



Your worksite wellness newsletter

News

MARCH/APRIL 2014

Hello Spring!

At least I am hoping the weather is changing, the trees start budding, and flowers are blooming soon. That way we can get out and start our walking or biking routine and shed some of those unwanted winter pounds.

The excitement of spring brings with it the good news that the Douglas County Board voted to approve a wellness vendor to assist our wellness committee and employees in our “commit to be fit” efforts.

With that, let us welcome our new wellness vendor – Viverae!

Viverae is a Dallas-based wellness health management company that works with many employers in the Omaha and surrounding area on a comprehensive health management program for ALL employees.

The preliminary work in reviewing the letter of agreement is underway. The next step is to work on setting up our own comprehensive health management program for all Douglas County employees.

The initial setup process is expected to take up to 90 days. I hope the program can be in place sometime around June First.

We have plans for a kick-off launch with a Health Fair to introduce Viverae to our employees. As we work through the details, we will continue to keep you informed of the upcoming events once everything is in place.

In the meantime get out and take a walk, run or a bike ride and enjoy the blooming of spring.

Kathy Adair & the Healthy Directions Wellness Committee

Take care of your body.
It's the only place you have to live. - Jim Rohn



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/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.



Commit to be Fit



Why you need your R & R

When we're busy, it can be tough to unwind. We'd like to and hope to ... when we get around to it. But, relaxation and recreation are more than wants — or wishes. They're essentials for your well-being.

When you enjoy your downtime — free from work or duties — it offers an emotional lift that gives you energy and confidence to tackle everyday challenges. And, losing yourself in leisure may even decrease harmful stress-related hormones and strengthen your immune system.

A new kind of to-do list Day-to-day life can get full and hectic. But, when free time is limited, it's that much more precious. So, make the most of yours by pursuing activities that soothe your mind, spark your creativity or otherwise give you a boost.

Do you need a little inspiration? Here are seven quick ideas to get you started renewing and recharging:

1. **Put "me time" on the calendar.** Treat it like an important appointment — because it is.

2. **Power off.** If at all possible, designate times at home to unplug completely. That means no TV, Internet, cell-phone, computer, etc.
3. **Revive a blast from the past.** Pick up a hobby you once enjoyed — whether that's tennis, knitting or playing the trombone. Or, reach for a dream. For example, maybe you've always wanted to try your hand at painting or playing the piano.
4. **Take a nature break.** A light breeze. Blue skies. A flowing stream. The natural world can calm your nerves and re-energize you.
5. **Play.** Give yourself permission to be a kid again. Get out a board game, a basketball or modeling clay. Encourage others to join in. Play spurs imagination and promotes creative problem solving. Best of all, it makes us happy.
6. **Couple fun with fitness.*** Take a bike ride. Or, walk around one of your favorite neighborhoods or parks. Invite a friend along — and you've got a triple win for well-being: You're recharging, getting some exercise and strengthening your social life.
7. **Delight in small moments.** Even on your busiest days, do at least one feel-good activity. It can be something simple. Call a friend who makes you laugh. Read a chapter in a good book. Take a warm bath.

*For safety's sake, talk with your doctor before significantly increasing your activity level. Discover positive ways to cope with stress at myuhc.com. Click Health & Wellness > Learn > Stress Management.

Arleen Fitzgerald, L.I.C.S.W., UnitedHealthcare®

Douglas County Health Department Health Equity Team

The Douglas County Health Department's Health Equity Team is addressing some of the major issues we face, as a county, a health department and as a community. Among those are equality of access to services and social justice.

The Health Equity Team is sponsored by the Douglas County Board of Health, with directions from the board to address health disparities in our community.

For an idea of the duties facing this group, please consider its mission statement:

The Health Equity Team supports and empowers its staff, partners and the Douglas County Board of Health in their desire to create a dynamic environment that is responsive to diversity through education, data analysis, policy development, and practice.

That casts an extremely wide net – with plenty of room for more jobs to come their way. Chief among the team's accomplishments to date has been a review of the Language Access Policy. That resulted in posting bilingual signage in areas downtown that had a high volume of non-English speaking customers.

The group is looking to get that done in the Health Department's new offices at 1111 South 41st Street. Also on the agenda are providing more opportunities for multi-cultural education and enrichment.

The Health Equity Team also has a page on the Douglas County Health Department's home page – just scroll down the menu on the left, then click on Health Equity Team.

If you are involved with or know of events and activities related to the team's mission, please let us know so they can be included on our calendar of events and our community calendar.



Get Tested for Colon Cancer



The Douglas County Health Department wants to remind everyone that colon cancer is one of the most preventable and treatable forms of cancer when caught early.

Colorectal cancer (commonly referred to as colon cancer) is one of only two cancers that can actually be prevented through testing. Colon cancer is 90% preventable, and due to colon cancer screening educational and awareness efforts the death rate for colon cancer has been declining. Nevertheless, Americans and Nebraskans are dying at alarming rates from undetected or late-stage colon cancer because not enough people are getting screened when appropriate.

Colorectal cancer starts as a tiny growth or a pre-cancerous polyp in the colon or rectum that may become cancerous over time. Screening detects these polyps and allows them to be removed before turning into cancer. Colorectal cancer can start with no symptoms. This means that someone could have polyps or colorectal cancer and not know it. That is why having a screening test is so important.

WHO IS AT RISK? Men and women are similarly affected, but African Americans have the highest rates of colorectal cancer of all racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. For those of you 50 or above or with other risk factors, the free Colon Cancer Test Kits (FOBT - Fecal Occult Blood Tests) can be picked up at your local pharmacy including: Hy-Vee, Walgreens, Bakers, Pharmacy Express, Blakes, HealthMart, Heritage, Kubats, and Kohls. The free Kits are available courtesy of the Great Plains Colon Cancer Task Force and the American Cancer Society, with support from the Douglas County Health Department and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

Did you know that you can stop this cancer before it starts? Scharol Bronson recalls, "My grandfather was a tall robust and spirited man who loved working on his pig farm in Texas. He had the most vibrant hazel eyes that glowed with a fierce passion and intensity for life. The ravages of colon cancer transformed him into a frail, lethargic and shallow image of a man. He fought a good fight for 2 years and eventually lost the battle at the age

of 64. This prompted me to consult with my physician in regard to my family history and I had my first colonoscopy in my mid-40s. They discovered a pre-cancerous polyp and removed it. I continue to keep abreast of my routine screening for colon cancer because I choose to take the road of prevention. I highly recommend prevention first by getting your colon cancer test kit because screening for colon cancer can save your life."

Men and women who meet income guidelines may qualify for a free colonoscopy. To learn more about this life-saving opportunity, go to coloncancertaskforce.org.

Seven steps to lowering your risk of colon cancer:

1. Get regular colon cancer screening tests beginning at age 50.
2. Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables and whole grains from breads, cereals, nuts, and beans.
3. Eat a low-fat diet.
4. Eat foods with folate such as leafy green vegetables. A daily multivitamin containing .4 mg of folic acid may also be helpful. Getting enough calcium.
5. If you use alcohol, drink only in moderation.
6. If you use tobacco, quit. If you don't use tobacco, don't start. Smokers are more likely to develop cancer than nonsmokers. But after three years smoke-free, the risk drops to that of a nonsmoker.
7. Exercise for at least 20 minutes three to four days each week. Moderate exercise such as walking, gardening, or climbing steps may help reduce your risk.



Batter Up!

It's time to play ball, and some of your Douglas County co-workers are looking to put together a softball team for fun and recreation.

Men and women are invited – looks like we'll go co-ed – and you don't have to be a star.

If this sounds like fun to you, please contact via e-mail Aja Anderson at aja.anderson@douglascounty-ne.gov or Phil Rooney at phillip.rooney@douglascount-ne.gov.

What do ya have to lose? Other than your dignity, a few pounds, some skin off your knees . . .

Commit to be Fit



The County Wellness Bicycling Corner By Lee Lazure

OK everyone, spring is here, at least by the calendar, and it won't be long before you can get out on a bicycle and start that "Commit to be Fit" promise you made as a part of your New Year's Resolution.

It's not that hard, really. Just get the bike out, dust it off, put some air in the tires and ride around the block or go a short distance on one of the trails. I honestly believe warm weather is just a few days away, so why not make the decision now to get into biking. It is a great individual exercise and even more fun with a group of people.

Our Douglas County bike group is always looking for new people to join us, and everyone including family members and friends is welcome.

If you don't have your own ride or you are not happy with the one in your garage or basement, this is a great time of year for sales at the various bicycle shops. Some stores have used bikes that were traded in, some of last year's models that are marked down, and even some bikes that have been rented out and are on sale at good savings.

Take this as a self-challenge to consider bicycling and to check into how you can get in shape with some outdoor fun. We have a number of Douglas County employees who are experienced in bicycling and in bikes in general who can help you get started. You will find them and the names of some of their family members listed below.

We have a number of employees who deserve to be recognized for their commitment to our wellness program and their accomplishments in bicycling. This includes such noted and distinguished riders as:

- **Mark "Captain America" Swoboda** of Corrections who did RAGBRAI, the Heat Stroke 100, the Corporate Cycling Challenge, the "500 miles in 5 Days" and several other rides for a total of 2,255 miles
- **Kevin "Iron Man" Conlon** of the Sheriff's Office with over 500 miles doing a variety of rides such as RAGBRAI and the Great American Pie Ride
- **Stacy "The Challenger" Cihak** of Corrections with 4 days of RAGBRAI and a multitude of other rides for more than 700 miles
- **Connie "Lighting" Lehman** of the Health Department who did the 5 days of the Tour de Nebraska, one day of

RAGBRAI, the Corporate Cycling Challenge and totaled more than 1,557 miles

- **Mel "Boomer Sooner" Washington** of Corrections with numerous rides including RAGBRAI totaling more than 1,500 miles
- **Johnny "The Jet" Blackburn** of the County Court's Office with over 1,350 miles including one day of RAGBRAI
- **Karen "Killer" Cole** of the County Commissioner's Office who completed RAGBRAI, the Corporate Cycling Challenge and rode more than 1,000 miles
- **Cheri "Atomic" Albin** of the Commissioner's Office who finished RAGBRAI, the Corporate Cycling Challenge and several other rides for a total of over 1,000 miles
- **Lee "Lash" Lazure** of HR with the Health Expo Ride, Bike Ride Across Nebraska (BRAN); 4 days of RAGBRAI, the Corporate Cycling Challenge in totaling more than 2,900 miles
- **Susan "Biathlon Lady" Wiggins**, wife of Stacy Cihak, who biked over 2,000 miles including 4 days of RAGBRAI
- **Catherine "Endurance Lady" Hall** of the Commissioner's Office with one day of RAGBRAI and multiple other rides for over 520 miles
- **Jim "The Boss" Bojanski** of Civic Center Security with 2,460 miles including the Corporate Cycling Challenge, RAGBRAI, and numerous other rides. Jim also served as a Safety Director for Pottawattamie County for RAGBRAI.

I know there are others out there who rode a great deal, so if anyone has been left out, please let me know what distances you rode or any specific rides you participated in during 2013 and you will be mentioned in next newsletter.

The weather is only going to get better so "Commit to Be Fit" and consider bicycling as a fun way to get in shape.

YOU CAN DO IT!

Lee Lazure

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

Commit to be Fit

Warning Signs of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas produced by many heat-making devices, such as boilers and stoves. If these devices are improperly vented, carbon monoxide poisoning can be fatal.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission says common initial warning signs of carbon monoxide poisoning include:

- Having a headache.
- Feeling tired.
- Feeling shortness of breath.
- Having nausea.
- Feeling dizzy.
- Having flu-like symptoms without a fever.

If you have these symptoms with no apparent cause, evacuate the premises immediately and seek immediate medical attention.

healthfinder.gov



FREE YOGA CLASSES AT THE MIDTOWN CAMPUS!

1111 S. 41ST Street (the old Goodwill building)

Every Wednesday in the first floor breakroom
5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

- No need to register, just pop in!
- Class is taught by a certified yoga instructor.
- It's a great way to de-stress and get in awesome shape!

- Bring a friend or family member.
- All skill levels welcome and it's a "no judgement zone".
- You've been meaning to try yoga, right?

Please wear workout clothes and bring a yoga mat, water and towel.

Need help quitting smoking?
Visit www.epa.gov/smokefree

FYI: Mammograms are paid 100%
by United Healthcare.

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 Omaha office at **402-345-6555**.

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 Alegent-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.

Weight Watchers
Stop Dieting. Start Living.

Considering Weight Watchers?

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

DC YOUTH CENTER: P90X CLASSES

Are you up to the challenge?
Call Daniel Archie at 402-444-1892



PLEASE BUCKLE UP

AND DON'T TEXT WHILE DRIVING.

Commit to be Fit