City of Bryan
The Good Life, Texas Style.™

Worksite Wellness News

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4 DECEMBER 8, 2008

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Holiday Cooking Tips
- Flu Information
- Medication Safety

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Home Blood Pressure Monitoring 2
Don't Wait for the Cold Weather! 2
Seasonal Affective Disorder 2
Know Your Benefits 3
December is... 3-D Month 3

Simple ways to cut fat and calories in holiday favorites!

- **Use two egg whites** instead of one whole egg.
- **Try dried fruits** (raisins, cranberries, dates, plums) in place of nuts.
- **Replace baking chocolate** with three tablespoons of cocoa powder and one teaspoon of canola oil.
- **Reduce the amount of sugar** in baked goods by one-quarter to one-half.
- **Use evaporated skim milk** in recipes that call for whipping cream.
- **Substitute an equal amount** of applesauce for at least half the oil in muffins, brownies, or quick breads like banana bread or cranberry bread.
- **Use low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese** instead of mayonnaise and sour cream in dips.
- **Cook stuffing** with chicken or vegetable stock instead of oil, butter or margarine.
- **Top casseroles** with almonds instead of fried onion rings.
- **Choose reduced-fat cheeses** for salads and casseroles.
- **Make a low-fat crust for pumpkin pie** with 1 cup of Grape Nuts® and 1/4 cup apple juice concentrate.

Source: American Dietetic Association, www.eatright.org

Tis' the Season to Lend a Helping Hand…

Volunteer for a longer, healthier life

When you volunteer a couple of hours a week to help others, you may be adding years and vitality to your own life.

People who give of their time and talents report higher levels of happiness and satisfaction, as well as a greater sense of purpose and control. Other benefits of volunteering can include reduced stress, lower blood pressure, less isolation, and fewer health problems later in life.

Whatever your passions or interests, you can find a way to contribute. Here are just a few ideas: Offer to clean up your neighborhood, tutor a child, cook or shop for a homebound person, volunteer at a homeless shelter, entertain at a senior center, walk pets at the animal shelter, or raise funds for your favorite charity.

Source: www.nationalservice.org

Home Blood Pressure Monitoring

Hypertension or high blood pressure can increase a person's risk for heart and kidney disease. Hypertension can usually be controlled with diet, exercise or medication. In addition to following a doctor's advice for regular checkups, people with high blood pressure should consider home monitoring.

For accuracy, the American Heart Association recommends these tips:

- ♥ Have your doctor check your monitor and show you how to use it properly.
- ♥ Make sure the cuff fits properly. Wrist monitors are not recommended.
- ♥ Sit down, with your upper arm supported and at heart level.
- ♥ Take two or three readings at a time, one-minute intervals apart.
- ♥ Take your blood pressure at the same time every day.

Normal blood pressure is below 120/80. Pre-hypertension is between 120/80 and 139/90. Hypertension is 140/90 or above. Always consult your physician regarding questions about your blood pressure.

Don't wait for the cold weather!

Before the flu season hits is the best time to get your flu shot. Anyone who wants to avoid the flu can get a flu shot, but it is especially recommended for these groups:

1. Children age 6 months up to their 19th birthday
2. Pregnant women
3. People age 50 years of age and older
4. People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
5. People who live in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities
6. People who live with or care for those at high risk for getting the flu
7. Anyone who wants to avoid getting the flu!

***Reminder:* Flu season in Texas usually peaks in January or February. The shot takes approximately two weeks to become effective.**

It's not too late!

City of Bryan Employee Flu Shots

St. Joseph Occupational Health Clinic
Free of charge for employees
$25 for dependents
No appointment necessary

Do you suffer from SAD?

Animals react to the changing season with changes in mood and behavior. People do the same when there is less sunlight.

Most people find they eat and sleep more during the winter months and dislike the short days. For some people, these symptoms are severe enough to disrupt their lives and cause considerable distress. These people are suffering from Seasonable Affective Disorder (SAD).

Symptoms may include fatigue, depression, irritability, insomnia and overeating.

www. medicine net.com

BlueCross BlueShield of Texas

Know Your Benefits

Blue Cross Blue Shield Medication Safety Project: Educate before your medicate

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas is working to provide consumers with the proper education to avoid potentially harmful medication errors. Poor communication between patients and their doctors, pharmacists and other health care providers accounts for 50 percent of all medication errors. About 1.5 million preventable adverse drug reactions occur each year in the United States. Always keep a list of your medications and current doses and communicate these to your health care provider. Know the names of your medications and why you are taking each of them. Two resources are now available on-line for you to access that will help you keep track of your medications and inform you about medication safety.

Visit www.bcbstx.com to print a medication wallet card and medication safety brochure

Always refill your prescriptions before they run out!

December is...National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month (3- D Month)

About 3 in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol related crash at some point in their lives. During the holiday season, and year-round, make sure that you and your loved ones avoid driving under the influence of alcohol.

- **Plan Ahead:** Always designate a non-drinking driver before your holiday party.
- **Take the Keys:** Do not let friends drive if they have been drinking.
- **Be a Helpful Host:** If you are hosting a holiday party this season, always have alcohol-free beverages available for guests and make sure all guests leave with a sober driver.

Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season!

If you have news to share with others and would like to have it spotlighted in our next newsletter, please feel free to submit it to:

Lesley Becker
Wellness Coordinator
(979) 209-5050
lbecker@bryantx.gov

Copies of this newsletter are available in Risk Management.