



Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust

Wellness Works

SUMMER 2017

Stellar Wellness Programs

On Tuesday, April 25, 2017 the Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust's Wellness Department hosted the 29th annual wellness conference. There were 74 attendees, representing 40 of our member groups. Two groups and one individual were recognized for implementing comprehensive wellness programs at their worksites.

Knox County

Knox County received the *Biggest Leap* award for offering a wellness program that made the most leaps and bounds. The Knox County wellness committee pushed themselves this past year to consider the health needs of employees and offered programs that have a positive and lasting impact on their health.



City of South Portland

The City of South Portland received the *Highest Peak* award for taking their wellness program to the next level. The City of South Portland's wellness committee challenged themselves to involve more employees in the well-



ness program. They did so by offering incentives and a wide variety of programs to meet the health interests of individual employees.

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Want to become a Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust trustee?

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Learn more about tick bites and Lyme Disease.

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Learn strategies to incorporate meatless meals into your eating plan.

Wellness on the Web



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a new app. The HEADS UP Concussion and Helmet Safety app will help you learn how to spot a possible concussion and what to do if you think your child or teen has a concussion or other serious brain injury. The application also includes a 3D helmet fit feature that teaches about proper helmet fit, safety and care. Download for free on iTunes or Google Play Store. For more information on concussions, check out the article on page 4 of this newsletter.

HEADS UP App

Stellar Wellness Programs *cont'd*

Denise Mungen

Denise Mungen, EcoMaine, was honored with the *Wellness Champion* award for inspiring others to be their healthiest self. She was successful by using her passion, empathy and ability to recognize and overcome barriers to meeting the health needs of employees who work shift work.



Digital Breast Tomosynthesis (3-D Mammogram) Coverage

Digital Breast Tomosynthesis (DBT), also called three-dimensional (3-D) mammography, is an advanced form of mammography, which uses a low-dose x-ray system and computer reconstructions to create three-dimensional images of the breasts. A conventional x-ray examination of the breast, called a mammogram, is two-dimensional.

Coverage for DBT is now provided under the Health Trust medical plans the same as a traditional mammogram. You should check with your medical provider to see which option is right for you. Some medical facilities do not yet have the equipment to offer DBT and may only offer the traditional mammograms.

Please contact the Health Trust Member Service Representatives at 1-800-852-8300, Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for questions or to verify the benefits on your plan.

Source: www.radiologyinfo.org

Health Trust Candidates Wanted

Would you like to serve as a Trustee for the Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust? The Health Trust's Selection Committee is soliciting names of individuals to fill a vacancy on the Board.

An eleven-member Board governs the Health Trust, and oversees its health, dental, short and long-term disability, vision and life insurance plans. The Board typically meets five times a year, including a two-day strategic planning meeting in the summer. Trustees are also expected to serve on one of the Trust's three standing committees that require additional meetings throughout the year.

In order to be considered as a Trustee candidate, you must:

1. Be employed by a Health Trust participating entity;
2. Be an enrolled participant in one of the Health Trust's benefit plans;
3. Have your employer's, board's, council's or commissioners' support for the commitment necessary to meet the fiduciary obligations of an MMEHT Trustee.

The Health Trust Board governs a complex array of employee benefit programs for local government, county and special district employees in an ever-changing insurance market environment. The Health Trust provides employee benefit programs to over 450 public sector employers around the state, with approximately 20,000 employees, dependents and retirees participating in the Trust's health plans.

The Trust is regulated as a Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangement by the state Bureau of Insurance and is one of the largest self-insured plans in the state. The Board works with a number of professional advisors, including its Plan Administrator (MMA), benefit advisor, actuary, and legal counsel, all of whom assist the Board in governing the Trust. Health Trustees serve as plan fiduciaries and, as such, must administer the Trust's programs in the interest of Trust participants. The Board is involved in many different functions, including setting annual rates, developing new plan offerings, reviewing third party administrative services, hearing benefit appeals, and analyzing claims trends. Trustees are not compensated, but they are reimbursed for their travel expenses.

If you have questions about the Health Trust Board, or you would like additional information, please contact Anne Wright, Director, Health Trust Services at awright@memun.org or 207-624-0180.

If you are interested in serving on the MMEHT Board of Trustees, please let us know by sending a resume and letter no later than July 31, 2017 indicating your interest and telling us a bit about yourself and why you wish to serve. Please send your submission addressed to Dale Olmstead, Chairperson, Health Trust Selection Committee, c/o Anne Wright, 60 Community Drive, Augusta, Maine 04330. You may also email the resume and letter to awright@memun.org.

Lyme and Other Tick-borne Diseases

Prevention is key in the fight against tick-borne disease

Tick-borne diseases are on the rise and prevention should be on everyone's mind, particularly during the spring, summer, and early-fall when ticks are most active. From May through July, people will get more tick bites and tick-borne diseases than any other time of year in the United States. It's especially important to take steps to protect yourself and your loved ones (including pets) from ticks during this season, as well as any time during warmer months when you're outside.

Many people do not know they are at risk. Each year, more than 30,000 cases of Lyme disease are reported nationwide, while studies suggest the actual number of people diagnosed with Lyme disease is more likely about 300,000. Despite these numbers, a recent national survey reported that nearly 20 percent of people surveyed in areas where Lyme disease is common were unaware that it was a risk. Additionally, half of people interviewed in another study reported that they did not routinely take steps to protect themselves against tick bites during warm weather.

Preventing Lyme and other tick-borne diseases is important every year. Predicting the number of Lyme disease or other tick-borne infections, and how an upcoming season will compare to previous years, is complicated. Ticks that spread disease to people can have up to two to three-year lifecycles, and many factors can affect their numbers, including temperature, rainfall, humidity, and the amount of available hosts for the ticks to feed on, such as mice, deer and other animals. In any given year, the number of ticks in an area will be different from region to region, state to state, and even county to county.

Take steps to protect against ticks

Taking steps to protect yourself and your family from getting a tick bite is the best defense against Lyme disease and other tick-borne infections. Whether you're working, enjoying your yard, camping, hiking, hunting or otherwise in the outdoors, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people:

- Avoid areas with high grass and leaf litter and walk in the center of trails when hiking.
- Use repellent that contains 20 percent or more DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin for protection that lasts several hours.
- Use products that contain permethrin to treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents or look for clothing pre-treated with permethrin.
- Treat dogs for ticks. Dogs are very susceptible to tick bites and to some tick-borne diseases. They may also bring ticks into your home. Tick collars, sprays, shampoos, or monthly "top spot" medications help protect against ticks.

- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors to wash off and more easily find crawling ticks before they bite you.
- Conduct a full-body tick check using a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body upon returning from tick-infested areas. Parents should help children check thoroughly for ticks. Remove any ticks right away.
- Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors. If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed.

For more information on ticks, ways to reduce your risk of tick-borne infections, and how to remove a tick properly, visit: www.cdc.gov.

Source: CDC, 2017

A Closer Look at Powassan

Powassan (POW) is a rare tick-borne disease caused by a virus. It can cause swelling in the brain (encephalitis) and in the membranes around the brain and spinal cord (meningitis). While only about 75 cases were reported in the U.S. over the last 10 years, we have had 2 confirmed cases in Maine in 2017. Powassan is rare, yet experts warn the disease could start to spread faster now that it's transmitted by the deer tick -- the same tick that spreads Lyme disease. Although the viral infection is usually mild, it can be life-threatening in a small number of people, and in severe cases, some symptoms, like weakness and memory loss, can be permanent. Signs and symptoms of infection can include fever, headache, vomiting, weakness, confusion, seizures, speech difficulties and memory loss. Long-term neurologic problems may occur. The time from the tick bite to the onset of symptoms may vary from one week to one month. There is no specific treatment, but people with severe POW virus illnesses often need to be hospitalized to receive respiratory support, intravenous fluids, or medications to reduce swelling in the brain. It is important to remember that not every tick is infected with the virus, and not everyone who is bitten will get sick. But ticks that are infected can transmit it quickly -- within minutes of attaching to a person. Lyme disease takes much longer -- 24 to 48 hours -- to spread from tick to human. Powassan is not passed from person to person, so the key is to stop the ticks from getting on you or your pets.

HEADS UP for Concussion Prevention

We often hear about concussions happening to athletes on the playing field, but everyone is at risk for a concussion at school, home, work, on the playground or doing your favorite activity. It is important you know how to spot a concussion and protect your child or other loved ones from this or other serious brain injuries.

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging the brain cells.

How do you spot a possible concussion?

After a fall or a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, look for one or more of these signs and symptoms of a concussion:

Symptoms you may notice:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Forgets instruction, is confused about what they are doing and where they are
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to or after the hit or fall

Symptoms the person may report:

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness, or double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Confusion, or concentration or memory problems
- Just not "feeling right," or "feeling down"

If you see any of these signs or symptoms and think your loved one has a concussion or other serious brain injury, seek medical attention right away. Remember, signs and symptoms may show up right after the injury, or may not appear or be noticed until hours or days after the in-



jury. While most people with a concussion feel better within a couple of weeks, some will have symptoms for months or longer.

For more information and ways to protect your family from the dangers of concussions, go to www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP

Danger Signs to Look Out For!

In rare cases, a dangerous collection of blood (hematoma) may form in the brain after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body and can squeeze the brain against the skull. Call 9-1-1 or ensure that the person is taken to the emergency department right away if he or she has one or more of these danger signs:

- One pupil is larger than the other
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away
- Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea, convulsions, or seizures
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Loss of consciousness - even for a brief moment

A Few Simple Ways to Stay Hydrated this Summer

Many people are so busy that they barely have time to eat, let alone pause for a water break. Since the body is made up primarily of water, it is especially important to stay hydrated so that the body can work at full capacity. Here are a few tips you can try to make hydration a habit this summer:

- Drink at least two large glasses of water right when you wake up.
- Carry a large water bottle and refill it several times throughout the day.
- Eat fruits and vegetables at every meal/snack because they have a high water content.
- Reserve sports drinks for workouts over an hour in duration and of moderate intensity as well as in the heat and humidity, or if you lose a lot of salt in your sweat. These drinks contain energy (calories) in the form of sugar and electrolytes lost in sweat.
- Weigh yourself before and after a workout. Weight loss equals sweat loss. Drink 16-20 oz. of fluid for every pound lost during the activity.

Remember to keep an eye on your elderly family members and neighbors as well as infants and small children. These groups tend to dehydrate quicker. You can also add some lemon or fruit to your water for flavor, if you need it. Drink up and enjoy your summer well hydrated.

Resource: www.sanfordhealth.org



The All Star Super Food: The Avocado

Avocados are considered one of the most nutrient dense, powerful super foods. They are high in fiber and ounce for ounce they top the charts among all fruits for folate, potassium, vitamin E and magnesium.

Avocados have been cultivated for thousands of years. A favorite of the Aztecs, they were originally native to Central America. There are generally two types of avocados available in U.S. markets today, the Hass avocado from California and the West Indian avocado from Florida. Hass avocados are nutty, buttery and rich in healthy monounsaturated oil (18 to 30 percent oil in each avocado). The light green Florida avocado is larger and juicier than the Hass variety, but it is less buttery, considerably lower in oil (3 to 5 percent oil) and has roughly 25 to 50 percent less fat than the Hass variety.

The delicious healthy monounsaturated fat in the avocado is one of its biggest Super Food health claims. The only other fruit with a comparable amount of monounsaturated fat is the olive. The monounsaturated fat in avocados is oleic acid, which helps lower cholesterol. One study found that after seven days on a diet that included avocados, there were significant decreases in both total and LDL (“bad”) cholesterol, as well as an 11 percent increase in the “good” HDL cholesterol.

Avocados offer nearly 20 vitamins and minerals in every serving, including potassium (helps control blood pressure), lutein (good for your eyes), and folate (crucial for cell repair and during pregnancy). Avocados are a good source of B vitamins, which help you fight off disease and infection. They also give you vitamins C and E, plus natural plant chemicals that may help prevent cancer. Avocados are low in sugar and they contain fiber, which helps you feel full longer. Avocados are high in fat. But it’s a monounsaturated fat, which is a “good” fat that helps lower bad cholesterol, as long as you eat them in moderation. Avocados have a lot of calories. The recommended serving size is smaller than you’d expect: 1/5 of a medium avocado (or 1 ounce) is 50 calories.

Store avocados at room temperature, keeping in mind that they can take 4 to 5 days to ripen. To speed up the ripening process, put them in a paper bag along with an apple or banana. When the outside skins are black or dark purple and yield to gentle pressure, they’re ready to eat or refrigerate. Wash them before cutting so dirt and bacteria aren’t transferred from the knife onto the pulp.

While guacamole is the most popular way to eat avocado, you can also puree and toss with pasta, substitute for butter or oil in your favorite baked good recipes, spread or slice onto sandwiches or salads or toss a serving size into a smoothie. Enjoy one of the many ways to eat an avocado and digest a considerable amount of nutrition at the same time.

Resource: www.superfoodsrx.com



Are You Sabotaging Yourself?

When it comes to healthy eating, sometimes we are our own worst enemy. It is easy to overeat on our calories without even knowing it. Check out these tips to become more mindful about what enters your mouth:

- No more mindless eating. Research consistently shows that people who eat while watching TV, reading or just listening to music eat about 10% more at any given meal than they would if they were focused on their food -- and they go on to eat up to 25% more total calories over the course of the day.
- Don't eat so fast. You'll eat 15% less or about 112 fewer calories, in a meal by just doubling the number of times you chew before swallowing. That could add up to an extra half-pound lost every week.
- Don't eat to soothe overwrought emotions. Emotional eating often leads to eating too much high-calorie, high-sugar and high-fat food.
- Start reading labels so you can measure out exact portions with measuring tools. "Guesstimating" or just eyeballing them can put you over your true calorie needs every day.
- Use a journal to keep track of the calories in the actual portions you eat.
- Don't use other family members as an excuse to buy tempting treats that you'll just end up eating. Everyone will benefit from healthier foods like fruit.

For more information and healthy eating tips, visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration www.fda.gov

Source: Health Day News, 2017



How harmful is too much sitting?

Sitting for long periods of time has been linked to a number of health concerns, including obesity, heart disease and even cancer. It's time to step away from the computer and move. According to one study, people who spend more than four hours a day in front of a screen of any kind (TV, computer, video games) have a higher risk of early death in general and a higher risk of events related to heart disease, such as chest pain or heart attack. But sitting in front of the TV isn't the only concern. Any extended sitting such as behind a desk at work or behind the wheel of a vehicle can be harmful. What's more, even fitting in some moderate or vigorous activity doesn't seem to significantly offset the risk of sitting most of the time.

The solution? Sit less and move more overall. You might start by simply standing rather than sitting whenever you have the chance. Try standing while talking on the phone or eating lunch. If you work at a desk for long periods of time, get up and take a quick stretch break or brisk walk down the hall or around your parking lot. Speak to your supervisor about trying a walking meeting instead of sitting down around a table for an hour. Studies show when people get out in nature they tend to be more productive, creative and focused.

The impact of movement, even leisurely movement can be profound. For starters, you'll burn more calories which can lead to weight loss and increased energy and production. Plus, the muscle activity needed for standing and other movement seems to trigger important reactions related to the breakdown of fats and sugars within the body. When you sit, these responses stall and your health risks increase. When you're standing or actively moving, you kick the processes back into action.

Pay attention to how long you have been sitting whether in a car or sitting at a desk. Get up and move, whether a quick walk down the hall or around the building. If driving, pull over at the next rest stop and stretch. Overall, you will feel much better with some movement and stretching.

Reference: www.mayoclinic.org and www.webmd.com

Meatless Meals

Cutting down on animal protein does more than cut calories – it lowers your cholesterol and blood pressure, as well as your risk of developing heart disease, diabetes and cancer. The vegetables, legumes and whole grains that will replace the meat help protect you from developing these chronic conditions too.

Most Americans get enough protein in their diets. Adults generally need 10 to 35 percent of their total daily calories to come from protein. The Dietary Guidelines recommend choosing a variety of protein foods including eggs, low-fat milk and products made from it, beans and peas, soy products and unsalted nuts and seeds.

You don't have to go cold turkey. Instead, try easing into meatless meals. Consider going meatless one day a week. If you don't like the idea of a whole day without meat, start with a couple of meatless dinners each week. Plan meals that feature entrees you like that are typically meatless such as lasagna, soup, pasta or salad. Or try substituting the following protein-rich foods for meat in your favorite recipes:

- Beans and legumes – great in casserole and salads
- Vegetarian refried beans – a good substitute for meat in burritos and tacos
- Tofu – a perfect addition to stir-fry dishes

When your meals do include meat, don't overindulge. Choose lean cuts and avoid oversized portions. A serving of protein should be no more than 3 ounces – or about the size of a deck of cards – and should take up no more than one-fourth of your plate. Vegetables and fruits should cover half of your plate. Whole grains should make up the rest.

The term “flexitarian” has been coined to describe someone who eats mostly plant-based foods, but occasionally eats meat, poultry and fish. That kind of healthy eating is the central theme of the Mediterranean Diet – which limits red meat and emphasizes fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains and healthy fats – and has been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease and other chronic conditions.



Avocado and Black Bean Salad

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 4

Ingredients

2-3 avocados, chopped

1 (15 ½ ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed

1 (10 ounce package) package frozen white corn, cooked and drained

¼ cup onion, chopped

3 roma tomatoes, chopped

¼ cup cilantro, chopped

½ lime juice, freshly squeezed

1 dash coarse salt

1 dash olive oil

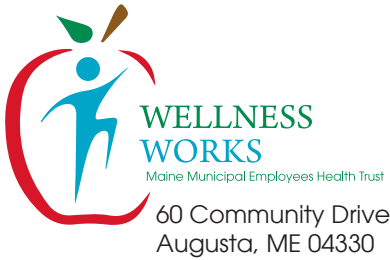
Directions

Mix together all of the above ingredients. Refrigerate for a couple of hours and serve cold.

Nutritional Facts (per serving):

410 calories; Total Fat: 16.9 g; Saturated Fat: 2.5 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 44.9 mg; Carbohydrates: 60 g; Fiber: 18 g; Sugar: 2 g; Protein: 14 g

Source: www.food.com



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FAST FACTS



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**MAINE IS
THE LEADING
PRODUCER
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**WITH 91.9
MILLION POUNDS
(2012)**

North America provides
nearly **90%** of world
blueberry production.

Wild blueberries contain
2 times the
antioxidants of regular
(cultivated) blueberries.

Wild blueberries are grown on
60,000
acres in Maine.