Wellness Works

Coordinator's Bulletin

Providing your wellness committee with updates and relevant health information!

November 2016

Highlights from this Month's Bulletin:

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A Blue Zone is an area where our healthiest longest living individuals live.

Most people living in the Blue Zones enjoy physical activity incorporated naturally into their daily lives (like gardening or walking); a sense of purpose (like caring for grandchildren or civic volunteering); low stress levels and a slower pace of life; strong family and community connections; and a diet characterized by moderate caloric intake, mostly from plant sources.

The fact that these people are living long and happy lives should not be surprising. For a while now we've known, generally, the lifestyle factors that contribute to unhealthier, shorter lives: sedentary jobs and transportation, increased screen time, reduced active recreation, a diet of highly processed/calorically dense and nutritionally deficient foods with growing portion sizes, social isolation, chronic stress, income inequality and social immobility—basically all features of a modern, consumer society. For decades, public health professionals and advocates have pointed to these things as appropriate targets for policies and actions meant to improve health and well-being.

For more information, check out www.bluezones.com or contact Danielle at dyale@memun.org to schedule the Blue Zone class.

Abby's New Classes for 2017:

Abby has been hard at work creating new classes that are informative and fun, so without further ado, here are her new classes:

Mason Jar Meals—Breakfast Edition: This hands-on program will teach participants how to use Mason Jars to save time, money and improve your nutrition all at the same time. Each participant will leave with a Wake and Take Mason Jar Breakfast Meal! Contact Abby at adipasquale@memun.org to schedule this interactive class.

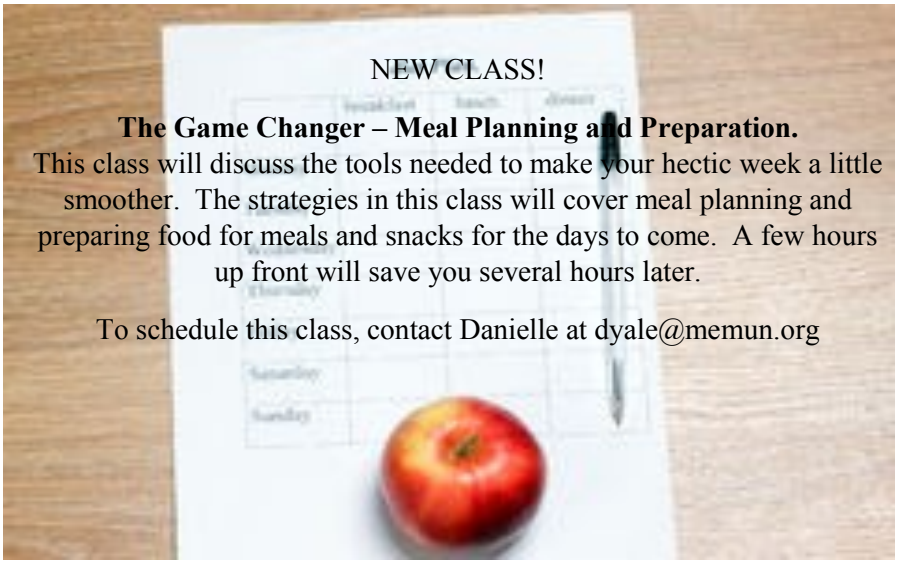
Mason Jar Meals—Lunch Edition: These aren't your grandmother's Mason Jars! Join us for this hands-on program to learn how you can use Mason Jars to save time, money and improve your nutrition all at the same time. Each participant will leave with a Mason Jar Meal! Contact Abby at adipasquale@memun.org to schedule this fun class.

Oral Health and Overall Health: Did you know that your oral health offers clues about your overall health—or that problems in your mouth can affect the rest of your body? Protect yourself by learning more about the connection between your oral health and your overall health by attending this important Wellness Works program! Contact Abby at adipasquale@memun.org to schedule this informative class.

Life's Simple 7: What if you had a guide that would guarantee you a longer life, prevent heart disease, and help you feel stronger and healthier starting right now? What if you had a road map that would improve your quality of your life and give you the energy and time to invest in your life goals? Believe it or not, there is such a guide...it is called Life's Simple 7. This class will walk participants through 7 simple things they can do RIGHT NOW to improve their health!
Contact Abby at adipasquale@memun.org to schedule this new class.

A New Look for the Nutrition Label: The Nutrition Facts Label has undergone a makeover! The new and improved label will help consumers make food choices that are better for their health. Join us for this class to see what has changed and find out how you can use the Nutrition Facts Label to reduce your risk for disease and improve how you feel! Contact Abby at adipasquale@memun.org to schedule this class.

Abby is currently scheduling for 2017, so if you have preferred dates and times, please schedule early to make sure you get your spot reserved!



NEW CLASS!

The Game Changer – Meal Planning and Preparation.

This class will discuss the tools needed to make your hectic week a little smoother. The strategies in this class will cover meal planning and preparing food for meals and snacks for the days to come. A few hours up front will save you several hours later.

To schedule this class, contact Danielle at dyale@memun.org

What does it mean to be grateful?

As we enter into the month of Thanksgiving, take a moment to consider what it means to be grateful and find ways to practice gratitude with your family, coworkers, and community this holiday season!

Gratitude is saying "thank you." But it's more than a thank-you to a friend for a favor or gift. Gratitude is saying thanks for everything that is important to you and good in your life. You are thankful for a gift, but you're also thankful to watch a sunset, do well at a sport, or to be alive. You see your life and your experiences as a gift.

Gratitude is linked to well-being. Recent studies show that people who practice gratitude appear to be more optimistic, pleased with their lives, and connected to others when compared to those who reflect on daily hassles or on everyday events. Research also suggests that gratitude in teens is linked to feeling good about life, being optimistic, and having a good social network.

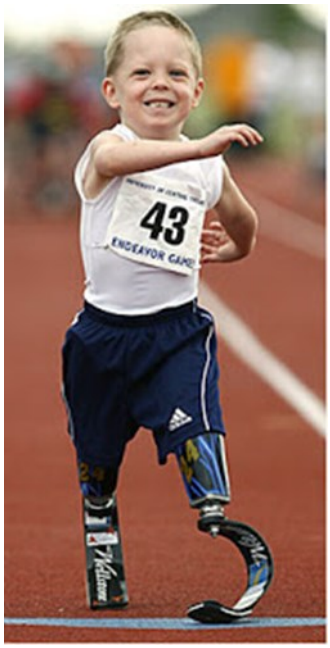
You also might find that gratitude may help decrease anger and be linked to resilience. If you find yourself thinking about how someone has wronged you, shift your attention to someone else who has been there to support you. The traits mentioned above, such as optimism and connection with others, are often found in people who are resilient and more likely to bounce back after stressful situations.

How can you practice gratitude?

To practice gratitude, you say "thanks" and you appreciate what's important to you.

1. Spend a few minutes at the end of each day and think about, or even write down, what you are grateful for that day. Think about people, events, or experiences that have had a positive impact on you.
2. Call or email someone just to say "thanks."
3. Write thank-you notes as well as saying "thank you" when you receive gifts or favors. Or write a letter of gratitude and appreciation to someone. You don't have to mail it.
4. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about something a stranger did for you. Or just say "thank you" to people you don't know, such as waving when a person lets your car cut in during heavy traffic.
5. When feeling burdened by your health, give thanks for the abilities you still have.
6. Start a family ritual of gratitude, such as giving thanks before a meal.
7. Find a creative way to give thanks. For example, plant a garden of gratitude or take pictures of things you are grateful for.

Source: WebMD Medical Reference from Healthwise



Wellness is not the absence of disease.
It's the freedom to enjoy life.
Some of the most well people I know
have big health challenges, but their

spirit and joy

more than compensate for their other
daily challenges.

Rules to Eat By

Eating has gotten really complicated, but here are some rules to eat by that might simplify the matter!

- Rather than focusing on specific nutrients, focus on consuming foods that are natural or minimally processed—and avoiding or limiting those that are ultra-processed.
- Prepare meals using actual ingredients and fresh foods. (REAL food!)
- Use oils, fats, sugar and salt in moderation. (The key word here is "moderation"…not elimination!)
- Limit consumption of ready-to-consume food and drink products. (Frozen pizza, cereal, soda, and the list goes on).
- Eat regular meals, paying attention, and in appropriate environments. (Be mindful of what you are eating and how you are eating—not mindlessly eating in front of the TV!)
- Eat in company whenever possible.
- Buy food at places that offer varieties of fresh foods. Avoid those that mainly sell products ready for consumption. (Plan so when hunger strikes you aren't stuck with only convenience stores and fast food chains as your only options!)
- Develop, practice, share and enjoy your skills in food preparation and cooking. (The most important thing we can do for our long-term health is to prepare and enjoy REAL meals.)
- Plan your time to give meals and eating proper time and space. (Make planning a priority! Plan ahead your lunches and snacks and take advantage of the slow cooker—again, don't get stuck with only poor food options!)
- When you eat out, choose restaurants that serve freshly made dishes and meals. Avoid fast food chains.

Want some more ideas to help guide your food choices? Abby would be happy to teach the Food Rules class at your worksite. Contact her at adipasquale@memun.org!

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Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust

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Weight Management: How to stay motivated during the holidays

To be successful at losing weight, you need to figure out what will give you an ongoing, burning desire to succeed. You need to tap your inner motivation. By understanding what motivates you, you'll be better able to follow through with your eating and fitness plan during hectic times like the holidays. Consider the benefits of losing weight and staying fit listed below. Rank your top three reasons (or more if you like) and add your own reasons if they're not on the list. Post the list where you'll see it often.

Sometimes temptation to indulge in certain foods or skipping a workout will be greater than your desire to lose weight. During these difficult moments, reflect on the top reasons why you are making healthy lifestyle changes. It won't always be easy, but keep in mind the important fact that you will never regret making good decisions!

For other strategies, schedule "Making Fitness Fit" with Danielle at dyale@memun.org.

Source: www.mayoclinic.org