

# Health Traxx

*For Teachers by Teachers*

A PUBLICATION FOR TEACHERS HEALTH TRUST PARTICIPANTS

SPRING 2006



VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1



WellFit 2006 Kicks Off

***The Best Weigh To Go***

*(See page 8 for details)*

# FREE TEETH WHITENING !!!

(\$199 value, with completed dental treatment plan. Must present this ad. For Teachers Health Trust participants and their eligible dependents only. Exp. 12/31/06. No cash value.)

We are a  
**PREFERRED DENTAL PROVIDER**  
for **TEACHERS HEALTH TRUST**  
participants and their dependents.

You'll love our caring doctors and staff,  
convenient locations and hours,  
modern equipment and comfortable setting.

**EVENING and WEEKEND  
HOURS!!!**



Dr. Theodora Gordon  
Loma Linda University

Dr. Ellen Piyevsky-Adamson  
USC School of Dentistry

**WIGWAM DENTAL**  
2649 Wigwam Pkwy  
(between Eastern & Pecos)  
**617-3333**  
open Saturdays

**LAKE MEAD DENTAL**  
7481 W. Lake Mead Blvd.  
(between Buffalo & Tenaya)  
**304-1234**  
open 8:30am-9:00pm



# FREE TEETH WHITENING !!!

(\$199 value, with completed dental treatment plan. Must present this ad. For Teachers Health Trust participants and their eligible dependents only. Exp. 12/31/06. No cash value.)

# LIVE BETTER LONGER

2ND ANNUAL HEALTHY HENDERSON EVENT FEATURING DR. ANDREW WEIL

Join Dr. Andrew Weil and learn how to age with grace and gusto by focusing on mind, body and spirit to reach a healthy balance between modern and alternative medicine resources.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 4**

**9AM - 12PM**

Henderson Pavilion  
Green Valley Parkway and Paseo Verde  
*Free, General Admission*

**9 - 10:30AM**

Educational Health Fair  
*Featuring local physicians, yoga, tai chi, meditation and more*

**10:30AM**

Dr. Weil Healthy Aging Presentation

**11:30AM**

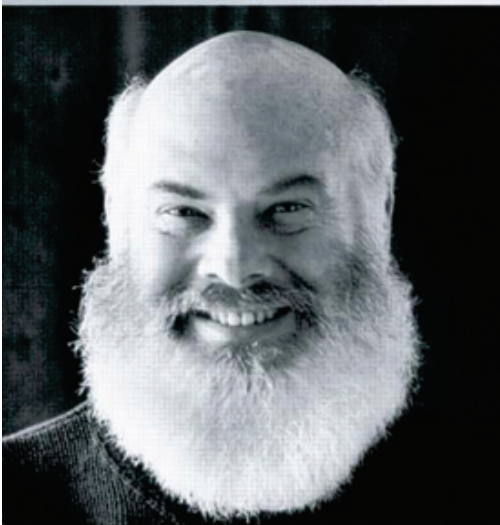
Dr. Weil Book Signing



St. Rose Dominican Hospitals

CHW

[www.strosehospitals.org](http://www.strosehospitals.org)



*Featured Speaker:*

**Dr. Andrew Weil**

*Healthy Aging 2006*

St. Rose Dominican Hospitals and The City of Henderson Parks & Recreation Department are proud to present Dr. Andrew Weil - recently featured in Time magazine and on PBS Frontline, CNN's Larry King Live and NBC's Today show - to our community. It's all part of our collaborative effort to grow a healthy Henderson.

**NO TICKETS REQUIRED! FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 616-4900**



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

A new year always brings new challenges, especially when you have the responsibility of overseeing the operation of a health plan that provides benefits for more than 31,000 people. The last edition of *Health Traxx* contained the Trust's audited financial statement for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2005, which showed a strong cash flow and the strengthening of the Health Trust's reserves. The current fiscal year has been more challenging, due to higher medical costs and increased utilization of the plan, which results in a higher volume of claims to be paid.

What changes can you expect to see in 2006?

- The elimination of all copays on generic drugs, whether purchased at the pharmacy or by mail.
- A completely revised Plan Benefits Document, which will be available on a CD-Rom and on the Health Trust's website. There will also be a limited number of printed versions of the new plan document available.
- An expansion of the number of providers on the Health Trust's network.
- More emphasis on wellness in order to reduce medical claims.

The Health Trust faces many challenges as we move into the second half of the first decade of the twenty-first century. Our staff is well equipped to meet these challenges and has the foresight to implement new and improved programs and benefits as medical technology and research progresses. These are both exciting and trying times in the health care industry, and we look forward to providing you with the most comprehensive benefits that our funding will permit.

Sincerely,

Peter Alpert  
Chief Executive Officer  
Teachers Health Trust  
January 2006

## HEALTH TRAXX

*The Teachers Health Trust  
Quarterly News Publication*

*Health Traxx* is published quarterly by the Teachers Health Trust to help participants make life-saving choices when making health care decisions. Although editorial content is based on sound medical information, we ask that you consult a health care professional for all matters of concern. We encourage you to keep copies of this news publication to build a handy home-medical reference or recycle issues to friends and family.

Any opinions expressed by an author/source whose article appears in this publication are solely the opinions of the author/source and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Teachers Health Trust. Questions or comments regarding this issue should be e-mailed to [wellness@teachershealthtrust.org](mailto:wellness@teachershealthtrust.org) or write to:

**Teachers Health Trust**  
c/o Darryl W. Thomas  
P.O. Box 96238  
Las Vegas, NV 89193-6238

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This publication is made in part by the generous donations of network providers and non-profit community organizations. Individuals or companies interested in advertising opportunities in *Health Traxx* should contact: **Darryl W. Thomas, Wellness Director** at [wellness@teachershealthtrust.org](mailto:wellness@teachershealthtrust.org) or contact the **Health Trust Wellness Division at (702) 794-0272**. Any advertisements in the *Health Traxx* publication do not mean the Health Trust endorses the provider, business, or service. Ad purchase space is based on a first-come, first-serve basis and advertisers are required to be a part of the PPO or PPO Plus provider network, or be a non-profit local or national health agencies/organizations approved by the Health Trust Special Events Committee, or a for-profit company with a valid business license.

• *Reminder* •

## STUDENT STATUS

*Spring Semester Verification Due February 17, 2006*

In January 2006, the Health Trust sent an affidavit/student status form to every participant with a dependent age 19 and over. The deadline for receipt of those documents is February 17, 2006. If the Trust does not receive the documents by February 17, 2006, dependents will be terminated effective February 28, 2006.

The Teachers Health Trust requires verification of student status for full-time students age 19 or over, but under age 26. The Trust considers a student as being **full-time**, if he or she is enrolled in at least 12 credit hours per semester or quarter, or is a full-time student as defined by the educational institution.

For verification of student status for spring 2006, the Trust requires a signed affidavit certifying that you provide 50 percent or more of the support of your dependent and that your dependent meets the credit requirements. It will not be necessary to submit verification from the college/university; however, the Trust reserves the right to request documentation if eligibility is of concern.

If you did not receive an affidavit for your dependent or want more information on student status, please contact the Trust at (702) 794-0272 or by e-mail at [serviceteam@teachershealthtrust.org](mailto:serviceteam@teachershealthtrust.org).

# NEWS & NOTES

## PROTECT YOURSELF

### *In-Network Oral Surgeons Are Not Always PPO for Medical Procedures*

Oral surgeons perform both medical and dental services. You and/or your covered dependents may not realize which services being provided are medical and which are dental.

In an effort to protect you from obtaining medical services from an out-of-network provider, oral surgeons who will not contract with the Trust as an in-network medical provider, will be removed from the dental plan. **Effective April 1, 2006, only the oral surgeons listed below will be considered in-network:**

- Mark Glyman
- John Holtzen
- Brendan Johnson
- Katherine Keeley
- Patrick O'Connor
- Mont Ringer
- Steven Saxe
- Eric Swanson

The oral surgeons above have agreed to be in-network providers for both medical and dental services. **To save you and your Trust money, the next time you need services from an oral surgeon, consider these providers.**

## HOSPITALISTS

### *A Convenient Tool for Doctors & Hospitals, But They Can Be Costly to You*



Hospitalists are doctors whose primary professional focus is the general medical care of hospitalized patients. Some local physicians hire hospitalists to see their patients like you or your covered dependents while hospitalized, allowing your doctor to keep appointments in the office with other patients. In addition, hospitals utilize their services to manage patient care during your hospital stay. Local hospitals often assign a hospitalist to a patient upon entering the hospital through the emergency room and scheduled hospital admission. Fremont Medical Inpatient Care and Inpatient Physicians Network are the in-network hospitalists providers for Teachers Health Trust.

**If you or your covered dependents are admitted to the hospital, make sure you or a trusted friend or family member, ensure the hospitalist assigned to the covered person is either with Fremont Medical Inpatient Care or Inpatient Physicians Network.** Confirming whether the hospitalist is in or out-of-network will save you and your Trust dollars.

If an out-of-network hospitalist is following your care, your claim will be paid at the in-network level of benefits; however, you will be responsible for any charges over the in-network allowable. Sometimes an out-of-network hospitalist will ask you to come to his or her office after your hospitalization for follow-up. You can verify that a provider is in-network by checking the Trust website at [www.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.teachershealthtrust.org), calling (702) 794-0272 or e-mailing a Service Team Member at [serviceteam@teachershealthtrust.org](mailto:serviceteam@teachershealthtrust.org). Protect your pocketbook by demanding an in-network provider should you or your dependents have to be admitted into a hospital.

# NEWS & NOTES

## HEART DISEASE: *A Dangerous Problem for Younger Adults with Diabetes*

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) reports that heart disease is one of the most dangerous problems associated with uncontrolled diabetes, contributing to more than 65 percent of deaths in diabetics. The ADA explains that diabetes can change the chemical makeup of substances in the blood and can cause atherosclerosis—hardening of the arteries that leads to heart disease. Nearly half of diabetics can have heart disease and will not have any signs.

Researchers report in the November 2005 issue of the journal *Diabetes Care* that the increase in heart disease associated with diabetes was much greater in younger adults than in older people. In the study, adults younger than 45 with type 2 diabetes were many times more likely to have a heart attack than others in the same age group who did not have diabetes.

To avoid heart disease and other long-term complications of diabetes, patients need to focus on controlling their blood-sugar levels. Monitoring blood-sugar levels throughout the day is the best way for diabetics to understand how well they are managing their disease on a daily basis. It is recommended that diabetics have their doctor test blood sugar using the A1C blood test—which measures blood sugar levels over the past three months—at least three times a year.

**Experts also agree that people, whether diabetic or not, can avoid heart problems by reducing heart disease risk factors, including controlling blood pressure, lowering cholesterol levels, stopping smoking, and starting an exercise regimen.** Although there are many problems associated with diabetes, it does not mean that these problems always occur. It is possible for diabetics to self-manage their disease with proper nutrition, daily physical activity, regular blood sugar monitoring, and taking medication as prescribed.

*Source: Darwin E. Asper, M.Ed., CSCS Director - Educational Services, Closer Healthcare, Inc*



*For more information on ways to prevent heart disease and diabetes for adults and children, please log onto the following websites:*

<http://www.eatright.org>  
<http://www.diabetes.org>  
<http://www.americanheart.org>  
<http://www.cdcnpin.org>

<http://www.healthfinder.gov>  
<http://198.102.218.57/nhic/>  
<http://www.livingtobaccofree.com>

American Dietetic Association.  
 American Diabetes Association  
 American Heart Association  
 CDC National Prevention Information Network  
 Health Finder  
 National Health Information Center  
 Nevada Tobacco Users Helpline



## **YOU MUST FILE A REPORT ON ALL INJURIES AND/OR ILLNESSES INCURRED AT WORK WITHIN SEVEN DAYS!**

Claims resulting from work-related injuries must be filed through your Workers' Compensation carrier, NOT the Teachers Health Trust. This includes, but is not limited to, coaching injuries, environmental illness, etc.

**IF YOU ARE INJURED ON THE JOB, THE CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT (CCSD) AND THE STATE OF NEVADA REQUIRE YOU TO SUBMIT A WRITTEN NOTICE OF INJURY OR OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE (FORM C-1) WITHIN 7 DAYS OF THE INCIDENT.**

If a timely-filed claim is denied as not being work-related, the Trust will review your claim for payment. **The Trust will not consider a claim if Workers' Compensation denied it because you failed to file the claim in a timely manner.**

To be on the safe side, if you are a licensed employee and become ill or injured while on the job, notify your administrator immediately and then call the School District's Risk Management office at **799-2967**.

# NEWS & NOTES

## BEING A SMART HEALTH CARE CONSUMER CAN SAVE YOU MONEY

*Let us show you how.*

The Teachers Health Trust encourages you to become a smart health care consumer so you are not left with large medical bills. Always verify your physician is an in-network provider before proceeding with services. Your physician doesn't always refer you to in-network surgeons or utilize in-network anesthesiologists. Often times, you assume that your physician will only refer you to an in-network provider, but that is an expensive assumption. The example below shows how much of a financial burden you will experience when utilizing out-of-network providers.

### Example PPO Plus Plan Cardiovascular Surgeon:

	<b>In-Network Provider</b>	<b>Out-of-Network Provider</b>
A. Billed Charges	\$33,000.00	\$33,000.00
B. Allowable Charges	\$15,679.00	\$15,679.00
C. Copay	\$ 125.00	\$ 0
D. Out-of-Network Deductible	\$ 0	\$ 1,500.00
E. Co-insurance (30% of allowable)	\$ 0	\$ 4,253.70
F. Amount Exceeding Allowable	\$ 0	\$17,321.00
<b>Total Employee Responsibility</b>	<b>\$ 125.00</b>	<b>\$23,074.70</b>

As you can see in this example, if you use an in-network provider, your out-of-pocket expense for the surgeon would be \$125.00. If you use an out-of-network provider, (such as Dr. Bashir Chowdhry of Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery of Nevada) the cost to you would be \$23,074.70. *You are urged to demand in-network providers to save you money.*

### Example PPO Plan Cardiovascular Surgeon:

	<b>In-Network Provider</b>	<b>Out-of-Network Provider</b>
A. Billed Charges	\$33,000.00	\$33,000.00
B. Allowable Charges	\$15,679.00	\$15,679.00
C. Copay	\$ 250.00	\$ 0
D. Out-of-Network Deductible	\$ 0	\$ 2,500.00
E. Co-insurance (30% of allowable)	\$ 0	\$ 3,953.70
F. Amount Exceeding Allowable	\$ 0	\$17,321.00
<b>Total Employee Responsibility</b>	<b>\$ 250.00</b>	<b>\$23,774.70</b>

As you can see in this example, if you use an in-network provider, your out-of-pocket expense for the surgeon would be \$250.00. If you use an out-of-network provider (such as Dr. Bashir Chowdhry of Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery of Nevada), the cost to you would be \$23,774.70. *You are urged to demand in-network providers to save you money.*

## PROVIDER CHANGES

### *Keeping Current*

Providers of the PPO Plus and the PPO plan are updated daily on the Health Trust website. Take a moment and go to [www.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.teachershealthtrust.org), click on *Provider Search*, to see if there have been any changes to your provider.



# The Best Weigh To Go

*WellFit program starts on Monday, February 13  
and concludes on Saturday, April 22.*

## **What is WellFit?**

WellFit is a 10-week cardiovascular program that encourages you and your colleagues to briskly walk or take part in other comparable physical fitness activities. The program is free, allows you to participate in fitness activities of your choice, and it offers some valuable gifts and awards for all who are eligible to participate.

## **Who can participate?**

WellFit is open to all active and retired licensed employees of the Clark County School District (CCSD) who are currently covered by the Teachers Health Trust, as well as employees of the Health Trust and the Clark County Education Association (CCEA). Administrators are also welcome to participate, but are not eligible for the special awards and some of the gifts.

## **Why participate?**

- To feel better
- To look better
- To improve your health
- To have fun
- To win cool stuff
- To support and join your colleagues

## **How To Get Started?**

1. Participants are encouraged to consult their medical doctor before starting any exercise program to ensure they are in good physical health.
2. Complete a registration form online either by going directly to the official WellFit website at [www.wellfit.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.wellfit.teachershealthtrust.org) or by linking to the site through the Trust website—[teachershealthtrust.org](http://teachershealthtrust.org). *The last day to register for WellFit is March 13, 2006.*
3. Review the program requirements.\*
4. Set your goals.
5. Print out the WellFit Log to take with you on your exercise journey, then report your achieved daily miles on the electronic WellFit log online. Logging your miles online is not a daily requirement but it must be completed by the end of the program.
6. Recruit up to five eligible participants to participate in “The Best Weigh To Go” program. *(Optional)*
7. If not participating in “The Best Weigh To Go” program, recruit your spouse, friend, or other colleagues to help you achieve your goals.
8. Attend the WellFit Kick-off to Weigh-in for “The Best Weigh To Go” program or obtain a fitness testing screen. *(Optional)*
9. Track and report your progress.
10. Attend some of the weekly WellFit activities. *(Optional)*

*\*Participants must perform their fitness activities for a minimum of 1/2 mile a day, four days out of a seven-day week, for a total of six out of the 10-week program.*





# WellFit's "The Best Weigh To Go" Program

## Guidelines/Instructions

- Teams **must** consist of a minimum of two (2) and up to five (5) employees and/or retirees who are active participants, eligible to participate in the WellFit program.
- Eligible employees (*All licensed/teachers & retirees who are enrolled in a Teachers Health Trust sponsored plan*).
- Eligible employees and/or retirees can compete on one team only.
- Each team is required to have a team name and team captain.
- All team members **must** weigh-in and weigh-out together.
- **Weigh-In: February 11 (9 AM to 12 PM) & Weigh-Out: April 22 (9 AM to 12 PM)** (10-week challenge)
- **Weigh-In Location:** UNLV's North Gym – Entrance off Harmon, which is off Swenson, between Tropicana and Flamingo. For a map of the campus, please visit UNLV's website at [www.unlv.edu](http://www.unlv.edu).
- Employees must wear comfortable athletic gear—shirt, pants/shorts, and socks/nylons—for weigh-in.
- Shoes must be removed for the weigh-in and weigh-out.
- The calculation for winning is based on the **Percentage of Team Body Weight Loss**.  
*Example: Weigh in - Weigh out = lbs. lost (lbs. lost/lbs at weigh in) x 100 = % of body weight loss 1500lbs - 1300lbs = 200lbs (200 / 1500) x 100 = 13.3% Body Weight Loss*
- Prizes will be awarded to the top 3 teams who lose the highest percentage of body weight in this 10-week challenge. The team who loses the highest percentage of body weight will win a **GRAND PRIZE of \$1,000.00**. Additional prizes will be awarded.
- **For safety, expectant mothers are not eligible for participation in "The Best Weigh To Go" program. If you are or become pregnant during the program, we recommend you stop the program.**

If you have additional questions, please contact the Health Trust Wellness Division at (702) 794-0272 or by e-mail at [wellness@teachershealthtrust.org](mailto:wellness@teachershealthtrust.org).

**LET'S PULL TOGETHER FOR A WELLFIT FUTURE!**

## WellFit FREE GIFTS

There are several ways to win a free gift when participating in WellFit. Your biggest gift will be the one you give yourself for joining the program.

### **Gift #1 (Register)**

All employees who register for the WellFit program will receive a "Make the Time" bracelet.

### **Gift #2 (All Finishers)**

All participants who finish the program will receive a pair of Nike, Inc., ankle socks. Finishing the program means you have performed at least 1/2 mile a day, four days of each seven-day week, and performed your desired fitness activity six weeks of the 10-week program.

### **Gift #3 (Division Winners)**

At the completion of the program, Nike, Inc. will provide a t-shirt to each participant at the work site that has the highest percentage of WellFit participants in their

division who complete the program. The t-shirt will be imprinted with the names of all the WellFit winning divisions. There are 12 divisions, grouped as follows:

- \* 4 elementary schools
- \* 3 middle schools
- \* 2 high schools
- \* 1 special school
- \* 1 rural school (*Indian Springs, Sandy Valley, Laughlin, Moapa Valley, Virgin Valley, Boulder City and surrounding areas*)
- \* 1 licensed department (*Professional Development, Student Support Services, Title I, Grants & Development*)

*(continues on page 10)*

# WellFit FREE GIFTS

(continued from page 9)

**Note:** *Athletic footwear will be awarded to one work site of one division that has the highest percentage of participants enrolled in the program and a breakfast will be awarded to one work site of one division that has the highest percentage of participants enrolled in the program. The division winners will be selected through a lottery process by the Health Trust Wellness Team. Teachers Health Trust and CCEA staff are not eligible to enter any of the lotteries.*

## Gift #4 (Most Mileage Winners)

Athletic footwear will be awarded to 1-4 employees from each work site division participation category—novice, intermediate, advanced and to one retiree—with the most number of miles within their division at the end of the 10-week program. The prizes will be divided into three categories:

1. Those who achieve the most number of miles as a novice competitor. Individuals under this category can only win once.
2. Those who achieve the most number of miles as an intermediate competitor.
3. Those who achieve the most number of miles as an advanced competitor.

## Categories

- \* Novice competitors are beginners who do not exceed 75 miles during the entire 10-week program.
- \* Intermediate competitors are participants who do not exceed 300 miles during the 10-week program.
- \* Advanced competitors are participants who exceed 300 miles during the 10-week program.

## Special Awards

The Health Trust recognizes various WellFit enrollees for their outstanding efforts. At the end of the program, the following special awards will be issued:

.....

The program is based upon an honor system. You can perform your activities anywhere, at anytime; e.g., home, health club, before work, during lunch, or after work.

1. **Lifetime Achievement Award** – An enrollee who is diagnosed with a lifetime disease and completes the WellFit program, despite complications with the disease. A serious medical condition can be a disease one lives with for a lifetime. The recipient of this award will be selected through a lottery process by the wellness division staff.
2. **The Best Weigh To Go Team** – Three groups of up to five individuals who achieve the highest percentage of team body weight loss. A **GRAND PRIZE of \$1,000 for the first place team.**
3. **Heart Saver Award** – Enrollees who lose 15 or more pounds will be awarded the *Why and How People Change Health Behaviors* book published by the American Fitness Association.
4. **Coordinators** – One premiere movie ticket to Regal Cinemas will be provided to each coordinator who complete the program. In addition, a \$50 gift certificate will be provided to three coordinators who are selected from a lottery of all coordinators who complete the program and have five or more colleagues complete the program at their work site. An additional \$10 gift certificate to Nike, Inc. will be provided to each coordinator who wins their division.

Some enrollees who win a special award will be provided with a special gift, recognized in local print and electronic media releases, as well as the Health Trust *Health Traxx* fall news publication.

Lifetime achievement recipients will receive additional gifts at the annual Health Festival.

## Go ONLINE and Sign-up Today!

[www.wellfit.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.wellfit.teachershealthtrust.org)

# HEALTH LINE

## Getting In Shape

(800) 328-8914

PIN #130

### MESSAGE / TOPIC CODE

Calories:

How Many Do You Need?

**7416**



Cardiovascular Conditioning

**7417**



Developing Your Personal  
Fitness Plan

**7421**



Diet, Exercise and Losing Weight

**7422**



Dynamic vs. Static Exercise

**7423**



The Health Line is a free service provided to the Teachers Health Trust by United Healthcare Service at no charge to you. It is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the toll-free number above, enter PIN 130, and select one of the specially recorded topic codes. After listening to the message, you can have the information faxed to you. The option to speak to a registered nurse is not available.

The Health Line is designed to help you become more informed about specific health issues. It is not intended to replace a medically-necessary consultation that may be needed. The information provided in the tapes represents information available at the time of taping. New information and research may be found after the tapes have been released. Always consult with your doctor for further information.

# NEWS & NOTES

## TAKE A BITE OUT OF SMOKING

### *300+ Establishments Participate in Clark County Health District's Campaign*



Encourage more restaurants to offer fully smoke-free dining and promote those that do. That simple goal launched the Clark County Health District's "Take a Bite Out of Smoking" campaign in 1999. Now in its sixth year, the campaign has grown to include an extensive promotional effort and more than 300 participating restaurants throughout the county. For the owners of these eateries, going smoke-free made

sense, both from a business and health perspective.

Many restaurants that have gone smoke-free have noticed a decrease in cleaning and repair costs, while loyalty among patrons has increased, particularly among people with children, respiratory problems or allergies. In addition, restaurants with smoke-free policies are taking an important step toward protecting the health of their employees. Plus, Clark County residents overwhelmingly support smoke-free dining. Though roughly 1 in 4 Clark County residents smoke, a survey conducted in 2003 by the Gallup Organization shows that 70 percent support smoke-free restaurants and nearly 90 percent believe the public should be protected from secondhand smoke.

To achieve smoke-free status, a restaurant must meet several criteria. First it must have an interior seating area. Second, the interior of the restaurant must be completely smoke-free year round. Finally, the dining area of any restaurant must be separated and completely isolated from any area where smoking is permitted, such as an adjoining bar or lounge.

If you would like a FREE "Take A Bite" coupon book or need more information about smoking cessation, please contact the Clark County Health District's Tobacco Control Program at (702) 759-1270 or visit [www.getthehealthyclarkcounty.org](http://www.getthehealthyclarkcounty.org).



# CLASS TIDBITS



## Battling Baby Blues

Depression in women is as common during pregnancy as it is after delivery, states a new report by the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). But because signs of depression such as tiredness, difficulty sleeping, emotional changes and weight gain also occur during pregnancy, health care providers and patients may fail to recognize depression.

According to the report, roughly one in 20 American women who are pregnant or have given birth in the past 12 months are suffering from major depression. The report defines perinatal depression as occurring during pregnancy and up to 12 months after childbirth.

"This report should serve as a wake-up call to health care providers as well as women and their family members," says AHRQ Director Carolyn M. Clancy, MD. "The belief that depression is mostly a problem for women following childbirth is a myth stemming from the fact that postpartum depression has been studied more thoroughly. Enhanced detection of depression by primary care doctors and OB/GYNs can help improve women's quality of care."

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)



## Damage Control

One third of women who deliver babies vaginally undergo episiotomies, but is this cutting of the perineum (the skin between the vaginal opening and the anus) necessary? According to a review of scientific evidence conducted by AHRQ, a

routine episiotomy did not achieve any of the goals it is commonly believed to. In fact, when providers restricted their use of episiotomy, women were more likely to give birth without perineal damage, were less likely to need suturing and were more likely to resume intercourse earlier.

"The routine use of episiotomy has been standard for years, with apparently limited research to support it," says Carolyn M. Clancy, MD, director of AHRQ. "This evidence could help many women with uncomplicated births avoid a procedure that is of no benefit to them."

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

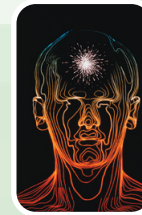


## Is 'Vitamin C' The Answer to Muscle Damage?

Athletes are forever looking for ways to protect against and treat muscle damage. According to a study by Connolly et al. published in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* (May 2005), vitamin C is not the answer. The subjects in the study took 3,000 milligrams of vitamin C

for three days before and five days after damaging exercise, but the C offered no protective benefits against muscle soreness.

Source: Nancy Clark, MS, RD



# Mental Muscle Express

Boost your brain power by solving these puzzles. See if you can uncover the meaning in these words, letters, symbols and their positions. Each puzzle represents a common word, phrase, expression, person or place.

The example below is "uptown."

N  
W  
O  
T

1

J A C K

2

PAIN PAIN PAIN PAIN

3

MEFLOSSALS

4

T F R O E E  
T R R E E  
T E R S E T E

5

MORE MORE  
MORE MORE  
MORE MORE  
MORE

See Answers on page 20.

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

## Tired of That Extra FAT

*How that lost hour of sleep can affect appetite-regulating hormones and your body mass index (BMI).*

At last, there may be a diet plan everyone can follow—getting enough sleep. Research from the Stanford University School of Medicine and the University of Wisconsin shows that sleep deprivation changes the blood levels of some appetite-regulating hormones and increases hunger. The research also linked sleep loss to a higher body mass index (BMI).

The researchers found that people who slept only five hours a night had about 15 percent higher levels of the appetite-stimulating hormone ghrelin than people who slept at least seven-and-a-half hours. The sleep-deprived also had 15 percent lower levels of the hormone leptin, which suppresses the appetite. The hormonal changes seemed to have some impact on weight, as the sleep-deprived group had a BMI about 3.6 percent higher than those with adequate rest.

“These findings suggest that we should consider healthy sleep as [an] important arm of any general well-being program. People don’t realize that not sleeping enough may be bad for their health—including predisposing them to being overweight,” says Dr. Emmanuel Mignot, one of the study’s authors.

### Sleep-Deprived Americans

In a 2005 poll conducted by the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), 40 percent of American adults reported less than seven hours of sleep a night on weekdays and 70 percent reported less than eight hours. According to the same poll,

there is a downward trend in the percentage of American adults who report averaging at least eight hours of sleep a night on weekdays. In 2001, 38 percent reported getting eight hours or more, but only 26 percent reported getting that much in 2005.

“The average American is chronically sleep-deprived. We know their bodies are trying to catch up because most Americans tend to sleep more on weekends than during the week,” says William Orr, president of the Lynn Health Science Institute in Oklahoma City and NSF board member.

Both Orr and Mignot agree that getting adequate sleep is as important to overall health as proper nutrition and exercise. But telling people to sleep more may be a relatively pain-free way to get them to lose weight, Mignot says. Furthermore, he says diets usually only bring short-term improvements because people do not enjoy them and eventually relapse to old habits. Since people enjoy sleeping, he thinks sleeping more may be a health tip people will be inclined to follow long-term.

Mignot and his colleagues studied 1,024 volunteers beginning in 1989. Participants filled out questionnaires on sleep habits, exercise and other lifestyle traits and kept periodic, six-day sleep diaries. Every four years researchers performed blood tests and measured participants’ sleep patterns using nocturnal polysomnography, which measures sleep disturbances and deepness of sleep.

Mignot’s study shows the long-term effects of sleep deprivation on

hormones, but other recent research shows that even short-term sleep loss has an impact. Two nights with only four hours of sleep raised people’s ghrelin levels and lowered their leptin levels, increasing their desire for sweet, salty and starchy foods, University of Chicago researchers reported in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

### Leptin and Ghrelin

The link between appetite and sleep illustrates that hunger is not just a matter of having an empty stomach, Mignot says. It is actually a complicated physiological response to a variety of conditions within your body—controlling hunger is more than an exercise in willpower. Consequently, obesity researchers have begun focusing on the effects of hormones like ghrelin and leptin, both of which were discovered within the last decade.

Leptin, the appetite-suppressing hormone, comes from fat cells. The fat cells secrete it constantly as a way to tell your body how much reserve energy you have stored. Low levels of leptin signal starvation and induce hunger. Its effect can be seen most starkly in those who lack leptin due to a mutation. “People without leptin are voracious eaters. They cannot stop. They will eat anything you put in front of them. In these patients, if you add leptin, it is a miracle,” says Mignot.

Despite its strong impact on the leptin-deficient, giving people supplemental leptin is not an effective treatment for obesity in the

*(continues on page 15)*

# NUTRITION

## *The Low Carb CRAZE*



### Learn the benefits, side effects and safety of these diets.

Low-carbohydrate regimens such as the Atkins and South Beach diets have become increasingly popular—they don't require exercise, allow unlimited caloric intake and are relatively effective. Some studies have shown that the diets do not elevate blood triglycerides or cholesterol levels in most people, in spite of relatively high fat intake. However, they do increase blood cholesterol and triglycerides in some people.

Thus, the diets appear to be relatively safe in the short-term, but little is known about long-term effects. These diets have side effects such as constipation from shortage of fiber and fatigue. They are deficient in certain minerals such as calcium and magnesium, low in antioxidants and often difficult to maintain because of sweets cravings.

Until his passing in 2003, Dr. Robert C. Atkins maintained that his diet was effective because ketones resulting from the diet suppress appetite. Dr. Arthur Agatston of the South Beach regimen believes his diet results in an alteration in metabolism, which corrects cravings to consume excess calories. (However, the South Beach diet reduces caloric intake to around 2,000 calories, which in itself, will result in weight loss for most people.)

### Carbohydrate Synthesis

Studies have shown the Atkins diet to be more effective in weight loss than traditional low-calorie diets and exercise plans—even without reducing caloric intake. Therefore, these diets appear to violate the principle that “calories in” must be less than “calories out” to lose weight. How can this be?

All carbohydrates are converted to blood sugar—better known as glucose—in the body. The Atkins and South Beach diets allow about 10 percent of the usual carbohydrate intake. This is not sufficient to supply the energy source for muscles and the brain. Glucose is also the starting material for synthesis of a number of important physiological and structural body components, and is the principle source of citric cycle intermediates. The citric cycle is the process where all nutrients are finally broken down to carbon dioxide and the starting materials of energy production. The cycle consists of eight compounds that must constantly be replenished because in addition to their role in energy production, these intermediates function as starting materials in various synthetic processes.

If carbohydrates are not adequate, the only source of glucose available to the body is protein since carbohydrate synthesis from fat is not possible. However, body protein is constantly broken down and resynthesized, and dietary protein is required to supply the essential amino acids for the new proteins. These amino acids make up 10 of the 21

present in most dietary proteins, which have only 11 of the total to be converted to glucose and to citric cycle intermediates. Thus, only about half of dietary protein is available for conversion to glucose.

### Ketone Bodies

Energy is required to convert amino acids from dietary proteins to glucose. First, nitrogen must be removed from the amino acid and converted to urea in order to be secreted in the urine. This process requires energy. The resulting deaminated acid products may then be converted to citric cycle intermediates and glucose, which also requires energy. Dietary fat and body fat must meet this energy requirement—and this is why the diet works. However, if citric cycle intermediates are depleted due to a shortage of glucose, the cycle cannot handle excessive fat breakdown and partially degraded fat remnants accumulate. These remnants are known as “ketone bodies.” Ketones can be used for energy, but excessive quantities may cause acidosis—which can be lethal although not at the quantities generated in the Atkins and South Beach diets. Atkins, and to a lesser extent the South Beach diet, result in excessive ketone formation and excretion, which suggests that the citric cycle is not adequate to handle the load. Since ketosis is a symptom of citric cycle deficiency, it appears that dietary protein intake cannot sufficiently supply citric cycle intermediates and excessive fat catabolism simply overloads the cycle.

Why doesn't a diet high in saturated fats increase blood cholesterol and triglycerides in everyone? One answer is that fats must be used for energy needs in a low-carb diet and if excessive cholesterol is produced, this is also degraded for energy. The fact that low-carb diets are more effective than traditional low-calorie regimens and that exercise is not required suggests that the energy explanation of the efficacy of carbohydrate deficient diets is correct.

## Restoring Insulin Sensitivity

The current low-carb fad has been caused by the misconception that stimulating carbohydrates rather than fat or protein results in weight loss in spite of a high caloric intake. However, this justification is only true under certain conditions. One reason might be that most Americans consume sugar-laden soft drinks and other carbohydrate snacks between meals. This results in elevated blood glucose levels, which don't return to fasting levels until after a night's sleep. Elevated blood glucose stimulates the secretion of insulin by the pancreas gland and insulin suppresses fat breakdown. Thus, there is never an opportunity for weight loss even with moderate exercise and a low-calorie diet insulin is required to facilitate entry of glucose into all cells. Furthermore, muscle cells have a limited capacity to store glucose and, when faced with an excessive supply, become forced to place a block on the glucose uptake system. The result is insensitivity to insulin—or type 2 diabetes. Once referred to as “late onset” diabetes seen only in the elderly, type 2 diabetes is now seen in children since young people are

especially prone to consuming soft drinks and snacks throughout the day. This, and lack of exercise, are the reasons for overweight children. The Atkins and South Beach diets and the low-carb fad thus have a positive feature since they should restore insulin sensitivity by maintaining low blood glucose levels.

If blame is to be placed on one of the three dietary nutrients (carbohydrates, protein and fat) as the main cause of weight gain, it should be fat because it contains more than twice the calories per gram than carbohydrates or protein—9.3 calories per gram for fat and 3.7 calories per gram for carbohydrates. Furthermore, dietary fat can be converted to body fat without significant energy consumption, but the conversion of carbohydrate to fat is an energy-requiring process because carbohydrates must be partially broken down and then resynthesized into fat. Thus, considerably more carbohydrates than fat must be consumed to gain weight. Restricting fat is a much easier way to reduce caloric intake.

Safe, healthy and effective ways to avoid weight gain and its related health problems is to keep caloric intake down, exercise and avoid snacks in between meals. If it becomes impossible to restrict caloric intake, cut out snacks and soft drinks. This, combined with some exercise (e.g. a 30-minute walk most days of the week), should help most people maintain a healthy weight.

Source: *American Fitness Magazine*  
(September/October 2005)

## Tired of That Extra FAT

(continued from page 13)

general population. Researchers have experimented with this approach unsuccessfully, Mignot says.

Ghrelin, the appetite-booster, comes from the stomach. According to Mignot, we don't know if it has a signaling function like leptin. The stomach releases ghrelin in pulses, usually just before a meal or when you are otherwise anticipating eating. Some people believe that stomach-stapling operations work in part because they reduce the stomach's ability to release ghrelin. However, Mignot says, this is not yet proven.

## Modern Maladaptation

Why does sleep loss change hormone levels? Mignot hypothesizes that it may be a leftover adaptation from the time before light bulbs when people could not do much but sleep after dark. Since those awake burn more calories than those who are asleep, it would make sense for the body to boost the appetite in response to sleep loss. Unfortunately, this once helpful trait may have become maladaptive in modern American society.

“The problem is that in the past...you didn't have food freely available. No, even a small increase in appetite results in a disproportionate amount of food intake because the food is so easily accessible,” says Mignot.

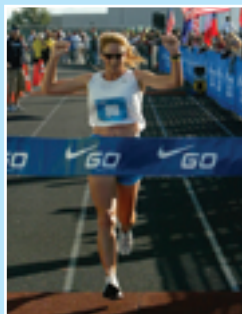
Whatever the reason for the link between sleep and hormones, Mignot cautions that more work remains to be done on the subject. For one thing, he thinks there may be other appetite-controlling hormones awaiting discovery. Researchers need to determine exactly how sleep-deprived obese people lose weight once they start sleeping more, he says. People need to remember that there are no shortcuts to good health and that they will always have to work at staying fit, he adds. “I wouldn't expect that you [could] take an obese person, get them to sleep one more hour and suddenly they become lean and fit. It's never going to be the magic bullet,” says Mignot.

Source: *American Fitness Magazine*  
(September/October 2005)



The program was brought to Clark County through the Teachers Health Trust to help raise funds to keep physical education in schools. The event was held on November 12, 2005, at Green Valley High School. There were more than 2,000 people of all ages in attendance. Eighty percent of all attendees were under the age of 18.

There was a 1-mile walk and a 5K (3.1 mile) race, but times were only tracked for the 5K. The winners for the 5K race were:



\*\*\*\*\* FEMALE OVERALL RACE RESULTS \*\*\*\*\*

PLACE	NAME	AGE	FINISH	PACE
1	<b>Kimberly Jefferson</b>	42	19:24	6:15 (CCSD Licensed/Teacher Employee)
2	Rachael Schulte	14	21:30	6:56
3	Lilian Chevalier	15	22:01	7:06



\*\*\*\*\* MALE OVERALL RACE RESULTS \*\*\*\*\*

PLACE	NAME	AGE	FINISH	PACE
1	<b>Nick Meis</b>	24	16:15	5:14 (CCSD Licensed/Teacher Employee)
2	Greg Sullivan	22	16:27	5:18
3	Jeff Gardner	46	16:34	5:21

Thanks to the event, \$35,000 was raised to assist the participating physical education teachers and their departments. The Trust would like to thank Medco Health, American Healthways, NevadaCare, Bank West, Encompass, and Diversified Dental for donating funds to assist various at-risk schools with event transportation for students. Niketown conducted after-school programs at five Title I schools selected through a lottery from Nike's P.E. night. The five schools were Jim Bridger MS, Tom Williams ES, Walter Bracken ES, C.P. Squires ES, and Fay Herron ES.

The school with the most participants at the event was Vo-Tech High School, with more than 100 students participating. As a result, Niketown and Jamba Juice conducted a *Jamba Juice Day* at Vo-Tech for their efforts.

Plans are underway for the 2006 Niketown 5 for Kids event. Details to follow in the next issue of *Health Traxx*.



**NIKETOWN 5K FOR KIDS EXCITES STUDENTS** — C.P. Squires E.S. students take part in the Niketown 5K for Kids event. They also benefited from sponsored after-school programs.



# HIGHLIGHTS

## *Your Health Benefits at Work* Participant's Testimonial

**Carol Schoonmaker**, 58, a fourth grade teacher at Will Beckley ES, has been an employee of CCSD and a participant of the Teachers Health Trust for 10 years. During the month of June 2002, she was diagnosed with colorectal cancer and is now cancer free, but the road she traveled to get there hasn't always been smooth.

"If I had the surgery first to remove the cancer and the radiation after, I would have healed properly and would not have had to go through so many surgeries," said Schoonmaker. "All my research (which I should have done earlier) has shown that when one has colorectal cancer, like I had, the primary cure is surgery first, then depending on the stage, it would be radiation and/or chemotherapy after the pathology report."

Due to issues related to her surgeries and some quality of care situations, Schoonmaker was approved by the Trust Case Management Department to seek further professional assistance.

"Roz, the Health Trust Case Manager, was very helpful in helping me get paperwork done for surgeries out-of-

network and for hyperbaric treatments," said Schoonmaker.

Consulting the Health Trust Case Management Department is necessary if you or your dependents discover to have cancer, a high-risk pregnancy, or other life-threatening diseases. They are your advocate and can make your steps to accessing quality health care easier.

"Whenever I have questions about benefits, I always get the answers I need," said Schoonmaker. "I've called them from my hospital bed for answers."

Schoonmaker is living cancer free today and has been considered cancer free since the surgery in October 2002. She still seeks assistance from the Case Management department due to issues related to excessive radiation therapy, but her issues are not nearly as eventful as they were three years ago.

"I am still bringing in my paperwork, Roz and Judy will sit down with me to go over all the information, check on the status of billings, and get right back to me as to what needs to be done next," said Schoonmaker.



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## RX NEWS

### PLAIN TALK ABOUT GENERIC DRUGS

Generic drugs have become a popular option for patients who want to receive high quality medications at less expensive prices. In fact, more than one-third of all prescriptions in the U.S. today are filled with generic drugs—a percentage that will surely grow as more brand-name drugs lose their patent protection.

**Q** *What's the difference between a generic and a brand-name drug?*

**A** A generic drug contains the same active ingredients in the same dosage form as its brand-name counterpart. It produces the same effect on the body as the brand-name drug, but is sold under its chemical or "generic" name instead.

**Q** *Is a generic drug as effective and safe as its brand-name counterpart?*

**A** The quality, strength, and purity of generic drugs are regulated by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA requires that generic drugs contain the same active ingredients and be the same in strength and dosage form to the original brand-name drugs.

**Q** *If generic drugs are really the same, why do they cost less?*

**A** A 20-year patent is granted to the manufacturer of a new prescription drug. During this time, the manufacturer researches, develops, advertises, and sells the drug under its own brand name. When the patent expires, other manufacturers may begin producing and selling the drug using its chemical or "generic" name. Generic drugs cost less because they do not require the same costly research, development, and sales expenses that are associated with brands.

**Q** *How much less do generic drugs cost than brand-name?*

**A** Generic drugs are priced from 40 percent to 60 percent less than their brand-name counterparts.

**Q** *Who makes generic drugs?*

**A** Most generics are made by the same drug companies that make the brand-name drugs. The rest are made by pharmaceutical companies that specialize in the manufacture of generic drugs. In all cases, all prescription medications—whether generic or brand-name—must meet rigid federal standards for quality, strength, and purity.

**Q** *How can you start using generic drugs?*

**A** The first step is to discuss the option of generic drugs with your physician. Talk to him or her about writing a prescription that would allow the pharmacist to dispense the generic equivalent of any prescription drug you currently use. Your physician will make the final decision about the most appropriate medication for you. If you start using generic drugs whenever possible, you can reduce prescription drug costs for your health plan—and ultimately you.

Source: Medco International

**Remember...** Your **generic copay**, unless maintenance prescriptions are filled at a retail pharmacy, is at **NO CHARGE** to you.

# H.E.R.O.S.

## HEALTHY EDUCATORS RUNNING OUR SCHOOLS



### Nick Meis

At the Niketown 5 for Kids event, held at Green Valley HS in November of last year, no one was more dazzling to watch than first place finisher Nick Meis, 24, a first-year health teacher and assistant boy's basketball coach at Lied Middle School. He completed the 5K run in 16:15 minutes, a 5:14 minute pace, which is comparable to some of the track athletes we will be watching at the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing.

"I train hard," said Meis. "I run six to eight miles every day, either in my neighborhood or at Red Rock, weight train frequently, and every Saturday I try to find a race."

He's encouraging, incisive, competitive, and refreshingly honest. Such characteristics explain why he earned the NCAA Division III All-American accolades in the 1500m and the Distance Medley Relay, which he ran the lead-off leg while at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

He loves his school, his administration, coaching and teaching health. His profound outlook on running and teaching goes back to his days in high school.

"I was inspired to teach by my high school cross-country coach, Rob Serres," said Meis. "He brought his enthusiasm from the track to the classroom."

Meis is a wonderful guiding principle for tools to relieve stress.

"I use running as a stress relief," said Meis. "You have to release some of your body's beta endorphins to help you relax."



### Jo Ann Hoffman

You may not know Jo Ann Hoffman, 55, physical education teacher at Las Vegas Academy of International Studies, Visual, and Performing Arts, but once you speak to her, the contemporary voice she has rings true. Her talk is funny, youthful, insightful, witty, energetic, and gentle.

She was honored with the Nevada Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (NAHPERD) physical education teacher of the year award. The award is presented statewide to a teacher exemplary in his or her field.

"I love my job because I love kids and it allows me to play, keeps me youthful, sharp, and graceful," said Hoffman. "If I can't be effective and have fun in my career, it's time to change because it is not fair to me or the kids."

In addition to her strong work ethic, she is focused on maintaining her overall health. She's an avid tennis player, goes to the gym 4-5 times a week, strength trains, and performs yoga and Pilates. She's even started teaching yoga at school.

"Yoga improves flexibility," said Hoffman. "I have noticed that increased flexibility not only helps me, but helps the kids balance stress personally and at school."

She is a person of great value at the precise moment when an obesity epidemic is pummeling our youth, because she understands the youth culture and is an icon for health.

"I believe you need to walk the talk," said Hoffman. "Being active makes me happy, which is something I have developed for years."



- 5) Room for one more  
the trees  
4) Can't see the forest for  
3) Floss between meals  
2) Growing pains  
1) Jack in the box

## FOR YOUR BENEFIT

**Earn additional miles and learn tools to improve your overall health.** Participate in some of the WellFit program health activities listed below at no charge. The programs are designed to boost your fitness program, receive some valuable information from some of the world's top health and nutrition experts, and to make-up for a day you might have missed to meet the required four out of seven-day week WellFit requirement. Below is a list of classes and events designed especially for you:

Event	Date	Location / Time
WellFit Kick-off	Feb. 11	UNLV's North Gym (off Swenson on Harmon, next to UNLV tennis courts)
The Best Weigh To Go Weigh-in	Feb. 11	UNLV's North Gym (off Swenson on Harmon, next to UNLV tennis courts)
Beginning Fitness Training (Instructor: Darryl Thomas)	Feb. 25	LVAC Central Location — 2655 S. Maryland Pkwy. 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Dr. Andrew Weil Presentation Live Better Longer <i>(RSVP not needed)</i>	Mar. 4	Henderson Pavilion (Green Valley Pkwy. & Paseo Verde, Henderson) Free Admission 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Health Ways Workshop	Mar. 11	Desert Springs Hospital — South Magna Room 12 p.m. – 2 p.m.
Too Close To The Edge? (A Coping and Life Balance Workshop)	Mar. 18	Teachers Health Trust — Marvin Sedway Conference Room 2950 E. Rochelle Avenue 12 p.m. – 2 p.m.
Beginning Yoga (Instructor: Tia Taymar)	Apr. 1	LVAC Central Location — 2655 S. Maryland Pkwy.. 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.
The Best Weigh To Go Weigh-Out	Apr. 22	UNLV's North Gym (off Swenson on Harmon, next to UNLV tennis courts) 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
WellFit Data Forms and Logs Due	Apr. 28	Should be completed and submitted to the Health Trust Wellness Division by 5 p.m.
Posting of Winners	May 15	WellFit Website — <a href="http://www.wellfit.teachershealthtrust.org">www.wellfit.teachershealthtrust.org</a>

Space is limited AND some programs are subject to change! Interested participants must RSVP at [wellness@teachershealthtrust.org](mailto:wellness@teachershealthtrust.org) to attend some of the events above unless noted. If space is not available, an e-mail will be sent to you.