

BIKE TO WORK

Below are details about the Bike to Work program that takes place in Central Connecticut:

- The program takes place the last Friday of every month from April to October
- Free breakfast is available at the Old State House between 7 and 9 AM for riders
- Riders have the chance to win a new Breezer Bike
- Showers are available to bikers at the Taking Care Center
- Details about the Bike to Work Program are available at <http://www.wecyclect.org/btw.htm>

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

Commissioner's Corner

ConnectiFIT offers "Spring into Summer" walking program!

The ConnectiFIT program will begin their next pedometer walking program during the month of May. "Spring into Summer" will track the steps that you take during the whole day not just at work.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have noted that participating in regular physical activity reduces the chances of dying from coronary heart disease, the leading cause of death in the na-

tion. Signing up for the new walking program is a good start to becoming regularly physically active.

The previous two walking programs were very successful and I hope that "Spring into Summer" will have the same level of participation. Take advantage of the warm months by partaking in the "Spring into Summer" walking program.

For more details on the importance of regular physical activity visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/importance/index.htm>

Pedometer Walking is Back!

In May, the next pedometer walking program will be launched at the Department of Public Health. The success of the first two pedometer walking programs has encouraged ConnectiFIT to offer another walking program, "Spring into Summer".

The ConnectiFIT team decided that this next walking program should track the number of steps taken around the clock. During the "Spring into Summer" program participants will count the steps that are taken throughout the entire day, every day of the week. Participants in this program will have the chance to see how active they are not only while at work, but at home as well. As in previous walking programs, walkers

will keep logs of their progress throughout the walking program and will be in teams.

The "Spring into Summer" kick-off event will be held on May 10th from 12:15-2:15 PM in 470 Conference Room A/B. The "Spring into Summer" walking program will begin on May 15th and continue through August 6th. Members of the ConnectiFIT Team will lead a guided walk at 12 PM on May 15th. The guided walk will be on different routes that are walkable during the lunchtime hour.

On the ConnectiFIT website walkers can view different walking trails that are located around Connecticut.

Descriptions of the trail include the location of the trail and the distance in miles of the trail. The estimated amount of calories that a walker will burn if they complete the trail will also be available.

For those who have signed up for this program, do not forget to check out the participant's guide located on our website. All DPH employees can also find information about walking and walking maps on our website, www.ConnectiFIT.uconn.edu For further information about the walking program please email us at ConnectiFIT@po.state.ct.us, or talk to Eugene Nichols, your DPH ConnectiFIT Program Contact.

National High Blood Pressure

May is National High Blood Pressure Education Month!

What is Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)?

Blood pressure is measuring the force produced in the arteries when the heart beats. This is called systolic blood pressure. Following each beat the heart rests and that is when the blood pressure falls. This lower pressure is called diastolic blood pressure. The blood pressure usually is measured in millimeter of mercury (mm Hg). The normal blood pressure is 120 mmHg for systolic and 80 mmHg for diastolic. Hypertension is when systolic blood pressure is equal or greater than 140 mmHg and diastolic blood pressure is equal or greater than 90 mmHg.

Hypertension is the major cause of many coronary heart diseases as well as stroke. The occurrence of high blood pressure increases with age, even though children may also have high blood pressure. African-Americans, heavy drinkers and women of child bearing age who are taking birth control medications are also at higher risk for having high blood pressure. Some people with family history of high blood pressure may also have higher risk of developing high blood pressure later in life. The risks associated with hypertension also increase dramatically if you have other lifestyle risk factors such as smoking, physical inactivity or obesity.

How do you know you have hypertension?

Unlike other heart diseases, hypertension usually has no symptoms. A person with hypertension may have the disease for years without even knowing it. That is why it is important to have your blood pressure checked by health professionals as often as possible. Many ConnectiFIT programs offer free blood pressure screening, take advantage of these opportunities and get your blood pressure checked.

You should also know that your blood pressure may change with the time of the day, day of the week or even if you are under stress. Therefore, if you have a high blood pressure, one reading may not be enough to diagnose that you are hypertensive. You should check your blood pressure at other times to make sure that it is the right measurement. However, even one high blood pressure reading could be the warning sign of hypertension. Pay attention and check your blood pressure often.

How to reduce your high blood pressure?

The American Heart Association has a 24 page brochure with information about "*Understanding and controlling high blood pressure*". This brochure is free of charge, and can be ordered from the AHA website at:

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 For more information about high blood pressure visit:
http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/hbp_low/index.

American Heart Association Recommendation for Blood Pressure Level Categories

Blood pressure category	Systolic pressure (mmHg)		Diastolic pressure (mmHg)
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Pre-hypertension	120-139	or	80-89
High			
Stage I	140-159	or	90-99
Stage II	160 or higher	or	100 or higher

It is Grilling Season!

As the weather becomes nicer, and more time is spent outside, people are likely to attend picnics and barbeques. Remember these tips for food preparation, food transportation and grilling to keep your family safe from bacteria this season.

- Clean hands are important even when eating outdoors
- Rinse all fruits and vegetables even those with skins or rinds
- Do not serve food on platters that previously held raw or uncooked meats
- Cold foods should be kept cold (this is at or below 40 degrees)
- Hot foods should be kept hot (this is at or above 140 degrees)
- Do not let perishable foods sit out for longer than two hours
- Food should not sit out more than one hour when the temperature is above 90 degrees
- Coolers should be kept in the open air or air conditioned so they remain cool, not in the trunk where they can get hot

For more tips from the USDA on food safety visit:
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fsdup107.html>

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

ConnectiFIT's One Year Anniversary

On April 12th ConnectiFIT held our One Year Anniversary Celebration. The celebration was a great success.

The event was started with an introduction from Christine Parker and Eugene Nichols of the Obesity Program. They spoke about the accomplishments of the program and acknowledged all that have participated in making the first year a hit.

Dr. Pouran Faghri, the Program Director of the ConnectiFIT gave an overview of the past year. She spoke about the

programs that were implemented at the DPH over the course of the year and the preliminary findings of the walking programs.

Dick Edmonds, the Chief of the Public Initiatives Branch, spoke on behalf of Commissioner Galvin, welcoming employees to the celebration. He also encouraged people to continue participation in the ConnectiFIT programs.

Attendance for the two speakers, Lori Woodhouse and Cris Jacobs was also high. Their presentations on reducing

stress were well received by the participants.

During the celebration we were able to collect 94 surveys from those that attended. Those participants that filled out surveys were entered in a raffle, for the chance to win a basketball signed by the members of the UConn Men's Basketball Team. From the information we collected on the surveys we will be able to design programs to better fit the needs and interests of the Department of Public Health employees.