The American Cancer Society estimates that nearly 40,000 American women will die of breast cancer in 2011. In the United States alone, there are more than 2.5 million breast cancer survivors. In one way or another, then, many of us have been or will be touched by this disease. Wear Pink Day gives us an opportunity to raise awareness about breast cancer, remember those who have suffered, and educate one another about screening guidelines. On Thursday, October 20, wear pink and encourage your coworkers and students to do the same. Then use your wardrobe choice to start a conversation about taking care of yourself and to remind those you care about to do the same.
Early detection is the key to breast cancer survival. Learn how to do a breast self-examination by visiting the Kaiser Permanente webpage.

Let us know how you will be participating in the Wear Pink Day by e-mailing your stories to wellness@mcpsmd.org.

Quit for Good with the MCPS Tobacco Cessation Program

Beginning November 3, MCPS and Kaiser Permanente will offer an eight-week tobacco cessation program that aims to teach you the skills it takes to quit for good. The free tobacco cessation program is available to everyone, regardless of whether or not you participate in MCPS employee benefits or if you participate with Kaiser.

The program is course-based, and consists of once-a-week classes led by a nurse practitioner with assistance from Kaiser Permanente clinicians and health experts. Classes will discuss the skills necessary to successfully live tobacco-free. Discussion topics will include risk assessment, stress management techniques, healthy weight management strategies, and more. Classes will be held at the Employee and Retiree Service Center’s new location at 45 West Gude Drive. In addition to the class meetings, participants will receive support through a help line, peer sponsors who understand what it takes to quit, and other resources.

Learn more about the program by visiting the wellness website.

To register, e-mail Well Aware at wellness@mcpsmd.org.

Wellness Competitions Have Begun: It’s Not Too Late to Get Involved and Get Moving!

The Work It Circuit Challenge and MCPS on the Move have officially kicked off as of Monday, October 3. Each competition is designed to challenge MCPS staff members to increase their physical activity and see the healthy benefits. Each program also provides motivational incentives, including prizes for participation and grand prizes for the most activity.

Haven’t signed up yet? Register today!

Nearly 3,000 of your coworkers have already signed up! Don’t be left behind—it is not too late to get registered for the program at your location. Once you have signed up, you can join a team or begin participating on your own. When you log your activity, your totals will automatically count toward competition prizes.

• Elementary School Staff, School Bus Operators and Bus Attendants:
  Register for the Work It Circuit Challenge

• Secondary School and Central Services Staff Members:
  Register for MCPS on the Move

Need to Know More? Visit the Work It Circuit Challenge webpage or the MCPS on the Move webpage today for complete details.

October is National Women’s Health Month: Follow These Women's Healthcare Guidelines

The National Women’s Health Information Center offers the following 10 things you can do to help live longer, live better, and live happier:

1. Be Informed. Learn about health promotion and disease...
1. Prevention and ask your physician for specific information regarding your needs.

2. Be Good To Your Bones. For healthy bones, be sure to replenish your stock of calcium every day with plenty of foods such as milk and dairy products, tofu, leafy, green vegetables, canned salmon or sardines, and calcium-fortified juices or breads. Speak with your physician about calcium supplements.

3. Avoid Illegal Drugs and Alcohol. For women, the definition of moderate drinking stops at one glass. And where illicit drugs are concerned, there is no such thing as "moderate" use.

4. Take Medicine Wisely. Read the labels, follow the instructions carefully, and remind your physician or pharmacist about any other medicines or supplements you might be taking that could interact with your medication. If you have any questions about possible side effects, call your physician or pharmacist.


7. Do Not Smoke. Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in our country.

8. Eat Smart. It is the secret to good health. Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Enjoy a variety of foods, balance foods from each food group, and exercise moderation.

9. Get Moving. The other secret to good health: just 30 minutes of physical activity, accumulated over the course of each day, can radically improve the way you look and feel, both physically and mentally.

10. Be Happy. Take time for yourself. Get connected with family, friends, and community. Do things you enjoy!

For more information about daily, monthly, and yearly activities to ensure your health, visit the CareFirst website.

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The employee wellness newsletter is brought to you by the Employee and Retiree Service Center (ERSC). To learn more about employee wellness, visit our website. To view this email as a .pdf document, click here.

Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-6100 or wellness@mcpsmd.org.