



Wellness Matters May 2011

The wellness newsletter of the Scantic Valley Regional Health Trust

May is National Employee Health and Fitness Month

WALKING WORKS

Let's celebrate National Employee Health and Fitness Month with some walking!!! The Scantic Valley Regional Health Trust Wellness Program, in partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, is launching *Walking Works*® on May 16, 2011. This 4-week challenge is a great way to get moving and have fun at the same time.

As a Walking Works participant you log your activities (on-line) over the 4-week period. You'll be able to monitor you own progress along the cross country route and see the progress of others' in the program. You will receive email tips and suggestions to help you along the way. Don't miss this fun and exciting opportunity to make strides towards better health and fitness!

Everyone who accumulates 600 minutes of walking (or jogging, cycling, swimming) over the 4 week period will earn a long sleeve Wellness Program t-shirt.

THIS IS NOT A GROUP WALKING PROGRAM.

Although we encourage you to meet up with friends, you will track the walking you do any-time, anywhere.

[Hurry! Register by Thursday, May 12!](#)

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HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT (HRA)

Most people know that genetics and environment can impact their health. But few realize that BEHAVIOR has the most impact of all.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| -Alcohol | -Physical Activity |
| -Blood Pressure | -Stress |
| -Cholesterol | -Tobacco |
| -Diabetes | -Weight |
| -Nutrition | -Injury Prevention |
| -Personal Safety | -Skin Protection |

SVRHT Wellness Program encourages you to complete your own HRA by August 31, 2011. If you do your name will go into a drawing for on of 20- \$25 gift cards. The drawing will take place on September 15, 2011.

There are separate instructions for Blue Cross Blue Shield and Health New England members. If you are not insured through either of these groups you can use the Health New England HRA. To participate contact Amy to have the appropriate link sent to you via email. In your message please say "HNE" or "BCBS".

amyhiggins2003@yahoo.com or 847.0249

A Few Thoughts on National Employee Health and Fitness Month

This national health observance is dedicated to you—the employee. Consider honoring this mission by creating Healthy Moments and forming Healthy Groups. Some examples:

Healthy Moments are occasions of healthy eating, physical activity, or personal/environmental health— such as going for a walk; having a healthy lunch together; participating in an exercise class or Walking Works; quitting smoking; completing a Health Risk Assessment and going to the doctor.

Healthy Groups are formed to create a sustainable activity continuing even beyond the month of May. Examples include: walking, jogging or cycling interest groups; healthy recipe or healthy lunch clubs; sports teams.

(<http://www.physicalfitness.org/nehf.html>)

Share your healthy moments and occasions on our Facebook page. To "LIKE" us on Facebook, go to scantichealth.org and link to

Scantic Valley Regional Health Trust Wellness.

This newsletter has 2 pages.

Wellness Notes

In the first quarter of 2011 employees all around the region have shown impressive commitment to wellness. The SVRHT Wellness Program kicked off the New Year with it's annual *Biggest Loser Challenge*. Of the 125 employees who participated in the program 25 lost at least 3% of their overall body weight. The 5 "Biggest Losers" dropped between 6-9% and earned \$50 each! Personal accounts expressed that the incentive and friendly competition led to an increase in physical activity, increased consumption of veggies, fruits and whole grains, and a decrease in foods high in fat, sugar and salt.

Do you want to hear more fabulous news? Twenty-two of your colleagues have attempted to quit smoking in 2011! So far 7 people have reached the important milestone of 8 weeks smoke free. That is a 31% quit rate. WOW! Not only have these individuals committed to improving their health and saved hundreds of dollars personally, but they have contributed to healthier work and home environments and potentially saved thousands of dollars in health care costs to our work community.

Now that Spring is here are you ready to shed some layers and enjoy the sunshine? In honor of National Employee Health and Fitness Month, we will again partner with Blue Cross Blue Shield to offer Walking Works. This is a self-directed activity program that you can do anytime, anywhere. Check out "Put Your Best Foot Forward" for a list of reasons why walking is one of the best activities you can do to improve your health. Then get out there and get started. (Don't forget your sunscreen!)

This is also a perfect time of year to work on improving areas of health that we might have neglected during the busy holiday times and months of being cooped up indoors. If you are ready to get focused, start by completing your Health Risk Assessment. This tool (see page 1) will help you chart a course to make the healthy changes you need and deserve.

If you have any wellness-related questions please get in touch.

amyhiggins2003@yahoo.com or 847-0249

Put Your Best Foot Forward

Forget "no pain, no gain." Research shows that regular, brisk walking can reduce the risk of heart attack by the same amount as more vigorous exercise, like jogging.

Walking is an easy, safe and inexpensive way to get and stay in shape. Like other exercise, walking can improve your health by:

- reducing your stress level
- improving blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- improving strength and balance to prevent falls for those with osteoporosis
- lowering risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, stroke, breast and colon cancer, and osteoporosis
- making you stronger and more fit
- causing a surge in your brain's endorphin and serotonin levels that will lift your mood
- helping you manage your weight

(From Purdue University Benefits and Worklife Programs)

What's in Your Oatmeal?

Oatmeal is touted as being a healthy breakfast option. It is high in fiber, and low in salt, sugar and fat. But don't be fooled when you aren't the



one making your breakfast. Check out this link for a look at how McDonalds fruit and maple oatmeal stacks up against various other foods...yikes!

<http://www.fitsugar.com/Nutritional-Value-McDonalds->

SCANTICHEALTH.ORG



Scantic Valley Regional Health Trust

All municipal employees in Hampden, Wilbraham, HWRSD, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow and LPVEC may participate in any of the programs listed in any location. Family members and friends are also invited to participate.