

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

Volume 8, Issue 3

Spokane Regional Health District • 509.324.1500

March 2009

Aim for Health

EXERCISING – WHAT TO WEAR?

All exercise clothing should be loose-fitting to permit freedom of movement, and should make the wearer feel comfortable and self-assured.

As a general rule, you should wear lighter clothes than temperatures might indicate. Exercise generates great amounts of body heat. Light-colored clothing that reflects the sun's rays is cooler in the summer, and dark clothes are warmer in winter. When the weather is very cold, it's better to wear several layers of light clothing than one or two heavy layers. The extra layers help trap heat, and it's easy to shed one of them if you become too warm.

In cold weather, and in hot, sunny weather, it's a good idea to wear something on your head. Wool watch or ski caps are good for winter wear, and some form of tennis or sailor's hat that provides shade and can be soaked in water is good for summer.

Never wear rubberized or plastic clothing; they interfere with the evaporation of perspiration and can cause body temperature to rise to dangerous levels.

The most important item is a pair of sturdy, properly-fitting, sport-appropriate shoes. Training shoes with heavy, cushioned soles and arch supports are preferable to flimsy sneakers and light racing flats.

www.fitness.gov

Your Safety

GET "BACK" IN SHAPE

The human spine is made up of small bones called vertebrae.

The vertebrae are stacked on top of each other to form a column. Between each vertebra is a cushion known as a disc. The vertebrae are held together by ligaments, and muscles are attached to the vertebrae by bands of tissue called tendons.

Openings in each vertebra line up to form a long, hollow canal. The spinal cord runs through this canal from the base of the brain. Nerves from the spinal cord branch out and leave the spine through the spaces between the vertebrae.

The lower part of the back holds most of the body's weight. Even a minor problem with the bones, muscles, ligaments, or tendons in this area can cause pain when a person stand, bends, or moves around. Less often, a problem with a disc can pinch or irritate a nerve from the spinal cord, causing pain that runs down the leg, below the knee called sciatica.

Causes of Low Back Problems

Even with today's technology, the exact reason or cause of low back problems can be found in very few people. Most times, the symptoms are blamed on poor muscle tone in the back, muscle tension or spasm, back sprains, ligament or muscle tears, joint problems. Sometimes nerves from the spinal cord can be irritated by "slipped" discs causing buttock or leg pain, numbness, tingling, or weakness in the legs.

People who are in poor physical condition or do work that includes heavy labor or long periods of sitting or standing are at greater risk for low back problems.

To Prevent Lower Back Pain:

- When lifting objects, keep them close to your body. Avoid lifting while twisting, bending or reaching.
- Exercise and stretch regularly. Talk to your doctor about exercises to help strengthen your back.
- Avoid sitting or standing for long periods of time.
- Make sure your work area is ergonomic.

www.pueblo.gsa.gov



YOUR COMPANY'S NAME

- ☛ Your Company's Info
- ☛ Your Company's Info
- ☛ Your Company's Info

HEALTH BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

Meditation has been shown to improve overall wellness; reduce anxiety, pain, depression, stress, and insomnia; and improve disease-related symptoms. Most types of meditation have four elements in common:

A quiet location – with as few distractions as possible. People who have been practicing meditation for a longer period of time sometimes develop the ability to meditate in public places, like waiting rooms or buses.

A specific, comfortable posture – Depending on the type being practiced, meditation can be done while sitting, lying down, standing, walking, or other positions.

A focus of attention. You can focus on a mantra (a specially chosen word or set of words), an object, or your breathing.

An open attitude. When distracting or wandering thoughts occur, they are not suppressed; instead, gently bring your attention back to the focus.

<http://nccam.nih.gov>



GET FIT WITH FIBER

Because insoluble fiber is indigestible and passes through the body virtually intact, it provides few calories. And since the digestive tract can handle only so much bulk at a time, fiber-rich foods are more filling than other foods--so people tend to eat less. Insoluble fiber also may hamper the absorption of dietary fat.

Recent research suggests that as much as 35 grams of fiber a day is needed to help reduce the risk of chronic disease, including heart disease.

To fit more fiber into your day:

- Start the day with a whole-grain cereal that contains at least 5 grams of fiber per serving. Top with wheat germ, raisins, bananas or berries – all good sources of fiber.
- When appropriate, eat vegetables raw. Cooking may reduce fiber content. When you do cook vegetables, microwave or steam only until they are tender but still firm to the bite.
- Avoid peeling fruits and vegetables; eating the skin and membranes ensures that you get every bit of fiber. Just wash well to remove surface dirt and bacteria before eating. Also, whole fruits and vegetables contain more fiber than juice, which lacks the skin and membranes.
- Eat liberal amounts unprocessed grains: bulgur, kasha and whole-grain breads, cereals and pasta.
- Add beans to soups, stews and salads; a couple of times a week substitute legume-based dishes (lentil soup, bean burritos, or rice and beans) for meat-based meals.
- Keep fresh and dried fruit on hand for snacks.

Calendar of Events

TASTE SPOKANE

March 6; Northern Quest Casino, 5-9pm
Enjoy tastes of wine, brews, food, desserts, and even pampering services from local businesses to benefit the Wishing Star Foundation
www.wishingstar.org/TasteSpo.html

CUSTER'S ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW

March 6-8; Spokane County Fair and Expo Center
\$6/adults, free/ages 12 and younger, good all weekend
300 professional artists and crafters - whimsical bird houses, clay fountains, metal sculpture, dried floral, one of a kind jewelry along with specialty and gourmet foods
(509) 924-0588; www.custershows.com

31ST ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

March 14, Noon - Downtown Spokane

BEGINNING GARDENING CLASSES

Saturdays in March
WSU County Extension, 222 N. Havana
Call for information and to register: 477-2048 or
www.spokane-county.wsu.edu/spokane/eastside

EASY LENTIL ONE DISH

1 cup uncooked and rinsed lentils
½ cup uncooked brown rice
3 cup sliced carrots
1 lb Swiss chard, cleaned and chopped
1 lb kale, cleaned and chopped
3 cups water
1 packet reduced sodium onion soup mix
1 tsp basil
1 Tbsp olive oil



Place all ingredients in large pot. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and cook until rice is done, 20 to 30 minutes.

Servings: 6 – Nutrition per serving:

Calories 290, Fat 4g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 540mg, Carbohydrates 52g, Fiber 13g (52%), Sugar 7g, Protein 15g, Vitamin A 530%, Vitamin C 200%, Calcium 20%, Iron 35%