

Health Traxx

For Teachers by Teachers

A PUBLICATION FOR TEACHERS HEALTH TRUST PARTICIPANTS

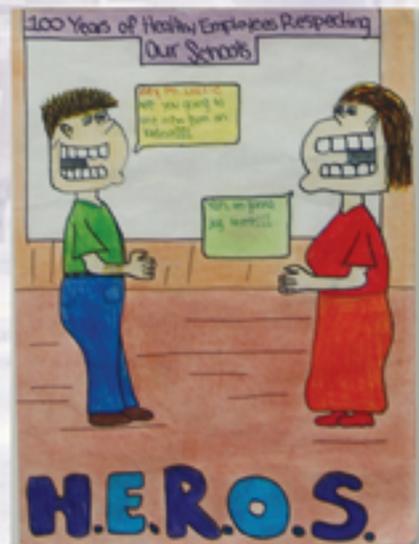
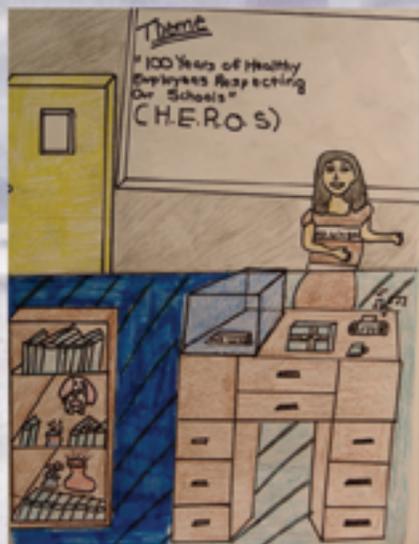
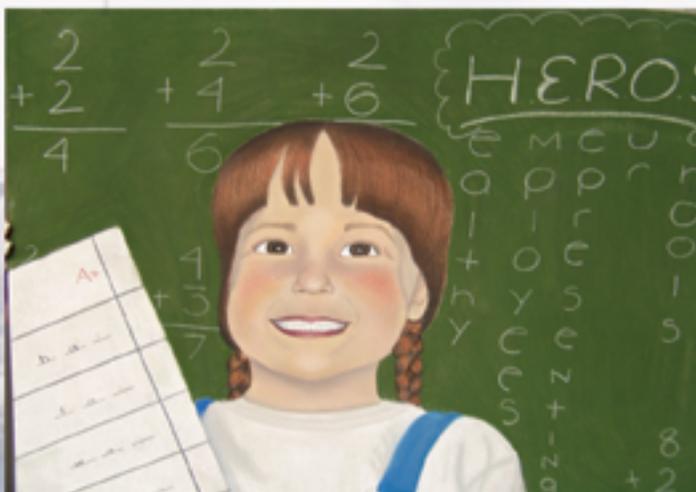
WINTER 2005



VOLUME 4, ISSUE 4

Trust's Art Contest Reveals Amazing Talents

(See page 10)



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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 or write to:

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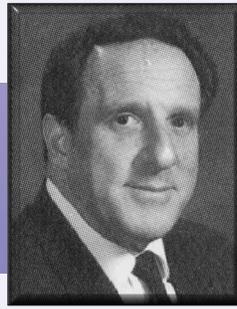
Jana Onosaki

LAYOUT/DESIGN

E&E Communications

• ADVERTISEMENTS •

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 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.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The Health Trust reached a milestone in October when it conducted its annual Health Festival. Not only did the Health Trust invite the support staff and administrators to participate for the first time, it also experienced the largest turnout of any Health Festival to date. More than 3,700 School District personnel attended, and approximately 75 vendors were present. The written comments we received were overwhelmingly favorable. We realize that, at times, the lines were long, but it is difficult to solve that problem when so many people arrive at the same time. As the morning progressed the lines were noticeably shorter.

The Health Festival is not only for the purpose of administering free flu shots – there are numerous other benefits. It is critical, given all of the temptations placed before us each day, to exercise, eat well, and receive appropriate medical and dental care. The Health Festival provides a forum for you to obtain the information you need to assist you in adopting and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. As I walked around the Cox Pavilion, it was apparent to me that many of you were taking advantage of the free testing procedures, and having extended conversations regarding health and wellness with many of the vendors who were present.

I would like to personally thank everyone from the participating groups who worked so hard to make this event such a great success. My thanks also extend to the Clark County School District for its support throughout the planning phase, and to the staff at Cox Pavilion for their assistance. I hope to see all of you (and many more) at next year's Health Festival.

Sincerely,


Peter Alpert
Chief Executive Officer
Teachers Health Trust

Teachers Health Trust Financial Report and Audit Results

The financial records of the Teachers Health Trust are audited each year by an independent certified public accounting firm. The 2005 fiscal year's audit was performed by the Certified Public Accounting Firm of Kafoury, Armstrong & Company.

The audited financial statements were presented to the Teachers Health Trust Board of Trustees on December 1, 2005 by a partner of Kafoury, Armstrong. A copy of the independent audited report has been included for your information (pages 4-7).



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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Trustees
Teachers Health Trust

We have audited the accompanying statements of net assets available for benefits and of benefit obligations of the Teachers Health Trust (formerly known as the Clark County Education Association Welfare Benefit Trust) (the "Trust") as of June 30, 2005 and 2004, and the related statements of changes in net assets available for plan benefits and benefit obligations for the years then ended. The financial statements are the responsibility of the Trust's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial status of the Teachers Health Trust as of June 30, 2005 and 2004, and the changes in its financial status for the years then ended, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the basic financial statements taken as a whole. The supplemental schedules for the years ended June 30, 2005 and 2004, listed in the table of contents are presented for the purpose of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements. These schedules are the responsibility of the Trust's management. Such schedules have been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in our audit of the basic financial statements and, in our opinion, are fairly stated in all material respects when considered in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole.

Reno, Nevada
October 18, 2005

TEACHERS HEALTH TRUST

STATEMENTS OF NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR PLAN BENEFITS AS OF JUNE 30, 2005 AND 2004

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>
ASSETS		
INVESTMENTS, at fair value	\$ 18,705,152	\$ 13,003,822
RECEIVABLES:		
Retiree plan contribution	-	-
Related party	885	3,094
CCSD contract settlement	-	-
Other receivables	1,319	507
	<u>2,204</u>	<u>3,601</u>
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	4,438,083	1,354,588
FIXED ASSETS (net of accumulated depreciation of \$2,587,097 and \$2,130,871, respectively)	5,194,199	3,505,196
OTHER ASSETS	5,513	4,754
PREPAID EXPENSES	<u>222,394</u>	<u>145,621</u>
TOTAL	<u>28,567,545</u>	<u>18,017,582</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable for administrative expenses	412,147	374,670
Due to related party	18,626	55,237
Deferred insurance contribution	<u>30,957</u>	<u>22,361</u>
Total liabilities	<u>461,730</u>	<u>452,268</u>
NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR PLAN BENEFITS		
Reserved for self-funded stop loss coverage	750,801	347,452
Unreserved	<u>27,355,014</u>	<u>17,217,861</u>
TOTAL NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR PLAN BENEFITS	<u>\$ 28,105,815</u>	<u>\$ 17,565,313</u>

See accompanying notes.

TEACHERS HEALTH TRUST

STATEMENTS OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR PLAN BENEFITS
FOR THE YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2005 AND 2004

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>
ADDITIONS:		
Contributions		
Clark County School District	\$ 73,543,772	\$ 68,933,951
Employee deductions	18,213,598	17,163,937
Retiree participants	760,157	3,840,059
Self-pay, COBRA, staff participants	1,624,940	1,398,696
	<u>94,142,467</u>	<u>91,336,643</u>
Interest and other income	2,491,021	286,587
State Emergency Fund	<u>2,884,530</u>	<u>-</u>
Total additions	<u>99,518,018</u>	<u>91,623,230</u>
REDUCTIONS:		
Insurance premiums	<u>12,594,123</u>	<u>12,253,619</u>
Benefits paid for participants		
Medical	44,429,887	44,044,712
Prescription drugs	15,136,492	12,851,678
Dental	8,473,585	8,726,636
Vision	1,895,784	1,973,467
	<u>69,935,749</u>	<u>67,596,493</u>
Administrative expenses	<u>6,447,645</u>	<u>5,851,281</u>
Total deductions	<u>88,977,517</u>	<u>85,701,393</u>
NET INCREASE	10,540,501	5,921,837
NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR PLAN BENEFITS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>17,565,313</u>	<u>11,643,476</u>
NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR PLAN BENEFITS, END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 28,105,815</u>	<u>\$ 17,565,313</u>

See accompanying notes.

TEACHERS HEALTH TRUST

STATEMENTS OF BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS AS OF JUNE 30, 2005 AND 2004

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>
AMOUNTS CURRENTLY PAYABLE TO OR FOR PARTICIPANTS, BENEFICIARIES, AND DEPENDENTS:		
Insurance premiums	\$ 186,788	\$ 1,172,966
Benefit claims	2,735,401	2,380,727
Prescription drugs	631,492	506,856
Total currently payable	<u>3,553,681</u>	<u>4,060,549</u>
OTHER CURRENT BENEFIT COVERAGE OBLIGATIONS:		
Claims incurred but not reported, at present value of estimated amounts	<u>8,234,599</u>	<u>6,269,273</u>
Total obligations other than postretirement benefit obligations	<u>11,788,280</u>	<u>10,329,822</u>
POSTRETIREMENT BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS:		
Current retirees	<u>415,475</u>	<u>527,504</u>
TOTAL BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS	<u>\$ 12,203,755</u>	<u>\$ 10,857,326</u>

See accompanying notes.

HIGHLIGHTS

Your Health Benefits at Work Participant's Testimonial

Gregory and Tiffany Wright have both been members of the Teachers Health Trust for about eight years. They were happy to add a new addition to their family, but were unprepared for what led up to the new family member becoming a reality.

Tiffany Wright, a Kindergarten teacher at Merv Iverson Elementary School, was scheduled to give birth to their son...Evan Wright on April 19, 2005. However, due to complications, he arrived 15 weeks earlier—January 5, 2005. He weighed in at 902 grams, 2 grams short of 2 pounds.

“We were unprepared for the situation,” said the Wrights. “We thought we have more time to ready ourselves for a new baby. We didn’t even have a name picked out for him. During the first few days of his life, he was known as Baby Boy Wright to the hospital staff, and we called him ‘Earl Lee’ because of his prematurity.”

In a period of four months, Evan underwent surgeries to repair his heart, eyes, and two hernias. He also suffered a pneumothorax—a complication from the heart surgery—which required him to have a chest tube. The social worker at the hospital advised them to contact their insurance company.

“Unaware of who to contact at the health insurance company, we contacted the Trust and was referred to the Case Management Department,” said the Wrights. “The Case Management Assistant—Judy Padilla—had the answers and made our situation more personable, instead of only addressing the insurance.”

“We never had to worry about being taken care of in this difficult time,” said the Wrights. “Judy and the Trust have always resolved our concerns and answered our questions.”

Congratulations!

The Teachers Health Trust would like to commend

Diane Harmon

of Lifestyle Decisions

for being nominated and awarded the

2005 March of Dimes Nurse of the Year.

The award reflects her commitment to Teachers Health Trust participants coping with diabetes and cardiac disease.

HEALTH FEST 2K5

Recognizing Clark County School District Employees and Student Artists

Well renowned groups—The Sacred Groove and Future Shock Dance Troupe—caricature sketching, dancing, clowns, a variety of foods, a district-wide art contest, health screens and information were some of the things participants of this year's Health Festival enjoyed on Saturday, October 22, 2005, at Cox Pavilion.

All Clark County School District (CCSD) employees were invited to have fun, get a free flu shot, and discover ways to be the best they could possibly be...physically, mentally, socially, spiritually, and financially. There were more than 3,700 participants—including their guests and family members—taking advantage of the limitless opportunities.

One of the booths at the festival incorporated the work of Clark County students in the art contest. The contest had 583 entries from three divisions—elementary, middle, and high school. Each of the 583 students were given a theme...“Celebrating 100 Years of Healthy Employees Representing Our Schools” and instructed to create an art piece. Fifteen finalists were chosen from the divisions and the results were as follows:

HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION



1st Place
KEENAN KORTH
 Coronado HS
 Grade 9
 Ms. Jessica Sellers, Teacher



2nd Place
MATT LOVE-MILLER
 SNVTC
 Grade 10
 Ms. Laura McCubbin, Teacher

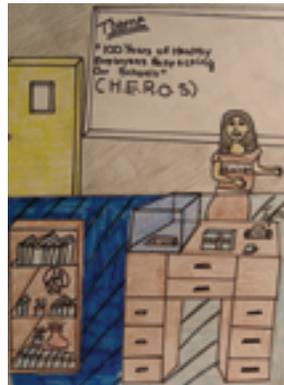


3rd Place
NICOLE FETTO
 Coronado HS
 Grade 10
 Ms. Jessica Sellers, Teacher

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION



1st Place
DEVIN LANE
 Molasky MS - Grade 8
 Ms. Lynn Coston, Teacher



2nd Place
GIANINA KARMENIS
 Molasky MS - Grade 8
 Ms. Lynn Coston, Teacher



3rd Place
VANESSA INIQUEZ
 Molasky MS - Grade 8
 Ms. Lynn Coston, Teacher

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIVISION



1st Place
ASIA HESTER
 Sandy Searles Miller ES
 Grade 5 - Ms. Latoya Lewis, Teacher



2nd Place
AALIYAH ARNOLD
 Lincoln Edison ES
 Grade 5 - Mr. Matt Reber, Teacher



3rd Place
JA'QUAN WASHINGTON
 Lincoln Edison ES
 Grade 5 - Mr. Matt Reber, Teacher

Health Trust staff would like to commend teachers and students for their creative art renditions. As a result of great leadership and artistic vision, the Teachers Health Trust awarded both the school art department of first place winners and the top three contestants of every division with financial rewards and certificates of achievements.

NEWS & NOTES

AEROBICS FIRST, WEIGHTS SECOND



Want more energy for your workouts? Start with aerobics—such as jogging, walking, or step class—and then do your weight lifting. In an 8-week study of 13 male athletes, University of Rhode Island researchers found that those who began their workout by running on a treadmill for 20 minutes and finished with a basic all-body strength training session reported having more energy throughout than athletes who did the workout in reverse order.

Lifting weights breaks down muscle fibers—a good thing, but the researchers speculate this leads to a greater feeling of fatigue during aerobic exercise that follows.

Source: *American College of Sports Medicine*

EAT TO BEAT THE FLU

If you didn't get a flu shot this flu season, try feeding your immune system—it might pay off with fewer days of achy misery. Studies show these foods fortify your flu-virus defenses.

♥ **Take a shine to shellfish.**

Getting adequate selenium (plentiful in oysters, lobsters, crabs, and clams) increased immune cell production of proteins called cytokines in a British study of 22 adults. The scientists say that cytokines help clear flu viruses out of your body.

♥ **Line up fatty fish.**

Of all fats, omega-3s—found in fish such as Pacific salmon—created the highest blood levels of flu-fighting T cells and interferon-gamma cytokines in a British study of 150 people.

♥ **Boost T cells with tea.**

Ten Harvard subjects who drank 5 daily cups of black tea for 2 weeks had T cells that secreted 10 times more virus-fighting interferon, compared with nine who drank the same amount of a tea substitute.

♥ **Get milk.**

Dairy products provide conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which raised immune system response to the flu in an animal study. Early research suggests that CLA may have a similar effect in humans.

Source: *Prevention Magazine*



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**.

GET READY!

*The time
to kick-off
the 2006 WellFit
program is fast
approaching!*

The WellFit kick-off is scheduled for Saturday, February 11, 2006, at UNLV's North Gym.

The WellFit kick-off is a pre-celebration of the WellFit program. Participants who attend the kick-off will be able to obtain some pre-testing fitness goals...body fat, flexibility, strength, and cardiovascular.

Participants will also be able to walk or run at their own pace and receive some valuable prizes before the start of WellFit 2006.

WellFit is a 10-week cardiovascular program that encourages you to walk or take part in other comparable physical fitness activities. The program is free, easy, and valuable gifts are being donated for all. Since this year's program will be completely automated, the Health Trust will be conducting Q&A orientations in January for everyone interested in the program. The orientation schedule will be e-mailed through Interact to all employees enrolled in a Teachers Health Trust plan.

NEWS & NOTES

• PROSTATE CANCER • *Focusing on Men's Health*



The Prostate Cancer Research Institute (PCRI) strongly supports **annual** testing for the early detection of prostate cancer. Effective testing combines both a prostate specific antigen (**PSA**) blood test and a digital rectal exam (**DRE**) for men, beginning at:

Age 35 – for those who have a family history of prostate cancer or who are of African descent.

Age 40 – for all other men.

It is important to note that even elevated PSA levels may indicate the presence of very treatable urinary conditions, such as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) or prostatitis, and do not necessarily indicate that cancer is present in the prostate.

Details of Testing for Prostate Cancer (PC)

Effective testing for PC combines both a PSA blood test and a DRE. Prior to having blood drawn for the PSA test, men should take into consideration some of the factors that might cause a variance in the PSA level. This will help men improve their understanding of their PSA values and DRE results, and promote better communication with their physician. Additionally, men are encouraged to be vigilant about getting photocopies of their PSA test results and also to become familiar with the factors that contribute to being at high-risk for prostate cancer.

Prior to taking a PSA test, it should be understood that the PSA test measures an individual's prostate-specific antigen level and is not a prostate-CANCER-specific antigen level. Hence, an elevated PSA level can indicate prostatitis (inflamed prostate), BPH (non-malignant enlarged prostate), or prostate cancer. Both **prostatitis and BPH are conditions, not diseases**, that are usually more easily treated, yet whose symptoms may be similar to those of cancer. Therefore, a needle biopsy may or may not necessarily be the next reasonable step.

Call the PCRI Helpline if you would like help understanding your PSA test or DRE test results, or if you are having suspicious urinary tract symptoms that you would like to discuss.

PCRI

800-641-7274

Source: Prostate Cancer Research Institute (PCRI)

NEWS & NOTES

• LIFESTYLE ENHANCEMENT •

Steps to Requesting the Benefit

In our efforts to meet the challenges of preventing a disease and/or illness, your Health Trust has taken a step to confront these challenges by broadening the PPO Plus and PPO Plan preventive/routine care coverage benefit.

COVERAGE COMPONENTS

Subscribers/main insurers of the PPO Plus and/or PPO Plan can request \$50 of their \$150 annual preventive/routine care benefit to be applied to the following lifestyle enhancement programs and activities:

- ▶ Health Club Memberships
- ▶ Personal Training and Nutrition Consults*
- ▶ Tobacco Prevention Counseling and Education Classes*
- ▶ Structured Educational Prevention or Wellness Classes

* The Trust maintains the right to audit personal trainers and nutritionists for appropriate and up-to-date licensing and certifications within their field of expertise. Structured educational prevention and wellness classes must follow a curriculum from a credible national organization.

COVERAGE COMPONENTS, EXCLUSIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

- ▶ Medication and supplements
- ▶ Any form of equipment
- ▶ Books, magazines, and journals
- ▶ Videos, CDs, DVDs, and other types of electronic educational devices
- ▶ Costs for dependents
- ▶ Non-itemized receipts
- ▶ Hand-written receipts
- ▶ Reimbursement for programs and/or activities where preventive/routine benefits have been exhausted for the year
- ▶ Eligible program and activity charges over and beyond the lifestyle enhancement request (LER) \$50 limit

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ELIGIBILITY

PPO Plus and PPO subscribers/main insurers are eligible.

HOW TO REQUEST THE BENEFIT

PPO plus and PPO subscribers/main insurers must submit a legible, itemized receipt to the Health Trust from the provider of services.

Receipts should have the following information attached or imprinted:

- ▶ Provider Name and Address
- ▶ Subscriber's Identification and/or Social Security Number
- ▶ Subscriber's Name, Telephone Number, Address, and Date of Birth

NEWS & NOTES

• DIABETES •

What is the Impact of Exercise?

Each time you exercise, you are placing a stress on your body for which an appropriate response is necessary. This article discusses the body's response to exercise for the person with diabetes who is on insulin therapy or insulin secretagogues such as glyburide, glipizide, Glucotrol XL, Amaryl, Prandin or Starlix. It also addresses steps to prevent diabetes-related complications—hypoglycemia in particular—during exercise. Maintaining safe blood glucose levels during and after exercise is accomplished through a correct balance of medications, diet and exercise.



Exercise Yields Consistent BGs

For people who don't have diabetes, blood glucose levels during exercise remain remarkably consistent. This is because the healthy pancreas secretes less insulin in response to exercise, which allows blood glucose to be mobilized from the liver and subsequently taken up by working muscle to be used as fuel.

The current emphasis on tight blood glucose control to prevent complications associated with diabetes increases the potential for hypoglycemia or a fall in blood glucose during exercise. In the case of a diabetic who is treated with insulin therapy or insulin secretagogues, the failure of blood insulin levels to decrease with exercise can result in relatively high levels of insulin and possible hypoglycemia. For this reason, reducing the dose of insulin with exercise may help prevent hypoglycemia. Consult with your diabetes care team for strategies in adjusting insulin dosages to accommodate your exercise needs.



An Insulin-Like Effect

Another potential contributor to exercise-induced hypoglycemia is the fact that

exercise has an insulin-like effect. Muscle contractions associated with exercise promote movement of glucose from the blood into the muscle, an action similar to that of the impact of insulin. In fact, exercise alone can result in glucose uptake into muscle, independent of insulin. Thus, if too much insulin is present prior to exercise, hypoglycemia may result. On the other hand, too little insulin present and high blood glucose or hyperglycemia may be the result.

The American Diabetes Association has published a position statement on the topic of exercise and diabetes. This helpful resource offers detailed information on the response to exercise for both type 1 and 2 diabetics, as well as the impact of complications such as neuropathy and peripheral artery disease on exercise. The statement, "Physical Activity/Exercise and Diabetes," is available from the American Diabetes Association.

Source: *Diabetes Health*

DESERT RADIOLOGISTS



**LOOK CLOSELY.
NOT ALL IMAGES
ARE CREATED EQUAL.**

As you're relaxing with the family, consider taking a few pictures. Not those snapshots from your vacation, but the important images only we can take.

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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

Surviving Holiday Overindulgence

Avoiding holiday overeating should not be about feeling depressed and deprived. Awareness and planning is a big part of staying healthy and feeling good during what is traditionally a time of overindulgence. Here are a few hints that are sure to keep you from getting FATigued during this holiday season.

- * **Be careful of the appetizer table.** Don't graze. Watch the sauces—the fat and calories live there. If it's a vegetable, eat it. If soaked in oil, pass it up. Take smaller portions, but do not deprive yourself in tasting.
- * **Watch the beverages.** Christmas drinks tend to be sweeter. Eggnog is the enemy. Watch the alcohol—calories add up. Try a "Reindeer Spritzer" – half white wine and half soda water. It's delicious, and has half the calories and alcohol of a regular drink.
- * **Know when to say no.** Many times we get caught in a social situation and eat too much. If your host will be offended by you saying "no" to more food, then accept some, but leave some on your plate.
- * **Keep things simple.** The holidays can get too complex by striving to make every thing perfect. Go with the flow, and take time to inhale the aroma of the season.

Source: Richard Collins, MD

Seeing Stars?

Stars, spots, floaters ...whatever you call them, they can be annoying. But what, exactly, are they? It's one of the questions eye doctors hear most often, including Dr. Dana Ziskrout, a VSP therapeutic optometrist in Houston, Texas.

"My patients describe the phenomenon as something floating in their vision," he says. "They speak of trying to brush it away or track it visually, to no avail." Dr. Ziskrout explains that floaters are a result of the gel-like structure in the very back of the eye undergoing structural changes. This gel, or vitreous humor, is uniformly thick and transparent at birth, similar to clear gelatin. But with trauma (such as a blow to the head), disease and age, some of the gel loses transparency. Since it is no longer completely transparent, the vitreous humor may create a shadow on the retina. This shadow, which may be in the shape of a speck, blob or strand, is what we perceive as a spot or floater.

Usually floaters are not serious, but Dr. Ziskrout strongly cautions against self-diagnosis. He says that a recent development of floaters, or a change in shape, size, frequency or number of them may indicate a serious eye problem such as an internal eye hemorrhage, a retinal tear or retinal detachment. Light flashes and blurred vision are additional symptoms of these conditions. "These situations require immediate attention," says Dr. Ziskrout, who recommends getting a thorough eye exam right away to pin down the cause of your floaters.

Source: Eye on Health from VSP



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 STEP
9ET2
9ET2

2 ART

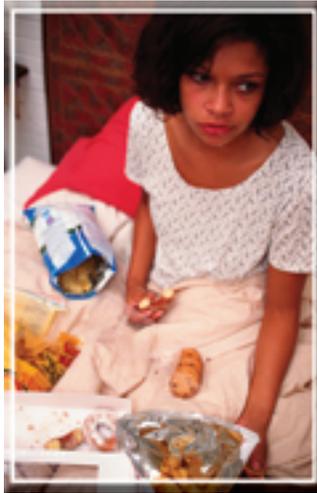
3 NOAHS

4 Dinner mint

5 H
E
A
R
T
E
D

See Answers on page 20.

CLASS TIDBITS



Unsuspected Diet Busters

Beware of these weight loss pitfalls—Post-Stress Munchies. A new Pennsylvania State University research found that women less able to cope with stress—shown by blood pressure and heart rate elevations—ate twice as many fatty snacks as stress-resistant women did, even after the stress stopped (in this case, 25 minutes of periodic jackhammer-level noise and an unsolvable maze). In a French study focusing on mealtime distractions, 48 women ate identical lunches once a week for 4 weeks. At the two lunches, during which they watched TV or listened to a story, they ate 11 percent more calories than at the other lunches. Focusing on only food while eating can help you know when you have had enough.

Source: Wellness Council of America

Tofu Tip

A study has confirmed previous conclusions that a small, daily dose of soy-derived foods decreases both total and bad cholesterol levels.

Source: Alternative Medicine Magazine

Say “Good Night” to Weight Gain

It was announced at the North American Association for the Study of Obesity on November 15, 2004, that obesity is linked to a lack of sleep. Levels of leptin—a satiety hormone—dropped by 20 percent in subjects allowed to sleep for only 4 hours a night, and levels of a hunger-promoting peptide, called ghrelin, rose by 20 percent.

Source: JAMA



Positive Strokes for Massage

If you head to the massage table when your muscles are in knots, you are among the legions of Americans who place themselves in good hands. Massage is a growing trend: Two out of five adults have experienced it, and 12 percent of the population received at least one massage during 2004, according to a survey by Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals. An overwhelming number of clients gave the therapy a thumbs up: 96 percent of the clients expressed favorable feelings. For more on good-hands work: www.massagetherapy.com

Source: Alternative Medicine Magazine

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Get Your Energy Edge Back

What to do when life seems to suck you dry

One winter, I was teaching a personal-growth course on the stunning Caribbean island of St. John. Despite the lush vegetation, aquamarine waters, and postcard sunsets, I was barely there. Months of intense travel—followed by the sudden defection of a key employee—had exhausted my coping reserves. I was a crispy critter, bone tired, and disheartened. By failing to keep track of my energy reserves, I had allowed them to fall perilously low.

A few minutes of honest conversation with one of my students, uncorked tears of grief and frustration. The frustration was about letting life get so out of hand that I was a basket case. Relief came from telling my story to an affirming and insightful woman. My energy was being sapped not only by a relentless travel schedule, but also by a difficult marriage that was a perpetual emotional drain. By trying to sweep it under the rug, I was hemorrhaging energy. The cost of denial—when you lie to yourself to avoid a painful truth—is always exorbitant.

Energy is the life force itself. It's like the power in your batteries that keeps your body, mind, and spirit running. Cutting off emotions creates chronic stress, which can lead to adrenal exhaustion, depression, and burnout.

My student, Dr. Donna, who is a corporate consultant and coach, became my ally in energy recovery. She explained that many things can deplete one's energy. I'd focused on my hectic travel schedule and failing marriage, but as we talked, I realized that other factors were part of the picture, too. For example, I wasn't exercising as much as I had in the past, and restaurant meals were adding unhealthy fats to my diet. My chronic inability to say no scattered my energy in too many directions. These were important insights, but Dr. Donna had some great tricks up her sleeve that helped me go beyond insight to change. One of the invaluable things she taught me—and that I want to teach you—is elegant in its simplicity. She calls it the **well scale**.

Here's how she introduced me to this powerful method of tracking one's energy reserves. That day on the boat, she leaned over and took my hand. With a look of pure compassion, she asked, "On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is full and 1 is empty, how full is your well?"

"I'm sucking mud," I groaned, "somewhere below a 1." This was an embarrassing revelation. After all, I am a mind-body scientist and a stress expert. I knew that my immune system was starting to falter, my sleep quality was poor, and my body felt off-kilter. I was cruising for a bruising. But I needed a little dose of my own medicine to get back to center. Sometimes even the coach needs a coach.

I worked with Dr. Donna for the next year, learning to take

better care of myself. The well scale—which I checked several times a day—was an important key to the recovery process. I quickly learned that if the level in the well dropped below a 7, it was a rapid hill side to empty, so I'd have to do something restorative in a hurry. Dr. Donna and I worked together weekly, then monthly, on the phone. The meetings kept me focused on what drained my energy and what filled my well. *I discovered that well-filling activities fall into two categories: things you can do immediately to bring up your energy level, such as drinking water or taking a walk, and long-term life strategies for better health and well-being like quitting a demeaning job.*

The meetings also kept me honest so that I couldn't backslide into denial about how my life was going. Being unconscious is harder when someone is routinely asking you about your life. I'd call Dr. Donna one week and say something like, "The well's an 8 right now, and I am feeling pretty frisky." But some weeks I might report, "I did my best, but I am fried today. The well is down to a 3."

Dr. Donna suggested three more scales to help streamline my work life. For example, I used to take almost every speaking offer that came in, and I was burning out fast. I needed a way to help me decide which to turn down. The **schlep scale** measures physical wear and tear. Giving a lecture 2 hours away is a 10. Going to India is a 1. The **service scale** measures meaning and helpfulness. Speaking to cancer survivors is a 10, while hyping cosmetics is a 1. Finally, there is the **pay scale**. A lucrative job is a 10, while a pro bono talk is a 1. The more points a job gets, the more reason I have to take it.

With a little creative thinking, you can customize these scales to get a handle on how to use your own precious energy reserves. For example, on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is a lot and 10 is a little), what's the energy cost to you of schlepping Junior to Little League? On the service scale, what's the benefit to his growth and development? If he has lots of other activities, it may be minimal, but if Little League is a source of positive self-esteem and camaraderie, that may offset some of the schlep factor. Is the total of the two scales higher than the value of spending time at home with your child?

The idea of using scales isn't about their being infallible if you reach certain numbers. Their value is in making you more aware of your choices—and their energetic costs and consequences. Here's a rule of thumb, though: **If the very thought of a certain activity or person drains your well, you need to make another choice.** Remember, our energy is our life, a vastly beautiful gift that we want to use with joy and in service. Don't waste it.

Source: *Prevention Magazine*, Joan Borysenko, PhD
www.joanborysenko.com

HEALTH LINE

Fitness Basics

(800) 328-8914

PIN #130

MESSAGE / TOPIC CODE

Fitness Values
of Common Activity

7434



Ways to Make Fitness Fun

7433



Fitness Awareness Quiz

7432



Fitting Fitness
Into a Busy Schedule

7435



Dangers of Poor Fitness

7420



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.

NUTRITION

Foods That Calm

That annoying little stress hormone, cortisol, will send you searching for the nearest bagel or chocolate cookie to replenish the energy you have spent while stressing out. The good news is that there are many calming foods you can add to your diet to keep cortisol production at bay.

1. Eat a serving of lean protein with every meal or snack (like fish, chicken, or soy). Protein minimizes the absorption of carbs, which slows down the release of cortisol.
2. Chew some cashews. These little nuts pack a mighty punch because they are high in magnesium, and magnesium helps reduce stress.
3. Bring on the Brazil nuts. Anxiety is associated with a deficiency in selenium, try throwing a small handful of raw Brazil nuts in your mouth. Three nuts provide you with your entire daily requirement of selenium.
4. Get your calcium. Calcium helps suppress stress hormones. Good sources include yogurt, fortified orange juice, and milk.
5. Switch to tea. According to Nicholas Perricone M.D., it's not the caffeine in coffee that's the problem, it's the acids that cause cortisol levels to skyrocket. Tea doesn't have these acids, so whether it's caffeinated or not, tea is a much healthier alternative.
6. Eat a bowl of oatmeal every morning. It provides more of the stress-relieving B vitamins that black beans, brown rice, and whole-grain bread combined!

Source: 89123 Magazine

HOLIDAY RECIPE

Roasted Cauliflower with Fresh Herbs and Parmesan

Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about 1 cup).

Use any fresh herbs you have on hand for this holiday recipe. While parsley, tarragon, and thyme make a nice combination, you can also try sage, chives, and rosemary.

Ingredients:

12 cups cauliflower florets (about 2 heads)
1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
2 teaspoons chopped fresh tarragon
3 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 cup (1 ounce) grated fresh Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 450°.
2. Place cauliflower in a large roasting pan or jellyroll pan. Drizzle with oil, toss well to coat. Bake at 450° for 20 minutes or until tender and browned, stirring every 5 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley, thyme, tarragon, and garlic. Bake 5 minutes. Combine cauliflower mixture, cheese, and remaining ingredients in a large bowl, toss well to combine.

CALORIES: 89 (35% from fat); FAT 3.5g (sat 0.8g, mono 2.1g, poly 0.4g); PROTEIN 5.2g; CARB 12.1g; FIBER 5.4g; CHOL 2mg; IRON 1.1mg; SODIUM 251mg; CALC 83mg

SOURCE: *Cooking Light Magazine*



GETTING CONTROL OF DIET & EXERCISE

To control unnecessary risks, think about the overall health of your heart; reduce the workload on your heart and keep your heart healthy.

Exercise: Keeping your heart in shape

Your heart is a muscle. Like any other muscle, it needs to stay active. That is one reason why exercise is such an important part of keeping healthy. You should ask your health care professional what exercise program is right for you. The most commonly stated goal for heart-healthy exercise is moderate exercise for 30 minutes three times a week.

Many people find that they are very good about exercising at first, but that after a while they find reasons to stop. You will find that it is easier to stay with an exercise program that includes an activity that you like to do and one that fits into your daily routine.

Variety will also help you stick with it, perhaps taking a long walk once or twice a week and playing tennis with a friend on weekends.

Go for variety, do what you like to do, do not start too suddenly.

Overall, enjoy!

Losing excess weight

Being overweight can often make hypertension worse. The body needs to circulate more blood, so the heart has to work harder. If your health care professional thinks you need to lose weight, but you have had a hard time losing weight in the past, get some advice on nutrition and exercise from your health care professional -- and, most importantly, follow it!

Tips for eating out

- ♥ Try broiled or baked, not fried, foods

- ♥ Avoid creamy salad dressings
- ♥ Skip the cheese appetizers
- ♥ Ask for sauce or gravy on the side

Controlling fat: a double bonus

Lowering fat in your diet, especially saturated fat, helps in two ways:

- ♥ It makes it easier for your body to lose weight
- ♥ It helps lower your cholesterol

Snack foods that are NOT junk foods

- ♥ Fruits and vegetables
- ♥ Fat-free, cholesterol-free cookies
- ♥ Unsalted pretzels
- ♥ Air-popped or low-fat microwave popcorn
- ♥ Juices
- ♥ Sorbet, sherbert and nonfat yogurt

Avoiding excess salt

As anyone who has eaten a bag of salted pretzels knows, salt makes your body want water. When the sodium in salt gets into your bloodstream, it pulls water in. This extra fluid can raise blood pressure and make your heart work harder -- harder than it has to. The trick is to "watch the sodium."

Watching for hidden salt

Check labels on processed foods like canned soups, sauces and gravies, and frozen dinners. Look for low-sodium or low-salt alternatives.

Seasonings other than salt can keep food flavorful. The key is to watch out for sodium that is in prepared foods that you use in

cooking, like canned soups. You do not have to give up eating well in order to live well.

The role of medication

For some people, diet and exercise are not enough to lowering blood pressure into the desired range. They need medication to work with their diet and exercise plan.

Medications work in different ways to help control high blood pressure.

Two important ways are:

- ♥ Getting the arteries to relax
- ♥ Keeping the heart itself from pumping too hard

Your body needs some extra help to balance the workload on your heart and the pressure in your blood vessels.

Remember that medications do not cure high blood pressure the way an antibiotic cures an infection. But for many people, they play an important role in helping keep high blood pressure under control.

What "control" means

Wearing glasses will not change anyone's eyes, but as long as a person has them on, he or she can see just fine -- and lead a normal life.

Controlling hypertension is much the same: as long as one continues to work at it, one may be able to keep blood pressure where it belongs -- and keep an active lifestyle.

Source: Medco Health

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- (1) One step forward, two steps back
- (2) Art Link-letter
- (3) Noah's Ark
- (4) After-dinner mint
- (5) Downhearted

FOR YOUR BENEFIT

Important Health & Wellness Workshop Information for All Participants

Call (702) 616-4900 for information, reservations, and to learn about other programs.
All classes are held at the St. Rose WomensCare Center unless otherwise noted.

VEGGIE SOUP FOR THE SOUL

Learn ways to incorporate fruits and vegetables into your meals. Swap ideas, recipes, and bring a vegetarian dish to share.

Date: Monday, Dec. 12
Time: 6-7 p.m.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR TEEN

Join Kelsay Berland, M.S. to learn techniques to improve interactions with your teen.

Date: Tuesday, Dec. 13
Time: 6:30-7:45 p.m.
Place: St. Rose – Siena, MacDonald Room

COLORFUL CHAKRA MEDITATION

Open the body's energy fields through meditation.

Date: Wednesday, Dec. 14
Time: 10:30-11:30 a.m.

CHRISTMAS TEA PARTY

Celebrate the holidays with a fun and festive tea party.

Date: Friday, Dec. 16
Time: 2-4 p.m.
Fee: \$25
Place: Tea-Licious
6665 S. Eastern Ave.
(inside Antiques at The Mall)

NUTRITION 101: WHY FRENCH WOMEN DON'T GET FAT

Enjoy a French cuisine lunch and get the skinny on why the French can eat high fat foods and still be thin. Presented by St. Rose's Nutrition Therapy Department.

Date: Monday, Jan. 3
Time: Noon-2 p.m.
Place: Rose de Lima Campus, Annex
Fee: \$5 (includes lunch)

HYPNOSIS FOR SMOKING CESSATION

Date: Saturday, Jan. 7
Time: 1-2:30 p.m.
Fee: \$25 (includes CD)
Place: St. Rose – Siena, MacDonald Room

MUSIC4LIFE OVERVIEW

Join music therapist Judith Pinkerton to learn how music can improve your life.

Date: Monday, Jan. 9
Time: 6-7 p.m.

LIFESTEPS WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Make lifetime, lifestyle changes for healthy weight loss through this comprehensive 14-week program.

Date: Thursdays
Jan. 12 through Apr. 13
Time: 5:30-7:00 p.m.
Fee: \$100 (includes all materials)

BODY-FOR-LIFE 12-WEEK CHALLENGE

Get your body motivated for a 12-week challenge that will reshape your mind, mouth, and muscles. At our first meeting, we'll set the challenge, pass out books, take private "before" pictures and perform body fat analysis. Monthly support meetings provided. *For women of all ages.*

Date: **Program Orientation**
Monday, Jan. 30
5:30-7:30 p.m.
Support Meetings
1st & 3rd Mondays
6-7 p.m.
Feb. 6 through May 1

PRESCRIPTION SAFETY BROWN BAG

Bring prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, vitamins and supplements for a St. Rose pharmacist to review for proper use and safety.

Date: Thursday
Dec. 1 OR Jan. 12
Time: 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Call (702) 616-4900 for appt.
Place: St. Rose – Siena, MacDonald Room