

The SLC Health Herald



April 2011

JUST ASK HERALD

Here is what Herald is saying:

NOW IS THE TIME TO SPRING INTO ACTION AND START BECOMING MORE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE.

- Make a small commitment to yourself to walk, bike, garden, or do something outside for **1 hour** EVERY DAY FOR ONE WEEK.
- Challenge a friend, co-worker or family member to do the same thing the following week (use your pedometers for fun).
- **Week three** – add one or two of the following to your activities and see if you can increase your steps:

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| - Bike to work/store/for errands | - Plant a tree/garden/rake | - Take a walk with your kids/grandkids |
| - Hand wash your car | - Hike w/friend/spouse | - Golf without a cart |
| - Cut grass (push mower) | - Walk the dog | - Wash the windows in your house |

Herald says: Raking the lawn for 20 minutes would be equal to an estimated 2400 steps. The American Heart Association recommends 10,000 steps a day. Herald wants to know how many steps you currently average in a day. Do you think you can increase those steps????

If you have a **health/fitness related** question for Herald please send an email to askherald@stlawco.org your question may be answered in the next newsletter.

From the Committees Corner:

The Wellness Committee has been working very hard to come up with some great ideas for 2011. We have some financial obstacles to hurdle but we feel this is simply making us more creative and we remain diligent in our endeavors. Many thanks to EAP for their \$500 donation in support of our efforts.

We are currently looking for a creative person to join the committee who would be willing to work with us on the newsletter. Please contact one of Wellness Committee members if you are interested.

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|---------------------|----------------|
| - Jason Pfothenauer | - Sue Hathaway |
| - Chris Boulio | - Laurie Maki |
| - Natalie Aldrich | - Debbie Snell |

Other endeavors we are working on are: on-site cooking classes, facility for working out as well as fitness classes.

BIGGEST LOSER COMPETITION - Don't miss the final weight-in April 28th and 29th. Who will be our "Biggest Loser"? Kudos to those people diligently trying to shed the winter weight.

Anyone maintaining their weight loss for one year will be given special recognition.

2ND ANNUAL WALK AT WORK DAY - Wed., April 27th

Get the dust off your sneakers because this is going to be a day to walk your socks off. Do you know what team is looking to

OUT-STEP you??? Well you better start asking around. After all, this is for "THE GOLD CUP". A little bird told us that a couple of the teams are on a mission to take the title away from the HR DreamTeam. Could that be true?

This year's competition has a major rule change. Contestants will arrive for the start of their shift on Wednesday, April 27th with a "zero" reading on their pedometer. Upon arrival for their shift on Thursday, April 28th the steps will be recorded for the competition. This rule change allows employees to walk throughout the day, lunch hours, after work and before coming to work the next day. Hopefully, this will encourage maximum participation and provide greater opportunities to "step up to the challenge."

Proper walking technique



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Walking: Trim your waistline, improve your health

Walking is a low-impact exercise with numerous health benefits. Here's how to get started.

Walking is a gentle, low-impact exercise that can ease you into a higher level of fitness and health. Walking is a form of exercise accessible to just about everybody. It's safe, simple and doesn't require practice. And the health benefits are many. Here's more about why walking is good for you, and how to get started with a walking program.

Benefits of walking

Walking, like other exercise, can help you achieve a number of important health benefits. Walking can help you:

- Lower low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol (the "bad" cholesterol)
- Raise high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol (the "good" cholesterol)
- Lower your blood pressure
- Reduce your risk of or manage type 2 diabetes
- Manage your weight
- Improve your mood
- Stay strong and fit

All it takes to reap these benefits is a routine of brisk walking. It doesn't get much simpler than that. And you can forget the "no pain, no gain" talk. Research shows that regular, brisk walking can reduce the risk of heart attack by the same amount as more vigorous exercise, such as jogging.



BIKING SEASON IS HERE – Thanks go out to the Lion's Club for their donation of a bike rack now located outside Family Court. Other bike racks are/will be located at various county complexes for your convenience.

DID YOU KNOW?

The growth in the average total health benefit cost per employee grew nationally in 2010 by 6.9%—the biggest increase since 2004. We can control the costs of our plan by our lifestyle decisions and utilization choices. As a self-funded health insurance plan we are all in this together. By making healthy lifestyle choices, controlling weight, exercising, smoking cessation..... employees can often solve many health issues and can reduce the need for doctor visits and reliance on prescription drugs. The average fill for high blood pressure medication:\$133.64, ulcer treatments \$231.41, anti-diabetic \$244.26.....often we only see the co-pay cost but the real cost to all of us in St. Lawrence County

government is over \$16 million per year, of which over \$3 million is paid for prescription drugs.

GENERIC DRUG SAVINGS OPPORTUNITY: The average cost in 2010 for a generic drug fill cost an average of \$36.30 as opposed to the average brand name fill which was \$190.91. Now consider the higher out-of-pocket co-pay to the consumer, a generic equivalent prescription should be considered.

# Generic Rx's	27,206	# Brand Rx's	11,103
Average Plan Paid/Generic Rx	\$36.30	Average Plan Paid/Brand Rx	\$190.91
Total Paid for Generic Rx's	\$987,640.50	Total Paid for Brand Rx's	\$2,119,696.83
% Generic Plan Spend	32%	% Brand Plan Spend	68%

Currently 71% of our prescriptions are filled by our enrollees utilizing the generic brand, however, these generic prescription fills represent only 32% of the plans overall cost for prescription drugs. Conversely 29% of our fills are brand name fills which represent 68% of our costs which is a \$2.1 million dollar annual cost to all of us. The next time you inquire about refilling your prescription ask your doctor or pharmacist about a generic equivalent. Some examples; for ulcer drugs, NEXIUM are highest drug cost to the plan and the enrollee pays a higher co-pay, ask your doctor about OMEPRAZOLE or LANSOPRAZOLE. For antihyperlipidemic treatment instead of the brand names LIPITOR (our third highest cost drug), CRESTOR or LOVAZA, inquire about the generic drug SIMVASTATIN.

MAIL ORDER SAVINGS OPPORTUNITY: Currently only 20% of our prescriptions are filled through mail order. By utilizing mail orders members will save on monthly co-pays while the plan saves approximately 7% for each brand prescription filled.

Traditionally there is a 3-5 day turnaround from receipt of order allowing a 90 day supply each time. Refills can be ordered online, via automation phone service or by talking to a mail order representative.



MM GOOD – A WELLNESS COOKBOOK

Let's face it. We all get bored at some time or other with making the same 'ol thing to eat. Let's help each other switch it up a bit with new recipes all year long. A SLC Employee Cookbook is in the making with the help of Richard Cassara in our Printing Department. Let us know if you have an idea for a name for the Cookbook. Please e-mail your suggestions for the name and a healthy recipe to Debbie Snell @ dsnell@co.st-lawrence.ny.us on an 8 1/2"x 11" paper with 1/2"margin and be sure that it is not a copyright. The committee will review all submissions. We are looking for a wide variety in all different categories such as heart healthy, diabetic, low sodium or simply healthy and yummy. The cookbook will, in turn, be sold and the profits placed back into the Wellness Program.

Recipe to Live For: *Seared Salmon with Blueberries*

Blueberry Sauce

2 large stalks rhubarb, trimmed & chopped
3 Tbsp sugar
¼ vanilla bean, split, or 1 tsp vanilla extract
1 Tbsp orange zest
¼ cup orange juice
½ cup water
1 cup fresh blueberries

4 salmon fillets (about 6 oz each)
1/8 tsp salt
Pinch white pepper

Make sauce: In a large saucepan, combine all sauce ingredients except blueberries, and bring to a boil over moderate heat. Lower heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes until rhubarb is tender. Transfer to a bowl and remove vanilla bean. Fold in Blueberries and stir to combine well. Allow sauce to rest until it comes to room temperature.

Sear salmon: Coat grill pan with nonstick cooking spray and place over high heat. Season salmon with salt and pepper, and place in pan; lower to moderate heat and cook for 3-4 minutes. With a spatula, turn salmon fillets and cook another 3-4 minutes, until firm and not opaque. Transfer to a platter and spoon sauce over salmon.

**Calories: 269; Fat: 6g; Carb: 18g; Fiber 2g;
Protein: 35g**

YOU ARE WHAT YOU THINK!

Use the power of positive thinking to boost your mood. It is as easy as telling yourself “I am so very happy today”. Hang around people who are upbeat and enthusiastic. They are contagious. Make it a habit to give positive reinforcement to others. When someone asks “How are you today”, don’t just reply “I’m okay” or “not bad”; reply with “Fantastic” or “Great”.

***FUN NOTE:** Try having everyone in your office or home put a rubber band on their wrist then every time they say something negative, snap the rubber band and have them say something positive.

Happy people have younger hearts, younger arteries, and a younger chronological age. Happy people recover more quickly from surgery, cope better with pain, have lower blood pressure, and have longer life expectancy than unhappy people. THINK OF SOMETHING TO BE HAPPY ABOUT EACH AND EVERY DAY!