American Heart Month:
Join the battle against heart disease!

“Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Its victims are women and men, and people of all backgrounds and ethnicities, in all regions of our country. Although heart disease is one of our Nation’s most costly and widespread health problems, it is among the most preventable. During American Heart month, we rededicate ourselves to fighting this disease by improving our own heart-healthy habits, and by raising awareness in our homes and our communities” (Obama, 2010).

American Heart Month is a time to battle cardiovascular disease and educate Americans on what we can do to live heart-healthy lives. You are at a higher risk of heart disease if you are:
• A woman age 55 or older
• A man age 45 or older
• Or a person with a family history of early heart disease

Heart disease can be prevented. To keep your heart healthy:
• Watch your weight.
• Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
• Control your cholesterol and blood pressure.
• If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation.
• Get active and eat healthy.
• Talk to your doctor about taking aspirin every day if you are a man over the age of 45 or a woman over 55.
• Manage stress (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011).

Join the battle against heart disease this month in honor of American Heart Month. You can show your support by wearing red on February 4 for National Wear Red Day. Millions of Americans will be wearing red to raise awareness about hear disease.

Check out this “Keep the Beat” heart healthy cookbook from the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute:
National Donor Day

February 14 is the 10th national donor day—a day to give the gift of life. Why be a donor? There is a great need for donors and that need is growing.

- As of February 1, 2010, there were 105,525 people waiting for an organ for transplant.
- Approximately 35,000 children and adults in our country have life-threatening blood diseases that could be treated by a marrow/blood stem cell or cord blood transplant.
- Every two seconds someone in America needs blood, more than 39,000 units each day, according to the American Red Cross.

How can you help?

- Fill out an organ and tissue donation card, register with your State Donor Registry (http://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,1607,7-127-34786---,00.html) and make sure your family knows you want to be a donor.
- Learn how you can donate your baby’s umbilical cord blood stem cells at birth.
- Donate blood.
- Join the National Registry of potential volunteer marrow and blood stem cell donors (You can join the National Bone Marrow Registry during the Kenneth Godfrey Marrow Drive Registry Event on campus. Dates and times are listed at http://webb.nmu.edu/SportsAthletic/godfrey_marrow_drive.pdf More information about the donation process is available at: www.marrow.org (OrganDonor.gov, n.d.).

Fitness Training

“Whether you’re a novice taking the first steps toward fitness or an exercise fanatic hoping to optimize your results, a well-rounded fitness training program is essential. Use the five primary elements of fitness training to create a balanced routine” (Mayo Clinic, 2009).

1. **Aerobic fitness**: (cardiovascular activity) is the cornerstone of most fitness training programs. Aerobic exercise causes you to breathe faster and more deeply, which maximizes the amount of oxygen in your blood. The better your aerobic fitness, the more efficiently your heart, lungs and blood vessels transport oxygen throughout your body. Aerobic exercise includes physical activity that uses large muscle groups and increases your heart rate (walking, jogging, biking, snow shoveling). Aim for at least two hours and 30 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activity or one hour and 15 minutes a week of vigorous aerobic activity.

2. **Muscular fitness**: strength training at least twice a week can help you increase bone strength and muscular fitness. It can also help you maintain muscle mass during a weight-loss program. Weight lifting can be done at a gym, but can also be done at home using handheld weights, resistance bands, and body weight (push-ups, squats).

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3. **Stretching**: most aerobic and strength training activities cause your muscles to contract and flex. For balance in your fitness training program, it’s important to stretch those muscles too. Stretching improves the range of motion of your joints and promotes better posture. Regular stretching can help relieve stress. Make sure to warm up before stretching. The best time to stretch is after you exercise when your muscles are warm. It is best to stretch whenever you exercise, but it is important to stretch as least three times a week to maintain flexibility.

4. **Core stability**: the muscles in your abdomen, lower back and pelvis (your core muscles) help protect your back and connect the upper and lower body movements. Core exercises help train your muscles to brace the spine and enable you to use your upper and lower body muscles more effectively. Any exercise that uses the trunk of your body without support is considered a core exercise. Core exercises can be done with a fitness ball, a bosu ball, or just your body (stabilizers).

5. **Balance training**: you can be strong, flexible and aerobically fit, yet still have poor balance. This is important since balance tends to deteriorate with age, which can lead to falls and fractures. Try standing on one leg for increasing periods of time to improve stability.

Whether you create your own fitness routine or have a personal trainer, it is important to include all five elements in your overall exercise plan. It is not necessary to include them in every workout, but including them in your weekly routine can help promote fitness for life!

(Mayo Clinic, 2009)

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**Avoiding Common Nutrition Pitfalls**

1. **Drinking too many sweetened beverages**: It is very easy to consume beverages throughout the day without even realizing how much the calories add up. Generally these drinks do not have a lot of nutritional value or keep you very full. **Bottom line**—cut back on sweet drinks and drink more water.

2. **Dehydration**: fluids play a vital role in weight control. If you don’t consume enough fluids, you may feel tired, and hungry. Before you grab for food try drinking a glass of water and waiting a few minutes. You may find that you don’t need to eat. **Bottom line**: drink at least 64 fl. oz. of water every day.

3. **Skipping Meals**: cutting back on food to lose weight does not mean skipping meals. Eating more frequently can help keep your metabolism going and help you maintain a healthy weight. Skipping meals makes you feel famished and it’s hard to eat a healthy, balanced meal when you feel that way. Pay attention to hunger signals and eat when you feel hungry. Don’t wait until you’re famished to eat a meal or snack. **Bottom line**: eat breakfast. Eat 3 meals and 2 snacks per day, or every 2-4 hours.

4. **Skimping on fruits and vegetables**: fruits and vegetables are rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and water, yet they’re low in calories. Fiber helps with weight loss because it helps you feel full. **Bottom line**: eat more fruits and vegetables. Aim for 6-10 servings per day.

5. **Eating large portions of food**: weight control isn’t just about what we eat, but how much we eat too. Serving sizes in the U.S. have significantly increased in the past 30 years. **Bottom line**: turn supersized feasts into moderate meals.

(Montana University Wellness, n.d.)
Wellness Spotlight

If you notice a co-worker is working hard on their health/wellness and motivating others to do the same, nominate them for the “Wellness Spotlight.” You can nominate someone by emailing Wellness the name of the employee and why you are nominating them. We will choose a new employee every two weeks.

In the spotlight this month is Nancy Carter, Certification Counselor from the NMU School of Education. Nancy was nominated by several co-workers over the last couple of weeks. Her co-workers said: “You can find Nancy walking the halls of Whitman during the winter or outside during the summer on her break time or lunch hour. She has been doing this for years and has always maintained her weight. I admire her behavior and she motivates me when I need motivation to continue exercising.” Nancy is involved with many of our Wellness programs and has been a great inspiration and motivator to get other people to join. Thank you for all of your hard work and health and wellness efforts Nancy!
-NMU Employee Wellness

REFERENCES:


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