

February 2007

## FIT FOR LIFE!

*Brunswick County Government— Our Best Health For You  
In Brunswick... from the Wellness Committee!*



## Happy Valentines Day

There are varying opinions as to the origin of Valentine's Day. Some experts state that it originated from St. Valentine, a Roman who was martyred for refusing to give up Christianity. He died on February 14, 269 A.D., the same day that had been devoted to love lotteries. Legend also says that St. Valentine left a farewell note for the jailer's daughter, who had become his friend, and signed it "From Your Valentine". Other aspects of the story say that Saint Valentine served as a priest at the temple during the reign of Emperor Claudius. Claudius then had Valentine jailed for defying him. In 496 A.D. Pope Gelasius set aside February 14 to honor St. Valentine. Gradually, February 14 became the date for exchanging love messages and St. Valentine became the patron saint of lovers. The date was marked by sending poems and simple gifts such as flowers. There was often a social gathering or a ball.

In the United States, Miss Esther Howland is given credit for sending the first valentine cards. Commercial valentines were introduced in the 1800's and now the date is very commercialized. The town of Loveland, Colorado, does a large post office business around February 14. The spirit of good continues as valentines are sent out with sentimental verses and children exchange valentine cards at school.

*Looking for ideas for your loved ones this Valentines Day? We recently asked members of the Wellness Committee to tell us what type of Valentine gifts they like and what is their favorite chocolate. Here are their responses:*

### What type of gifts do you prefer?

- Not having to cook, preferably a nice restaurant
- A nice romantic dinner for two
- Jewelry
- Thoughtful words; doing something special such as a project around the house; prepare dinner for me or take me out.

### What is your favorite chocolate for this day?

- Mrs. See Milk Chocolate Assortment
- Box of variety filled chocolates. Nice brand name (no dollar store chocolates, spend a little extra for good quality).
- Milk chocolate with almonds
- A small amount of Hershey Kisses. The chocolate shaped boxes do not have good chocolate.

## GET READY, DO THE 10,000 STEP!

The County Health Plan proudly introduces the 10,000 Steps-A-Day Program, the first initiative of County Lifestyles. Employees want to be active and to be well. The 10,000 Steps-A-Day program gets people moving towards an active lifestyle while having fun doing it. At specific intervals, those registered in the 10,000 Steps-A-Day Program are eligible for receiving incentives for participating. The incentives are based upon taking an average of 10,000 steps for the time period being monitored. Participants are placed in raffle drawings at eight, sixteen and twenty-four weeks as long as they continue to walk and log steps. They made it simple: register for the program by logging on to [www.nccountyhealthplan.org](http://www.nccountyhealthplan.org), log your steps through the website (you will even receive a free pedometer), get entered into raffles for prizes, be active, have fun doing it. What could be simpler? This is exclusively for County Health Plan Members.

You can win: an MP3 player, gift cards to sporting goods stores, wireless headphones, snorkeling set, smoothie machines, George Foreman grills and more.

Also, Brunswick County is challenging all employees to enroll in this program and during the month of February, all employees who participate and reach at least 50 miles or at least 100 miles, will be eligible for a drawing for nice prizes from our County too. A kick off walk is planned for Thursday, February 1st, at 10am in front of the Cafeteria. Contact your Ambassador or manager for more information!

## COUNTY HEALTH PLAN WELLNESS INITIATIVES FOR 2007 INCLUDE 100% COVERAGE FOR PREVENTIVE CARE!

The County Health Plan (CHP) will focus on Wellness for 2007 by promoting certain specific coverages and programs related to health and wellness. Beginning Feb. 1, 2007, the CHP will begin providing coverage at 100% for certain preventive health benefits. This means you will have no out-of-pocket expenses when you or your covered dependents seek preventive care at an in-network provider. Such services as routine well-person visits, mammograms for females 40 and over, annual physical exams and other preventive care, based on your age and medical history, will be covered in-network without a co-pay.

For more information go to the County Health Plan website at [www.nccountyhealthplan.org](http://www.nccountyhealthplan.org). This site contains news about changes in the program, a database of providers in the County Health Plan in your area, a description of our County Lifestyles Wellness Program, plan documents, and lots of health information.

## THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT IS PROMOTING NATIONAL WEAR RED DAY!

The Health Department is encouraging all employees (men too) to support the fight against heart disease in women by wearing red on Friday, February 2, National Wear Red Day. It's a simple, powerful way to raise awareness of heart disease and stroke. You can wear a red blouse or shirt, a red dress pin, a red tie or even red socks. Heart disease is the number 1 killer of women and men. You can learn more about it by going to the website [www.goredforwomen.com](http://www.goredforwomen.com). Also, during the week of 2/12 through 2/16 the Health Department and the Wellness Committee are planning a series of events centered around education about Heart Disease and how to have a Healthy Heart. Be on the look out for more information!



## BOSTON BUTT SALE!

The Operation Services Department will be having a Boston Butt sale on Friday, February 23rd from 11am to 2pm. You can pick it up (no deliveries) at the Operation Services Department (Building L). The Butts are \$20 each and must be paid in advance. Please contact Julie at (910) - 253 - 2515 with any questions.

*Tickets must be purchased in advance and must be presented at time of pickup.*

## CIGNA WELCOMES YOUR INPUT!

Cigna is still encouraging all covered employees and dependents to go to their website, [mycigna.com](http://mycigna.com) and complete a Health Risk Assessment (HRA). This HRA is a good way to measure present health with where you want to be in the future, health-wise. So check it out!



## 5 MORE SLEEP MYTHS

In January's newsletter, the top 5 sleep myths were given with the promise to give you 5 more of the top 10 sleep myths. So here's the final list from the top ten!

### Number 6 — You can make up for lost sleep during the week by sleeping more on the weekends.

Although this sleeping pattern will help relieve part of a sleep debt, it will not completely make up for the lack of sleep. This pattern will also not make up for impaired performance during the week because not enough sleep. Furthermore, sleeping later on the weekends can effect your biological clock so that it is much harder to sleep at the right time on Sunday nights and get up early on Monday mornings.

### Number 7 — Naps are a waste of time.

Although naps do not substitute for a good night's sleep, they can be restorative and help counter some of the impaired performance that results from not getting enough sleep at night. Avoid taking naps later than 3:00pm, as late naps can interfere with your ability to fall asleep at night. Limit your naps to no longer than 1 hour because longer naps will make it harder to wake up and get back in the swing of things. If you take frequent naps during the day, you may have a sleep disorder that should be treated.

### Number 8 — Snoring is a normal part of sleep .

Snoring during sleep is common, particularly as a person gets older. Evidence is growing that snoring on a regular basis can make you sleepy during the day and more susceptible to diabetes and heart disease. In addition, some studies link frequent snoring to problem behavior and poorer school achievement in children. Loud, frequent snoring can also be a sign of sleep apnea, a serious disorder that should be treated.

### Number 9 — Children who don't get enough sleep at night will show signs of sleepiness during the day.

Unlike adults, children who don't get enough sleep at night typically become more active than normal during the day. They also show difficulty paying attention and behaving properly. Consequently, they may be misdiagnosed as having attention deficit activity.

### Number 10 — The main cause of insomnia is worry.

Although worry or stress can cause a short bout of insomnia, a persistent inability to fall asleep or stay asleep at night can be caused by a number of factors. Certain medications and sleep disorders can keep you up at night. Other common causes of insomnia include depression, anxiety disorders, and asthma, arthritis, or medical conditions with symptoms that become more troublesome at night. Some people that have chronic insomnia also appear to be more revved up than normal, so it is harder for them to fall asleep.

Adapted from [www.sleepdisorders.com](http://www.sleepdisorders.com).

## GET FIT KIT!

You don't have to buy expensive equipment or join a fancy gym, simply start with....

- ◆ A pedometer - Track the number of steps you take each day. Less than 4,000 steps is sedentary. Optimum goal is 10,000. Aim for 500-step increments, easily achievable if you park your car farther away or use stairs.
- ◆ A pair of sneakers - Look for sneakers with firm support at the heel, cushioning to absorb shock and enough room to wiggle your toes.
- ◆ Comfortable Clothes - If exercising outdoors, dress warmly, including hats and gloves; indoors, look for moisture-wicking fabrics.
- ◆ Light hand weights - Women, try two gradations, 3 and 5 pounds, for men; 5 and 8 pounds

From Michael O'Shea— "The Easiest Way to Shape Up for Life" - Parade Magazine

## SENIOR HEALTH CLINIC IS AVAILABLE TO ALL!

The Senior Health Clinic located in Building A adjacent to the Cafeteria is now available to all Brunswick County employees and their families under the Health Plan. It is staffed by a wonderful group of caring health professionals headed by Angie Bertsch, NP. Angie is originally from Arlington VA and moved to Brunswick County three years ago. She started as the Nurse Practitioner for the Senior Adult Clinic in November 2004. She has been a nurse for 30 years, has ICU and Emergency Room experience along with cardiology, and she has a Master's in Nursing.

Randy Beverly, CNA/PPT is originally from Horry County SC and moved to our county 19 years ago. He has 12 years of healthcare experience, and is a recent graduate of the phlebotomy course with honors.

Deborah Cooper, Medical Receptionist is originally from Southport, NC and started with the Health Department in 2004. She is the smiling face that greets you as you enter the clinic. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her position.

The clinic provides the following services:

- ⇒ Adult Physical Exam
- ⇒ Diagnose and treat acute minor illnesses including colds, sore throats, skin rashes, breast cancer screening, prostate cancer screening and more.
- ⇒ Chronic Illnesses including Hypertension, Diabetes, Heart Disease
- ⇒ Can prescribe drugs for treatment—Antibiotics, Blood Pressure, Cholesterol and Diabetes.
- ⇒ Immunizations include Flu, Pneumonia and Tetanus
- ⇒ But the best deal is that they will accept your CIGNA plan and waive the co-payment, so it's a free service!



Pictured left to right are Angie Bertsch, NP, Deborah Cooper and Randy Beverly

## BOOST YOUR HEALTH WITH SPICES

Adding spices such as basil, oregano, garlic, curry, and rosemary to your diet can benefit your health, according to Suzann Zick, a naturopathic physician and researcher at the University of Michigan Health System. "Adding herbs and spices can help you maintain a healthy weight. Plus they can help prevent certain cancers, and even lower blood pressure, control blood sugar and improve cardiovascular health," Zick stated.

The following are 10 tips from Zick for picking the best spices for your overall health:

1. **Replace salt with herbs.** Herbs such as oregano, thyme, rosemary, parsley and garlic can bring out the natural flavors in meat.
2. **Use fresh garlic.** Garlic can lower blood pressure and cholesterol. Dry garlic or garlic left out too long, loses its healthy benefits.
3. **Eat rosemary.** Rosemary is an antioxidant that is thought to improve memory and possibly help prevent cancer.
4. **Fight colds with basil, oregano and rosemary.** The essential oils in these herbs may be able to fight against colds and flu.
5. **Treat chronic coughs with thyme.** It has been traditionally used to treat coughs and even the whooping cough.
6. **Eat turmeric for back pain.** Researchers have found that a substance known as curcumin that is found in turmeric has anti-inflammatory properties.
7. **Fight cancer with curry.** Curcumin has also been shown to shrink pre-cancerous colon polyps.
8. **Use "warming spices" to lower blood pressure.** "Warming spices" including ginger, nutmeg, cinnamon, allspice, pepper, and cayenne pepper bring blood from the center of the body to the skin. This disperses blood throughout the body more evenly, which may decrease blood pressure.
9. **Eat ginger to soothe your stomach.** A substance called gingerols can help control nausea.
10. **Replace sugar with spices.** Add spices like cinnamon and nutmeg to sweeten snacks instead of sugar.

Adapted from Lifeclinic Health Management Systems - HealthDay News