

CONGRATULATIONS
TO ALL THE
NATIONAL PARKS
EXPLORATION TEAMS!

Connecticut Department of Public Health Worksite Wellness Program Newsletter ~ January 2006

Beauties and the
Beast

Away We Go

Buddy Walk

Epi Stats

Fabulous Six

Faith Walkers

Fiscally Chal-
lenged

Footloose

Foxy Trotters

Happy Campers

Los Caminantes

Mission Team

Paper Trail

Paperless Trail

Random Vari-
ables

The Walking
Warriors

Vital Energy

Wacky Walkers

Commissioner's Corner

Recent studies have found that about 2/3 of Americans are not physically active and about 65% are either over weight or obese. Changing an unhealthy behavior and adopting a healthy behavior is a challenging task. Researchers have identified different stages that people go through in order to make change in their behavior. The "Transtheoretical Model", developed by Prochaska and his Colleagues, has identified five stages that individuals go through as they change their unhealthy behavior. These stages are

Precontemplation: --not ready for change

Contemplation: - - thinking about change

Preparation: --preparing to take action

Action: --taking action

Maintenance: --maintaining the good behavior

The goal of ConnectiFIT's walking programs is to help you move closer and eventually reach the maintenance stage. As a matter of fact, the pre- and post surveys that our walkers completed will help the ConnectiFIT researchers identify if the program has been successful in moving the participants forward through the stages of change. The Centers for Disease Control recently applied this model to help people in adopting exercise and physical activity. For more information regarding how the stage of change can help you increase your physical activity visit the Centers for Disease Control website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/starting/index.htm>

New Year Resolution

During the New Year many people resolve to lose weight. It is important to remember to remain healthy when trying to shed the excess pounds. The Centers for Disease Control put together the following tips for losing or maintaining a healthy weight, while still remaining healthy.

Make healthy choices on a regular basis- Making healthy choices should be a habit, not a rare occurrence. The more you incorporate healthy living into your life, the easier it becomes.

Goals should be realistic- Do not overwhelm yourself by trying to change too much at once. Set small goals for yourself and gradually add another challenge. Remember that you do not want to

set yourself up for failure, so make goals that are attainable.

Prepare and eat snacks and meals at home- By preparing food and eating at home you can save money, spend more time with your family, and eat healthy. Cut out some of the calories in your favorite meals by using low-fat or low-calorie ingredients. For example, use non-fat milk instead of whole milk, or use low fat cheese in your recipes.

Do not eat if you are not hungry- When you eat, take your time. Eat slowly and enjoy the taste, texture, and smell of your food.

Eat high fiber foods- Foods that are high in fiber give the feeling of "fullness". Eat

more whole-grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables to add more fiber to your diet. Eating more fiber can help you decrease the total amount of calories that you consume during the day.

Forgive yourself- Nobody is perfect, so do not feel bad if you make a mistake. An occasional mistake is no reason to give up your resolution. Instead, keep working at your goal, and make an effort to correct the problem. For example, if you eat a meal that is high in fat or calories, make your next meal low in calories, or add more physical activity to your day. Mistakes happen, so forgive yourself and move on.

Health Risk Appraisals:

Coming Soon for DPH Employees

It is a new year! Why not take the opportunity to assess your health?

In January and February the ConnectiFIT Program plans to implement a comprehensive Health Risk Appraisal (HRA) program. The HRA program will consist of measures of blood pressure (BP), total cholesterol, glucose, height, weight, and circumference measures. These data will be entered into the Well Source health risk appraisal questionnaire. Participation in the program is voluntary. Each DPH employee participant must sign an informed consent prior to the HRA. All data collected will be confidentially maintained by the University of Connecticut for research purposes only. The aggregate data obtained from the HRA program will profile the health status of the DPH workforce and be used for customized health promotion programming. The individual HRA screening results and follow-up consultations will be provided to each participant on request. An outside vendor will be contracted to perform the blood lipid-lipoprotein and glucose screening.

These measurements will be free of charge for DPH employees.

The HRAs will be done early in 2006, so please check your email often for information about how to sign up for the HRAs. Due to the need for nurses to perform the blood screening, we can only take a limited amount of participants. Make sure that you sign up quickly to ensure that you are able to take part in the Health Risk Appraisal.

Please check the ConnectiFIT website for more information regarding HRA, including the frequently asked questions.

As always, we look forward to seeing you all during this ConnectiFIT event, and wish all of you a happy and healthy New Year!

ConnectiFIT 's National Parks Exploration Walking Program Wrap-up

Congratulations to all the teams and walkers that completed ConnectiFIT's second walking program, ConnectiFIT's National Parks exploration. During the 10 weeks that the program took place, we walked a combined total of 10,537 miles. This number is very impressive considering the program took place during months with cold weather, and a time of year when we are all busy with the holiday season.

This walking program had 100 participants that walked in 18 teams. During the program we set the goal of trying to explore 18 National

Parks that were located throughout the nation. During the walk we were able to visit 14 of these National Parks. To see where these National Parks are located, please go to our website and visit the web page dedicated to the National Parks Exploration.

Participants in the program were asked to complete surveys which included some lifestyle questions, as well as measurements of blood pressure and weight. The data collected during these walking programs will help the ConnectiFIT team evaluate the effectiveness of these programs and

to increase the level of physical activity and improve the DPH employees' general health. If you were unable to attend the wrap-up please turn in your pedometers and post-survey to Eugene Nichols if you have not done so already.

ConnectiFIT is very pleased with the success of these walking programs and thanks all of the participants, especially the team leaders, for all they have done. We hope to see you all at more ConnectiFIT events and programs in the New Year.

ConnectiFIT's Healthy Living Seminars

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| January 12th, 12:00-1:00 PM | Jodi Petrozak "Taking Simple Steps to Improve Your Health" 470 Conference Room C |
| February 7, 2006 12:00-1:00 PM | Dr. Richard Sieps "Risks of Stroke and Heart Disease" DPH LAB |

For More Information About ConnectiFIT and it's Programs, go to www.ConnectiFIT.uconn.edu or email ConnectiFIT@po.state.ct.us

Set SMART goals in the New Year!

Once you have set a goal make sure that it is SMART– specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based. Setting SMART goals can help you accomplish all of your New Year's resolutions.

Specific- Identify exactly what you want to achieve. Ex. Go for a 30 minute walk 3 times a week.

Measurable- Determine if your goal is measurable by asking yourself questions like "How much?" and "How many?".

Attainable- Set goals that are important to you, and strategize ways to make them come true.

Realistic- Goals should be do-able with some effort. If they are not challenging enough, you will not be motivated to achieve them.

Time-based- Set a clear time-frame for your goal. Set benchmarks as well to keep motivated on the way to your final goal. Time should be

Quit Smoking this Year

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease known today! Knowing this, don't you think it is time to quit? The CDC's Tobacco Information and Prevention Source has compiled information and tips about quitting smoking.

- In 2004, about 44.5 million Americans smoked, even though about 70% said that they wanted to quit.
- Smoking harms every organ of the body, causing many diseases and deteriorating general health.
- Quitting smoking will reap immediate and long term benefits to your health.
- Smoking cigarettes leads to lung cancer. About 90% of men and 80% of women that have died from lung

cancer were smokers.

- Nicotine is very addictive. It is normal to try quitting three or more times before you are successful.
- If you use smoking cessation treatments that have been proven to work, you double your chance of success.

The CDC has also compiled 5 tips to help you quit smoking:

1. **Be ready-** Set a date, and review past attempts to see what worked and what didn't work so well.
2. **Get support and encouragement-** Tell your family and friends that you are trying to quit and ask them for their

support.

3. **Learn new skills and behaviors-** Try to distract yourself from urges to smoke, and try a daily routine.
4. **Get medication and use correctly-** Ask your health care provider for advice and carefully read the information on the package.
5. **Be prepared for relapse and difficult situations-** Alcohol use, other smokers, weight gain, and depression are all difficult situations that you may encounter.

For more information and tips about smoking cessation visit <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>.