



# WELLNESS WORKS

## *around the state*

MAINE MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH TRUST

WINTER 2012

### 9 Things You Can Do to Get Better Care

- 1. Talk with your doctor or nurse.** Talk with your doctor or nurse about what matters to you. Share your beliefs and preferences for care. Ask questions. Make a list of all the questions you want to ask. Bring the list to each appointment and write down the answers. If you don't understand, ask again until you do.
- 2. Don't go it alone.** Take a friend or family member along to medical appointments. They can listen, take notes and help you remember what was said.
- 3. Learn about the best treatments for your condition.** A lot of research has been done on what care works best for chronic conditions like asthma, diabetes and heart disease. For many conditions, clear standards for treatment exist. Become familiar with what works for your condition. Learning more helps you understand what your doctor might look for and recommend. It will help you follow recommendations, and will help you know what questions you want to ask during your appointment.
- 4. Find and use quality information to make health care decisions.** Use information in publicly available reports to make decisions about doctors and hospitals. Look for a doctor who appears to provide the care you want for you and your family and who is willing to work with you to make decisions. Look for a hospital that is highly rated by consumer groups or other organizations and has lots of experience treating your condition. Use the **GetBetterMaine** website, [www.getbettermaine.org](http://www.getbettermaine.org), to compare Maine doctors and hospitals.
- 5. Have one doctor or nurse coordinate your care.** To make sure you get the right amount of the right kind of care, you need help coordinating your care. With one doctor or nurse who knows about all of the care you're getting, you're more likely to get the care you need and not get the care that might be harmful. For example, someone who knows about all your care might prevent you from getting prescriptions from different doctors for drugs that have harmful interactions. Or it might prevent you from repeating a test.
- 6. Create a medication list.** List all medications and supplements you currently take, including over-the-counter medicines, prescriptions, vitamins and herbal remedies. Bring your medication list with you to every doctor appointment.
- 7. Ask your doctor or nurse if they use health information technology.** Electronic medical records help track and share your medical information with your other health care providers. Tracking information electronically, rather than on paper means that the information your doctor needs is available all of the time, no matter where you are. This can reduce errors and unnecessary tests.
- 8. Know the difference between more care and better care.** Studies have shown that getting more care doesn't mean that you are getting better care. Sometimes getting more care can actually do more harm or expose you to unnecessary risks. If you think you may be getting more care than you need, you can protect yourself by asking, "How will this help me? What will we find out from this test?"
- 9. Take responsibility for your health care.** Find and review reports of physician and hospital performance. Work as a partner with your doctor or nurse to ensure you're getting the best care. Talk with your doctor or nurse about your health care goals and follow through on their recommendations.

Please see important  
*2012 Medical Plans Updates*  
on Page 2.



### *Winter 2012*

#### What's Inside:

2012 Medical Plan Updates.....	2
TDES® Graduate Finds Health and Saves Money.....	3
Telephonic Diabetes Education and Support Program .....	3
Getting Started and Sticking with Exercise.....	4
Walk-in Centers Can be a Smart Choice.....	4
Homework Tips for Parents.....	5
Health Trust Staff Update .....	5
Do You Know Your Numbers? .....	6
The Power of Plants .....	6
"Little" Efforts with a Big Impact ....	7
Easy Tortellini Soup .....	7
Newsletter Search Contest.....	8

# 2012 Medical Plan Updates

## New Pediatric Fluoride Coverage at Well-Child Visits Effective January 1, 2012

The Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust joins other Maine plan sponsors and large employers in supporting the *From the First Tooth* initiative by adding coverage for fluoride varnish treatments under the Trust medical plans for young children at well-child visits with their healthcare providers. Effective January 1, 2012, the Trust medical plans (excluding the Trust Retiree Group Companion plan) will include preventive service coverage for fluoride applications (up to two per calendar year) for children up to age 48 months administered by healthcare providers. Under most circumstances, the preventive service provisions cover the treatment at 100%. Please contact an MMEHT Member Service Representative at 1-800-852-8300 or [htservice@memun.org](mailto:htservice@memun.org) should you want to verify coverage for your provider or medical plan.

*From the First Tooth* (FTFT) is a prevention initiative whose goal is to improve the oral health of Maine children. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that all children have their first oral health check up by age one. FTFT staff train healthcare providers all over the state how to do a basic oral health assessment, apply a fluoride treatment to all newly erupted teeth, coach parents how to properly care for their child's mouth, and referral to a dental home. The FTFT initiative helps to build the capacity needed to ensure that all children can meet the AAP standard, and that they have access to early oral health care – *from the first tooth*. Please visit [www.fromthefirsttooth.org](http://www.fromthefirsttooth.org) for additional information.



## Check Your Home Mailbox For Important Information

### Replacement Medical ID Cards

Thank you for your patience. Due to year end processing, it is taking a bit longer to produce new 2012 medical identification cards for employees and dependents reflecting the new prescription drug copayments and plan elections. New cards are expected to be issued this quarter. Please remember to show your providers your new card once you receive it. (Please note that Medicare retirees already received their updated cards.)

In the short term, if you are currently on the MMEHT health insurance, you can continue to use your existing identification card for prescriptions and medical claims.

If you are a new member and have an upcoming appointment or need a prescription, please contact a MMEHT Member Service Representative at 1-800-852-8300 to obtain more information and/or a temporary identification card.



### AnthemEAP Wallet Card and Brochure

Life is not always easy. But when the going gets tough, Anthem Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is one place you can turn to for help from caring, experienced professionals. For employees whose employers offer the Trust medical insurance, Anthem EAP can offer information and advice to help solve a wide range of problems – from relationship and family concerns, anxiety, depression, alcohol and drug abuse, stress, grief and even financial, legal, child care and elder care issues.

Anthem EAP provides employees and dependents:

- **Free confidential assistance 24 hours day, 7 days a week.**
- **Up to 3 free face-to-face counseling visits per employee/household member per issue.**
- **On-line resources.**

You never know when you might need help which is why you will receive a brochure with a wallet card soon. But, why wait? To see what AnthemEAP can do for you, visit [www.anthemEAP.com](http://www.anthemEAP.com) for a ten minute orientation video or call 1-800-657-9151.

## TDES® Graduate Finds Health and Saves Money

Recent Telephonic Diabetes Education and Support (TDES®) program graduate **Karen Dunton** says, “Thanks to the support from TDES®, I have lost 15 pounds and brought my A1C (average blood sugar level) from 10.2 to a healthy 7.6!” Please read more from her telephone interview conducted by Medical Care Development, the administrator of the program.

- **Please tell us about yourself and how the Telephonic Diabetes Education and Support Program® (TDES®) helped you.** *My work in two different towns and caring for six animals at home keeps me very busy. I felt out of control and my blood sugar level was too high. I started the TDES® program to save money and found I was getting a lot more!*
- **What interested you in the TDES® Program?** *I read about the TDES® diabetes educators in the MMEHT newsletter. I decided to enroll after learning how they help people manage their diabetes.*
- **How did your application and enrollment go?** *I met with Lori at St Joseph’s Hospital and she was helpful right from the start. Lori went over the program and gave me a workbook about diabetes. During our monthly calls, I received advice and support that kept me on the track to success.*
- **What do you do differently since TDES®?** *I added fun to my busy life. I recently purchased a Wii (indoor exercise game) and can’t wait to work in my garden this spring.*
- **What else do you like about the TDES® program?** *I feel lucky that a nurse at my doctor’s office also helps me with my health goals. The two services worked very well together.*
- **What would you tell fellow members of MMEHT or co-workers about TDES®?** *The financial aspect helped my pocketbook; the support system helped my life! It worked for me- I say sign-up today!*

We thank Ms. Dunton for publically sharing her story, congratulate her for completing the TDES® program offered through the Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust medical plans, and commend her for her inspirational commitment to her health and wellness.

Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live.

-Jim Rohn

### Telephonic Diabetes Education and Support® Program

⇨ Continued for 2012 ⇨

The Health Trust continues to offer a pilot program where voluntary participants are offered financial incentives (waiver of co-pays for medications and supplies) to complete a 12-month telephonic diabetes self-management program with a local educator (one in-person visit and 12 monthly calls) administered by Medical Care Development in Augusta.

Health Trust participants, early retirees, and adult family members between the ages of 18 and 65, not enrolled in Medicare, being treated for Type 1 Diabetes, Type 2 Diabetes, or Pre-Diabetes are invited to participate. The program is available through 2012 with voluntary rolling admission throughout the year.

For additional information, please contact Health Trust Member Service at 1-800-852-8300 or email to [htservice@memun.org](mailto:htservice@memun.org) or visit our website at [www.mmeht.org](http://www.mmeht.org) and click on “What’s New.”

# Getting Started and Sticking with Exercise

The hardest part to any exercise program is getting started then sticking with it. Try some of the tips and strategies mentioned in this article to fit exercise into your life in a simple, painless way.

## Start Small and Start Where You Are

Exercise is not an *all or none* endeavor. It is a continuum. Keep in mind that a little is better than none and you can do something today, so don't worry about what you will do next month. This perspective is hard for anyone who expects a lot from themselves and sets long-term fitness goals. Don't expect results overnight. But do expect to take small steps every day. Your exercise program doesn't need to be elaborate. It doesn't require you to join a gym or sweat for an hour every day. Look at your current routine and you may discover you already walk 15 minutes at a time taking the dog around the block or walking to the store for milk. That's exercise. You can use that as a jumpstart and add another 5 minutes or walk at a faster pace – start from where you are.

## Go Low Tech

Technology is a wonderful thing, but much of it reduces us to very lazy people. If you want to fit activity into your daily life, just go low-tech and you will probably burn another few hundred calories a day. Walk or ride your bike for errands, take the stairs, mow your lawn with a push mower, give up your television remote and actually get up to change the channel, walk down the hall to your co-workers office rather than calling.

## Surround Yourself with Good Role Models

If all your friends are couch potatoes, odds are you will have a hard time becoming active while hanging out with them. If you surround yourself with people who are healthy and active, odds are it will be easy for you to stay active as well. Peer pressure is a wonderful thing if you use it in positive ways!

## Set Weekly Goals and Write it Down

Check in with yourself each week by setting attainable, yet realistic goals. Try to set a plan to go faster, farther or longer with your routine. You can even set nutrition goals such as getting 5 servings of fruit and vegetables each day. Your goal can be as simple as taking a daily 15 minute walk or as intense as completing your first marathon. Only you know what is realistic for you. Keep an exercise log book. Simply writing down what you did, how long and how you felt can be great motivation. Not only can you view your progress and look back at your accomplishments, but you can plan ahead and decide where you want to be in a week, a month or more.

## Make Exercise Part of Your Daily Routine

Rather than trying to go to the gym, or squeeze in more time for exercise look for ways you can add exercise to what you already do. Walk the dog, bike to the store or to work, do crunches or push-ups during commercials, pedal your exercise bike during your favorite TV show, meet friends for walking dates rather than dinner and drinks. If you are creative, you will realize you don't need to change your routine much to fit exercise into your life.



For more information on exercise try [www.acsm.com](http://www.acsm.com) or [www.nscs.com](http://www.nscs.com)

---

## Walk-in Centers Can be a Smart Choice

Emergency room (ER) wait times are at an all-time high, and ER visits could cost more than you think. If it's not a true emergency, you can get quality care — and often be seen faster — at a walk-in center. Your costs are usually lower at these clinics, too.

### Get care sooner.

The average wait time in a hospital emergency room is three hours — and many times care could have been handled in a walk-in center. Wait times are usually much shorter at walk-in clinics. And they're often less crowded, more comfortable places.

### Get the care you need.

Walk-in centers have the same types of nurses, doctor's assistants and doctors you'd see in an emergency room or at your doctor's office.

### Make the smart choice when you need care quickly, but your life isn't in danger.

Most walk-in centers can treat problems like minor cuts and burns, sprains and strains, sports injuries, sore throats, earaches and flu. Some places can give X-rays or run other tests on site, so they can let you know quickly if you need more specialized care.

### You don't need an appointment or referral.

You'll pay a specialist copay at a walk-in center. To find your specific costs and coverage, call MMEHT at 1-800-852-8300 or visit us at [www.mmeht.org](http://www.mmeht.org) and click on "What's New." Then just walk right in when you need urgent or after-hours care.

### Know the emergency rule of thumb.

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room if you think delaying care could put your health at serious risk.

# Homework Tips for Parents

Homework can have many benefits for children. It can improve remembering and understanding of schoolwork. Homework can help students develop study skills that will be of value even after they leave school. It can teach them that learning takes place anywhere, not just in the classroom. Homework can benefit children in more general ways as well. It can foster positive character traits such as independence and responsibility. Homework can teach children how to manage time. Below are some strategies to help maximize the benefits.

- **Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework.** Avoid having your child do homework with the television on or in places with other distractions, such as people coming and going.
- **Make sure the materials your child needs, such as paper, pencils and a dictionary are available.** Ask your child if special materials will be needed for some projects and get them in advance.
- **Help your child with time management.** Establish a set time each day for doing homework. Don't let your child leave homework until just before bedtime. Think about using a weekend morning or afternoon for working on big projects, especially if the project involves getting together with classmates.
- **Be positive about homework.** Tell your child how important school is. The attitude you express about homework will be the attitude your child acquires.
- **When your child does homework, you do homework.** Show your child that the skills they are learning are related to things you do as an adult. If your child is reading, you read too. If your child is doing math, balance your checkbook.
- **When your child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers.** Giving answers means your child will not learn the material. Too much help teaches your child that when the going gets rough, someone will do the work for him or her.
- **When the teacher asks that you play a role in homework, do it.** Cooperate with the teacher. It shows your child that the school and home are a team. Follow the directions given by the teacher.
- **If the homework is meant to be done by your child alone, stay away.** Too much parent involvement can prevent homework from having some positive effects. Homework is a great way for kids to develop independent, lifelong learning skills.
- **Stay informed.** Talk with your child's teacher. Make sure you know the purpose of homework and what your child's class rules are.
- **Help your child figure out what is hard homework and what is easy homework.** Have your child do the hard work first. This will mean he will be most alert when facing the biggest challenges. Easy material will seem to go fast when fatigue begins to set in.
- **Watch your child for signs of failure and frustration.** Let your child take a short break if she is having trouble keeping her mind on an assignment.
- **Reward progress in homework.** If your child has been successful in homework completion and is working hard, celebrate that with a special event (i.e. family game night, a trip to the ice cream store) to reinforce the positive effort.

Source: U.S. Department of Education



---

## Health Trust Staff Update

Please join us in welcoming *Dawn Thomas* as a new **Health Trust Billing and Enrollment Representative**. Recently returning to Maine from California, Dawn has more than a decade of experience in business administration in the medical field. Dawn replaces Melanie Ingraham who left the Trust in December to pursue another career opportunity.

# Do You Know Your Numbers?

How many numbers do you have circulating in your head during the course of the day – phone numbers, PIN numbers, important dates, etc.? But do you know the heart health numbers that could literally save your life?

There are three key numbers you need to know to help reduce your risk of heart disease, they are:

1. Your blood pressure
2. Your cholesterol levels
3. Your waist size

Healthy numbers mean a healthy heart. If you follow a healthy lifestyle -- eat a balanced diet, get regular exercise, and avoid smoking – you can even turn bad numbers around.

## **Blood Pressure:**

Blood pressure consists of two numbers. Your *systolic* pressure measures the pressure of blood against artery walls when the heart pumps blood out during a heartbeat, while the *diastolic* pressure measures the same pressure between heartbeats, when the heart fills with blood. Both of these numbers are important, just because one is normal doesn't mean you're off the hook. These are the numbers you are looking for:

- Normal blood pressure is below 120/80.
- Pre-hypertension is 120 to 139 (systolic) and/or 80 to 89 (diastolic).
- Hypertension – also known as high blood pressure – is 140 or higher (systolic) and 90 or higher (diastolic).

One in three adults in the U.S. – about 74 million people – has high blood pressure or pre-hypertension.

## **Cholesterol:**

Cholesterol isn't all bad -- it's a type of fat that's actually a nutrient. But as you've probably heard, there's "good" cholesterol and "bad" cholesterol. When we measure cholesterol and blood fats, we're really talking about three different numbers: HDL, LDL, and triglycerides. They combine to give you a "lipid profile" score, but the three individual scores are most important. Here are the numbers to strive for:

- Total cholesterol of 200 mg/dL or lower.
- HDL ("good" cholesterol) of 50 mg/dL or higher, if you're a woman, or 40 mg/dL or higher, if you're a man.
- Optimal LDL is 100 mg/dL or lower. If you have other major risk factors, like pre-existing cardiovascular disease or diabetes, your doctor may want your LDL closer to 70 mg/dL.
- Triglycerides of less than 150 mg/dL.

## **Waist Size:**

Waist size is perhaps the most important number for you to remember. It is not your pant size; rather it is the size of your midsection – around your belly button! This is what you need to know:

- If your waist size is equal to or more than 35 inches in women and equal to or more than 40 inches in men, it increases your risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, metabolic problems, high blood pressure and abnormal cholesterol.
- It's easy to measure yourself. Just get a non-elastic tape and measure around your belly button.

If you don't know what these numbers are, be sure to discuss it with your health care provider when you go in for your annual physical. Knowledge is Power!

Source: WebMD

---

## The Power of Plants

In the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the USDA recommended a switch to "a more plant-based diet." Despite this recommendation, however, many Americans continue to load their plates with heavy portions of animal proteins and fat. Research shows that cutting back on animal-based foods may help prevent or treat chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer, but you don't need to go completely vegan to reap the health benefits. Here are some simple ways to work more vegetables into your meals:

- Buy frozen. Fresh fruits and vegetables can be expensive and really not tasty during the off season here in Maine. So save your money and preserve the flavor of the food by buying frozen fruits and veggies that are packaged without any salt, sugar, or added sauces!
- Start your meal with a salad. This is a sure way to increase the vegetables in your diet and fill you up!
- Add vegetables to your favorite foods; whether it is a pizza, a casserole or your favorite soup...simply add some more vegetables to add more flavor and nutrition to your meal.
- Double your normal portion of vegetables with your meals.

(Continued on Page 7)

# “Little” Efforts with a Big Impact

This quarter we would like to recognize the efforts of all the wellness committees across the state. These wellness committees have made great efforts in motivating and educating employees in their workplaces to improve their health. Across the state of Maine there are 79 active wellness committees that utilize grant money provided by the Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust (MMEHT). Grant money is based on the size of the employer groups, which currently range in size from 10 employees to over 300 employees. To qualify for the Wellness Incentive Grant, each group must form a wellness committee made up of representatives from each major department. The committee then works in coordination with the MMEHT to set goals and objectives that will meet the needs and interests of participants.

Over the years, we have seen a lot of creativity from groups- many of which we have highlighted in this newsletter. While we typically feature the “big” ideas and efforts, it should not go unrecognized that several of our groups do “little” things that create big change. For example, in the fall some groups have put together and distributed “Flu Survival Kits” to get employees thinking about flu prevention. The kits include items like hand sanitizer, tissues, cough drops and handouts on flu prevention. Often times this type of creativity is followed up with a class offered by MMEHT, in this case, it was a class entitled “The Flu and You.”

Other groups have shown appreciation for their Public Works crews who frequently work well beyond their normal hours during the winter season. Often times these crews work long hours, driving in poor weather conditions without a lot of time to stop and eat. Wellness groups have brought in chili or soups to leave at the Public Works Garage for the employees to enjoy when they come back to the garage. Other groups have put together healthy on-the-go meals for the crews to take in the vehicles with them during the storm season.

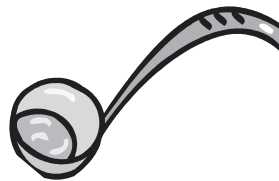
Big or small, no wellness effort goes unnoticed by the employees or by MMEHT. We appreciate the efforts of all our wellness groups throughout the year to improve the overall well-being of each of us!

*A grant from Wellness Works, the health education and promotion program of Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust, provided the necessary funding to help offset the cost of the interventions that these group offer. If you would like more information on how to get a Wellness Program started at your worksite, please contact Anne Charles at 1-800-852-8300 or via e-mail at [acharles@memun.org](mailto:acharles@memun.org).*

## Easy Tortellini Soup

**Prep/Total Time:** 30 minutes **Yield:** 6 servings

1 medium onion, chopped  
1 tsp. olive oil  
1 garlic clove, minced  
2 cans (14 ½ oz, each) reduced-sodium chicken broth  
1 can (14 ½ oz) diced tomatoes, undrained  
(sodium-free if you prefer)  
1 pkg (9 oz) refrigerated cheese tortellini or tortellini of your choice  
3 cups chopped fresh spinach  
1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar  
¼ tsp. pepper  
Shredded Parmesan cheese, optional



### Want to Increase the Veggies?

This is a great soup recipe to add some extra vegetables to. Simply open your vegetable drawer and add anything... carrots, celery, zucchini, peppers...you can't go wrong!

1. In a Dutch oven, sauté onion in oil till tender. Add garlic; cook 1 minute longer. Stir in broth and tomatoes. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Add tortellini; cook for 7-9 minutes or until tender. Stir in spinach, vinegar and pepper. Cook and stir until heated through and spinach is wilted. Sprinkle with cheese.

**Nutrient Facts:** 1 cup (calculated without cheese) equals 178 calories, 4 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 18 mg cholesterol, 652 mg sodium, 27 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 9 g protein. **Diabetic Exchanges:** 1 starch, 1 lean meat, 1 vegetable.

*(The Power of Plants – Continued from Page 6)*

- If you are eating out, ask for steamed vegetables instead of French fries.
- Add fruit to the top of your cereal or oatmeal in the morning.
- Snack on fresh fruits or vegetables instead of packaged or processed foods.
- Look for vegetable based or vegetarian recipes to try- you may be surprised by how good it tastes!

Remember, any vegetable or fruit is better than none! So start somewhere and add a little bit extra to every meal and snack to improve your overall health.



## WELLNESS WORKS

Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust  
60 Community Drive  
Augusta, ME 04330

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

Visit our website at  
[www.mmeht.org](http://www.mmeht.org)

---

The **WELLNESS WORKS Around the State** Newsletter is a publication of the Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust (MMEHT), 60 Community Drive, Augusta, ME 04330. Editor: Anne Charles; Desktop Publishing: Sally Joy; Contributing Writers: Karen Childs, Amanda Collins, Abby DiPasqualem, Danielle Yale and Lisa Rigoulot. Phone: 1-800-852-8300.

---

### Newsletter Search Contest

Do you want a chance to win a Wellness Works backpack? Take a few minutes and answer the following questions (all answers can be found in articles in this newsletter). Send the answers along with your name, address and phone number to: Wellness Works, 60 Community Drive, Augusta, Maine 04330. You can also e-mail your answers to us at: **wellness@memun.org**. Entries must be received by March 15, 2012. One winner will be drawn at random.

Congratulations to Juliene Hart, an employee from Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, who won the Fall Newsletter Search Contest!

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer (or former employer, if you are a retiree): \_\_\_\_\_

1. What are the three key numbers to help reduce your risk of heart disease? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What are three examples of low-tech exercise efforts? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What are three ways to ensure that a child benefits from homework? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What website can you visit to find how a hospital or doctor rates? \_\_\_\_\_

