

MANAGED CARE EMPLOYEE WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

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New Year... New You! Successful Resolutions

While you can't wave a magic wand and make your resolution come true, there are some easy steps to take that will make it easier to fulfill your promise to yourself.

- Choose an attainable goal. Resolving to look like a model is not realistic for most of us, but promising to include daily physical activity in our lives is very possible.
- Avoid choosing a resolution that you've been unsuccessful at achieving year after year. This will only set you up for failure, frustration and disappointment.
- Create a game plan. At the beginning of January, write a comprehensive plan. All successful businesses start with a business plan that describes their mission and specifics on how they will achieve it.
- Break it down and make it less intimidating. Rather than one big end goal, dissect it into smaller pieces. Set several smaller goals to achieve throughout the year that will help you to reach the ultimate goal. Then, even if you aren't able to reach your final goal, you will have many smaller, but still significant, achievements along the way.
- Make contingency plans: don't assume sticking to your plan will be smooth sailing. Plan on hitting bumps along the resolution road and be prepared with specific ways to overcome them. What will keep you from skipping your workout or stop you from having a cigarette? This may mean seeking help from family or a professional or writing in a journal.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

New Year... New You!	1
Men's Corner	1
Diet Soda: Not so... Diet?	2
Super Food of the Month	2
Healthy Children, Healthy Choices	2
Your Alli... But Is It Really Your Friend?	3
Take Your Medications the Right Way	3
Cervical Cancer Awareness	4
Your Best (Four Legged) Exercise Partner	4
Weight Training isn't just for the Boys	5
What's your RealAge?	5
Move of the Month	6
Weight Watcher's Recipe of the Month	6

- Give it time: most experts agree that it takes about 21 days to create a habit and six months for it to actually become a part of your daily life.
- Reward yourself with each milestone. If you've stuck with your resolution for 2 months, treat yourself to something special. But, be careful of your reward type. If you've lost 5 pounds, don't give yourself a piece of cake as a reward.
- Ask friends and family members to help you so you have someone to be accountable to.

On average only about 20% of us keep our New Year's resolutions. Unfortunately, some of the biggest failures are found in fitness resolutions. But don't let the statistics get you down. By following the tips above you'll be better equipped to fall into the successful 20% category.

Article by author by Lynn Bode

MEN'S CORNER:

More than Just a Beer Belly

Clinical studies have revealed that the size of a man's belly is actually a better predictor of heart disease than general obesity. Men with central obesity tend to develop higher blood pressure, regardless of body mass index (BMI) than men who store fat in other areas of the body.

The study undertaken by Dr Alfonso Siani and his team from the National Research Council in Avellino, Italy, involved more than 700 men aged 25 to 75 who were not taking blood pressure-lowering medication. The researchers measured blood glucose and insulin levels after an overnight fast, calculated BMI and took three different blood pressure readings. Abdominal circumference, a marker of central obesity, was determined by measuring the waist in relation to the hips.

It's time to lose those extra pounds for good... for your heart's sake!



The study also found a relationship between belly size, age and high blood pressure. Moreover, the volunteers showed higher insulin levels when consuming sugary drinks. This in turn was related to higher blood pressure. Whereas body mass index has always been used as a key measure in assessing risk to heart disease, it is clear that belly size correlates more closely to other well known risk factors such as LDL cholesterol, high blood pressure, high blood glucose levels and low levels of HDL cholesterol (beneficial cholesterol).

-taken from Men's Health Magazine

Diet Soda: Not so... DIET?

Stop where you are. Stay calm and, very slowly now, put down the can of diet soda. A study at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio has reached a stunning conclusion: Diet soft drinks don't help you lose weight — they may actually promote weight gain.

Researchers analyzed 8 years of data on 1,550 people. Participants who drank one diet soda per day were 65 percent more likely to become overweight during the next 7 to 8 years and 41 percent more likely to become obese than non-diet-soda drinkers. "Some studies suggest that diet drinks stimulate appetite," says study coauthor Sharon P. Fowler. One theory is that diet sodas tease taste buds with the promise of sugar but then don't deliver real sweetness, causing drinkers to look for the missed calories elsewhere. For a low-calorie alternative, brew some iced tea and add a spoonful of honey (about 25 calories).

-Taken from Women's Health Magazine

QUINOA (keen-wah) Super Food of the Month



Although not a common item in most kitchens today, quinoa is an amino acid-rich (protein) seed that has a fluffy, creamy, slightly crunchy texture and a somewhat nutty flavor when cooked. Quinoa is available in your local health food stores throughout the year. Most commonly considered a grain, quinoa is actually a relative of leafy green vegetables like spinach and Swiss chard.

A recently rediscovered ancient "grain" native to South America, quinoa was once called "the gold of the Incas," who recognized its value in increasing the stamina of their warriors. Not only is quinoa high in protein, but the protein it supplies is *complete protein*, meaning that it includes all nine essential amino acids. Not only is quinoa's amino acid profile well balanced, making it a good choice for vegans concerned about adequate protein intake, but quinoa is especially well-endowed with the amino acid *lysine*, which is essential for tissue growth and repair. In addition to protein, quinoa features a host of other health-building nutrients. Because quinoa is a very good source of manganese as well as a good source of magnesium, iron, copper and phosphorous, this "grain" may be especially valuable for persons with migraine headaches, diabetes and atherosclerosis.

To cook the quinoa, add one part of the grain to two parts liquid in a saucepan. After the mixture is brought to a boil, reduce the heat to simmer and cover. One cup of quinoa cooked in this method usually takes 15 minutes to prepare. When cooking is complete, you will notice that the grains have become translucent, and the white germ has partially detached itself, appearing like a white-spiraled tail. If you desire the quinoa to have a nuttier flavor, you can dry roast it before cooking; to dry roast, place it in a skillet over medium-low heat and stir constantly for five minutes.

Information from whfoods.com



Are your dieting efforts being sabotaged with your favorite fizzy diet drink?

Healthy Children, Healthy Choices



Parents are in charge.

As a parent, your responsibility is to buy healthy groceries and serve nutritious food to your growing children.

Start by establishing a routine, even if it is difficult at first. This means a set time for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. Once you have a routine for meals and snacks, meal times are more relaxed. Most children are happier on a schedule and become hungry at regular times. You'll feel happier about your parenting job when the family has a routine.

- So, be consistent! Children need a meal routine just like they need a bedtime routine. Plan for three meals and two snacks each day! Serve a vegetable or fruit at every meal. Fruits and vegetables are great for snacking too.
- Instead of rewarding your child with food, reward them with attention (hugs, kisses, and smiles) and playful activities.
- Avoid arguments about high-fat, high-sugar foods by not bringing them into the house. Leave the candy, soft drinks, chips, and cookies at the store.
- Make sure to always include low-fat or nonfat dairy products, fruit, and vegetables.
- Limit the amount of processed ready-to-eat-snacks you buy (such as potato chips or cookies). Prepackaged and processed foods are usually higher in calories and fats and often more expensive.

Information from CDC.gov

Your Alli... But Is It Really Your Friend?

By now, you have probably seen the commercials about Alli. They ask if you are ready to commit to a weight loss plan that includes Alli, the over-the-counter version of the FDA-approved fat blocker formerly known as Xenical.

The name has changed -- and the over-the-counter version is one-half the strength of Xenical -- but it's the same drug. And it has some of the same problematic side effects that plagued its prescription-strength predecessor -- gas with oily discharge, inability to control bowel movements, oily or fatty stools, and oily spotting.

Alli (pronounced "ally" -- as in friend or associate) hit drug stores on Friday, June 15. And as its name suggests, Alli is merely one component of a new weight loss program.

If you take Alli and follow a sensible low-fat diet and exercise, you may lose 50% more weight than you would with diet and exercise alone. Instead of losing 10 pounds, a person who takes Alli might lose 15 pounds.

"Alli is an add-on," says George Blackburn, MD, PhD, director of the Center for the Study of Nutrition Medicine at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. "You have to have a good lifestyle with diet and exercise."

GlaxoSmithKline even makes the point on its web site devoted to the drug that it "only works if you work" and that it is "not a miracle pill or a quick fix."

"It's not about a pill, it's about a program," agrees Valentine Burroughs, MD, MBA, chief medical officer and chairman of the department of medicine at North General Hospital in New York City. Burroughs participated in developing the Alli program.

How Alli Works

The new drug is not an appetite suppressant. Instead, Alli works by blocking the absorption of fat in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. But the blocked fat has to go somewhere, which is why many a candid commentator has said not to take Alli on a first date or wear white pants while taking it.

A GlaxoSmithKline executive, speaking at a news conference in New York City, called the untoward GI effects a positive feedback tool to help people modify their eating habits. Put another way: eat a high-fat meal, have an "accident" -- and you will be less likely to do it again.

"If you think a Quarter Pounder with cheese is low fat compared with a Big Mac, you will get some feedback," says Gary Foster, MD, director of the Center of Obesity Research and Education at Temple University in Philadelphia. For this reason, Alli is not a good combination with a high-fat, low-carb diet. In addition, if your diet is too low in fat, there's no fat to be blocked.

Some critics think it may be better to avoid taking the pill at all, saying it's not necessary.



The name suggests it's a friend... a companion in your dieting quest. But are the side-effects friendly?

"There are demonstrable short-term risks and no possibility of long-term benefit," points out Sidney Wolfe, MD, director of Public Citizen's Health Research Group in Washington, D.C.

Despite its detractors, and even though it's not being billed as a magic bullet, many consumers may see it as one anyway.

"There are always going to be some people who won't read beyond the headlines, who so much want a miracle that they will believe this is one when it's not," says Arthur Frank, MD, the medical director of the George Washington University Weight Management Program in Washington, DC.

Always consult with a physician to assess risks before starting any over the counter medications, or weight loss programs.

-Article excerpts from author Denise Mann, webmd.com

Take Your Medications the Right Way

Be honest with your doctor: Discuss any allergies or problems you've had with a medication before. Also, give a rundown of all the medicines you're taking—prescription or over-the-counter. Mention supplements too: Herbs are natural, but they may lead to drug interactions

Don't be embarrassed to ask for clarification: Discuss with your doctor exactly how you should take your medicine, what time of day you have to take it and for how long. Ask what you should do if you forget a dose: Skip it? Double up the next time? Always finish all of the medicine you are prescribed.

Double-check the label: Look at the label after it's filled and speak to the pharmacist if you have any questions.

Understand the side effects: Read and keep the inserts that come with your drugs. If you can't bear to wade through the small print, ask your physician or pharmacist detailed questions.

Don't assume that more is better: If two tablets haven't helped your hammering headache, another two won't do any better. Most drugs have what's called a "ceiling effect," in which the body's drug receptors reach their limit.

Never take another person's prescription: Just because your throat is achy and you're having trouble swallowing doesn't mean you have the same strep throat as your husband. Even if you do, doctors take into account your age, weight, existing medical conditions and other drugs you're on before writing a script. You may be allergic to that drug, or you may be taking a dose that's suitable for him but not for you.

Be diligent about organization: Take doses at the same time every day so it becomes a habit. Set the alarm on your watch, cell phone or BlackBerry to help you remember. You also can keep pill bottles near an object you use daily—like a coffeemaker or an alarm clock.

-Taken from Parade Magazine

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month



Many women think that cervical cancer could never affect them. The truth is, cervical cancer's threat to women is second only to breast cancer in the United States. HPV, the virus that commonly causes cervical cancer is more common than many realize. At least 50 percent of sexually active men and women acquire HPV infection at some point in their lives. **By age 50, at least 80 percent of women will have been infected with HPV.** For many people the infection clears on its own. For some, the virus progresses causing changes to the cervix which could eventually lead to cancer.

Cervical cancer has many treatment options when caught in early stages. It is very important for you to have routine exams done with your gynecologist. Your doctor will be able to decide based on your age and history how often these tests need to be performed.

Young women and children now have the opportunity to vaccinate themselves against the cancer causing virus. Gardasil is the first ever approved vaccine that protects against HPV virus strains that cause 70% of cervical cancer cases. Gardasil is currently only approved for females ages 9-26. Studies are being conducted to gain further approval for broader age ranges and for men.

Be aware of cervical cancer. Visit your doctor regularly and discuss if a cervical cancer vaccine is appropriate for you.

Your Best (Four Legged) Exercise Partner



You know what they say about man's best friend, but could dog be man's best exercise partner too?

Here's why a canine boost could be just what your fitness plan needs, along with tips for getting started. Researchers expected that overweight people walking their dogs 30 minutes daily would find Fido made a good exercise buddy. But the power of the pooch was even greater than you might expect. Dogs provide three unique supports that 'people buddies' just don't.

1. **Initiator extraordinaire.** Your dog wants to walk, probably more than you do. You look at those dancing eyes, the furry feet tap dancing, the tail helicopter rotor engaged, and you don't want to disappoint him by not going for a walk. So you go!
2. **Pure joy.** People reported a unique sense of joy when walking with their dog that went far and above what they'd feel when walking with people.
3. **Parental pride.** People love it when others stop and ask questions about and admire their dog. There's more to being a parent than admiring glances, though; wanting a healthy, fit pooch was a strong motivator for many walkers. (So feel free to admire the pup in this picture)

Know Your Canine

All dogs can benefit from exercise; in fact, 50% of America's pets are overweight. Besides excess pounds, behavioral problems may melt away with exercise as well. But every dog is different. Knowing what you can expect from your dog depends on both breed and temperament.

Two laps. There are 'lap dogs,' like retrievers, Dalmatians, and Afghan hounds, that are great for running long distances--laps--around the local high school track. Then there are other 'lapdogs,' like Maltese, teacup poodles, and shih tzus that are better at shorter walks and then lying in laps. If you're lean and mean and training for a triathlon, you wouldn't want to burn up the asphalt with a dachshund, whose legs would be a blur trying to keep up.

Reluctant runner. Don't be discouraged if it doesn't happen right away. While some dogs will happily wait by the door for a walk, others you may have to almost drag along at first until you develop a new daily habit.

Of course, whenever you head out, you need to pay attention to safety. Here are a few hints:

Check first. Just like you'd talk with your doctor before starting a new workout, check with your vet. If your pet is older or has been sedentary, you want to rule out any condition that might make exercise painful or dangerous for him.

Start slowly. Start by walking your dog two blocks per 10 pounds of body weight per day then increase your distance by 5 to 10% each week.

Drink up. Bring water--for yourself and your panting partner.

Watch his signs. If your dog ever lags behind on a walk, stop and let him rest. If he lies down, seeks shade, or pants excessively, he could be in danger of heat exhaustion, and you need to stop! Give your dog some rest and water to recuperate.

Pat the pavement. Before you walk, touch the surface you're going to walk on. If it's too hot for your hand, it's too hot for your dog's foot pads. Opt for a grassy park or shady path. It's also a good idea to time walks for mornings or evenings, when the temperature and humidity are lower.

Be consistent. Walking daily is the best way to turn even a reluctant dog partner into an enthusiastic one.

Weight Training isn't just for the Boys



You don't have to be super woman to benefit from lifting weights.

Maybe, like so many women, you sometimes wonder why you should bother with strength training. Or maybe it's one of those things you know you should do, but never get around to. If you're serious about ditching the flab, strength training is the only way. Cardiovascular activity blasts stress and builds healthier hearts and lungs. And it definitely burns extra calories. But when you're looking for total body toning, aerobics alone just doesn't do the job. Strength training does because it doesn't just burn calories while you are exercising, it increases your muscle mass, which helps you burn more calories all day.

Metabolism Magic! Strength training works because making muscles fires up your metabolism and keeps your body running at its fat-burning best. This is why many men can toss down a bucket of wings and a pitcher of beer without a worry about weight gain — they naturally have more muscle. Every pound of muscle on your body burns between 30 and 50 calories a day — even when you're sleeping. Every pound of fat burns only two to five calories. Women often blame their weight problems on sluggish metabolisms when what's really to blame is their lack of muscle.

Unless you start strength training, the problem only gets worse. As we get older, we naturally lose some of our muscle mass. Starting somewhere after age 35, women start losing about a half-pound of muscle a year. By age 50, that can jump to up to a pound loss each year. That's why women in their late 30s and 40s often complain that even though they are not eating or exercising differently, they are still gaining weight — they are literally losing metabolism-revving muscle. The good news is that you can stop early midlife fat spread in its tracks just by adding a little muscle.

Consider this: If you gain 3 pounds of muscle and burn 40 additional calories per pound, you'll burn 120 additional calories per day, or 3,600 calories per month. At that rate, those 3 pounds of muscle will burn off 12 pounds over the course of a year.

The easiest way to understand the dynamics of strength training is to remember these two cardinal rules. One: Muscle tissue takes up considerably less space (and is much more aesthetically pleasing) than fat tissue. Two: Muscle tissue weighs more than fat tissue. Too often, women who are having fabulous success with their fitness programs step on a scale and get discouraged because they haven't lost as much weight as they hoped to. Their clothes fit better. They feel better. They look great. But they're still sweating the numbers on the scale. Your better bet is to pay attention to your measurements. Is your waistline getting trimmer? Are your legs firmer? Do your clothes hang better?

These benefits are especially pronounced for women who are currently out of shape or overweight. The fact is, even though physical activity is what they need most, many overweight women avoid exercise like oral surgery — and not unreasonably so. Frankly, exercise can stink when you're out of shape. It's no fun feeling winded and sore doing something that's supposed to make you feel so spectacular. Weight training is less intimidating and more accessible than running or even walking when you're out of shape or overweight. Then, once those muscles get a little stronger, walking around the block isn't such a big deal. You start becoming more spontaneously active simply because you feel more capable and confident.

Live Longer and Happier! Maybe best of all, strength training can make you happy. Strength training is a great way to blow off the stress, anxiety, and tension of the day. You'll sleep like a stone at night, as your body demands high-quality sleep to recover from your workouts. Studies show that you'll be less likely to suffer from depression, an ailment that clouds women's lives more often than men's. And you'll simply feel good about yourself.

-article excerpts taken from Prevention Magazine

What's Your RealAge?

You may know Dr. Michael Roizen, M.D. as the head of the Cleveland Clinic's Division of Anesthesiology, Critical Care Medicine and Comprehensive Pain Management. Most recently he was appointed as the Chief Wellness Officer for the Cleveland Clinic. Dr. Roizen is a past chair of the Food and Drug Administration advisory committee. He has published more than 160 scientific papers and multiple books. There is not a more suitable Chief Wellness officer available. But, Dr. Roizen's pursuit to promote wellness in the community started long before his appointment at the Cleveland Clinic. Dr. Roizen is also the co-founder of the San Diego based company RealAge.

RealAge is the biological age of your body, based on lifestyle, genetics, and medical history. Depending on how well you take care of yourself, your RealAge might be years younger -- or older -- than the calendar indicates. Calculate your RealAge by taking the free RealAge test. Once you know your RealAge, you'll receive personalized recommendations, health information, and solutions to help make your RealAge younger.

Science is increasingly showing that certain health choices can slow and perhaps even reverse the rate of aging. Even choices made late in life make a difference. For example, people who exercise early in life, but quit, may show no longevity benefit. In contrast, people who start exercising in their 50s and 60s, or even later, show considerable benefit.



Dr. Roizen's RealAge website will reveal what you're doing to help – or hurt your body.

To find out your RealAge, visit: www.RealAge.com

MOVE OF THE MONTH

WIDE SQUAT:



STEP ONE:

START: Hold a weight over each shoulder, palms facing in, and stand with your feet wider than shoulder-width apart, toes turned slightly outwards, pointing to the corners rather than directly forward. Stand tall and raise your ribcage away from your lower back. Engage your core muscles to keep your spine stable.



STEP TWO:

FINISH: Lower your body by pushing your hips slightly out behind you and leaning your straight back slightly forward in a diagonal line. Hold your ribs high and press your chest forward as you tighten your core muscles to help support your back. Drop your hips to just above knee level, with knees bent to 90 degrees or more. Then squeeze your butt and inner thigh muscles to zip up your thighs and straighten back up to a standing position.

INNER THIGH RAISE



STEP ONE:

START: Lie on your left side with both legs straight and inline with your body. Prop yourself up on your left forearm and elbow and bend your right knee, placing your right foot flat on the floor behind your left knee. Make sure your body is facing sideways, your bottom leg straight and inner thigh facing up. Hold a weight in your right hand and place it on the inner thigh of your bottom leg, as close to your knee as you can.



STEP TWO:

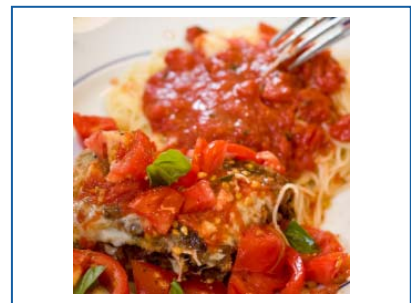
FINISH: Keep your torso stable and raise your left leg up two to four inches off the floor, feeling the inner thigh muscles contract as you do. Lower and repeat. Then switch sides.

Weight Watchers Recipe of the Month

Eggplant Parmesan

4 points per serving, 192 calories

- 1 cup dry bread crumbs -- unseasoned
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- 4 egg whites
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 medium eggplants -- about 2 pounds, unpeeled, each cut crosswise into 8 slices
- Vegetable cooking spray -- or olive oil spray
- 3 cups low-fat spaghetti sauce
- 1 cup part skim milk mozzarella cheese -- shredded
- 2 tsp fresh parsley -- chopped



In a shallow bowl, combine bread crumbs, parmesan cheese, and basil. Mix well.

In another shallow bowl, lightly beat together egg whites and salt. Working one at a time, dip eggplant slices into egg whites, then into crumb mixture. Turn to coat both sides with crumbs.

Place slices on 1 large or 2 small baking sheets that have been sprayed with non-stick spray.

Spray tops of slices lightly with olive oil cooking spray. Bake at 400°F for 15 minutes. Remove eggplant slices from oven, turn them over, and spray again with cooking spray.

Return to oven and bake for 15 more minutes.

To assemble casserole, spoon 1 cup pasta sauce over bottom of 9 x 13 inch baking dish. Top with 1/2 eggplant slices. Spoon another 1 cup sauce over eggplant, followed by 1/2 mozzarella. Repeat layering with remaining eggplant slices, sauce, and mozzarella.

Sprinkle parsley over top. Return to oven and bake, uncovered, for 20 minutes, until cheese is completely melted and sauce is bubbly. Serve immediately!