

Your Worksite Wellness

News

SEPT/OCT 2012

Fall is officially here, and your Healthy Directions Wellness Program wants to make sure you are not sitting around.

"We have many exciting things happening with Healthy Directions to help you be fit and well for the coming holidays," said Kathy Goodman, chair of Healthy Directions.

Among those activities was the recent sponsorship of the 2012 Corporate Cup Run. It was the fourth straight year Healthy Directions has sponsored the Corporate Cup. This year more than 12,000 people participated, making it the event's largest turnout in more than a decade.

"Douglas County Healthy Directions had 43 participants with some running the 10-K and others doing the 2-mile run," Kathy said. "The good news is that our numbers included several first-timers."

To support our participants, Healthy Directions again sponsored a gathering table with refreshments and lots of inspiration before the race, and a team picture was taken (which will appear elsewhere in this newsletter).

"Our Douglas County employees raised \$645 for the American Lung Association," Kathy said. "Thank you to everyone who took part, and we hope more of you will join us next year."

County employees who took part in the Corporate Cup were dressed in the distinctive 2012 Douglas County Corporate Cup Run T-shirt, designed by Karin Caldwell of Environmental Services. Karin received a \$50 Visa gift card for her winning design.

Looking ahead, Healthy Directions will sponsor the county's 3rd annual Health Fair. The dates:

Health Center Town Hall **Oct. 16**
6:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Civic Center Room 702 **Oct. 19**
7:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Healthy Directions also will be sponsoring the annual Health Assessment Survey.

"Anyone taking the survey on the day of the Health Fair or anytime from now through the Health Fair will receive a \$10 Subway gift card on the spot," Kathy said. "No waiting this year for the gift card, and it's now worth \$10, not \$5 like last year."

To take your Health Assessment, go to www.myuhc.com. After you take the survey, bring your confirmation page to the Healthy Directions staff at the Health Fair and collect your \$10 Subway gift card.

"We will also have some of the same vendors participating as last year," Kathy said. "You can expect some new ones, too, and all of them have donated some great prizes for the drawings."

Plus, there is more!

Free flu shots will be available to employees and their spouses if covered under the United HealthCare medical plan. For everyone else, there will be a small fee, and Healthy Directions will offer "No Fasting" Biometric testing through United Healthcare at no charge to employees and spouses who are on the United Healthcare medical plan.

"More information will be coming to all departments," Kathy promised.

It's also that time of year to remind you that Open Enrollment is approaching, and many of you probably already know that will happen online this year.

"No forms or paperwork," Kathy stressed. "More details will be coming soon."

So, as you can tell, there are plenty of things happening.

"It's time to get moving," Kathy says. "Thanks to all of you for your support and participation in our wellness programs."

Phil Rooney



Corporate Cup T-shirt design winner: Karin Caldwell



Corporate Cup Participants

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 Goodman. We'd like to hear from you! Send questions/comments to the committee by e-mailing chairwoman Kathy Goodman at kathy.goodman@douglascounty-ne.gov, drop her a note to Human Resources, Room 505, or call her at 402-444-6099.

Commit to be Fit



Health Tip: Check Yourself for Ticks

Ticks can harbor a number of disease-causing germs, including bacteria that cause Lyme disease.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says you should frequently check yourself, your children and pets for ticks, particularly if you live near an infested area.

The CDC offers this advice:



- Take a bath or shower as soon as you come inside, preferably within two hours.
- Use a handheld mirror to check your body from head to toe.
- Carefully inspect children after they've played outdoors, paying attention to the underarms, belly button, ears, hair, behind the knees and between the legs.
- Inspect clothing and gear before you bring it into the home.
- Check pets for ticks when they've come inside.
- Put clothing in a dryer and tumble dry on high heat for an hour to kill any ticks that may linger.

www.healthfinder.gov

Free Blood Pressure Machines: Are They Accurate?

How accurate are the blood pressure machines in grocery stores and drugstores?

Not accurate enough to make health decisions regarding your blood pressure.

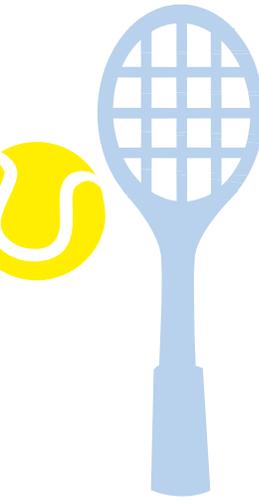
The blood pressure machines that you can use free of charge in many grocery stores, drugstores and other locations may have been accurate when first installed. But in order to stay accurate, they must be maintained and recalibrated. Generally, no information is available to the user regarding the care of these devices. As a result, the reading you get has limited value because it may be incorrect.

In addition, the blood pressure cuffs on these do-it-yourself machines are often too small to get an accurate reading on a number of people with high blood pressure. To ensure accuracy, the inflatable portion of the cuff should cover at least 80 percent of the upper arm.

It's best to have your blood pressure checked in a medical facility or in a community screening program with trained staff. Before diagnosing or treating high blood pressure, you'll need to have your blood pressure measured in your doctor's office at several separate visits.

If you need to check your blood pressure more frequently, your doctor can instruct you on the best way to monitor your blood pressure from home. Home blood pressure monitoring can be an inexpensive, accurate way to get regular blood pressure readings.

Sheldon G. Sheps, M.D., www.mayoclinic.com



To All Tennis Players!

The Wellness Committee is considering organizing a competitive tennis tournament and/or league for Douglas County employees. However, before it can happen, we need to determine whether enough employees would participate in a tournament and/or league. So, if you are interested, please notify Larry Miller, 402-444-6780, and let him know in which of the events you would participate—tournament, league, or both. If there is enough interest, we'll begin organizing the event(s). "Douglas County Closed" ... we like the sound of that.

FYI... FREE FLU SHOTS FOR STAFF

- Flu shots for Douglas County employees will once again be given at the DC Health Fair in October at the Civic Center and Health Center (on different dates to be announced).
- Kathy Goodman will be sending out specific information closer to the actual Health Fair.
- The Health Department will hold clinics for those who couldn't make any of the health fairs.

Commit to be Fit



Workplace exercises: How to burn calories at work

You may spend your workdays at a desk, but you don't need to take it sitting down. Make workplace exercises -part of your routine.

If you're doing your best to set aside time for physical activity either before work or after work, good for you - but finding time to exercise can be a challenge for anyone who has a busy schedule. Why not work out while you're at work? Consider 10 ways to make workplace exercises part of your routine.

No. 1: Make the most of your commute

Walk or bike to work. If you ride the bus, get off a few blocks early and walk the rest of the way. If you drive to work, park at the far end of the parking lot - or park in the lot for a nearby building. In your building, take the stairs rather than the elevator.

No. 2: Look for opportunities to stand

You'll burn more calories standing than sitting. Stand while talking on the phone. Better yet, try a standing desk - or improvise with a high table or counter. Eat lunch standing up. Trade instant messaging and phone calls for walks to other desks or offices.

No. 3: Take fitness breaks

Rather than hanging out in the lounge with coffee or a snack, take a brisk walk or do some gentle stretching. For example, face straight ahead, then lower your chin to your chest. Or, while standing, grab one of your ankles - or your pant leg - and bring it up toward your buttock. Hold each stretch for 15 to 30 seconds.

No. 4: Trade your office chair for a fitness ball

Consider trading your desk chair for a firmly inflated fitness or stability ball, as long as you're able to safely balance on the ball. You'll improve your balance and tone your core muscles while sitting at your desk. You can even use the fitness ball for wall squats or other workplace exercises during the day.

No. 5: Keep fitness equipment in your work area

Store resistance bands - stretchy cords or tubes that offer weight-like resistance when you pull on them - or small hand weights in a desk drawer or cabinet. Do arm curls between meetings or tasks.

No. 6: Get social

Organize a lunchtime walking group. You might be surrounded by people who are ready to lace up their walking shoes - and hold each other accountable for regular exercise. Enjoy the camaraderie, and offer encouragement to one another when the going gets tough.

No. 7: Conduct meetings on the go

When it's practical, schedule walking meetings or walking brainstorming sessions. Do laps inside your building or, if the weather cooperates, take your walking meetings outdoors.

No. 8: Pick up the pace

If your job involves walking, do it faster. The more you walk and the quicker your pace, the greater the benefits.

No. 9: If you travel for work, plan ahead

If you're stuck in an airport waiting for a plane, grab your bags and take a brisk walk. Choose a hotel that has fitness facilities - such as treadmills, weight machines or a pool - or bring your equipment with you. Jump-ropes and resistance bands are easy to sneak into a suitcase. Of course, you can do jumping jacks, crunches and other simple exercises without any equipment at all.

No. 10: Try a treadmill desk

If you're ready to take workplace exercise to the next level, consider a more focused walk-and-work approach. If you can safely and comfortably position your work surface above a treadmill - with a computer screen on a stand, a keyboard on a table or a specialized treadmill-ready vertical desk - you might be able to walk while you work. In fact, Mayo Clinic researchers estimate that overweight office workers who replace sitting computer time with walking computer time by two to three hours a day could lose 44 to 66 pounds in a year. The pace doesn't need to be brisk, nor do you need to break a sweat. The faster you walk, however, the more calories you'll burn.

Want more ideas? Schedule a walking meeting to brainstorm with your supervisors or co-workers. Remember, any physical activity counts!
www.mayoclinic.com

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

is available to all Douglas County employees. 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 three counseling sessions. Call 402-391-2477 for an appointment or e-mail familyenrichmentomaha.com.

Commit to be Fit



The County Wellness Bicycling Corner

You may not realize it, but now is the best time of the year to go bicycling!

Cooler weather, less wind and some really neat fall foliage make for a beautiful experience. Sure, it definitely can get chilly, but all you have to do is layer-up with the right kind of clothing. Once the air gets warmed up by mid-morning and you generate some body heat, you'll bet comfortable before you know it. Also, fall means you can ride in the afternoon and not have to be concerned about 80 to 90 degree temperatures.

There are a couple of rules you should remember if the temperature is below 60 degrees. You would be wise to wear long pants, gloves, warm socks and perhaps cover your ears with a head band. It's a good idea to wear a medium weight jacket.

Since your body will warm up as you ride, the key is to not overdress and begin sweating, because that is when you start to get cold. You don't need to dress like you are going skiing or snowmobiling.

There are some great bike trails worth exploring where you can really enjoy the fall colors. Those include the Wabash Trace Nature Trail, the Iowa Riverfront Trail along the Iowa side of the Missouri River, and the Omaha Riverfront Trail that starts near the Bob Kerrey Bridge and goes north to NP Dodge Park.

A Wellness Committee Bike Ride is being planned for Veteran's Day, Nov. 12, weather permitting. Keep on the alert for information on that one.

Another neat thing about bicycling in the fall is the joy of riding with a group of friends, and stopping at a restaurant to eat or even just have some coffee or hot chocolate.

For you experienced riders, this is the time to keep up the distance and stamina that you developed over the spring and summer. It's the perfect time to enjoy some great rides and still maintain your endurance. Check out some of the local bicycling club websites like the Omaha Peddlers and the Bellevue Bicycling Club for bike riding opportunities in this area.

There is no need to hang up the bike for the year because we still have plenty of excellent days to ride. And keep in mind, before we know it, next year will be here. As you may remember, last year we had a mild winter with a number of good riding days in January and February.

From the rumor mill, something of interest but still unconfirmed - RAGBRAI will be starting in Council Bluffs in late July 2013. We will let you know as soon as possible if that will be happening.

Now is a great time to either start cycling or get out and burn off some of those "L-Bs".

You Can Do It!

Ride Safely!

Lee Lazure

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

*Columbus Day riders taking a
break in Mineola, IA, on the
Walbash Trace.*

Photo courtesy Johnny Blackburn



Commit to be Fit

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Risk Factors

Research has found several risk factors that may increase your chances of getting breast cancer, including—

- Getting older.
- Being younger when you first had your menstrual period.
- Starting menopause at a later age.
- Being older at the birth of your first child.
- Never giving birth.
- Not breastfeeding.
- Personal history of breast cancer or some non-cancerous breast diseases.
- Family history of breast cancer (mother, sister, daughter).
- Treatment with radiation therapy to the breast/chest.
- Being overweight (increases risk for breast cancer after menopause).
- Long-term use of hormone replacement therapy (estrogen and progesterone combined).
- Having changes in the breast cancer-related genes BRCA1 or BRCA2.
- Drinking alcohol (more than one drink a day).
- Not getting regular exercise.

Having a risk factor does not mean you will get the disease. Most women have some risk factors and most women do not get breast cancer. If you have breast cancer risk factors, talk with your doctor about ways you can lower your risk and about screening for breast cancer.

For more information on prevention, screening and treatment of breast cancer, visit the American Cancer Society's website:

www.cancer.org

5 Step Self Breast Exam



1. Begin by looking at your breasts in the mirror with your shoulders straight and your arms on your hips.

Here's what you should look for:

Breasts that are their usual size, shape, and color.

Breasts that are evenly shaped without visible distortion or swelling.

If you see any of the following changes, bring them to your doctor's attention:

Dimpling, puckering, or bulging of the skin

A nipple that has changed position or an inverted nipple (pushed inward instead of sticking out)

Redness, soreness, rash, or swelling

2. Now, raise your arms and look for the same changes.
3. While you're at the mirror, look for any signs of fluid coming out of one or both nipples (this could be a watery, milky, or yellow fluid or blood).
4. Next, feel your breasts while lying down, using your right hand to feel your left breast and then your left hand to feel your right breast. Use a firm, smooth touch with the first few finger pads of your hand, keeping the fingers flat and together. Use a circular motion, about the size of a quarter.

Cover the entire breast from top to bottom, side to side — from your collarbone to the top of your abdomen, and from your armpit to your cleavage.

Follow a pattern to be sure that you cover the whole breast. You can begin at the nipple, moving in larger and larger circles until you reach the outer edge of the breast. You can also move your fingers up and down vertically, in rows, as if you were mowing a lawn. This up-and-down approach seems to work best for most women. Be sure to feel all the tissue from the front to the back of your breasts: for the skin and tissue just beneath, use light pressure; use medium pressure for tissue in the middle of your breasts; use firm pressure for the deep tissue in the back. When you've reached the deep tissue, you should be able to feel down to your ribcage.

5. Finally, feel your breasts while you are standing or sitting. Many women find that the easiest way to feel their breasts is when their skin is wet and slippery, so they like to do this step in the shower. Cover your entire breast, using the same hand movements described in Step 4.

When to see a doctor

If you find a lump or other change in your breast — even if a recent mammogram was normal — make an appointment with your doctor.

www.breastcancer.org

FYI: Mammograms are paid 100% by United Healthcare.

Commit to be Fit

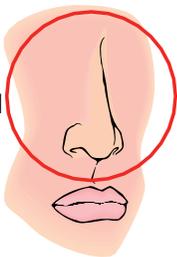


**Did you know that
2nd Wind Exercise Equipment
gives a 15% discount to
Douglas County Employees?**

2nd Wind sells both brand new and gently used exercise equipment. Visit them at their store at 3425 Oakview Drive Suite 50 in Omaha or on line at www.2ndwindexercise.com or call them at 402-965-9900.

Nosebleeds 101

Nosebleeds can sometimes look more serious than they actually are. The good news is that most - in adults and children - can be treated at home.



To stop a nosebleed:

Try to stay calm. Being upset may make the bleeding worse.

Sit down - but don't lie down. Bleeding slows when your head is above your heart.

Lean forward a bit - never back. This will help you avoid swallowing blood.

Use your thumb and index finger to firmly pinch the lower, soft part of your nose. Don't put tissues or gauze into your nose.

Hold your nose for 10 minutes without stopping.

If bleeding continues, you might try gently blowing the nose to remove any clots. Then, pinch your nose for another 10 minutes.

Once the bleeding stops, being careful can help it from starting again. For example, don't vigorously blow your nose, bend over, lift anything heavy or do strenuous activity.

If you're still bleeding after 20 or 30 minutes, call your doctor. Also, be sure to seek medical care if the bleeding is caused by an injury.

Nosebleeds are often the result of overly dry nasal membranes - and can be caused by allergies or colds, as well. They can also be a side effect of certain medicines - or the sign of a health problem. If your nosebleeds are a frequent problem, talk with your doctor.

And, if you have a bleeding disorder - or take medicine that increases the risk of bleeding - ask your doctor how you should handle nosebleeds or other injuries.

www.unitedhealthcare.com

Start each Thursday morning with the toning, relaxing power of

Yoga

FREE!

Every Thursday

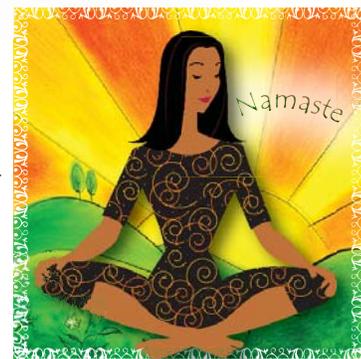
Yoga Instructor • 7:00 a.m. - 7:45 a.m.

Held in the Treasurer space on the Harney Level of the Civic Center

Three easy ways to sign up!

- Call Kathy Goodman at 402-444-6099
- E-mail Kathy at kathy.goodman@douglascounty-ne.gov
- Sign up before one of the regularly scheduled sessions!

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



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 Goodman
at 402-444-6099



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

QUIT SMOKING TODAY
WE CAN HELP

www.smokefree.gov

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