

# Take Charge!



Providing information and ideas for City employees and their families on how to improve health and wellness

AUGUST 2009    **This issue** ▶ 10 Ways To Lose 10 Pounds ▶ Kitchen Safety ▶ Stroke Prevention ▶ What's For Breakfast?

## Too Busy to Exercise?

**No time to fit in hour-long workouts?**  
No sweat. You're more likely to make exercise a life-long habit if you weave it into your lifestyle – and make it enjoyable.

First, grab opportunities throughout the day to get up and move more. List some fun and easy ways to be active so you won't view exercise as one more thing you have to do.



### How To Get Moving

- Do you laze in bed after your alarm goes off? Rouse yourself and welcome the day with a walk and a blast of fresh air.
- Do you watch TV every evening? Set up a treadmill or free weights in front of it, and work a little.
- Do some errands on foot – trips to the post office or market to pick up a paper.
- Just do some basics: 2 sets of 8 strength-training exercises for 10 minutes.
- Ride a bike or rollerblade around the neighborhood playground.
- Walk the kids to school or the bus stop.
- Walk through a shopping mall or visit museums.
- Pace while thinking or talking on a phone.
- Work up a sweat indoors – sweep, vacuum or wash floors, walls or windows.
- Turn outdoor chores into exercise – garden, rake leaves or sweep the driveway.
- Swim at a community pool after dinner instead of passively watching TV.
- Treat yourself to golf lessons. Next time you're on the course, walk it.
- Hop in your car and meet a friend for a scenic walk in the park or along a beach.

**Bottom line:** Accumulate at least 30 minutes a day of extra activity. Even a little exercise will deliver protective benefits – so long as you fit it in every day.

### CITY Wellness Events

#### Stress Management Strategies in Times of Change

August 11 and August 25  
12 noon - 1:00 PM  
Seattle Municipal Tower  
Room 4050/4060

#### 2009 Puget Sound Heart Walk

October 6, 2009  
Quest Field  
Walk begins at 9:00 AM  
**Register and donate at:**  
[www.pugetsoundheartwalk.org](http://www.pugetsoundheartwalk.org)

### Fall Planning

**Open Enrollment:** Benefits Annual Enrollment starts Thursday, October 1.

**It ends Friday, October 23.** (See page 4 for planning tips.)

**Gear Up for Flu Season:** The City offers flu shots for employees with medical coverage in the fall. Check clinic details on the Benefits InWeb pages starting in October.

### Featured City Benefit

- Concerned about a relationship, depression, or substance abuse?
- Need help finding child or elder care resources?
- Don't know where to start with a legal, financial, or career question?

The Employee Assistance Program provides counseling services on all these issues, by phone or in person, at no expense to you.

Call Wellspring Family Services at 206-654-4144; TTY 206-451-1341.

### AUGUST GOAL:

No time to work at the gym? Working in the yard burns calories and tones muscles too. Beautify your garden and your body.

## Good Timing

Do you manage your time at work or does it manage you? Check the items that apply to you:

- I'm busy all the time, yet most days I feel as if I've made little progress.
- I always feel as if I'm trying to catch up.
- I often miss deadlines that I've set for myself.
- I get irritated when I must let go of work I feel isn't perfect.
- I tend to take on more even when my plate is full.
- I'm not sure where my time goes or how I'm using it.
- I shortchange myself on sleep, healthy meals and/or leisure activities so I can get "more" done.

If you checked more than 2 items, especially the last one, you will benefit from the following time management strategies on the job.

**Find a daily planner that works for you**, whether it's electronic or paper. Schedule virtually every project and obligation in it and rely on it to manage your day.

**Create routines**, such as when you'll check email, address difficult tasks most efficiently, and take breaks for meals or exercise.

**Plan tasks each week** according to high, medium or low priority.

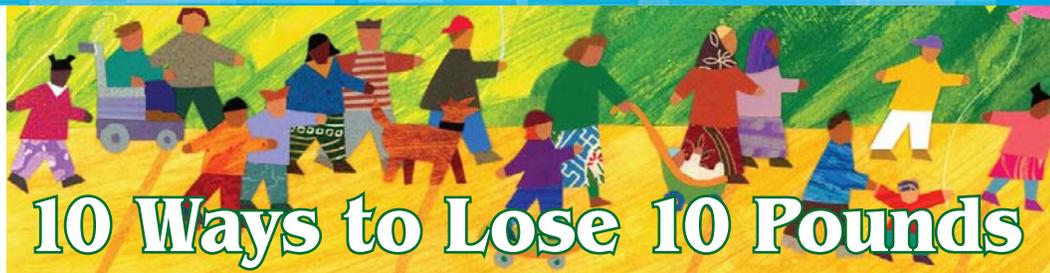
**Be selective about information.** Reduce the unnecessary email, Internet browsing, reading and meetings.

**Derail interruptions** when you're working. Let others know when you've scheduled uninterrupted work time.

**Tidy up your workspace** to avoid wasted time hunting for misplaced stuff.

**Cut the chatter.** Gabfests are part of the workplace, but be aware of what they cost you in time.

**Avoid striving for "perfection"** when "good" will suffice, and the results are effective.



## 10 Ways to Lose 10 Pounds

**D**ropping 1-2 pounds per week is a healthy rate of weight loss. The best strategy? Watch the calories you consume and burn with these guidelines from the Partnership for Healthy Weight Management.

**1. Plan the first few weeks of your weight loss in detail.** Create exercise routines and menus to keep you on track until they're automatic. *Tip:* Cut 500 calories per day by eating 250 fewer calories and exercising to burn off 250 calories more to lose a pound a week.

**2. To keep up your metabolism (calorie-burning rate),** lower your calorie intake and raise your activity level. Be aware that metabolism may slow with age.

**3. Read food labels.** Check calories and fat per serving, even on products labeled "light".

**4. Walk, jog, garden ...** Aim for 30 minutes of extra physical activity daily and vary your activities.

**5. Stay hydrated with water.** Sugary and alcoholic beverages can add hundreds of calories to your day.

**6. Avoid fads that cut out entire food groups.** You miss out on essential vitamins and minerals, which could impact your health and zap your energy.

**7. Make sure your meals taste good.** In between, include satisfying, nutritious snacks.

**8. Be realistic, and respect your individuality.** We're all built differently and no two people lose weight the same way.

**9. Think long-term** – exercise and healthy eating are life-long pursuits. Once you lose the 10 pounds, be ready for maintenance – make flavorful light cuisine and pleasant exercise part of your lifestyle.

**10. You're not alone.** If you see no progress, seek guidance and encouragement from your health care provider, a personal trainer or coach.



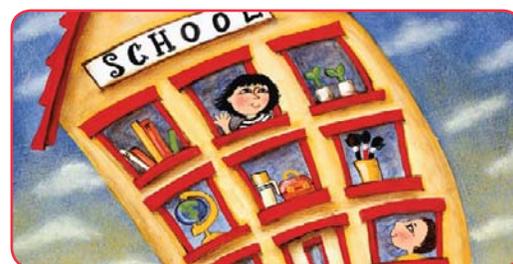
## Back-To-School Checklist

**S**ummer vacation is winding down and if you're like most parents, you're eyeing back-to-school sales and trying to get your kids ready for the academic routine.

Here's a list of reminders to start the school year smart:

**Immunizations** – Check with your pediatrician to make sure your children have all the recommended vaccinations. Not being current may prevent your child from attending school (state requirements vary). *Tip:* College students also need to keep vaccinations current; infectious diseases spread easily in communal living areas such as dormitories.

**Health issues** – Inform the school ahead of time if your child has allergies or conditions such as diabetes. Determine if a nurse is on staff. Ask about the school's policy regarding reducing sensitive children's exposure to potentially allergenic foods, such as peanuts.



**Routine** – Don't wait until the night before the first day of school to change your child's bedtime. Give them a few weeks to adjust to the school schedule.

**Stuff** – Many schools require the student to bring supplies, such as art materials. Get a list and shop ahead of time.

**Backpacks** – Show younger children how to use backpacks to avoid strain and injury. Remind older kids about overloading their packs. A backpack should not weigh more than 10-20% of a child's weight.

## QUIZ:

# Kitchen Safety

Your kitchen is a haven for gathering family and friends and multiple activities – no wonder it's also a place prone to safety hazards. A Home Safety Council Survey found that 70% of survey respondents do not take preventative steps even though they're aware of kitchen risks.

### Check: How safe are you in the kitchen?



- True  False Dish towels, paper bags, curtains and other flammable items should be placed at least 1½ feet away from the heat of the range top.
- True  False “Stop, Drop, Roll and Cool” is the old-fashioned strategy to put out a fire on clothing. Douse it out with a wet cloth instead.
- True  False Wearing loose clothing while cooking is a hazard.
- True  False Only grease spills need to be wiped up immediately to prevent slips.
- True  False Chemical cleansers and other toxic products can be stored near food as long as they are sealed properly.
- True  False To prevent scalding, set the hot water heater to 120°F or lower.
- True  False After microwaving foods, remove their covers quickly to prevent steam burns.
- True  False In the kitchen, covered trash cans keep odors in and young children and pets out.

### Answers:

- False.* Keep all flammable items at least 3 feet away from the range.
- False.* Teach young children the tried and true method – “Stop, Drop, Roll and Cool.” Drop to the ground, cross hands to chest, and roll over and over or back and forth until the fire is out. Get immediate treatment for burns.
- True.* Roll up your sleeves when cooking and don't wear anything that dangles over the heat or flame, such as a scarf, tie or jewelry, where they could catch fire.
- False.* Any spilled liquid or food can cause slips, whether it's grease, dry cereal, a banana peel or plain old water. Keep floors clear of clutter, too – toys, shoes – anything that poses a tripping hazard.
- False.* Store toxic products in their original containers, away from foods and out of toddlers' reach.
- True.* Look for tub spouts and showerheads with anti-scald features.
- False.* Let microwaved food cool for a few minutes before uncovering; follow package directions. Do a touch test for temperature before eating; heat is distributed unevenly in microwaved foods.
- True.* A covered trash can helps reduce exposure to germs. Also, teach kids to avoid touching the lids.

## Q: Risk with nutrient supplements? By: Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

**A:** Before using an herbal or nutrient supplement, consider these points:

**Safety:** Remember, “natural” does not mean harmless. The herb kava, for example, has been linked to liver damage. Bitter orange or ephedra supplements can contribute to heart attack, stroke or irregular heartbeats. Learn about side effects before purchasing dietary supplements.

**Reliability:** Federal regulations do not require manufacturers of herbal products and vitamin or mineral supplements to prove their claims.

If possible, research each product; if you have questions, talk to your provider.

**Drug interactions:** St. John's wort decreases the effectiveness of certain prescription drugs, while other herbs increase sedation from anesthetics during surgery. To prevent drug interactions, inform your provider about all your supplements and prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

**Know your needs:** Taking unnecessary or high doses of supplements can be a waste. **Better:** Try to get your nutrients from whole foods.

## 8 Part Stroke Prevention

*By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP*

**True or false? Up to 80% of strokes are preventable.** The answer is “true.” Here are the key steps to prevention from the National Stroke Association:

- 1 Check your blood pressure.** Have your provider get a reading at least once every 2 years. High blood pressure causes your blood vessel walls to thicken or weaken. This can result in blockage or breakage of a blood vessel in the brain, 2 common causes of stroke.
- 2 Learn if you have atrial fibrillation.** Your provider can check for an irregular pulse; an EKG (electrocardiogram) can confirm the diagnosis and possible need for blood thinners to prevent stroke.
- 3 Stop playing with fire.** Your stroke risk goes up two-fold if you use tobacco.
- 4 Limit alcohol.** Too much alcohol can triple your risk for stroke. The recommended daily limit is 1 drink for women and 2 for men.
- 5 Limit salt intake.** Recommendation: 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day, or 1,500 milligrams if you're middle-aged or older.
- 6 Watch blood sugar and cholesterol.** Ask your provider if you need diabetes and cholesterol screening based on your health history.
- 7 Promote good blood circulation.** If you have risks for cardiovascular disease, work with your provider to control them, including 2.5 hours of moderate exercise weekly, preferably aerobic.
- 8 Act fast if you have symptoms.** Call 911 and get tested and treated immediately, if you show signs of stroke.

**SIGNS of STROKE** They typically occur suddenly and include: severe headache • trouble walking, dizziness or loss of balance • trouble seeing • confusion, trouble speaking or comprehending • numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg, especially on one side.

**MORE INFO** ▶ National Stroke Association:  
[www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org)

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

phone: 800-871-9525  
 fax: 205-437-3084  
 e-mail: editor@personalbest.com  
 website: www.personalbest.com

Editor: Diane McReynolds  
 Managing Editor: Susan Cottman  
 Assistant Editor: Kim Wake  
 Medical Editor: Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP  
 Advisors: Cynthia Gale, MS, RD; Timothy J. Halm, MD, ASAM;  
 Mary P. Hollins, MS, JD; Leslie B. Hutchinson, PhD;  
 Alice Lockridge, MS; Wm. Richard Ludwig, MD  
 Designer: Nicolai Petersen  
 ©2009 Oakstone Publishing, LLC dba Personal Best. All rights reserved.  
 100 Corporate Parkway, Suite 600, Birmingham, AL 35242  
 phone: 800-871-9525 fax: 205-437-3084

*The content herein is in no way intended to serve as a substitute for professional advice. Reproduction in any form of any part of this publication is a violation of federal copyright law and is strictly prohibited. Sources available on request.*

# What's for BREAKFAST?

*Think outside the box.*  
 By Cynthia Gale M.S., R.D.

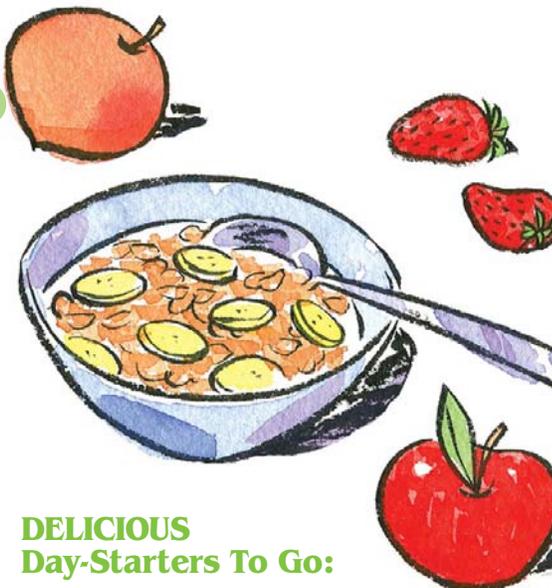
**Y**ou've heard health experts say it — breakfast is the most important meal of your day. Yet, 20% of Americans skip it! Breakfast sets the pace for your day, physically and mentally. Without it, you may find yourself wilted and ready to raid the vending machine mid-morning.

Adults who eat breakfast have better concentration and productivity in the morning, and tend to maintain a healthier weight than people who skip it. Children who eat breakfast also show better concentration, alertness and creativity.

**Sugary cereals just don't stick to your ribs.** They are quickly absorbed and may soon leave you hungry. However, high-fiber, whole-grain cereals such as oatmeal and bran are absorbed more slowly and, with low-fat or nonfat milk, they may supply more long-lasting energy.

**Breakfast can be more than cereal and still be a breeze to fix come sun-up.** For a balanced meal that fills you up and delivers your nutritional needs choose fruits, whole grain breads, lean protein and low-fat dairy products. *Examples:* A banana or juice, whole-wheat toast, a boiled egg and yogurt.

**To make breakfast a healthy habit,** plan some easy weekly breakfast menus. You might also set it up the night before to save time in the morning. Keep breakfast foods on hand that require little preparation.



## DELICIOUS Day-Starters To Go:

- ☀ Peanut butter on apple slices or whole-wheat muffin
- ☀ Parfait made with cottage cheese and fruit
- ☀ Greek yogurt with fruit and granola
- ☀ Whole-wheat tortilla with low-fat cheese heated in a microwave oven
- ☀ Smoothies with milk or juice, protein powder and fruit
- ☀ Whole-grain bagel with low-fat cream cheese
- ☀ Leftover lean meat or fish fillet and fruit
- ☀ Chopped hard boiled egg stuffed in a whole-wheat pita pocket
- ☀ A bag of dry cereal mixed with nuts and dried fruit

*Start your healthy breakfast habit with our Quiche Cups To Go.*

## Recipe of the Month

# Quiche Cups To Go

You can freeze these make-ahead breakfast treats, then reheat them in a microwave oven. Use any combination of vegetables and cheese you like.

- 10 oz. package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- ¾ cup egg substitute
- ¾ cup shredded reduced fat cheese
- ¼ cup red bell pepper, diced
- ¼ cup onion, diced

- 1 Line 12 muffin tins with baking cups. Moisten the cups with cooking oil spray.
- 2 Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix well.
- 3 Divide mixture evenly among baking cups.
- 4 Bake at 350°F for about 20 minutes, until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

## Nutrition Facts

Makes 12 muffins.

Amount Per Muffin		
	Calories	77
	Protein	9g
	Total Fat	3g
	Saturated Fat	2g
	Cholesterol	10mg
	Carbohydrate	3g
	Fiber	2g
	Sodium	160mg