

Your Health Your Life

A Women's Health
Newsletter from the
Atlantic County
Division of Public Health

Winter, 2008

Welcome 2008! Your time to TAKE CONTROL of YOUR HEALTH. . .

Once again it's time to clean the slate, turn the page and take the opportunity to make positive changes in the new year. Did you make a New Year's resolution? Did you know that the most popular resolutions include losing weight, working out more, taking more time for yourself and spending less money? No matter what your resolution is, keep in mind, making a short-term promise to eat grilled chicken and spinach salad for lunch or run five miles every day until you lose 15 pounds may set you up for disappointment in the long run. Long-term, dramatic changes to our daily lives can be very hard to keep. Habits that we've had since childhood usually can't be broken just because the calendar says it's a new year. The solution lies in making small steps towards a goal, which can help us implement things that will lead to healthier lives.

The basics of a healthy lifestyle are still pretty straightforward: eat a healthy diet, control portion sizes and get regular physical activity most days of the week. It sounds simple, right?! If it were, we'd all be walking around looking like movie stars - effortlessly fit and

in-shape. The lives we live are often filled with running errands, 40 hour work weeks, sick children, fast food and deadlines. This can keep us from fitting in anything healthy, let alone keeping our New Year's resolutions!

One small step you can take this year is to schedule an appointment with your doctor to get a pap test. Screenings like a pap test can help detect cervical cancer early - when it's easier to control.

Remember, don't set yourself up for a year of impossible goals. Start small with simple changes, made one-at-a-time. Make it a point to do one healthy thing each day. Whether it's as simple as eating an apple, doing 20 extra sit ups, or just allowing yourself five minutes of quiet time, do something that will make you feel better just for doing it.

"A bad habit never disappears miraculously; it's an undo-it-yourself project." ~ Abigail Van Buren - "Dear Abby"

Special Heart Day. . .



The wonderful human heart is celebrated in song, praised by poets, captured by lovers, it is one of the most important organs in the human body, but it can also be the deadliest.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both women and men in this country, killing almost 700,000 Americans each year. In fact, cardiovascular disease claims more women's lives than the next six causes of death combined - nearly 500,000 women's lives a year, nearly twice as many as all forms of cancer. There is good news though, choosing a healthy lifestyle can help you reduce your risk or help you control heart disease if you're one of the 70 million Americans diagnosed with it.

When it comes to heart disease, prevention is key, but the most common mistake people make is waiting until they find out that they have a problem before they start adopting a heart healthy lifestyle. A great place for women to learn about heart disease and prevention is www.goredforwomen.org. Go Red for Women is a national movement founded by the American Heart Association to help you fight back against the number one killer of American women.

National Health Observances

January

Cervical Health Awareness Month
National Glaucoma Awareness Month
Thyroid Awareness Month

February

American Heart Month
National Children's Dental Health Month

March

National Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month
National Nutrition Month
National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month



Atlantic County Division of Public Health: Working for Healthy People and Healthy Communities
Atlantic County Executive, Dennis Levinson. Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders, Joseph F. Silipena, Chairman.

Eat More Fruits and Vegetables Every Day. . .

Fruits and vegetables should make up a large portion of your diet. They are low in calories, which is good, and they are high in vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and fiber, which is even better. Experts suggest that you eat five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

Eating the suggested amount of fruits and vegetables on a daily basis is difficult for many people. Busy schedules, eating on the run, and the temptation of junk foods are all barriers to getting enough fruits and vegetables into your diet.

Do you need some help getting more fruits and vegetables into your diet?

Here are some tips:

Make Fruits and Vegetables Convenient at Home

Apples, pears, bananas, oranges and cherry tomatoes don't need any refrigeration. Keep your fruits and vegetables in plain view on your countertop or table.

When snack time rolls around it will be easy to grab a piece of fruit or a handful of cherry tomatoes. With this idea in mind, make sure you keep the cookie jar and the candy bars out of sight.

Make Fruits and Vegetables Convenient at Work

Single serving packs of apple sauce or fruit cups that don't need refrigeration can also be kept at your desk. Pack sliced

carrots and celery with your lunch for a nutritious afternoon snack.

Eating away from home can be difficult, but with some thought you can still get enough fruits and vegetables into your diet.

Fruits and Vegetables as Snacks

After school snacks or nighttime snacks often mean bags of greasy chips, bowls of ice cream or bottles of sugary sodas. Those snacks are high in calories and low in nutrition. Here are some great snack ideas instead:

Freshly cut vegetables are absolutely delicious with your favorite dip. Eat them at snack time instead of potato chips or tortilla chips.

Drink juice instead of soda. Mix your favorite 100 percent fruit juices with club soda if you miss the fizz.

Make a delicious parfait instead of scooping up high calorie ice cream. Layer fresh or frozen berries with vanilla yogurt and nuts or granola.

Eat a chocolate-covered strawberry instead of a candy bar.

Choose dark chocolate for the extra antioxidants.

Instead of milk and cookies, have a small bowl of whole grain cereal with sliced fruit or raisins and low-fat milk.

Keep seedless grapes in the freezer instead of popsicles and ice cream bars.

Set a goal to eat five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables every day, your body will thank you.

Cervical Cancer Awareness, It's time to learn. . .

Did you know...

- Cervical cancer is the 5th leading cause of death in women from cancer?
- The Pap Smear can be one of the best prevention tools against cervical cancer?
- Twice as many African American women die from cervical cancer than Caucasian women?

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable types of cancer. Because of the Pap Smear test, the number of cervical cancer cases has dropped over the past twenty years. However, many women still develop cervical cancer. In fact, over 9,000 women in this country develop cervical cancer every year.

While some cases of cervical cancer cannot be prevented, here are some ways to reduce your risk:

Get a regular Pap smear. The Pap smear can be the greatest defense for cervical cancer. The Pap smear can detect cervical changes early before they turn into cancer.

Limit the amount of sexual partners you have. Studies have shown women who have many sexual partners increase their risk for cervical cancer. They also are increasing their risk

of developing HPV, a known cause for cervical cancer.

Quit smoking or avoid secondhand smoke. Smoking cigarettes increases your risk of developing many cancers, including cervical cancer. Smoking combined with an HPV infection can actually accelerate cervical dysplasia. Your best bet is to kick the habit.

If you are sexually active, use a condom. Having unprotected sex puts you at risk for HIV and other STD's which can increase your risk factor for developing cervical cancer.

Follow up on abnormal Pap smears. If you have had an abnormal Pap smear, is important to follow up with regular Pap smears or whatever your doctor has decided for you.

Get the HPV vaccine. If you are under 27, you may be eligible to receive the HPV vaccine, which prevents high risk strains of HPV in women. The HPV vaccine, Gardasil, was approved by the FDA to give to young girls as young as 9. The vaccine is most effective when given to young women before they become sexually active.

[For more information or to make an appointment for our Women's Health Clinic, call the Atlantic County Division of Public Health at 609-645-5933.](#)

Wellness Tip of the Quarter: Get Moving . . .

Physical activity doesn't take a lot of time or money, but it does take commitment. Start slowly, work up to a satisfactory level, and don't overdo it. You can develop one routine, or you can do something different every day. Find fun ways to stay in shape and feel good, such as dancing, gardening, cutting the grass, swimming, walking, or jogging.

