



Your worksite wellness newsletter

# News

DEC 2013/JAN 2014

## Looking Back at 2013; Looking Forward to 2014!

Well, another year is almost behind us, so what better time than now to ask: "How did we do with our wellness goals this year?"

Healthy Directions offered our employees many opportunities during 2013 to take part in wellness activities. Wow! Your response was simply remarkable.

There was "100 Miles in 100 Days," a walking competition in which all participants received a Subway gift card just for taking part. We also sponsored the 2013 Corporate Cup Run which drew more than 100 employees and 53 family members.

We had the Corporate Cup Run T-Shirt contest - won by Carol Prokop, whose winning design brought her a \$50 Visa gift card, T-shirt and free registration to the CCR.

Then there was the new Yoga class added for after work hours at the Midtown campus, thanks to instructor and employee Leslie Huber. We have both a Yoga and Pilates class at the Civic Center thanks to Liah Frazier and Allyson Mendoza, our outstanding pair of instructors from the Public Defender's Office.

Lee Lazure our Human Resources director, has led the Bike Club and offered several opportunities for employees to participate in exciting bike rides. Thank you, Lee!

Healthy Directions earned state-wide recognition at a Nebraska Association of County Officials conference workshop at Kearney in February for our wellness program.

It was a good year and a lot to be proud of with the accomplishments toward wellness. How did you do?

As we wind down 2013, I look forward to 2014 and at what is on the horizon for wellness. We will be looking at a wellness vendor to assist Healthy Directions and our employees in their goal to work toward better health.

Ask yourself: "What will be your wellness goals?"

I also want to take this opportunity and thank the Healthy Directions committee members for their commitment to our program and each one of our employees who participates and supports the activities we offer. May you all have a Merry Christmas and the best to all of you in 2014.

*Kathy Adair* & the Healthy Directions Wellness Committee



*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](mailto: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



# Holiday Health and Safety Tips

Recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Wash your hands often



Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Wash your hands with soap and clean running water, rubbing them for at least 20 seconds. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.

## Stay warm



Cold temperatures can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults. Stay dry and dress warmly in several layers of loose-fitting, tightly woven clothing.

## Manage stress



The holidays don't need to take a toll on your health and pocketbook. Keep your commitments and spending in check. Balance work, home, and play. Get support from family and friends. Keep a relaxed and positive outlook. Make sure to get proper sleep.

## Travel safely



Whether you're traveling across town or around the world, help ensure your trip is safe. Don't drink and drive, and don't let someone else drink and drive. Wear a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle. Always buckle your child in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt appropriate for his/her height, weight, and age.

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

## Words of wisdom to stay motivated toward your wellness goals in 2014

**CLEAR YOUR MIND OF CAN'T.**

Samuel Johnson

STRIVE FOR PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION.

Unknown

**Energy and persistence conquer all things.**

Benjamin Franklin

**ABILITY IS WHAT YOU'RE CAPABLE OF DOING. MOTIVATION DETERMINES WHAT YOU DO.**

Lou Holtz

**Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going.**

Jim Ryun

# 7 Signs & Symptoms Not to Ignore

**DANGER** 

**T**ake note of important signs and symptoms - from unexplained weight loss to sudden flashes of light - and know when to seek medical care.

Chest pain, sudden loss of vision or speech, and severe abdominal pain require immediate medical attention - but what about more subtle red flags? It can be tough to know what to do. Here's a list of seven signs and symptoms that merit attention.

## **No. 1: Unexplained weight loss**

Losing weight without trying might sound like a dream come true, but in reality it can signal a health problem. If you've lost up to 10 percent of your weight during the past six months - for instance, 15 pounds if you weigh 150 pounds consult your doctor.

An unexplained drop in weight could be caused by various conditions including overactive thyroid, diabetes, depression, liver disease, cancer or disorders that interfere with how your body absorbs nutrients (malabsorption disorders).

## **No. 2: Persistent or high fever**

A fever isn't necessarily a cause for alarm. Fever seems to play a key role in fighting infection. If you've had a fever for more than three days, however, get checked by your doctor. Persistent fever can signal a hidden infection, which could be anything from a urinary tract infection to tuberculosis. In some cases, cancerous (malignant) conditions such as lymphomas cause prolonged or persistent fevers, as can some medications.

If you have a high fever - 103 F or higher - consult your doctor as soon as possible.

## **No. 3: Shortness of breath**

Shortness of breath that feels more severe than what's caused by a stuffy nose or vigorous physical activity could signal an underlying health problem. If you're unable to get your breath, or you're gasping for air or wheezing, seek emergency medical care. Feeling breathless when lying down also is a symptom that needs to be evaluated promptly.

Causes for breathlessness may include chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia,

a blood clot in the lung, as well as other heart and lung problems. Difficulty breathing can also occur with panic attacks - episodes of intense anxiety that can cause rapid heart rate, sweating, shortness of breath and other physical symptoms.

## **No. 4: Unexplained changes in bowel habits**

What's considered normal for bowel movements varies widely. Consult your doctor if you notice unusual or unexplained changes in what's normal for you, such as:

- Bloody, black or tarry-colored stools
- Persistent diarrhea or constipation
- Unexplained urges to have a bowel movement
- Changes in bowel habits could signal a bacterial infection - such as campylobacter or salmonella - or a viral or parasitic infection. Other possible causes include irritable bowel syndrome and colon cancer.

## **No. 5: Confusion or personality changes**

Seek medical attention if you have:

- Sudden confused thinking
- Confusion about time or place (disorientation)
- Sudden problems with concentration or memory
- Sudden personality or behavior changes, such as becoming aggressive

Changes in behavior or thinking could be caused by many problems, including infection, anemia, low blood sugar, dehydration or mental health conditions. Sometimes medications contribute to confusion or personality changes.

## **No. 6: Feeling full after eating very little**

If you consistently feel full sooner than normal or after eating less than usual, get checked by your doctor. This feeling, known as early satiety, also may be accompanied by nausea, vomiting, bloating, fever, and weight loss or gain. If so, be sure to tell your doctor about these signs and symptoms as well.

Possible causes of early satiety include gastroesophageal reflux disease, commonly known as GERD, and irritable bowel syndrome. In some cases, a more serious problem - such as pancreatic cancer - could be a factor.

## **No. 7: Flashes of light**

Bright spots or flashes of light and other visual disturbances sometimes indicate a migraine. In other cases, sudden flashing lights could signal retinal detachment. Immediate medical care can help prevent permanent vision loss.

Commit to be Fit



# The County Wellness Bicycling Corner

By Lee Lazure



For information on the cycling team, contact Lee Lazure,  
Douglas County Human Resources, Civil Service: 402-444-6123



Electronic cigarettes, often called e-cigarettes, are battery-operated devices designed to look like regular tobacco cigarettes. Like their conventional counterparts, electronic cigarettes

contain nicotine. Here's how they work: An atomizer heats a liquid containing nicotine, turning it into a vapor that can be inhaled and creating a vapor cloud that resembles cigarette smoke.

Manufacturers claim that electronic cigarettes are a safe alternative to conventional cigarettes. However, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has questioned the safety of these products. When the FDA analyzed samples of two popular brands, they found variable amounts of nicotine and traces of toxic chemicals, including known cancer-causing substances (carcinogens). This prompted the FDA to issue a warning about potential health risks associated with electronic cigarettes.

Until more is known about the potential risks, the safe play is to say no to electronic cigarettes. If you're looking for help to stop smoking, there are many FDA-approved medications that have been shown to be safe and effective for this purpose.

Lowell Dale, M.D., [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)



**Buckle up and please don't drink and drive this holiday season.**

**Reminder: Stay Hydrated While Playing Outside this Winter**

Don't assume you only need water in summertime. Dry winter air is dehydrating, and you do sweat away water in winter — you just don't always realize it. *Weightwatchers.com*



# Commit to be Fit

## Log on for sensible weightloss advice



If losing weight and gaining wellness is your goal for 2014, log on to [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov) and type *Manage Your Weight* in the search window for information on sensible weight

loss, a printable food diary, physical activity suggestions, healthy meal planning and more!

Relax at work? YES!  
Enjoy the relaxing, healing power of

## Yoga



# FREE!

**Civic Center:** Every Monday at noon

Held in the Treasurer space on the Harney Level

**Midtown Campus:** Every Wednesday at 5:00 P.M.

Held in the first floor breakroom

**All classes are taught by a trained yoga instructor**

**It's easy to get started!**  
E-mail Kathy at [kathy.adair@douglascounty-ne.gov](mailto:kathy.adair@douglascounty-ne.gov) to say you'd like to join the class then just show up for any or all the classes!

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

Need help quitting smoking?  
Visit [www.epa.gov/smokefree](http://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](mailto:aja.anderson@douglascounty-ne.gov).

Rejuvenate and de-stress in the middle of the day!



Join us for the **FREE** Every Tuesday at Noon

## PILATES AT LUNCH CLASS!

**Old Harney Street Treasurer's Office**  
Questions?  
Call Kathy Adair at 402-444-6099



**Considering Weight Watchers?**

Contact Gail Knapp at [gknapp@ci.omaha.ne.us](mailto: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

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](http://Alegenteap.com).

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