners and space-faring entities to promote the responsible, peaceful,



(Graphic of Tiangong-1 Courtesy of Aerospace Corporation)

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — Tiangong-1 reentered the Earth's atmosphere over the southern Pacific Ocean at about 5:16 p.m. (PST) April 1, 2018. This was confirmed by the U.S. Strategic Command's (USSTRATCOM) Joint Force Space Component Command (JFSCC), through the Joint Space Operations Center (JSpOC).

and safe use of space and to strengthen cooperation within the space domain.

"All nations benefit from a safe, stable, sustainable, and secure space domain," said Whiting. "We're sharing information with space-faring nations to preserve the space domain for the future of mankind."

The JFSCC does not predict or track what happens after decay and reentry occurs, such as the exact location of fallen

debris on the earth's surface; however, the JFSCC does provide operational information about reentries and potential threats to geographic combatant commands for national defense planning and operations. Additional information about JFSCC processing and reporting reentries of space objects is available here.

For additional information about China's Tiangong-1, please contact the China National Space Administration (CNSA).

Big changes for north gate hours

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — After conducting a review of operations at our north gate we are implementing some changes starting April 9.

1. The gate will open at its usual time on week days, 6 a.m. Rather than staying open until 6 p.m., the north gate will now close at 9 a.m.
2. At 2:30 p.m., the outbound side of the north gate will reopen to facilitate vehicle traffic leaving the base, as well as Colorado Military Academy students entering the base.
3. Within the next 60 days, we'll have a longer term change to keep the outbound lanes at the north gate open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. This will facilitate outbound vehicle traffic as well as pedestrian traffic from the school, and people wishing to enter and exit the base on foot.



Remembering Austin

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — March 28, 2018 marked the 1-year anniversary of Staff Sgt. Austin Bieren's death. He was stationed at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, with the 4th Space Control Squadron from 2014 to 2017, when he passed away. In honor of Bieren, who loved weightlifting and working out, the Austin beer Run Workout of the Day was registered through the CrossFit Hero WOD program. The workout, which was held March 28, 2018 and was open to all Airmen at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, consists of 28 single arm dumbbell presses, 25 goblet squats and a 200-meter run with weight in 17 minutes. These exercises represent working as a team, standing up, pushing forward, commitment and responsibility. Airmen from the 21st Space Wing, including Security Forces Squadron, 4th SPCS and 16th SPCS, participated in the workout. See page 3 for photos.

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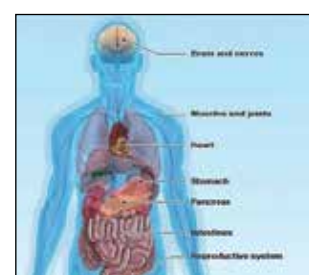
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21ST SPACE WING COMMANDER'S CORNER



Assumptions matter: A perspective from the northern wall

THULE AIR BASE, Greenland —Thirty-fourth president and first Supreme Allied Commander Europe Dwight D. Eisenhower is known to have said “Plans are nothing; but planning is everything.”

Most can agree that plans are often overcome by events, or OBE, by the time it comes to execution. Human interactions, technological improvements, and alterations in the physical and cyber terrain are usually too dynamic to be rigidly confined to paper. “No plan survives first contact with the enemy” and all that.

But the second half of Ike’s statement is just as compelling; by acknowledging that plans quickly become OBE, we should not just ‘wing it.’ Instead, we build and invest in processes which continuously evaluate planning elements and assumptions, rather than entrusting our fate to heroics.

Through the routine and careful revisiting, and even testing of existing assumptions, we usually discover more about our own weaknesses and strengths as well as those of our potential adversaries. To brutalize Sun Tzu, “If you know yourself and your enemy, you will never know defeat.” Information, whether it be from the Intelligence Community, open source reporting, accurate SITREPS, and systematic reviews of programs is paramount to feeding this analysis.

Take the concept of the ‘permissive environment,’ which is a prevalent assumption in most CONUS-based planning. This assumption essentially means we can do what we want when we want because our opponents are either incapable or unwilling. Air, space, and cyberspace superiority, secure basing, and other unhindered operations are features of the permissive, or unchallenged, environment.

In light of resurgent international competition in Europe and the Pacific, in all domains, do all our activities truly operate in an unchallenged environment? How many cur-



By Maj. Adam Morgan

821st Security Forces Squadron Commander

rent operations and future plans are built on the permissive environment assumption? How many waivers or deviations from established but under-resourced requirements rely on the overriding belief that it cannot happen ‘here?’ How quickly assumptions can change: Hannibal’s elephants over the Alps, Pearl Harbor, the Tet Offensive, and 9/11 are all examples which demonstrate how quickly the operational environment alters. Is our readiness-resources, manpower, training-postured or at least building toward the threats to come?

This gray area is where young CGOs and the junior NCOs can thrive. They are the plans OICs, the training NCOs, and the readiness monitors. They are the closest to the ‘problem,’ that is the person best positioned to identify the gap and build to a solution.

In light of our dynamic environment, all program managers, enlisted and officer, owe it to their commander not to gloss over shortfalls. Training staffs must frequently apprise their commanders on what is not getting done due to resource or qualification constraints. And the useful staff officer will advise her commander not just on what is broken, but plan out how to correct the gap, that is, how to get to

yes. Commanders all have a ‘1 to N’ list of priorities; there is no shame in developing ‘N,’ you at least have made the list. And even if it is a dormant priority, your commander is now equipped for when opportunity has met your preparation.

But how do young staff officers and NCOs identify gaps? Well, they must revisit the assumptions.

Take for instance a support agreement, where another organization has agreed to provide capability that you need, a capability that your organization cannot generate organically. Have you contacted them lately? Do you even know their phone number? If they are military, do they also deploy that capability-implying that capability may not be there when you need it?

Assuming positive feedback, have you exercised the relationship? Here is where your inspection teams and wing planning offices can earn their pay. Because if you have not tested the agreement, you cannot know that it actually works. And if it works, without testing, it probably will not work well.

Concerning materiel-what capability or requirement have you been waiving which you might need in that contested environment? Does your organization have a plan or message an actionable unfunded requirement to fill this gap? Very few requirements and capabilities are the kind that your organization will NEVER need. Be careful in using the ‘permissive environment’ assumption to justify its liquidation, because the day that assumption is invalidated is the day you will need it.

It is OK to start a plan that will take some years to achieve; build continuity concurrently with your planning so it can be carried and even finished by those who follow you. Build for the long game to ensure we can overcome in the contested environment.

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Airmen honor Staff Sgt. Bieren at Peterson AFB



(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Dennis Hoffman)

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. – Airmen from the 21st Space Wing perform the workout of the day in honor of Staff Sgt. Austin Bieren at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., March 28, 2018. The workout was inspired by Bieren's workouts and is done to honor and commemorate his death, which occurred March 28, 2017.



(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Dennis Hoffman)

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. – (From left) Capt. Megan Crews, 4th Space Control Squadron flight commander and Capt. Margot Wolfersberger, 4th SPCS weapons and tactics, perform the workout of the day in honor of Staff Sgt. Austin Bieren at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., March 28, 2018. The workout was inspired by Bieren's workouts and is done to honor and commemorate his death which occurred March 28, 2017.



(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Dennis Hoffman)

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. – Lt. Col. Chris Fernengel (left), 4th Space Control Squadron commander, and Airmen from the 21st Space Wing honor the memory of Staff Sgt. Austin Bieren at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., March 28, 2018. Airmen participated in an intense, early-morning workout including dumbbell presses, goblin squats and a 200-meter run with a dumbbell.



(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Dennis Hoffman)

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. – Staff Sgt. Maurice Hardy, 4th Space Control Squadron maintenance, works out in honor of Staff Sgt. Austin Bieren at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., March 28, 2018. The workout was inspired by Bieren's workouts and is done to honor and commemorate his death, which occurred March 28, 2017.



(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Dennis Hoffman)

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. – Lt. Col. Chris Fernengel, 4th Space Control Squadron commander, presses a dumbbell over his head during a morning workout to honor Staff Sgt. Austin Bieren at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., March 28, 2018. Airmen from the 21st Security Forces Squadron, 4th SPCS and the 16th SPCS gathered early in the morning to workout in honor of Bieren, who was known for his intense workouts.

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READY TO RUN

The cadets at USAFA are sponsoring the Falcon 50 Race Series; an annual event that takes place on the USAFA Reservation and surrounding mountains. Events include a marathon, a military heavy, and an ultramarathon. Race date is April 28 and registration is open from March 20 through April 20. Please sign up here <http://ultrasignup.com/register.aspx?did=56661>.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID CLASS

Friday, April 27, an Adult Mental Health First Aid class will be held at the base Chapel from 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. There is no cost to participants and the class is open to military members, veterans and their families. For questions please call Ms. Cremeans at 719-556-2835. Register for class at: <http://www.mhfac.org/findclass>.

ELDER CARE WORKSHOP

The Employee Assistance Program is hosting an elder care workshop Monday, May 14 from 1 to 2 p.m. in Bldg. 350. Caring for an aging loved one presents difficult challenges. This presentation focuses on raising awareness about elder care and caregiving resources, and offers practical tips and insight. To RSVP, please email: 21sw.cab.cat@us.af.mil or call Beverly Price at 719-556-6768.

WEIGHT LOSS CLASS

It's time to spring into a Healthier YOU! A group Lifestyle Balance 12-week weight loss class will start Thursday, April 5 at 11 a.m. in the Health Promotion Classroom at the Fitness Center. The class is open to all DoD ID cardholders 18 years and older. Please register by April 3 with Dana Johnson at 719-556-9642 or Dana.L.Johnson12.ctr@mail.mil.

HEARTLINK CLASS

A Heart Link Spouse Orientation Class will be offered April 20 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided; FREE child care is available as well through the FCC in-home daycare (must mention this at time of registration). The class is designed for spouses to learn what base agencies have to offer, tour some facilities on base, meet new people and for the most up-to-date resources. To register or for more information contact Nona Daugherty at 719-556-9264 or nona.daugherty@us.af.mil.

CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS

For Child Abuse Awareness teams from Family Advocacy, 21st SW Violence Prevention, and the Pikes Peak Therapeutic Riding Center will present the documentary film "Buck" at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, April 12, at the Base Chapel and again at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 19, in the Auditorium. You can see a trailer for the film here <http://buckthefilm.com/>. Please plan on joining us!

CLINIC NOTES

Have you noticed anything different at the Peterson Family Health Clinic? Such as shorter wait times for appointments, and not having to drive in for something as simple as medication refills? This is because the Peterson Health Clinic has launched a new program called RESET. RESET allows us to increase patient care while ensuring life is easier for both our patients and staff members.

Now you can make virtual appointments over the phone at 719-524-CARE for simple issues instead of making a trip to the clinic! If we find that you do need to make a trip after your virtual appointment, we are able to book you with our Priority Access Clinic which ensures you are able to be seen the same day.

ALLERGY SEASON

Allergy season is here! Use our Over-the-Counter Medication Program for your short-term allergy needs rather than calling for an appointment. The OTC Medication Program is only for patients enrolled at the 21st MDG clinic at Peterson or Schriever and can be picked up at the Peterson and Schriever Clinic Pharmacies. The program is NOT available for members on flying status, PRP status, Arming and Use of Force, who are pregnant or breastfeeding, or tasked for deployment. OTC medications are available to treat minor illnesses, including short-term allergy needs.

RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE

The RAO will hold its monthly council meeting April 12 at 11:30 a.m. at The Club. The guest speaker will be Maile Gray to talk about Drive Smart of Colorado. Please call 719-556-7153 for information.

BIG CHANGES FOR NORTH GATE HOURS

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Articles, announcements, news briefs or feedback for the Space Observer should be submitted to the 21st SW/PA via space.observer@us.af.mil. For further information, call 21st SW/PA at (719) 556-5185 or DSN 834-5185 or e-mail space.observer@us.af.mil. Deadline for article submission is noon the Friday one week before publication. All articles, copy and announcements submitted will be edited to conform to AFI Series 35 and the Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual.

For information in the event of a Peterson Air Force Base emergency, contact the Straight Talk line at (719) 556-9154.



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Colorado Reserve wings host local civic, military leaders



(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Frank Casciotta)

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. – Col. James DeVere, the 302nd Airlift Wing commander, explains the Reserve wing’s aerial port mission to members of the Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC’s Military Affairs Council, Area Chiefs of Staff forum during a meeting hosted by 302nd AW and 310th Space Wing commanders at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado March 21, 2018. The ACOS, an organization composed of key local military and civilian leaders meets regularly to discuss current affairs affecting the military and local community.



(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Frank Casciotta)

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. – Col. James DeVere, the 302nd Airlift Wing commander, talks with Kristen Christy, the Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC’s Military Affairs Council vice chair, during the Area Chiefs of Staff forum held at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado March 21, 2018. The ACOS, an organization composed of key local military and civilian leaders, regularly meets to discuss current affairs affecting the military and local community.

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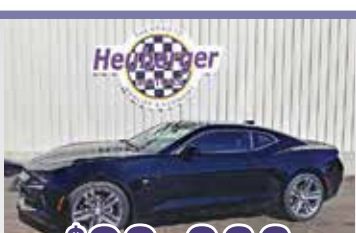
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(Courtesy graphic)

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — After you retire you have 90 days to enroll in a TRICARE plan to continue your coverage. You can enroll in either TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select if you are under 65 years old and retired from active duty.

Select. TOP Prime and TOP Prime Remote options are not available after retirement.

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Part A after your retirement, you or they will lose TRICARE coverage unless enrolled in Medicare Part B. With Medicare parts A and B, you or they will have coverage under TRICARE For Life.

For more information on how to enroll in a TRICARE plan, visit [Enroll or Purchase a Plan](#) on the TRICARE website. Learn more about TRICARE plans during retirement in the [Retiring from Active Duty Brochure](#).



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Finding the arts: Airman pursues passions through community



(Courtesy photo)

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — Staff Sgt. Siphon Brannen, 4th Space Control Squadron logistics flight chief and unit deployment manager at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., has a passion for spoken word poetry, which he sometimes performs at different venues in Colorado Springs. After searching for an open mic night to join when first stationed at Peterson AFB in 2017 and not finding what he was looking for, Brannen created his own monthly open mic night for poets, musicians, singers in Colorado Springs.

By Audrey Jensen
21st Space Wing Public Affairs

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — Upon arrival at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, in 2017, one Airman took advantage of local opportunities to further his love for the arts.

Now, Staff Sgt. Siphon Brannen, 4th Space Control Squadron logistics flight chief and unit deployment manager, can be found in downtown Colorado Springs with his friends, reciting poetry at a restaurant or hosting his own local poetry open mic night on evenings or weekends.

When he first arrived in Colorado Springs, Brannen searched for an open mic night similar to what he and his friends started while stationed at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia in 2011.

"When I was looking around at the other open mics in Colorado Springs, I didn't see anything centered on artist development that was trying to build up or celebrate artists in town," Brannen said. "Everything was geared more toward slam poetry or more developed artists who just wanted some stage time."

Instead, Brannen created his own monthly open mic night called The Shop Open Mic & Laboratory, where musicians, singers or poets, inexperienced or not, can perform and get feedback from the audience at a local lounge.

About 40 people come to the monthly open mic night and about 10 perform, said Brannen. The most Brannen said he has seen

attend is 70 people.

"I've had a few folks from my squadron come through. I haven't pushed it to the base yet though, I'm kind of just seeing how it naturally develops," Brannen said.

Brannen recites poetry when there is enough time for an extra performer, but he mostly facilitates his open mic night, which is held every first Thursday of the month at 8:15 p.m. When stationed in Virginia, Brannen first recited original poetry at a local restaurant with his friends.

"I got tired of going to the clubs and bars and stuff. I get it, we go out on the weekend and have a few drinks, but this was an unfulfilling experience. So I thought, 'How can I get more from what's happening? What can I do with my time?' Someone said, 'Hey, why don't we start an open mic?' I asked a few of my friends who liked poetry as well. We started an open mic and did that for three or four years."

Spoken word poetry, photography and videography have become a few of Brannen's passions since he first became involved with open mic nights.

"I didn't have many poems at first, but it was fun, I enjoyed it and kept going," Brannen said. "My pieces started off super short, I had these five-line poems. They just got longer and longer, I got more confident and had more things I wanted to say."

"Open mics can be like therapy or church group — where you get people's real confessions. They go deep."

In exploring the surrounding community, Brannen has been recruited by groups like

People Embracing All Cultures Equally at Liberty High School in Colorado Springs for a video collaboration.

"We're working on a video project together. I'm one of the people PEACE invited in to brainstorm and come up with ideas. That's one I'm really excited about," said Brannen, who is also part of the Colorado Springs Black Arts Movement.

It's easy for Airmen to stay on base wherever they're stationed, Brannen said, but integrating yourself into neighboring groups and organizations is more than just checking off a box.

"I think it's important on a personal level and professional level," said Brannen. "When you join the Air Force, you're still a citizen. You're under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the life that comes with that, but you're still a citizen at the end of the day. You still have this part of society that you exist in."

Connecting communities

For Airmen like Brannen, who have interests in the arts, it can be difficult to fulfill this need on base.

That's why Beverly Price, 21st Force Support Squadron installation resilience operations director and community support coordinator, can provide resources to anyone on Peterson AFB looking to be more involved with the arts.

"Building supportive relationships is the foundation for resilience and ties directly with our wingman philosophy of taking care of yourself and taking care of others," said Price. "Activating social engagement through music, poetry, theater or exercise helps create those friendships — those positive protective systems — which we all need in times of adversity."

Price works with different arts organizations around Colorado Springs to provide opportunities for Airmen at Peterson AFB.

"It's bringing balance to their life," Price said. "My whole job with resilience is making sure people balance the four quadrants of their life: social, mental, physical and spiritual. Blending a series of arts programs with our resilience modules introduces like-minded people to one another, which in turn strengthens our community and sense of connectedness."

If an Airman wants to start a group or club on base, such as a writing club that meets in the library, they can do that. Otherwise, Price said she is currently speaking with different organizations to bring more arts to base.

Through his open mic night, Brannen has developed relationships with many people in the Colorado Springs community, includ-

ing military members from all branches of service.

"A lot of the work I do affects a lot of people on different levels. People will pull me aside and tell me about an event that happened or an experience they had," Brannen said. "Having those experiences where people are vulnerable with you, getting through a moment that's really hard or sharing something that's really difficult — you get more of those experiences there than in a professional setting."

Thanks to hosting his monthly event, Brannen said he has more confidence and has also published his own book.

Finding a creative outlet doesn't have to be through poetry, Brannen said, it can be through music or rock climbing.

"Look at what you're interested in or maybe even try something new that's outside of your comfort zone," he said. "Just do something that's different, because you never know what you're going to find with experiment and getting away from the day-to-day tasks of a military job."

Arts in Colorado Springs

Portal: Connecting people around the world

- Visit the Portal at The Citadel mall and communicate with someone else from around the world in a life-size video chat.
- North entrance to The Citadel mall — 750 E. Citadel Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80909
- Visit www.sharedstudios.com/Pikes-Peak for more information.

HomeFront Theatre Project — University of Colorado Colorado Springs

- HomeFront serves veterans, active military and the public by using theater to raise awareness and create conversation.
- Visit [Facebook.com/UCCSHomeFront](https://www.facebook.com/UCCSHomeFront) for upcoming events and information

Bemis School of Art - Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College

- Military Courses: Military Artistic Healing classes and workshops are free for all military veterans, active duty military and their families. Supplies are provided.
- Upcoming classes: Warrior Poets one-day workshops: April 14, 2-3:30 p.m./ April 21, 6:30-8 p.m. Must register to participate.
- Visit coloradocollege.edu/fac for more information.

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Feeling stressed?

By Airman 1st Class Mary Czarnecki
Aerospace and Operational Physiology

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — Spring is in the air, and as the weather starts to change, so do our everyday lives. Our to-do lists grow, kids are getting out of school soon, the house needs spring cleaning, tax day is approaching, projects are at work and more.

As our lives shift and change, so do our stress levels. While stress is often thought of as being a negative factor, it is not necessarily the case. It's our body's natural response to potential danger.

Stress prepares us for what is known as the "fight or flight" response, which still helps us to survive in a modern world. However, when the body goes into a stress state at inappropriate times, we can encounter numerous problems.

Effects of stress on the body

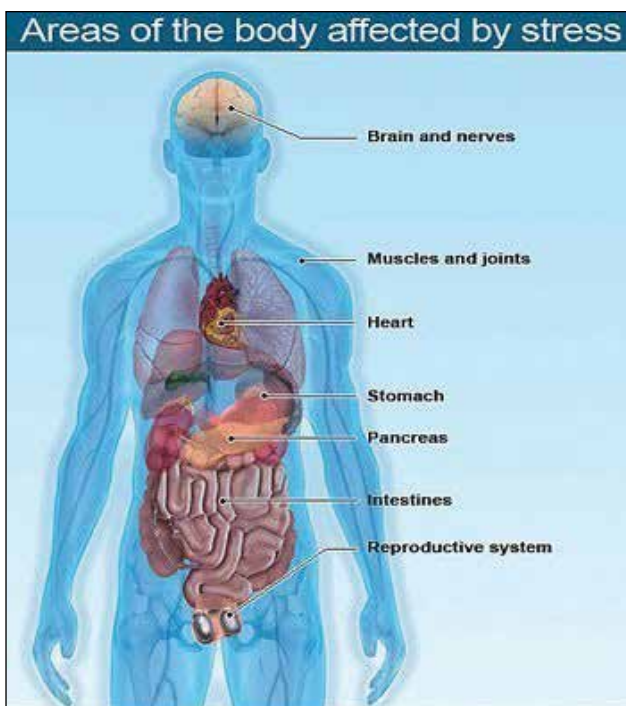
If we perceive a situation to be stressful, our body activates our stress response. Once our brain decides the present situation is stressful, our body releases adrenocorticotropic hormone, cortisol and adrenaline.

In some short-term, immediate situations, an increase in these hormones can prove to be beneficial. Your heart rate increases, your breathing becomes quicker, and your muscles tense up, preparing you for a potentially serious situation.

However, if your brain continues to send out stress signals, your body's response will continue.

This continued response to stress can affect bodily systems including the respiratory and cardiovascular systems, the digestive system, the muscular system, and the immune system. Stress can increase your breathing rate and heart rate to distribute oxygen-rich blood to your body.

When stress is prolonged, breathing can become difficult. Prolonged stress can aggravate breathing conditions, such as asthma or emphysema. Stress hormones also cause blood vessels to constrict and divert blood to your muscles, but



(Courtesy graphic)

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — Steps you can take to reduce stress include exercise, face-to-face interaction, reduced caffeine intake and sleep. Stress can negatively affect different parts of the body such as the immune system and stomach.

when they are continuously secreted, blood pressure increases, causing an increased risk of a stroke or heart attack.

The negative effects of stress can also affect how your digestive system acts. An increase in stomach acid production during the stress response can increase chances of heartburn and acid reflux. Ulcers are another concern. While stress does not directly cause ulcers since they are caused by a bacterium known as H. pylori5, it can increase your risk or

cause existing ulcers to act up.

The muscular system and immune system can both benefit from short term stress by allowing your body to protect itself and often times, heal itself. However, chronic stress can lead to unnecessary muscle tension, causing headaches and other body aches. In addition, stress hormones can weaken the immune system over time. This can leave you more susceptible to illnesses and increase recovery time.

Ways to decrease stress

Whether it's the looming deadline of taxes, the thought of spring cleaning, or simply not having enough hours in the day, stress can wreak havoc on our body. Below are a few ways to manage stress levels.

Get moving: Exercise is a very common way to relieve stress. When you exercise, feel-good neurotransmitters, called endorphins, are released in your brain, often improving your mood.

Connect with others: A 2015 study in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society found adults that have frequent face-to-face interaction with friends or loved ones had reduced sub-sequent symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression. If you're feeling stressed, try to get that human interaction, even if it's only for a short period of time.

Reduce caffeine intake: Ingesting a large amount of caffeine can increase the body's stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline, leading to additional health consequences, such as weight gain, moodiness or heart problems. In addition, caffeine blocks the hormone adeno-sine, which calms the body and prepares it for sleep.

Get some sleep: Adults who sleep fewer than eight hours a night report higher stress levels than those who sleep at least eight hours a night 5.5 vs. 4.4 on a 10-point scale. Sleep helps restore our mind and body. Fatigue can cause us to think irrationally, thus increasing our stress level.

There are plenty of ways to relieve stress. Finding a safe and healthy method to decrease stress can help you to be happier, healthier, and more productive.



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Secure Messaging makes communicating with your Air Force doctor simple

By Peter Holstein

Air Force Surgeon General Office of Public Affairs

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — In today's connected world, we expect most communication to be convenient and instantaneous. Why should communicating with your health provider be any different? That is why the Air Force Medical Service offers a secure messaging platform for patients and families to communicate safely and quickly with their providers.

The TRICARE Online Patient Portal Secure Messaging, or just Secure Messaging, can be especially valuable for patients using a specialty provider. Patients visit their primary care provider for regular visits and preventive care, but specialist visits are rarer and often occur under stressful circumstances. The benefits of Secure Messaging can make a big difference for these patients.

Lt. Col. (Dr.) Daniel Schulteis, a developmental behavioral pediatrician with the 88th Medical Group at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, is an enthusiastic advocate for secure messaging in his practice.

"I could not function in my clinic and serve my whole patient population without secure messaging," said Schulteis. "It's absolutely critical to what I do, and to how my team functions."

Schulteis' practice makes full use of Secure Messaging to communicate with patients, share documents, complete reports, and even in-process patients to the clinic. All this is on families' own schedule, without the need for extra visits or phone calls.

"The first thing my team does for new pa-

tients is enroll them in Secure Messaging," said Schulteis. "We use it for our intake packet, patient questionnaires, screening information, family history and more. Getting all that up front improves the care when the patient is actually in the clinic. I don't waste time getting all that background material in person. I feel like I know the patient before I meet them."

The patients and families in Schulteis' clinic usually face high stress levels. Developmental and behavioral childhood disorders can take a high toll on resilience. Anything that removes a burden from a family improves their quality of life.

"We don't have to play phone tag or find a way around work schedules to get information from parents," said Schulteis. "They can sit down after the kids are in bed and send us a message on their own time."

Medical care for children with developmental and behavioral disorders involves a lot of paperwork. Schulteis' clinic receives progress reports and input from many sources, including teachers, guidance counselors, and other medical providers. Receiving all these documents electronically over Secure Messaging makes it much easier for parents and clinic staff to organize and share the information.

"Secure Messaging is fundamental to what I do," said Schulteis. "There's no way I could take care of my patients without it. Some families are hesitant to start using it, but once they see what a difference it can make, and how fast we respond, they come around."

To learn more about Air Force Secure Messaging at Air Force or to sign up, visit www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/TOLPatientPortalSecureMessaging/.

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