

Your worksite wellness newsletter

News NOV/DEC 2014

The holiday season is in full swing and an amazing 2014 is coming to an end. This has been a year of many exciting things for our worksite wellness program. It may well go down as the year we really took orbit!

Healthy Directions partnered with Viverae, a leading health management service provider, beginning on July 1, 2014. Employees and retirees who are covered under the medical plan can participate in the wellness program and earn points for a variety of healthy activities.

If the required points were earned by December 1, 2014, a \$75 Visa Gift Card has been earned and soon will be distributed to the participating employees and retirees.

What a great way to earn cash while getting healthy!

Our second year of working with Viverae begins on January 1, 2015, when not only covered employees/retirees can participate in the wellness program, but the program will be extended to the covered spouses of employees/retirees.

To provide even more incentive for 2015, the Visa Gift Card prize grows to \$150 – and that is not only for the employee/retiree, but also their covered spouse. The December 1st deadline remains the same. What a great opportunity!

Healthy Directions also will offer the Biometric screening at several locations and times during the month of March, and we will bring you several employer healthy challenges during the New Year.

Be sure to watch your mail for details on the 2015 wellness program requirements, and information on how to register for the program if you haven't done so yet.

During the past year, Healthy Directions proudly sponsored several other healthy activities. Those include: free Yoga classes, Weight Watchers, free Biometric screenings, free flu shots, the 2014 Corporate Cup Run/Walk along with design a T-shirt, biking club, and with two employer challenges: the Hydr8te Challenge and the Maintain for Life Challenge.

Healthy Directions continues to offer the newsletter you are reading. This has proven to be a tremendous resource for healthy tips and other healthy opportunities.

While 2014 was an amazing year, we hope to top it during the months to come with more participation, more healthy opportunities and ways to become a better healthy YOU!

With the holiday season soon approaching we traditionally spend more time with family and friends. That means we participate in lots of holiday celebrations with great food and holiday cheer.

If I can give you one thought during this time of great temptation, please keep moving, whether it is walking, getting to the gym, or just getting out and enjoying the holiday lights. Merry Christmas and the Healthiest 2015 to you and your family!

Kathy Adair & the Healthy Directions Wellness Committee



The Healthy Directions Wellness News-

letter is brought to you by the Douglas

County Healthy Directions worksite well-

ness committee. Contributing editor and

photographer: Phil Rooney; layout and

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*Kathy Adair. **We'd like to hear from you!***

Send questions/comments to the com-

mittee by e-mailing chairwoman Kathy

Adair at [kathy.adair@douglascounty-ne.](mailto:kathy.adair@douglascounty-ne.gov)

gov, drop her a note to Human Resources,

Room 505, or call her at 402-444-6099.

Commit to be Fit

Healthy Sleep Tips from the National Sleep Foundation

Healthy sleep habits can make a big difference in your quality of life. Having healthy sleep habits is often referred to as having good “sleep hygiene.”

Try to keep the following sleep practices on a consistent basis:

Stick to the same bedtime and wake up time, even on the weekends.

This helps to regulate your body’s clock and could help you fall asleep and stay asleep for the night.

Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual.

A relaxing, routine activity right before bedtime conducted away from bright lights helps separate your sleep time from activities that can cause excitement, stress or anxiety which can make it more difficult to fall asleep, get sound and deep sleep or remain asleep.

Avoid naps, especially in the afternoon.

Power napping may help you get through the day, but if you find that you can’t fall asleep at bedtime, eliminating even short catnaps may help.

Exercise daily.

Vigorous exercise is best, but even light exercise is better than no activity. Exercise at any time of day, but not at the expense of your sleep.

Evaluate your room.

Design your sleep environment to establish the conditions you need for sleep. Your bedroom should be cool – between 60 and 67 degrees. Your bedroom should also be free from any noise that can disturb your sleep. Finally, your bedroom should be free from any light. Check your room for noises or other distractions. This includes a bed partner’s sleep disruptions such as snoring. Consider using blackout curtains, eye shades, ear plugs, “white noise” machines, humidifiers, fans and other devices.

Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows.

Make sure your mattress is comfortable and supportive. The one you have been using for years may have exceeded its life expectancy – about 9 or 10 years for most good quality mattresses. Have comfortable pillows and make the room attractive and inviting for sleep but also free of allergens that might affect you and objects that might cause you to slip or fall if you have to get up during the night.

Use bright light to help manage your circadian rhythms.

Avoid bright light in the evening and expose yourself to sunlight in the morning. This will keep your circadian rhythms in check.

Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and heavy meals in the evening.

Alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine can disrupt sleep. Eating big or spicy meals can cause discomfort from indigestion that can make it hard to sleep. It is good to finish eating at least 2-3 hours before bedtime.

Wind down. Your body needs time to shift into sleep mode, so spend the last hour before bed doing a calming activity such as reading.

For some people, using an electronic device such as a laptop can make it hard to fall asleep, because the particular type of light emanating from the screens of these devices is activating to the brain. If you have trouble sleeping, avoid electronics before bed or in the middle of the night.

If you can’t sleep, go into another room and do something relaxing until you feel tired.

It is best to take work materials, computers and televisions out of the sleeping environment. Use your bed only for sleep and sex to strengthen the association between bed and sleep. If you associate a particular activity or item with anxiety about sleeping, omit it from your bedtime routine.

If you’re still having trouble sleeping, don’t hesitate to speak with your doctor or to find a sleep professional.

Get Your Game On!!!



Plans are under way to launch the inaugural Douglas County Tennis Open in May 2015. The Douglas County Open will be a nonsanctioned, fun-filled tournament for all levels of players, sponsored by the Douglas County Wellness Committee. **Watch for more details in the coming months. Feel free to call Larry Miller, 402-444-6780 or 402-960-0679, if you have questions.**

In the meantime, do you want to get some “tune-up” play in before May 2015? Join a practice league at Hanscom Park Tennis Pavilion. The cost is approximately \$90 for 10 sessions, beginning in October. League play is from 8:30 p.m. – 10 p.m. For more information, contact Carvie Erwin, 402-415-4438. Tell him “Larry” suggested that you call. **See you in May!!**



Winter Fitness: Just Play!

Winter shouldn't be a time that your fitness plans hibernate—especially with all of those holiday treats around. With the right attitude and mix of exercises, winter can actually be a fantastic time to mix up your workouts, get creative and even reignite your love of fitness by trying new, fun activities. Not to mention, exercise can help you beat those winter blues!

How to Make the Most of Winter Workouts

Change your mind. Winter isn't just about cold weather, it's a whole new season! Embrace the time of year by sitting down and revisiting your goals, then plan out what you'd like to accomplish during the next few months.

Go out and play! If you can't seem to muster the energy to work out this time of year, try “playing” instead. You can burn quite a few calories playing indoors or out.

Take up a winter sport. If you're a competitive type, why not try a new winter sport? From skiing to snowshoeing, there are many great options that burn mega calories and put a whole new twist on your cold-weather workout.

Get creative at home. Sure, getting to the gym can be more of a hassle when it is cold outside, but never use snowy weather as an excuse to miss your daily exercise. Instead, work out at home, where's it's cozy and warm. Whether you pop in a new workout DVD, invest in a few pieces of fitness equipment or even just use your body

weight for a killer workout, exercising at home can be a convenient (and fun!) solution to staying on track.

Try something new. There's nothing like signing up for a new class or joining an indoor sports league to get you up and moving during chilly months. Whether it's indoor volleyball, a dodgeball league, a bootcamp class or even tennis lessons at a local indoor racquet club, participating in a regular activity that you've paid for (or have teammates counting on you to play in) is a fantastic way to stay active in the winter time.

Set a big goal—and some little goals. If winter weather leaves your motivation to exercise colder than an icicle, heat things up with a challenging, new goal. It can be anything from losing those last 10 pounds, to running a 5K (yes, you can still run outside in the cold) or even doing a full pull-up, but choose a goal that you *really* want and that will stretch you beyond your comfort zone to reach it. Setting a smart goal that you then break down into smaller, achievable action steps is a great way to start.

Get excited! If you've never been a winter fan, start focusing on what you *do* love about it and how this time of year provides new opportunities for your fitness and health.

www.sparkpeople.com



Spice Up Your Tea!

One of the easiest ways to spruce up your tea is to head to your spice rack and grab pumpkin or apple pie spice or cinnamon and add a little to your hot tea. It might seem weird, but they can add a subtle hint of flavor to your tea and give it a little zing when you want something different. It won't totally transform your tea, so if you really want to alter the flavor to make it sweeter, use a pie spice with a dash of sugar or honey.

www.allwomenstalk.com

Commit to be Fit



The County Wellness Bicycling Corner By Lee Lazure

Looking back, 2014 was a great year for bicycle riding and building on one's fitness and stamina. There are a number of success stories among county employees who really put the foot to the pedal and achieved a great deal of fitness and fun during the year.

Special congratulations are due to the following county employees who put some miles on their bikes and/or rode in such events as the Corporate Bike Challenge, the Bike Ride Across Nebraska (BRAN), the bike ride across Iowa (RAGBRAI), the Tour De Nebraska, the Great American Pie Ride.

We had such notable and distinguished riders such as: Mark "Capt America" Swoboda of Corrections, who rode over 2,200 miles to include the entire RAGBRAI trip, the Heat Stroke 100 and several "century rides;" Kevin "Iron Man" Conlon of the Sheriff's Office, with more than 1,800 miles and 4 days of RAGBRAI; Connie "Lighting" Lehman of the Health Department, who rode over 2,037 miles including all of Tour De Nebraska; Mel "Tiger" Washington of Corrections with over 1,200 miles including all of RAGBRAI; Randy "The Bullet" Benak of the City of Omaha, with 3 days of RAGBRAI and doing the Triple By Pass in Colorado with a total of more than 800 miles; Karen "Hill Killer" Cole of the County Commissioners Office with 1,246 miles including all of RAGBRAI and her first Century ride; Cheri "Atomic" Albin, County Commissioner's Office, who biked over 500 miles and completed all of RAGBRAI and her first Century ride; Chris "Super Man" Sweeney of Corrections, who often bikes to work and back, with over 2,714 miles; Lee "Lash" Lazure of HR with over 3,200 miles, including all of BRAN and 4 days of RAGBRAI; Johnny "The Jet" Blackburn of the County Courts, with more than 1,589 miles including the Tour De Nebraska; Jim "The Boss" Bojanski of Civic Center Security, who completed RAGBRAI and biked over 2,200 miles, and Jim's wife, Marj "The Boss #1" Bojanski who rode over 2,000 miles and completed the Lake Tahoe Classic of 76 miles around Lake Tahoe, Nevada.

Also noteworthy were the seven county employees who completed a Century ride (100 miles) during the year: Karen Cole, Cheri Albin, Mel Washington,

Lee Lazure, Randy Benak, Kevin Conlon and Mark Swoboda.

Now, I realize there are others out there who rode a great deal, so if anyone was left out, please let me know what kind of distances you rode this year or any specific rides you completed. Then I can put you in our January/February Newsletter to recognize your wellness accomplishments.

One thing to remember is that just because of some cold weather, this is not the time to hang up your bike and hibernate --- you need to set a goal of getting out on your bike at least once or twice during the December through February timeframe. You simply need to layer up for the weather, ride just to keep your legs in shape, and to keep the "lb's" from building up on the body. Set some basic goals for fitness during these months, and don't lose the fitness you earned during the past year.

With the Holidays coming, put some biking items on your Christmas list such as cold weather gloves, long pants for riding, a balaclava, and wool socks. Or stop by one of the excellent bike stores in town and get yourself a "Christmas present" with something for your bike or for riding in the New Year.

To get you thinking about riding in 2015, make bicycling one of your New Year's resolutions. Get that old bike in the garage or basement fixed up or make an investment in yourself, and check out the bikes at many of the sales this time of the year.

Bicycling is such a great sport, matched only by the greatness of our outstanding County employees who go out on their bikes and ride for wellness with our Healthy Directions initiatives.

Don't let the weather hold you back, get out and exercise - ride.

You Can Do It!
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!

Lee Lazure

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

Commit to be Fit

'Tis the Season for Leftovers!



How to safely store and reheat your favorite holiday dishes

Store Leftovers Safely

Leftovers can be kept in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days or frozen for 3 to 4 months. Although safe indefinitely, frozen leftovers can lose moisture and flavor when stored for longer times in the freezer.

Thaw Frozen Leftovers Safely

Safe ways to thaw leftovers include the refrigerator, cold water and the microwave oven. Refrigerator thawing takes the longest but the leftovers stay safe the entire time. After thawing, the food should be used within 3 to 4 days or can be refrozen.

Cold water thawing is faster than refrigerator thawing but requires more attention. The frozen leftovers must be in a leak-proof package or plastic bag. If the bag leaks, water can get into the food and bacteria from the air or surrounding environment could enter it. Foods thawed by the cold water method should be cooked before refreezing.

Microwave thawing is the fastest method. When thawing leftovers in a microwave, continue to heat it until it reaches 165° F as measured with a food thermometer. Foods thawed in the microwave can be refrozen after heating it to this safe temperature.

Reheating Leftovers without Thawing

It is safe to reheat frozen leftovers without thawing, either in a saucepan or microwave (in the case of a soup or stew) or in the oven or microwave (for example, casseroles and combination meals). Reheating will take longer than if the food is thawed first, but it is safe to do when time is short.

Reheat Leftovers Safely

When reheating leftovers, be sure they reach 165° F as measured with a food thermometer.

Reheat sauces, soups and gravies by bringing them to a rolling boil. Cover leftovers to reheat. This retains moisture and ensures that food will heat all the way through.

When reheating in the microwave, cover and rotate the food for even heating. Arrange food items evenly in a covered microwave safe glass or ceramic dish, and add some liquid if needed. Be sure the covering is microwave safe, and vent the lid or wrap to let the steam escape. The moist heat that is created will help destroy harmful bacteria and will ensure uniform cooking. Also, because microwaves have cold spots, check the temperature of the food in several places with a food thermometer and allow a resting time before checking the internal temperature of the food with a food thermometer. Cooking continues for a longer time in dense foods such as a whole turkey or beef roast than in less dense foods like breads, small vegetables and fruits.

Refreezing Previously Frozen Leftovers

Sometimes there are leftover "leftovers." It is safe to refreeze any food remaining after reheating previously frozen leftovers to the safe temperature of 165° F as measured with a food thermometer.

If a large container of leftovers was frozen and only a portion of it is needed, it is safe to thaw the leftovers in the refrigerator, remove the needed portion and refreeze the remainder of the thawed leftovers without reheating it.

www.fsis.usda.gov

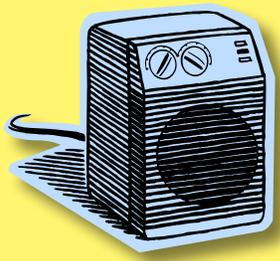


Tips for Enjoying Dried Fruit

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics suggests how to choose dried fruit:

- Pay attention to serving size. Dried fruit is nutrient-rich, but serving sizes typically are small.
- Make sure the product does not contain added sugar.
- If you have a sulfites allergy, read the product label to make sure the fruit doesn't contain any.
- Eat a handful of dried fruit as a snack. Or sprinkle on a salad, cereal, pancakes or include with a favorite bread recipe.

www.healthfinder.gov



Use Your Space Heater Safely

Each year, space heaters cause more than 25,000 residential fires and more than 300 deaths, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports. Also, more than 6,000 Americans a year receive emergency room care for space heater-related burns.

“If proper precautions are taken, space heaters can be used safely; but so often they aren’t and house fires ignite,” he said. “Whole families are seriously injured, often for life.”

Space heaters should be kept at least 3 feet away from furniture or other combustible items, such as curtains and bedding. Don’t place heaters on carpets or rugs. Put them on a hard, level surface where a child or pet can’t brush up against them. Never leave a space heater on when an adult is not present in the room, and never keep flammable liquids near a space heater.

Only vented fuel-fired heaters or electric heaters should be used in mobile homes.

Electric space heaters are the safest for use in any home. They should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. If an extension cord is needed, use a heavy-duty cord of 14-gauge wire or larger. The heater should have a tip-over safety switch that turns off the heating element if the heater falls over.

Never use unvented combustion heaters in your home. They are for outdoor use only.

If you use a vented indoor combustion heater, follow the maker’s recommendations for fueling and use only the approved fuel. Have it professionally inspected each year. Never fill a heater while it’s hot. Don’t overfill it -- allow room for fuel expansion. Store fuel outdoors.

Be sure there is a guard around the heating element or flame area. Never leave a fuel-fired heater on when you go to sleep.

www.healthfinder.gov

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



The Employee Assistance PROGRAM (EAP)

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.



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.



PLEASE BUCKLE UP

AND DON'T TEXT WHILE DRIVING.

Commit to be Fit