



Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust

Wellness Works

SPRING 2017

New Health Trust Website

The Health Trust is pleased to announce that we have a new website, at www.mmmeht.org! The new site was designed with our users in mind, and it features an easy to follow menu and a fresh new look.

All content from the old site is available on the new one, plus some additional features:

- Contact information for reaching the Trust staff is listed on every page of the site.
- A new “Search” feature was added to make finding information easier.
- The new site is designed to be mobile friendly.
- There is a new section specifically for employer resources and forms.
- Recent news articles and features will be frequently updated on the home page.

We hope you will find this new website a useful resource and will visit it often. Feedback or questions about the site may be directed to Health Trust Assistant Director Kristy Gould, at kgould@memun.org.



INSIDE

Page 2:

Learn why men are more at risk for developing skin cancer than women.

Page 5:

Feeling sluggish? Learn 10 ways to boost your energy!

Page 5:

Important reminders about your smoke alarms.

Page 6:

Learn ways to include a nutritious breakfast into your daily routine.

Wellness on the Web



Maine Trail Finder is a free, interactive mapping site designed to help Maine residents and visitors find hiking, snowshoeing, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and paddling trails across the state. The goal is to get people out, be active and explore our state's treasures, both those well-known and hidden. Detailed trail description pages allow users to view the trails, get essential information, and submit trip comments and photos, and a whole lot more! Check out the Maine Trail Finder website at:

www.mainetrailfinder.com.

Maine Trail Finder

Taking Steps to Prevent Stiffness

We know that older adults with arthritis-related joint pain and stiffness need to keep moving to remain functionally independent. But research tells us that only 10% of Americans with arthritis in their knees meet the federal guidelines of at least 150 minutes of moderate activity a week. However, a new study conducted at Northwestern University found that just doing a little physical activity (about 45 minutes a week) may go a long way toward helping adults with arthritis remain able to do daily tasks.

150 minutes of activity a week might seem overwhelming and impossible for people who are struggling with the pain and stiffness of arthritis, so it is encouraging to hear that just 45 minutes a week will still be beneficial. This study involved more than 1,600 adults ages 49 and older, who had arthritic pain or stiffness in their hips, knees or feet. Those participants who did a minimum of 45 minutes of moderate activity -- such as brisk walking -- a week were 80% more likely to improve or sustain physical function and gait speed over two years, compared with those who did less activity. Of course, if you can do more, then do more. The more you do, the better you'll feel and the greater the health benefits. This just goes to show that even a little bit of activity is better than none. So put on those sneakers and get stepping to prevent stiffness and promote good health!

Source: *Health Day News*, 2017



Men Are More at Risk for Skin Cancer

Everyone Needs to Protect the Skin They're In!

Sun protection isn't just for a day at the beach. In fact, most sun exposure occurs while doing everyday things like biking, working, running, or even mowing the lawn. These day to day tasks increase our exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays, which can cause skin cancer. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. The two most common types of skin cancer—basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas—are highly curable, but can be disfiguring and costly. Melanoma, the third most common skin cancer, is more dangerous and causes the most deaths. While everyone is at risk for developing skin cancer, men have a higher risk for developing skin cancer than women.

Why are men more likely than women to get skin cancer?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) men typically get more sun exposure than women because they spend more time outside over their lifetimes than women. Men are also more likely to work outdoors than women, not to mention that many women's personal care products (like moisturizer and makeup) often contain sunscreen, while many products for men don't. Without sunscreen, you are more likely to get a sunburn, which can increase your risk of getting skin cancer.

Easy Ways to Protect Yourself

It's easy to protect yourself from UV exposure—

- Long-sleeved shirts, pants, and a wide-brimmed hat offer the best protection. If you're wearing a baseball cap or short-sleeved shirt, make sure to put sunscreen on your ears, neck, and arms.
- Stay in the shade as much as possible between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., which are peak times for sunlight.
- Use a sunscreen of at least SPF 15 on any exposed skin, and don't forget to re-apply it every two hours, as well as after swimming, sweating, or toweling off.
- If you work outdoors, ask about sun protection at your job, like wearing sun-protective clothing.
- Avoid indoor tanning.

Source: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

When outside on a sunny day for more than an hour, only about 14% of men use sunscreen on both their face and other exposed skin!

The Attitude of an Olympian

By: Abby DiPasquale

I am a self-proclaimed super fan! Not for professional sports - I honestly couldn't tell you a thing about any team or player in the NFL, NHL, NBA, or MLB - but ask me to attend a youth sports event and I will be the first one there and the loudest cheerleader in the stands (much to my niece and nephews' chagrin). I have always loved the excitement of the game at the youth level. You can actually see the kids' grit and determination paying off when they make their first basket, hit their first homerun, or score a goal. Yet when my daughter, Olivia, was diagnosed with multiple brain disorders and didn't develop in the same way as her peers, I thought that involvement in sports for her was not something that I would ever see happen. She was different and the area youth sports I had loved, cheered on and supported for many years were not a good fit. As a family, we took it upon ourselves to do things like skiing, swimming and snowshoeing, but we were always missing that team aspect and the opportunity to be the cheering fans in the crowd. That is until recently, when we were introduced to the remarkable world of Special Olympics, where everybody is different!

Special Olympics is for people who are different because they learn new skills slowly. They are different in other ways as well. They have an intellectual disability, or ID. Special Olympics is a global movement of people creating a new world of inclusion and community, where every single person is accepted and welcomed, regardless of ability or disability. If you aren't familiar with this program, the mission for Special Olympics Maine "is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate



Olivia DiPasquale getting ready to race. What a smile!



Olivia previewing the race course with her father, and coach, Doug DiPasquale.

courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community." (Check out their site at www.somaine.org or www.specialolympics.org)

My daughter, Olivia, recently competed with hundreds of other participants in her first Winter Games as an Olympian. This group of athletes have trained and worked hard to learn the skills needed to compete in their events. They showed remarkable courage and bravery as they slipped on their skis, plodded along on snowshoes, or skimmed across the ice on ice skates. Their skills were remarkable, but the most important thing I noticed was that they did everything with a smile and everyone was encouraged and cheered on for doing their best. As they were awarded their ribbons and medals, they were truly proud of their accomplish-

ments and those of their fellow competitors. Their excitement for the games was apparent and contagious. These athletes truly exemplified what it means to be an Olympian, both in their activities and their attitudes. Special Olympics is really about supporting, encouraging and creating friendships with those you are vying against - something that we sometimes forget when we are watching or competing in other sporting events.

If you have the opportunity, I would highly recommend attending an Olympic event near you. Special Olympics Maine is always looking for volunteers - even volunteer "Fans in the Stands," where you can cheer on the participants. Better yet, if you enjoy participating in sports, check out the opportunity to get involved as a team player in the Unified Sports Leagues in your area. I guarantee that the time you spend with these Olympians will renew your spirit and fill you with joy.

Making Fitness a Family Event

By: Abby DiPasquale

If you are anything like me, you try to squeeze your exercise in around your kids' schedule, your partner's schedule and your own busy schedule. Sometimes it seems like there just isn't enough time. I solved most of the time issue with the discovery of interval workouts, which allow you to get a full-body workout in about 10 minutes, but I recently stepped my workout up a bit by adding in a personal trainer. Before you think "Well, I can't afford that" and stop reading this, you should hear who I "hired." It's my four year old daughter, Gigi, and I believe she has a bright future as a drill sergeant or fitness guru!

Being physically fit is not just something for adults. It is important to teach children how their bodies work and how to be fit and strong - no matter what their age. The Let's Move campaign worked to get this message out for years, but the statistics of childhood obesity are still shocking and worth discussing. Over the past three decades (yes, just 30 years), childhood obesity rates have tripled, and today nearly one in three children in our country are overweight or obese. If we don't solve this problem, one third of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives and many others will face health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma. So, while many of us know the reasons we exercise, it is just as important to roll model these behaviors for our kids and get them involved. Which brings me back to my personal trainer...

While searching for new and exciting workouts, I recently discovered Darebee Dice (www.darebee.com). These are available as a free printable from the website listed above and have really made fitness a fun family event for us. These two dice are rolled to determine how many and what type of exercise you do. For example, it could be 20 squats, 8 pushups, or 10 jumping jacks...your fate is in the roll. This is where the personal trainer comes in. My daughter loves to roll the dice and then do the exercises with me (in her own 4 year old sort of way). She laughs like a demon when she rolls a 20 of anything and pushes me through multiple sets of exercises for about 10 minutes a day while dinner is cooking. This is a great way to get her involved and see how easy it is to fit fitness into the day, plus she doesn't let me forget when it is time to exercise. Our little paper dice got squashed a few too many times to actually roll after a week or so, but then we turned it into a fun craft project. We cut the pictures off the dice and used her ultra-cool hot glue gun to glue these pictures onto a couple of wooden blocks we picked up at the dollar store.... presto, no more squished blocks. Now I just have to remind her to roll the dice instead of launching them in the air at the light fixtures.

So, as we gear up for the summer months and begin thinking about fitting fitness back into our hectic lifestyles, I would encourage you to look no further than your family for some motivation and work-



out partners. Even if you don't have any little ones to turn into personal trainers, you can find a friend or loved one to enjoy a walk or begin working out with. It is a great way to stay motivated and fit.

Trying to Fit in Some Fitness? Try these ideas:

- Take walks before or after dinner with the family. This is a great time to catch up on the days' activities and enjoy some fresh air!
- Play catch with your kids (human or the furry kind)!
- Ride your bikes. Remember what they say...you never forget how to ride a bike...or do you?
- Park further away at the grocery store. This can add some quick steps, without adding a lot of time.
- Start a lunchtime walking group. The regular routine and the support of your co-workers may help you stick with the program.
- Join an active social group, like a dance club, golf team or hiking group. Being with other people can make exercise painless!

The Importance of Working Smoke Alarms

Nearly 5 million homes don't have a smoke alarm installed. In fact, three out of every five people killed in a house fire didn't have a "working" smoke alarm. About half of home fire deaths occur between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., while residents are asleep. Below are some strategies to keep your loved ones safe in the event of a fire:

- Replace smoke alarms every 10 years. The date of manufacturer can be found on the back of the alarm.
- Replace the batteries in the smoke alarm twice a year. The best way to remember is when you change your clock for daylight savings time.
- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of the home, including the basement.
- For the best protection, install interconnected smoke alarms in your home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Test alarms at least once a month by pushing the test button. Replace the alarm if it does not sound when tested.
- Some people, especially young children and older adults, may need help to wake up. Make sure someone will wake them if the smoke alarm does sound.
- When the smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside. Have a predetermined meeting place.

Source: US Fire Administration – www.usfa.fema.gov



10 Ways to Boost Your Energy in 10 Minutes or Less

Are your eyelids sagging as the afternoon wears on? When low energy drags you down, don't look to a candy bar, cup of coffee, or energy drink for a lift. The sugar and caffeine might give you an immediate pick-me-up, but after that quick high wears off, you'll crash and feel even more drained! What you need is a lasting solution to keep sluggishness at bay.

Here are 10 fatigue fighters that can leave you feeling refreshed and revitalized:

1. Eat your breakfast. People who eat breakfast every morning report less fatigue and stress than people who skip it. High-fiber foods, like hot oatmeal, stick with you longer than a sweet roll or pastry. As the day wears on, they'll prevent you from getting hungry (hunger can lead to low energy).

2. Do a downward dog. Some studies have found that yoga, which uses various postures and deep breathing for exercise and meditation, can be an excellent fatigue fighter.

3. Belt out your favorite tune. Singing gives you a kind of emotional high while it reduces levels of stress hormones in your body. So grab a hairbrush, put on your favorite song, and sing away. If you're at work and don't want to face your co-workers' puzzled stares, you might want to save your vocal stylings for the car.

4. Have a drink of water. Dehydration can leave you feeling drained and fatigued. You don't necessarily have to follow the "eight glasses a day" rule, but you do want to drink enough water to keep your body well hydrated. You can tell you're well hydrated when you don't feel thirsty and your urine is light-colored. Try to get to the fridge or water cooler for a refill every few hours. The walk there will also help you wake up.

5. Go nuts. Eat a handful of almonds or peanuts, which are high in magnesium and folate (folic acid). These nutrients are essential for energy and cell production. A lack of these nutrients in your system can leave you feeling weary.

6. Grab a cinnamon stick. Some people say that just a whiff of this scented spice can reduce fatigue and make them feel more alert. No cinnamon handy? Grab a mint from your bag. Peppermint's sweet aroma is another fatigue fighter for some people. More research is needed to see if and how these aromas actually affect a person's energy level.

7. Get moving. Exercise is a natural energy booster, because whenever you do it, oxygen-rich blood surges through your body to your heart, muscles, and brain. Regularly squeezing a workout into your day -- even if you can spare only 10 minutes at a time -- will help keep your energy levels at their peak. Move around every chance you get, even if it's just to pace in circles while you're on the phone.

cont'd on page 6

10 Ways to Boost Your Energy *cont'd*

8. Let the sunshine in. Research suggests that just a few minutes of walking outside on a warm, clear day may enhance mood, memory, and the ability to absorb new information. Going outside can even improve your self-esteem. If you absolutely can't get out, at least open the shades.

9. Have a bite. Your brain needs fuel to function at its best. When your blood sugar level drops, your mind will start running on fumes and will feel fuzzy as a result. So if your head is starting to droop, eat a snack that will give you enough energy to take you through the rest of the afternoon. Snacks that combine protein with slow-burning carbs – like banana slices with peanut butter, or granola with fresh berries – are best for maintaining your blood sugar levels over the long term.

10. Hang out with upbeat friends. Emotions are surprisingly contagious. People who are constantly negative and down can sap your energy, while those who are always up and excited can give you a real lift.

Source: WebMD Medical Reference



Breaking Breakfast Barriers

Are you skipping the most important meal of the day? People who regularly eat a healthy, balanced breakfast tend to concentrate better and get more physical activity than those who skip it. Breakfast eaters also have an easier time managing their weight and tend to have better cholesterol levels. Take a bite out of the habit of skipping breakfast with these strategies:

- Get into the habit of eating breakfast daily. Start with grabbing just a piece of fruit as you walk out the door and gradually include other food groups.
- Curb your sweet tooth the healthy way. Try making French toast using whole-grain bread dipped in a batter made of egg whites or an egg substitute, a pinch of cinnamon and a few drops of vanilla extract. Fry in a nonstick skillet or use a cooking spray. Top with thinly sliced apples, unsweetened applesauce, berries or sliced banana for sweetness.
- Prepare in advance. If you're rushed in the morning, set the table the night before with bowls and spoons for cereal or slice some fruit ahead of time and place your smoothie blender out on the counter. Keep easy favorites such as hard-boiled eggs, fresh fruit, instant whole-grain oatmeal and low-fat yogurt on hand.
- Think out of the (cereal) box. Don't limit yourself to traditional breakfast foods. Left-over vegetable pizza or a turkey sandwich on whole-wheat bread can make a healthy breakfast.
- Take it with you. If there's no time to eat breakfast at home, pack a brown-bag breakfast or grab a banana and take it with you.
- Split it up. If you're not hungry first thing in the morning, eat a slice of whole-wheat toast or drink a glass of 100 percent fruit juice or water. Later, eat a healthy mid-morning snack.
- Change gradually. Have breakfast on two mornings at first, and three mornings a little later. Your eventual goal is to eat breakfast every day.

Whenever you're tempted to skip your morning meal, just remember that a good breakfast also helps keep you from becoming ravenously hungry later in the day, so you won't eat as much.

Source: www.mayoclinic.org



Clean Out the Refrigerator!

The refrigerator is one of the hardest working appliances in your home – and it's one that also takes a beating. It's subject to spills, varied odors, and overcrowding. It also never gets a break – it's constantly running. A clean refrigerator promises to keep food fresher. Below are some tips to keep your refrigerator sparkling clean!

- Immediately clean up spilled juices, particularly from raw meat. To defrost, always put uncooked meat on the bottom shelf inside a container with a lid.
- Use warm, soapy water and a sponge to clean shelves, drawers and other surfaces. Avoid spray cleaners. Dry with a clean paper towel or cloth.
- Clean the door handle frequently.
- Place an open box of baking soda inside your refrigerator to absorb odors. Change it every three months.
- Wipe away any dust from the front grill of your refrigerator to keep it working efficiently.
- Check the expiration dates on food. Remember to check salad dressings, marinades and condiments.
- Check your refrigerator temperature. The Federal Drug Administration recommends between 32-degrees and 40-degrees F.

Source: www.consumer.healthday.com and www.thekitchen.com



Chicken, Apple, and Sweet Potato Salad

Ingredients

- 6 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. stoneground mustard
- 1 tsp. raw honey
- 6½ tsp. olive oil
- 8 oz. raw chicken breast, boneless, skinless, sliced
- 1 medium sweet potato, peeled, sliced
- 1 medium apple, peeled, cored, sliced
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 head green leaf lettuce, torn or chopped
- 2 Tbsp. crumbled feta cheese
- 2 Tbsp. raw pecan pieces, toasted

Preparation

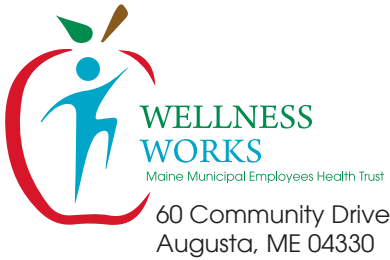
1. Preheat oven to 425° F.
 2. Combine vinegar, mustard, and honey in a medium bowl; whisk to blend.
 3. Slowly add 6 tsp. oil, whisking continuously until blended.
 4. Place one third vinegar mixture in re-sealable bag. Add chicken; mix well. Marinate, refrigerated, for at least 2 hours. Set aside remaining vinegar mixture for salad dressing.
 5. While chicken is marinating, combine sweet potato, apple, cinnamon, and remaining ½ tsp. oil in a medium bowl; toss to blend. Place on baking sheet lightly coated with spray. Bake for 10 minutes, turn, bake an additional 10 to 15 minutes, or until tender. Set aside to cool.
 6. Remove chicken from marinade; discard used marinade.
 7. Place chicken on baking sheet lightly coated with spray. Bake for 8 to 12 minutes, or until cooked through. Set aside to cool.
 8. Combine lettuce, sweet potato mixture, chicken, cheese, and pecans; toss gently to blend.
 9. Drizzle with remaining dressing; toss gently to blend.
 10. Divide evenly between six serving plates.
- Note: Apples can be peeled if you prefer.

Nutritional Facts (per serving):

Calories: 176; Total Fat: 8 g; Saturated Fat: 2 g; Cholesterol: 25 mg; Sodium: 222 mg; Carbohydrates: 17 g; Fiber: 2 g; Sugar: 10 g; Protein: 9 g

Source: www.beachbody.com





PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Augusta, ME
PERMIT #195

FAST FACTS

**EVERY
3 MONTHS
- HOW OFTEN
YOU SHOULD
REPLACE YOUR
TOOTHBRUSH**

1:4 admit they
Adults don't brush
twice a day.

25% of adults
have not
visited the dentist in the
past 2 years.

Only **9%** of men
and **11%** of women
have oral health which is
classified as excellent.

1:3 have never
People flossed their
own teeth.



The **WELLNESS WORKS** Newsletter is a publication of the Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust (MMEHT), 60 Community Drive, Augusta, ME 04330.

Contributing Writers: Anne Charles, Amanda Collins, Abby DiPasquale, Danielle Yale, Lisa Rigoulot, and Kristy Gould.

Questions? Contact Anne Charles at 1-800-452-8786

Graphic Design: Jaime G. Clark

Phone: 1-800-852-8300

Website: www.mmeht.org