

Your Health Your Life

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

July - September, 2007

What's Good for the Body is Good for the Spirit as Well

As people grow older, it is very important to keep motivated, to say to yourself, "*I can do it.*"

Regular exercise is even more important for seniors than other age groups since the risk of disease and lost mobility is greater and the positive effects are realized more quickly. But, as we all know, the hardest part is getting started. . .

Tips for getting started:

- Look for daily opportunities to exercise in work and play. Force yourself to walk by parking your car several parking aisles away from the store or your office entrance and walk briskly!
- *Choose an exercise you like and stick with it.*
- Use the buddy system. Arrange to have a friend meet you - it's harder to say no to exercise when you exercise with a friend.
- *Walk, swim, climb, bicycle, dance, fish!*
- Join a walking group or visit your local recreation center, park, church, or senior center.

Remember, it's never too late to start!



National Health Observances

July:

UV Safety Month

National Youth Sports Week - 10th - 14th

August:

National Immunization Awareness Month

National Pain Awareness Month

National Psoriasis Awareness Month

September:

Healthy Aging Month

National Cholesterol Education Month

Fruit & Vegetable Month

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

The Good, the Bad & the Ugly...What your Cholesterol Numbers Mean

Cholesterol levels should be measured at least once every five years for anyone over the age of 20. The test that is usually performed is a blood test called a lipoprotein profile. The lipoprotein profile includes:

LDL (Low density lipoprotein cholesterol, also called "bad" cholesterol.)

HDL (High density lipoprotein cholesterol, also called "good" cholesterol.)

Triglycerides (Fats carried in the blood from the food we eat. Excess calories, alcohol or sugar in the body are converted into triglycerides and stored in fat cells throughout the body.) Results of your blood test will come in the form of numbers.

Here is how to interpret your cholesterol numbers:

LDL cholesterol can build up on the walls of your arteries and increase your chances of getting heart disease. That is why LDL cholesterol is referred to as "bad" cholesterol. The lower your LDL cholesterol number, the better it is for your health. The information below explains what the numbers mean.

Less than 100 - Optimal

100 - 129 - Near optimal/above optimal

130 - 159 - Borderline high

160 - 189 - High

190 and above - Very high

When it comes to HDL cholesterol -- "good" cholesterol -- the higher the number, the better it is for your health. This is because HDL cholesterol protects against heart disease by taking the "bad" cholesterol out of your blood and keeping it from building up in your arteries. The information below explains what the numbers mean.

60 and above - Optimal; helps to lower risk of heart disease.

Less than 40 in men and less than 50 in women - Low; considered a risk factor for heart disease.

Triglycerides are the chemical form where most fat exists in food and the body. A high triglyceride level has been linked to coronary artery disease. The information below explains what the numbers mean.

Less than 150 - Normal

150 - 199 - Borderline high

200-499 - High

500 or higher - Very High

For more information, contact the Atlantic County Division of Public Health at 609-645-5933.



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.

Fruits and Veggies - More Matters. . .

Looking for a brighter future? Try eating a diet rich in colorful fruits and vegetables. The benefits associated with eating more fruits and vegetables stack up quickly. Reducing your risk of certain chronic diseases is only the beginning.

Whether fresh, frozen, canned, dried or 100% juice, there are over 200 taste sensations that are quick, delicious and convenient, and will keep you healthy all year round.

Fruits and veggies provide a great combination of taste, nutrition and variety - nature's perfect convenience food!

Every step you take towards eating more fruits and veggies helps you and your family to be at their best. Because eating fruits and vegetables may reduce your family's risk of many diseases, the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) recommends eating more fruits and vegetables than any other food group. Fruits and vegetables can be great sources of many nutrients that play a role in reducing the risk of certain diseases.

Aim for variety: fresh, frozen, canned, dried and 100% juice. All forms count and remember your colors, they're important. Eating fruits and veggies in a variety of colors—red, dark green, yellow, blue, purple, white and orange—provides the broadest range of nutrients. And color is a great way to engage

kids—from filling the shopping cart with a spectrum of colorful fruits and vegetables to making sure there's a rainbow on their plate!

Ready to mix it up? Here's a list to get started:

- Leafy greens
- Red beans
- Yellow peppers
- Sweet potatoes
- Mushrooms
- Eggplant
- Purple Asparagus

Eating more fruits and veggies also matters when it comes to maintaining a healthy weight. Every step towards getting more physical activity also matters in weight management and overall health. You can help your family be at their best by encouraging a balance of diet and exercise!



Ovarian Cancer... It Whispers, so listen...

The National Ovarian Cancer Coalition (NOCC) "Break the Silence" campaign is a national education program created to increase awareness and encourage public dialogue about the symptoms and risk factors of ovarian cancer among women and their physicians. NOCC is striving to facilitate earlier diagnosis and to ultimately improve survival rates of this disease.



While the symptoms of ovarian cancer (particularly in the early stages) are often not acute or intense, they are not silent; they whisper, so listen.

Some symptoms of ovarian cancer include:

- Pelvic or abdominal pain or discomfort
- Vague but persistent gastrointestinal upsets such as gas, nausea and indigestion
- Frequency and/or urgency of urination in the absence of an infection
- Unexplained weight gain or weight loss
- Pelvic and/or abdominal swelling, bloating and/or feeling of fullness
- Ongoing unusual fatigue

- Unexplained changes in bowel habits

If symptoms persist for more than 2 weeks, consult your physician.

What are some of the risk factors linked to ovarian cancer? While the presence of one or more risk factors may increase a woman's chance of getting ovarian cancer, it does not necessarily mean that she will develop the disease. However, women should be extra vigilant in watching for early symptoms.

Risk factors include:

- Genetic predisposition
- Personal or family history of breast, ovarian or colon cancer
- Increasing age
- Undesired infertility

[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: Iced tea is not fuel for your cooling system...

Iced tea, iced coffee, or caffeine-containing colas may seem like the perfect thirst quenchers when you are hot and tired. Wrong! They are all dehydrating and will increase your body's fluid losses. So, go ahead and enjoy them. But always be sure to down a couple of water chasers.

