World Heart Day: Workplace Wellness

“Take responsibility for your own heart health.”

World Heart Day was started to inform people that heart disease and stroke are the world’s leading cause of death. According to the World Heart Federation, “heart disease and stroke claim 17.1 million lives each year and at least 80% of premature deaths could be avoided if the main risk factors are controlled.”

The main risk factors for heart disease include tobacco use, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity.

The World Heart Federation provides 10 Health Steps to live a healthier life and increase your workplace wellness:

How you can live a healthier life:

1. Healthy food intake—eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day and avoid saturated fat. Beware of processed foods, which often contain high levels of salt.

2. Get active & take heart—even 30 minutes of activity can help to prevent heart attacks and strokes and your work will benefit too.

3. Say no to tobacco—your risk of coronary heart disease will be halved within a year and will return to a normal level over time.

4. Maintain a healthy weight—weight loss, especially together with lowered salt intake, leads to lower blood pressure.

5. Know your numbers—visit a healthcare professional who can measure your blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels, together with waist-to-hip ratio and body mass index (BMI). Once you know your overall risk, you can develop a specific plan of action to improve your heart health.

6. Limit your alcohol intake—restrict the amount of alcoholic drinks that you consume. Excessive alcohol intake can cause your blood pressure to rise and your weight to increase.
World Heart Day (con’t)

Ideas on how you can make your workplace healthier:

7. **Insist on a smoke-free environment**—demand a tobacco ban—ensure your workplace is 100% smoke-free. Support the adoption of smoking-cessation services; encourage your employer to provide help to those wanting to quit tobacco.

8. **Bring exercise to the workplace**—include physical activity in your working schedule—cycle to work if this is possible, take the stairs, exercise or go for a walk during your lunch breaks, and encourage others to do so too.

9. **Choose healthy food options**—ask for healthy food at your work canteen, or find nearby cafes or restaurants that serve healthy meals.

10. **Encourage stress-free moments**—while stress has not been shown to be a direct risk factor for heart disease and stroke, it is related to smoking, excessive drinking and unhealthy eating, which are risk factors for heart disease.
   - Take time for lunch away from your workplace to get some fresh air
   - Have regular breaks during the day—try stretching or exercising for 5 minutes twice a day.

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**Cholesterol Education**

What is the difference between “good” cholesterol, “bad” cholesterol, and “how do I lower my cholesterol”? According to the CDC, “Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that your body needs. But, when you have too much in your blood, it can build up on the walls of your arteries. This can lead to heart disease and stroke—the first and third leading causes of death in the United States. “Good” cholesterol, HDL (high density lipoprotein), has a higher ratio of proteins to lipids. HDL helps remove the “bad” cholesterol, LDL (low density lipoprotein), which has a higher ratio of lipids.

When getting blood cholesterol checked there are a few numbers to pay attention to (see table to the left).

- **Total cholesterol under 200 is good**
- **LDL— for most people, under 130 is good; if person has heart disease or diabetes, keep under 100**
- **HDL— above 60, under 40 is a major risk factor for heart disease for men and under 50 for women**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cholesterol Type</th>
<th>Desirable Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total cholesterol</td>
<td>Less than 200 mg/dL*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDL (“bad” cholesterol)</td>
<td>Less than 100 mg/dL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDL (“good” cholesterol)</td>
<td>40 mg/dL or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triglycerides</td>
<td>Less than 150 mg/dL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Cholesterol levels are measured in Milligrams (mg) of cholesterol per deciliter (dL) of blood

**Table from: cdc.gov**
Cholesterol Education (con’t)

“[To raise HDL avoid tobacco, maintain a healthy weight, and get at least 30-60 minutes of physical activity more days then not]” (AHA, 2010).

- **Triglycerides under 150**

It has been reported that one in every six Americans have high cholesterol. There are no signs or symptoms of this, but being aware of risk factors and getting a blood test can help identify one’s numbers.

**To help prevent or Lower Cholesterol the Department of Health and Human Services suggests:**

- Read food labels and limit foods high in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol.
- Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, and whole grains.
- Ask to see a registered dietitian if you need help with a plan.
- Be physically active. "Physical activity" includes any activity that raises your heart rate, such as brisk walking, working in the house or yard, or playing sports.
- Do activity for 10 minutes or more at a time. Aim for at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of activity each week.
- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight. If you are overweight, ask your provider for help with an eating and physical activity plan to lose weight.

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

The CDC reports that ovarian cancer is the eighth most common cancer and the fifth leading cause of cancer death. But when ovarian cancer is found in its early stages, treatment is most effective.”

The ovaries are responsible for making female hormones and egg production.

Knowing the **signs and symptoms** is extremely important for early detection of ovarian cancer. These include: vaginal bleeding (if past menopause) or abnormal discharge, pain or pressure in the pelvic or abdominal area, back pain, bloating, feeling full quickly while eating, a change in bathroom habits, such as having to pass urine very badly or very often, constipation, or diarrhea (CDC, 2010). Any questions or concerns should be brought to a healthcare professional.

**Risk factors** for ovarian cancer include: “being middle-aged or older, having close family members on either side who have had ovarian cancer, having had breast, uterine, or colorectal cancer, having an Eastern European (Ashkenazi) Jewish background, having never given birth or having had trouble getting pregnant, or having endometriosis.”

According to the CDC, there is no way to prevent the following may **lower the risk**: having used birth control pills for more than five years, having had tubal ligation, both ovaries removed, hysterectomy, given birth.

Pap tests cannot screen for Ovarian cancer, but you doctor may suggest pelvic exams, transvaginal ultrasound or a CA-125 blood test.

![Ovaries Image from cdc.gov](ovaries.png)
Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

According to The Project to End Prostate Cancer, “in the male reproductive system, the prostate is involved with sexual function producing fluid for sperm and helps control the flow of urine.” It is a difficult area to treat if cancer is found because the prostate “is the size and shape of a walnut and weighs only an ounce.”

Prostate is a common slow growing cancer depending mainly on the testosterone hormone. It is not easily detected early on, so knowing symptoms is very important in treating it as soon as possible.

In advanced stages symptoms may include: difficult or frequent urination, blood in the urine, or bone pain.

These symptoms should be reported to your doctor: quality or quantity of semen, pain on ejaculation, loss of potency or libido.

“Sometimes cells keep growing over their natural lifespan, and can cause a group of cells to swell up into a tumor.”

Risk factors are mainly age, family history, race, diet and obesity, chemical exposure and genetics.

PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) blood test is an early detection tool to show if further testing is needed, but will not show if prostate cancer is present. Annual screenings should begin at age 45 for the general public, or earlier depending on your level of risk.

“Mortality rates have dropped more than one-third since the PSA test became widely used. Efforts are being made to increase the accuracy of the net range in the PSA test” to better determine the need for further testing or biopsies.

Preventative measures include eating a healthy diet and exercising.

“While it’s not as simple as taking vitamins or supplements, growing evidence shows changing your diet and behavior could lower your risk.”

Fruits and Veggies—More Matters

With their wide variety of color, fruits and vegetables are a great source of vitamins and minerals, and therefore provide many health benefits. To promote these great health benefits, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Prevention and Produce for Better Health Foundation sponsor September as “National Fruits and Veggies: More Matters Month.”

Increasing intake of fruits and vegetables can help protect against heart disease, bone loss, Type 2 Diabetes, high blood pressure and some cancers. It is recommended to consume different amounts of fruits and vegetables per day depending on age, gender and physical activity level. Follow the Daily Recommendation Calculator link at the end of this article to calculate appropriate individual daily recommendations.

The CDC has chosen a fruit and vegetable for
Fruits and Veggies—More Matters (con’t)

each month of the year. The Chili Pepper and Fig are the fruit and vegetable for the month of September. By choosing a fruit, vegetable and meal type, one can create recipes using the Recipe Search on the CDC website.

Sometimes great recipes are loaded with butter or sugar and lacking fruits and vegetables, but that does not mean they have to be thrown out. There are many ways to substitute ingredients to create a healthier version of your favorite recipes. The CDC makes it simple to substitute by using the Recipe Re-mix located on their website.

Unfortunately, eating healthy, fresh produce can get expensive. However, the CDC provides some great tips for buying produce without “breaking the bank” in an article called, “30 Ways in 30 Days to Stretch Your Fruit and Vegetable Budget.”

The CDC says that “a growing body of research shows that fruits and vegetables are critical to promoting good health.” Fruits and vegetables can protect against chronic illness, are a natural source of energy and are great sources of vitamins and minerals. With the many health benefits and resources available to aid in the process, “National Fruits and Veggies: More Matters Month” is a perfect time to increase one’s intake of fruits and vegetables.

To promote the importance of fruits and vegetables, the CDC has made the following resources available on their website:

- “30 Ways in 30 Days to Stretch Your Fruit and Vegetable Budget” http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/publications/index.html

REFERENCES:
Purpose: To review the health care costs for the university with the prospect of identifying ways to control or reduce such costs. It recommends a university-wide Health Care and Wellness Program, which is designed to promote better health among members of the campus community.

Who: The committee consists of representatives from each employee union group, a representative from the non-union employee group and a member of the retirees group covered under NMU's group health insurance. In addition, representatives are present from various university academic departments including Nursing and Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

Programs: The programs include seminars, workshops, special events, newsletter/weekly tips, health screenings, physical activity incentives, and other positive well-being resources. New information will be provided via email and the soon to be updated Wellness website during the month of September!

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OUTREACH: “Get in, Get out, Get fit”

The new employee wellness movement for the fall semester includes an OUTREACH program. It’s purpose is to bring free, fun, effective 30 minute or less workouts to your department.

The Wellness Committee along with Rec Sports will be offering “Get in, Get out, Get fit” beginning immediately!

A program like this was featured in Forbes October 2008 “The Healthy Workplace,” where leaders in the Duncan Aviation company encouraged and participated in a 30-minute interval circuit training class provided by the wellness staff. Participation was astounding and the social aspect of the workouts were encouraging.

Previous experience is not necessary, as classes are modified for each participant.

A wellness instructor may be coming to your office soon to get concrete times and dates for upcoming sessions!

Possible classes include, but are not limited to:

- Circuit style (cardio/overall strength)
- Hard Core
- Pilates
- Yoga
- Boot Camp style
- Stretching
- Cardio
- HABIT (hips, abs, butt, inner thigh)
- Upper Cut