

Healthcare Insights

Quarterly Newsletter for Employee Wellness
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20/20 Healthcare Vision



Healthy Tips

- Antioxidants help prevent cancer by neutralizing free radicals. Fruits, veggies, nuts and seeds are often rich in antioxidants.
- Generic drugs have the same active ingredients as name brand, yet cost a fraction of the price.
- Beans are a healthy source of fiber and protein. Dried and bagged beans have less sodium than canned.

To-Do List

Make physical activity a priority on your to-do list!

Block off time almost every day to do at least 20-30 minutes of moderate level activity, like walking during breaks or lunch.

If you're a morning person, exercise before work to get your blood flowing. If you're a night owl, grab a friend or family member to workout with you. A fitness buddy can help you show up for each and every exercise "appointment."

Simple Ways to Improve Your Health in 2012

A new year brings a chance to start over and make changes in your life. Make your 2012 resolution an ongoing promise towards better health. Consider these starting points:

■ **Cancer prevention through screenings:** The National Institute of Cancer states that screening tests are designed to find cancer before symptoms appear. Cancer found in early stages is easier to treat or cure. If you haven't scheduled any of your cancer screenings (breast, prostate, skin, cervical, colorectal), now might be a good time. Talk to your healthcare provider about which screening exams fit your individual needs and visit www.cancer.gov for more screening tips.

■ **Wise healthcare consumerism:** The American Institute of Preventive Medicine (AIPM) suggests several ways to be a wiser healthcare consumer in their 2007 publication of Healthy Savings. Information is available at www.aipm.net, but here are the basics:

1) Ask your physician about generic prescription drugs, which are typically less expensive. Also, check with your local pharmacies for

generic drug programs that provide free or low cost prescriptions.

2) Use online medical resources, a nurse hotline, or your physician to help determine self-care versus when you need to seek care.

3) AIPM reports that 55 percent of ER visits are not necessary. Save time and money by knowing when ER care is vital. Urgent Care Centers and physician offices can provide service for less serious conditions.

■ **Better nutrition:** Good nutrition can reduce your risk of developing various diseases, including heart disease. Nutrition can also be a key component in management of chronic conditions, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. While only a registered dietician can produce a tailored and individualized meal plan for you, basic dietary changes can be made to improve your everyday eating. Add more fruits and vegetables to your diet, choose non fat or low fat dairy products, and pick lean sources of protein; these small changes could go a long way when it comes to your health.

Monthly Tips & Health Reminders

■ **January:** Consider getting checked during Cervical Health Awareness Month. The early detection success of the Pap test has caused rates of cervical cancer to drop significantly. The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends different timelines for screenings based on age and risk factors. Learn more at www.cancer.org.

■ **February:** Observe American Heart Month. The risk of developing heart disease increases with the presence of chronic conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. If you have not been diagnosed

with any of these conditions, talk to your doctor about ways to prevent development and ask about screening intervals. If you already have high blood pressure, high cholesterol or diabetes, work with your physician to develop a plan of action on how to better manage your condition.

■ **March:** Celebrate National Nutrition Month. The USDA recently replaced MyPyramid with MyPlate, a better visual representation of portion size. Take a lesson from the "plate" and model your portion sizes accordingly, with fruits and vegetables making

up half of your total plate. Eating off a smaller plate can help with moderation. Looking at a full plate will make you feel less deprived. Visit www.choosemyplate.gov for more nutritional tips as well as meal budgeting tips.

***New Year's Tip:** Commit to making better choices in all aspects of wellness. For example, financial wellness is often overlooked. Many have a large credit card debt after the holidays. Start 2012 by making a financial plan. A financial advisor can help you learn how to pay off debts, reduce spending and save more.*

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