

Commit to be Fit

Happy New Year 2016!

The year is almost over and the worksite wellness program for 2015 has come to a close. We have a total of 396 employees/spouses who reached the 200 point goal for 2015 and earned the \$150 Visa gift card. The gift cards were ordered and paid for on December 22nd and we are awaiting the shipment. Expected time of arrival of the gift cards will be around December 30th. The plan would be to get the gift cards distributed to employees/spouses right after the New Year holiday. Congratulations to all of you who made the effort to be a healthy you during 2015! Along with the wellness incentive gift card, the wellness committee added an additional challenge to all employees to earn an extra \$75 for being one of the five top employees with the most 2015 wellness points. Those top five employees are John Ashford/Public Defender, Michelle Perales/Health Center, Rosanne Holmes/Health Center all three with 410 point and Leeann Derry/Mailroom and Carol Prokop/Election Commission with 390 points. Special Congratulations to those top five employees and their outstanding efforts toward being healthier.



So what's in store for 2016? We have revamped the wellness program and increased the cash incentives. Healthy Directions/Viverae will offer a two-tier incentive for 2016 and the reward will be a total of \$200 for reaching your 200 point goal. That's \$1 for every point you earn up to 200 points. You have a chance to earn the first \$100 Visa gift card instantly for completing the two required healthy activities. Once you complete your Bio-Metric screening, worth 50 points and the Member Health Assessment survey (MHA), also worth 50 points, you will be awarded the first \$100 Visa gift card instantly. You will earn the second \$100 Visa gift card once you earn the remaining 100 points by December 1, 2016, for a total of \$200 cash in your pocket by the end of next year! What better deal could you have than receiving big cash for doing healthy activities and improving your well-being? Plus, we are adding a coaching benefit to the 2016 program to assist you with weight management, fitness, tobacco cessation and stress management. Watch for more details coming in your mailbox this month.

As I reflect on 2015, I am proud of where our wellness program has come since December 2008. Our wellness committee volunteers and the overall change in our employee's thoughts on wellness are something to behold. Employees are getting involved and thinking more about their own health, and trying to do better. We are here to help, and that makes all the work worth it! God bless all of you and your families during the holiday season and throughout 2016!

Commit To Be Fit,  *Kathy Adair*

November - December 2015

**5 Ways to Avoid the Flu**

Every year, thousands of people in the United States die from the flu and even more are hospitalized. Follow these quick, simple and easy tips to keep away the flu!

Get vaccinated**Wash your hands often****Stay away from people who are sick****Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands****Practice good hygiene****Clean surfaces and objects in your home, at work, at school and elsewhere to reduce the changes of spreading the flu.**www.aphagetready.org



The seasonal struggle is real

5 Tips For Healthy Holidays

As the year comes to a close and holiday celebrations are in full force, health and fitness are typically put on the backburner. Considering the stress that people deal with during the holidays—gift shopping, family visits, preparing meals, and writing cards—it's no wonder that people want to comfortably coast through the season. But, if you're like most people who began a fitness routine in the spring or summer, it's important to not waste all the progress you've made so far. Here are some tips for staying on track during the holidays.

- 1. Make a realistic goal.** The average person gains less than five pounds around the holidays, so don't beat yourself up! What's really important? The goal shouldn't be to lose weight, but rather, to not gain weight.
- 2. Plan and balance.** It's important to eat the things that you really like. Whether you're heading to a holiday party or having lunch at work, pick and choose your favorite treats to indulge on and balance out your meal with other healthy options. For example, if you know that you really like pumpkin pie, skip the bread you could have any time. Just say, "no" to anything you don't absolutely love.
- 3. Limit your portions.** Large portions of food always leads to overeating, which is the No. 1 cause of obesity. Being selective about the foods you eat and enjoying them in smaller portions causes you to be aware of what you're eating. Mindful eating is the remedy to

bottomless bingeing and will help keep your calorie intake in a safe zone.

- 4. Rethink measurements.** Calorie counting and weighing or measuring portion size is difficult, especially if you're at a party or traveling. But it's important to understand food's calorie density to help you easily gauge how many calories you're about to eat. Keep in mind that food containing a lot of sugar or fat—including alcohol—also tends to be high in calories. An easy way to keep track of your alcohol is to remember that typically a 12oz beer = 5oz wine = 1 ½ oz
- 5. Keep moving.** Physical activity during the holidays is important because it actually helps relieve stress. Don't let the cold, dark, or travel be obstacles to keeping your fitness routine going. You can decrease the amount of time you work out or even decrease the intensity, but don't stop completely. While many people opt to start fresh in January, remember that you can get a head start on January's goals and New Year's resolutions.

There's a long stretch of time from Thanksgiving to the first of the year, and a lot can happen in six weeks. Remember, if you plan to make goals or New Year's resolutions for 2016, the transition won't be as hard if you continue all the great work throughout the holidays.

Boyd Lyles, Jr., MD, Chief Medical Officer, Viverae.com



Safe Winter Driving Tip: Keep Those Wipers Working

Inspect the wiper blades monthly. Check to see if they are worn, cracked or rigid with age. Damaged wiper blades won't adequately remove debris, compromising the driver's vision and safety. The life of a rubber insert is typically six to 12 months depending on its exposure to heat, dirt, sunlight, acid rain, and ozone. Streaking and chattering are common clues that the rubber is breaking down and a replacement is needed.

The windshield washer fluid reservoir should be checked monthly. Top it off with a solution formulated to aid in the removal of insects or other debris. In winter, use a solution that will not freeze at low temperatures. Also, test the washer spray nozzles for proper operation and aim before leaving on a trip.

www.aaa.com

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Winter Workout Ideas

While it's tempting to turn into a couch potato in winter (30 percent of people don't exercise at all during the winter months), it's also a good time to take a deep breath, wrap up in warm clothes, summon your adventurous spirit, and get out into that crisp invigorating air. Exercise can help you shed those holiday pounds, while increasing your overall health and quality of life. And, keep in mind the winter bonus: you actually burn more calories exercising in winter because your body has to work hard to keep itself warm.

Walking/Jogging

A regular walking or jogging program can benefit you by decreasing your blood pressure, resting heart rate, and cholesterol, while increasing your metabolic rate and ability to burn fat. Wind, snow, and cold needn't slow you down if you dress appropriately with layers to keep you warm and reflective clothing to keep you visible on dark days. Be sure to warm up your muscles first, since cold temperatures make your body less flexible and more prone to injuries. Wear shoes with deep traction to prevent slipping on wet or icy roads. Finally, find yourself a workout buddy who'll help keep you motivated—it's a lot easier to roll out into the cold when you have a committed friend waiting.

Snow Hiking

A step up from walking or gentle jogging, walking around in snow, especially deep snow, can be great exercise, too. It requires more effort from legs and heart than simple walking, and the only additional equipment needed is good, insulated boots that will keep your feet dry and warm.



Snowshoeing

With almost 5.9 million participants, this hybrid of running and cross-country skiing is one of the fastest growing winter sports! Exercisers of all fitness levels can work at their own intensity level, increasing stamina and toning leg muscles. There was a time when snowshoes looked like big tennis rackets, but times have changed.

Easy to transport, the shoes pack away in much less space than skis or sleds, and provide a great aerobic workout — burning anywhere from 360 to 860 calories an hour, depending on your speed and the depth and packing of the snow.

Snowshoeing is a great way to condition for running. These movements are similar. Snowshoes add resistance, yet there is less impact on joints. In fact, research shows that runners who substitute snowshoeing for winter training improve their running fitness over those who choose running as their primary winter activity.

Other than the snowshoes themselves and a pair of waterproof hiking boots, no special equipment is necessary.

Cross Country Skiing

Like snowshoeing, cross country skiing is an aerobic sport that works all body parts (especially your biceps, glutes, hamstrings, triceps and quads) without stressing your joints. Burn 560 calories hour or more with a brisk cross country ski excursion. You can ski almost anywhere: a trail, conservation area, local park, or even a farmer's field. As with snowshoeing, you can make your workout gentle or vigorous, and you can rent equipment for less money until you're sure you want to purchase (new skis, boots and poles average about \$250).

www.sparkspeople.com



Holiday Peppermint Smoothie

1 1/2 cups skim milk
1 1/2 cups low-fat vanilla yogurt
1 1/2 cups ice cubes

5 peppermint leaves, torn
1 Tbsp ground cinnamon
A few drops peppermint extract (optional)

Blend all ingredients and serve in cups garnished with a pretty rim of crushed candy cane. Serves four.

Nutritional information:

Per serving: 114 calories, 8 g protein, 1 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 19 g carbohydrates, 1 g fibre, 6 mg cholesterol, 99 mg sodium

www.besthealthmag.ca

Have you heard? Coloring books

are no longer just for kids! The practice generates wellness, quietness and also stimulates brain areas related to motor skills, the senses and creativity. Ready to crack open the crayons or markers? You can purchase coloring books for adults online or at your local bookstores or download pages for free at these websites:

www.coloring-pages-adults.com
www.everythingetsy.com/
www.art-is-fun.com/free-adult-coloring-pages





Count the Kicks

Count the Kicks is a public health campaign that encourages expectant parents to monitor their baby's movements in the third trimester of pregnancy.

Significant changes in your baby's movement pattern may help identify potential problems with your pregnancy before the baby's heart rate is affected.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends that you note the time it takes to feel 10 kicks, jabs, turns, swishes, or rolls (not hiccups). A healthy baby should have 10 kicks in less than 2 hours. Most babies will take less than 30 minutes.

By keeping track of each time your baby kicks, rolls or pokes, you can monitor your baby's health and begin to create a bond with him or her.



As a parent, it's reassuring to Count the Kicks to make sure your baby is active and healthy, and counting may reduce the risk of a stillbirth, which occurs in one out of every 160 pregnancies in the United States.

Count the Kicks every day, preferably at the same time.

Pick your time based on when your baby is usually active, such as after a snack or meal.

Make sure your baby is awake first; walking, pushing on your tummy or having a cold drink are good wake-up calls.

To get started, sit with your feet up or lie on your side. Count each of your baby's movements as one kick, and count until you reach 10 kicks.

Most of the time it will take less than a half-hour, but it could take as long as two hours. **(If no movement is noted during this time period, or it takes longer than two hours to Count the Kicks, your doctor should be notified.)**

Log your recorded times using our Count the Kicks App or a kick chart.

Charting your baby's activity is a great way to get to know your baby and can alert you to potential problems. Your charts are also useful for visits with your doctor.

Want to learn more? Contact Carol Isaac, RN, BSN, MA at the Douglas County Health Department or visit <http://www.countthekicks.org/faq/>.



Stressed?

Take a Meditation Break

With its focus on full, cleansing breaths, deep breathing is a simple yet powerful relaxation technique. It's easy to learn, can be practiced almost anywhere, and provides a quick way to get your stress levels in check. Deep breathing is the cornerstone of many other relaxation practices, too, and can be combined with other relaxing elements such as aromatherapy and music. All you really need is a few minutes and a place to stretch out.

Practicing deep breathing meditation

The key to deep breathing is to breathe deeply from the abdomen, getting as much fresh air as possible in your lungs. When you take deep breaths from the abdomen, rather than shallow breaths from your upper chest, you inhale more oxygen. The more oxygen you get, the less tense, short of breath, and anxious you feel.

- Sit comfortably with your back straight. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- Breathe in through your nose. The hand on your stomach should rise. The hand on your chest should move very little.
- Exhale through your mouth, pushing out as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles. The hand on your stomach should move in as you exhale, but your other hand should move very little.
- Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count slowly as you exhale.

If you find it difficult breathing from your abdomen while sitting up, try lying on the floor. Put a small book on your stomach, and try to breathe so that the book rises as you inhale and falls as you exhale. www.helpguide.org



MyViverae Enhancements

At Viverae®, good simply isn't good enough! We're always looking to enhance the member experience – and that's why members will notice updates to the look and feel of our portal, creating a more engaging experience.

The first time members log in, they'll see personalized promotional panels welcoming them and explaining new features. We will be introducing an exciting update with this new feature that will give our Challenges a new face. Members will now be able to upload a picture of themselves and select a preferred name to appear on all Challenges!

Enhancements have also been made to the MyViverae™ Dashboard, menu, and navigation. We're confident the MyViverae experience will be easier than ever to navigate!

To get a full view of the changes download our MyViverae Portal Enhancements One-Pager.



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Happy, Healthy New Year
from the
Healthy Directions
Committee

Kathy Adair
Jane Alexander
Diane Battiato
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Mike Boyle
Karen Buche

Steve Cacioppo
Kevin Conlon
Jane Faust
Jan Johnson
Brock Hanisch
Connie Lehman
Suzette Moorman

Jamie Manzitto
Stephanie Nichols
Carol Prokop
Dennis Rookstool
Phillip Rooney
Natalie Wilson

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 Omaha office at 402-345-6555.**

Rent Smoke-free! Would you like to learn more about Smoke-free multi-unit housing?



Info@MOTAC.org
(402) 546-1099

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 Alegentep.com.**

Don't Text and Drive: STOP TEXTS, STOP WRECKS.

24-Hour Nurse from Unitedhealthcare

Connect with a registered nurse who'll take the time to understand what is going on with your health and provide personalized information just for you, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To talk with a nurse, call 888-332-8885, or visit myuhc.com®.

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; proofreading: Tina Curry; 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.

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