

# Your Health Your Life

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

July - September, 2008

## Have Fun in the Sun...but protect your eyes!

While some exposure to sunlight can be enjoyable, too much is dangerous, causing immediate effects like blistering sunburns, as well as longer-term problems like eye damage. Ultraviolet radiation is composed of high-energy rays from the sun. Long-term exposure to ultraviolet radiation ("sunburn rays") may contribute to the development of various eye disorders, such as: age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of vision loss among older Americans; and cataracts, a major cause of visual impairment and blindness. Everyone is at risk for eye damage that can lead to vision loss from exposure to the sun.

It's important to protect your eyes from acute damage caused by even a single outing on a very bright day. Intense, excessive exposure to ultraviolet light reflected off sand, snow or pavement can damage the eye's surface. Similar to sunburns, eye surface burns usually disappear within a couple of days, but may lead to further complications later in life. To ensure your eyes are protected, wear sunglasses and a broad-rimmed hat. When selecting sunglasses, make sure they block 99 to 100 percent of UV-A and UV-B rays. But don't be deceived by color or cost. The ability to block UV light is not dependent on the darkness of the lens or the price tag.

Also, while you are out enjoying the sun in the water, remember to wear swimming goggles whenever you swim. Chlorine can make your eyes red and puffy, and ponds and lakes may have bacteria that can get underneath contact lenses and cause inflammation of the cornea.

Remember to protect your eyes when you step out into the sun. If you experience any vision problems, see your eye doctor.



## National Health Observances

### July:

UV Safety Month

### August:

National Immunization Awareness Month

### September:

Healthy Aging Month

National Cholesterol Education Month

Fruits & Veggies - More Matters Month

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

America On the Move Month

Whole Grains Month

## Have You Heard the News?

The American Cancer Society and leaders in the City of Pleasantville have joined a partnership, The Pleasantville Cancer Initiative. The purpose of the Initiative is to eliminate the burden of cancer for people living and working in Pleasantville.

The partnership is headed by "The Leadership Council", a group of passionate community and corporate leaders who volunteer their time, energy, network and resources. While the American Cancer Society spearheaded this effort and will provide guidance and support, it is "owned" and led by the Leadership Council, partners and the community.

If you're wondering why Pleasantville, data suggests the African American and Hispanic communities bear a disproportionate burden of poor health due to a wide range of complex circumstances involving poverty, little or no insurance and barriers to low literacy, language and cultural beliefs.

If you would like to get involved, regardless of where you live, please contact Kim Archie, Director, Community Health Initiatives at 1-800-ACS-2345.

## There's lots of living left to do...

Healthy Aging Month is an annual observance designed to focus national attention on the positive aspects of growing older. Here are some helpful and healthful tips that can help you enjoy your life for a very long time:

### *Physical Fitness*

- Choose an exercise that you like and stick with it.
- Engage in 30 minutes of aerobic exercise and weight-bearing exercise every day.

### *Social Well Being*

- Contribute time to your community through local volunteer groups, religious organizations, or civic groups.
- Stay in close contact with friends and family. Write, email, or call someone daily.

### *Mental Wellness*

- Keep your mind exercised, too, by reading, learning a new skill, and researching something that interests you.
- Develop a hobby -- it's never too late to learn how to play the piano.



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.

## Get Moving America...

**You've probably heard.....**

**Most Americans gain at least 1-2 pounds per year, some even more.**

- Today, almost 65% of the U.S. adult population is overweight or obese. That's 2 out of every 3 of us!
- Individuals gaining weight are at increased risk for diabetes, hypertension, some types of cancer, gall bladder disease, liver disease, sleep apnea, respiratory problems, and osteoarthritis.
- Obesity is the second leading cause of preventable death after smoking and will likely surpass smoking if the trend continues.
- Approximately 30% of 6 to 9 year olds are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight, and excess weight in childhood and adolescence has been found to be a predictor of overweight in adults
- We are raising a generation of children who are at risk of dying at a younger age than their parents due to obesity-related illness.

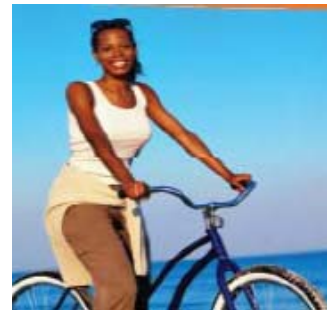
To achieve or maintain a healthy weight, we all know it's important to make wise decisions about eating and physical activity every day. It sounds simple enough. But in today's hectic world, too many people see their best intentions lose out to other daily demands. America On the Move,

encourages everyone to make small, realistic changes that fit into your busy lifestyle.

It's not as difficult as you might think. To avoid weight gain, start by adding just 2,000 extra steps to your daily routine, and choose wise ways to eat 100 fewer calories each day. Make incremental changes that you can stick with for the long-term.

Why wait? Challenge yourself and get involved in a healthier diet and some physical exercise.

If you need help or inspiration to get started check out the America On the Move website: [www.americaonthemove.org](http://www.americaonthemove.org) or just enjoy the nice weather and go for a walk or a bike ride.



## Fruits, Veggies & Whole Grains: Making Your Diet Healthier.

If your diet is still not what it should be in the good nutrition department, September is a great month to try for improvement. Fruits, veggies and whole grains are all celebrated in September.

You've probably heard that you should be including 5 to 9 servings of fruits and veggies, but did you know that you should also be including 3 servings of whole grains in your diet every day?

Whole grains contain protective antioxidants in amounts near or exceeding those in fruits and vegetables. They also provide some unique antioxidants not found in other foods. Corn, for example, has almost twice the antioxidant activity of apples. Wheat and oats almost equal broccoli and spinach in antioxidant activity. But remember that fruits and veggies contain phytochemicals, which determine the different colors, so it is also important to eat all the colors of fruits and veggies as well. Phytochemicals have been shown to have a variety of health benefits, including, reducing the risks of several kinds of cancer.

Research continues to turn up new evidence on the benefits of whole grains. In addition to the known benefits to your digestive system, recently, studies have shown that eating more whole grains may help reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer and diabetes. New studies show that whole grains may lower triglycerides, improve insulin control, help with weight management, and slow the buildup of arterial plaque.

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommend that Americans "make half their grains whole." This means most people should consume three or more servings of whole grains each day, along with their servings of fruits and vegetables. Many people think the number of servings is too high, but remember that most of the portions we consume are bigger than an actual serving size. Take time to do some research, there are plenty of easy recipes that make getting these servings in your normal diet much easier than you think.

### Wellness Tip of the Quarter: Get to Know the Atlantic County Division of Public Health!

The Atlantic County Division of Public Health provides a variety of clinics and screenings. To find out more about our services call us at 609-645-5933 or go to [www.aclink.org/publichealth](http://www.aclink.org/publichealth).

