

Commit to be Fit

January - February, 2015

Happy 2015 and Happy Valentine's Day!

Can you believe it is already the second month of 2015 and a new year with our wellness provider, Viverae. We are off to a great start with employees and now covered spouses registering for the Viverae website. Employees and spouses are racking up points for the 2015 wellness incentive. If you missed out on earning your \$75 gift card last year, you can get signed up for the 2015 calendar year for an even better incentive. This year, if you reach the 200 point goal you will receive a \$150 Visa gift card AND your covered spouse also can get the \$150 incentive as well if the required points are earned by the December 1, 2015 deadline. We will once again require that you complete a bio-metric screening and the Member Health Assessment Survey - with each one of those earning 50 points. Then you will be required to earn an additional 100 points by participating in various activities, answering the questions of the month, completing different webinars, getting your preventive care, or participating in three employer challenges that will be offered this year.

The first employer challenge - "On the Move" - is already in the works. Participants track the number of minutes engaged in physical activity each day. If you reach the goal of at least 500 minutes of physical activity by the end of the challenge, you will earn a total of 15 points.

Healthy Directions will again be sponsoring Bio-metric screening this year at a few locations in March and then in April. You can sign-up for the March bio-metric screenings now on the Viverae website. The April bio-metric schedule for signup will be posted on the Viverae website soon. If you cannot make one of the scheduled screening dates, you have the option to have your bio-metrics done in your personal physician's office. You will need to have your physician complete the physician form once the results are completed and fax directly to Viverae to be credited with the 50 points. The physician forms are located on the Viverae portal under "Resources".

Plans are in the works to sponsor a one-day Health Fair at the Health Center in March and one at the Civic Center in April during the bio-metric screenings. More details and flyers are coming soon. Let's make 2015 your year to become a better you! Those of us at Healthy Directions and Viverae are here to help you in whatever way we can. We want to hear from you about any healthy suggestions you have for the New Year. Do you have a New Year's resolution you would like to share? We would like to post your healthy 2015 New Year's resolution in our next newsletter (first names only) and track your progress at the end of this year. Send your 2015 healthy New Year's resolutions to kathy.adair@douglascounty-ne.gov - I will follow up with you before our last newsletter of 2015 and post your results. Until next time, Commit to be Fit,

Kathy Adair



February is American Heart Month!

Protect your heart with healthy eating, physical activity, and stress management. This month's issue offers simple changes that can add years to your life!

Learn more at:
www.heart.org/HEARTORG



Commit to be Fit



Reset Your Taste for Sugar

Viverae.com

As long as you're getting proper nutrients in the rest of your diet, a spoonful of sugar probably won't hurt you. With a little practice and planning, you can get that sugar monkey off your back.

Here are some guidelines from researchers and nutritionists:

Don't use sweets as a distraction

When you find yourself reaching for the jelly beans, ask yourself what's going on. If you're hungry, have the kind of snack that will last longer than a sugar rush – a handful of almonds or an ounce of cheese, for instance. If you're stressed, take a walk. If you're sad, call a friend. If you're bored, get out of the house.

Eat regular meals

Most nutritionists recommend eating small meals every three hours to keep blood glucose levels stable.

Get rid of the candy dish on your desk and the stash of chocolates in your kitchen.

If junk food isn't around, you can't eat it. When you want a sugary snack, go out and buy just one.

People who rely on low- or no-cal sugar substitutes aren't necessarily taking in fewer calories. You can substantially reduce calories by using them. But don't lull yourself into thinking you can eat more of other foods because you've downed a diet soft drink or put artificial sweetener in your coffee.

Wait Five Minutes

See if the craving passes. If it doesn't, start transitioning to healthy substitutions by having a single serving of what you want. Eventually, begin satisfying your craving with natural sugars from fruit.

Eat appropriate foods at appropriate times

Have your dessert for dessert, not for lunch or breakfast. You are less likely to go overboard when you have a full meal in your stomach. The best defense against overeating is eating.

Demystify sugar

It isn't evil. It isn't your friend. Be aware that when you're eating sugar, you're getting calories and not much else. There aren't many virtues associated with sugar. But you don't have to avoid it like the plague.



Banana Yogurt Shake

10 minutes prep time

4 servings

1 1/2 cups fat-free milk
4 small bananas, peeled
1 cup low-fat plain yogurt
1 tsp vanilla
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp nutmeg
1 cup ice cubes

Calories	160
Cholesterol	5mg
Sodium	85mg
Carbohydrates	32g
Total Fat	2g
Saturated Fat	1g
Fiber	3g
Protein	7g

- 1 Combine all ingredients except ice cubes in blender or food processor.
- 2 Process until thick and creamy.
- 3 With motor running, add ice cubes. Process until smooth.
- 4 Pour into tall glasses to serve.

No matter how slow you go, you are still lapping everybody on the couch.

Getting Back on Track with Exercise

Viverae.com

Everybody knows exercise is great for both body and mind, so why do so many of us stay rooted to the couch? Simply put, getting motivated to exercise isn't always easy. But take heart: even the most committed couch potatoes can find a way to get active.

Slow and Easy

Your body may be desperate for more exercise, but physical fitness can't be rushed. Doing too much too soon is a recipe for a quick flameout.

If your body isn't used to exercise, start with just 10 minutes of light activity each day. Walking, biking, and swimming are all great exercises for beginners. For most people, they don't involve learning any new skills, and your body won't take a pounding. Walking is an especially popular option for reformed couch potatoes. You can start by simply walking around the block. If that feels good, try two blocks. The next time you go out, try going a little farther.

Small Steps, Big Rewards

If you don't get much exercise now, just about anything you do will be a step in the right direction. To get the most out of exercise, you should gradually work your way up to 30 minutes of moderate activity four to six times per week.

Healthy Expectations

As you prepare to get off the couch, take time to think realistically about your goals. If you want to transform your body instantly, you'll be disappointed. The benefits of exercise build slowly over time. Consider your motivation. If you're exercising purely out of guilt or a sense of duty, you aren't likely to stick to it over the long haul.

Safe Starts

In addition to giving the green light, a doctor might have some customized advice for safe and successful exercise. Be sure to tell him or her about any dizziness, nausea, or chest pains – these are signs that your workouts need to be a little less vigorous, or that you should wait until you're in better health to begin. If exercise really hurts, stop immediately and talk with your doctor about next steps. Remember: Your goal is to feel better, not worse. As you start exercising, ask yourself a very important question: Are you truly enjoying yourself? If the workouts aren't pleasurable or satisfying, you'll be back on the couch in no time.



Put these humble items to use to slim down — and feel great!

It's not a secret formula. The best way to lose weight — and keep it off — is to combine regular exercise, healthy eating and portion control.

You probably already have at least five everyday items that can help you reach your goals.

- 1. Salad plates.** They'll give you built-in portion control.
- 2. A timer.** Use it to inspire 10 minutes

of motion. Aim for moderate aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, stationary cycling or dancing.

- 3. Small plastic baggies.** Divvy up healthy snacks into single portions. They'll be ready to grab and go when the munchies strike. And you won't find yourself eating right from a package — and blowing your portion control. You might prep baggies of grapes, veggie sticks, and whole-grain crackers or cereal.

- 4. A notebook.** Many people find that keeping a food and fitness diary helps. It can show you where there's room for improvement — and be a place to track your progress too. Of course, it doesn't matter if you use pen and

paper or an app for that. The important thing is to have a place to track your everyday habits.

- 5. Your phone.** Consider it your special support-seeking device. Need a workout buddy? Text or call a friend to set up a fitness outing. Reach out to a supportive pal who you know will cheer you on when you need it most.

And if you're struggling with weight control, there's someone else you can call: your doctor. Make an appointment. Together, you can discuss your goals and the best ways to meet them.

United Healthcare newsletter



The County Wellness Bicycling Corner

By Lee Lazure

Here we are in 2015 and after taste of warm weather in January, which is supposed to be the coldest month of the year, we survived. The light at the end of the winter tunnel is really spring and the signs are beginning to show. It stays light longer, the average temperature is above 32 degrees, and the recent snow is starting to melt. So, if you have not been out on your bike, start thinking about layering up, and taking a short ride. It is guaranteed to chase away the winter doldrums, and get you thinking spring and summer.

If you are not a biker, here is one of the best times to fix up that old bike in the basement, take it to a bike shop for a tune-up or look at purchasing one. Hey! Wasn't one of your New Year's resolutions a commitment to exercise, lose weight and take care of yourself? Now is the time to renew your resolution on wellness for the New Year.

If you're getting an income tax refund this year, why not consider getting a bike? It is a great investment in your health. Some of the bike stores have really good sales this time of the year. The Omaha Pedalers Bike Club is even sponsoring a Bicycling Swap Meeting on Sunday, March 8th from 11:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the College of St. Mary's Lied Fitness Center, at 7000 Mercy Road.

The key to biking this time of year is to layer up and simply go for the short ride that gets you out on that bike. Look for a day that has 40 degree temperatures, lots of sun, minimal wind, and just do it. Set your goal at getting out at least twice during the upcoming months until spring really hits. There are a number of good trails for biking around the city, and they usually are cleared off after a snow and will quickly dry off. March 20th is officially the first day of spring, and it's not far away.

If you need further motivation, here are some really great quotes regarding cycling:

- **"Every time I see an adult on a bicycle, I no longer despair for the future of the human race." -- H.G. Wells**
- **"Think of bicycles as rideable art that can just about save the world." - Grant Petersen**
- **"Melancholy is incompatible with bicycling." - James E. Starrs**
- **"When the spirits are low, when the day appears dark, when work becomes monotonous, when hope hardly seems having, just mount a bicycle and go out for a spin down the road, without thought on anything but the ride you are taking. - Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**
- **"Bicycling is a big part of the future. It has to be. There is something wrong with a society that drives a car to workout in a gym." - Bill Nye the Science Guy**

On that note, I must say that this is my last Bicycling Corner Wellness letter since I am retiring from the County at the end of March. That does not mean I am hanging up bicycling - to the contrary, I plan on keeping in touch with the bicycling crew here at the County and will keep everyone's e-mail addresses and look to get together to do some rides. After all, there is BRAN in June, the Tour De Nebraska in June, RAGBRAI in July, the Great American Pie Ride, the Corporate Cycling Challenge, the Heat Stroke 100, etc. etc. I hope to ride with everyone on these and other rides.

I also am looking for people who would want to travel to Moab, Utah, (a day west of Denver) for some beautiful rides in the red rock canyons of the various national monuments. It also would be fun to do some great rides on the Raccoon Trail near Des Moines and the Katy Trail in Missouri. Let me know if you are interested in these or other rides.

As the saying goes; "Goodbye Tension, Hello Pension" and here comes the open road to new adventures. Thank you for ten great years at Douglas County.

Wishing you the Best!

Lee Lazure

Douglas County Human Resources-Civil Service, 402/444-6123

Frostbite Facts

www.cdc.gov



Frostbite is an injury to the body that is caused by freezing. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and color in affected areas. It most often affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes. Frostbite can permanently damage the body, and severe cases can lead to amputation.

What are the warning signs of frostbite?

At the first signs of redness or pain in any skin area, get out of the cold or protect any exposed skin—frostbite may be beginning. Any of the following signs may indicate frostbite:

- a white or grayish-yellow skin area
- skin that feels unusually firm or waxy
- numbness

A victim is often unaware of frostbite until someone else points it out because the frozen tissues are numb.

What should I do if I see someone with warning signs of frostbite?

If you detect symptoms of frostbite, seek medical care. Because frostbite and hypothermia both result from exposure, first determine whether the victim also shows signs of hypothermia, as described previously. Hypothermia is a more serious medical condition and requires emergency medical assistance.

If (1) there is frostbite but no sign of hypothermia and (2) immediate medical care is not available, proceed as follows:

- Get into a warm room as soon as possible.
- Unless absolutely necessary, do not walk on frostbitten feet or toes—this increases the damage.
- Immerse the affected area in warm—not hot—water (the temperature should be comfortable to the touch for unaffected parts of the body).
- Or, warm the affected area using body heat. For example, the heat of an armpit can be used to warm frostbitten fingers.
- Do not rub the frostbitten area with snow or massage it at all. This can cause more damage.
- Don't use a heating pad, heat lamp, or the heat of a stove, fireplace, or radiator for warming. Affected areas are numb and can be burned.

Note: These procedures are not substitutes for proper medical care. Hypothermia is a medical emergency and frostbite should be evaluated by a health care provider.

Need help quitting smoking?

Visit www.epa.gov/smokefree

Stop Domestic Violence

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, **please contact the YWCA of Omaha's 24-hour hotline at 402-345-7273 or YWCA Omwaha office at 402-345-6555.**



Considering Weight Watchers?

Contact Gail Knapp at gknapp@ci.omaha.ne.us or call Gail at (402)444-5190

Rent Smoke-free! Would you like to learn more about Smoke-free multi-unit housing? **Contact: Aja Anderson, BS, Douglas County Health Dept. at aja.anderson@douglascounty-ne.gov.**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to all Douglas County employees through Alegant-Creighton Health. EAP's trained staff can help with problems that affect your personal or professional life. Services are provided to employees in a confidential manner and there is no charge to the employee for up to five counseling sessions. **Call 402-398-5566 or 1-888-847-4975 or visit Alegenteap.com.**

FYI: Mammograms are paid 100%

by United Healthcare

According to the Centers for Disease Control radon is the 2nd main cause of lung cancer in the U.S.

Test your home for radon. Learn more at <http://1.usa.gov/1I17rkV>.

The Healthy Directions Wellness Newsletter is brought to you by the Douglas County Healthy Directions worksite wellness committee. Contributing editor and photographer: Phil Rooney; layout and design: Connie Lehman; distribution: Kathy Adair. We'd like to hear from you! Send questions or comments to the committee by e-mailing chairwoman Kathy Adair at kathy.adair@douglascounty-ne.gov, drop her a note to Human Resources, Room 505, or call her at 402-444-6099.