

Summer 2010

Region 8 Update

From Dr. Guerra...

I take great pride in serving as the Regional Medical Director for Health Service Region 8. Not only does our Region perform well in the many programs we offer, but during crises we also shine. During my tenure in Region 8, we have responded to a tornado in Eagle Pass, flooding in D'Hanis, multiple hurricanes and tropical storms, disease outbreaks and the FLDS investigation in San Angelo. In each case, I have been impressed by your ability to support the response effort.

Hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30. During the 2009 season, Texas was not affected by a single storm. In 2008, however, we faced three hurricanes and a tropical storm. While we do not know for certain what Hurricane Season 2010 has in store, we do know that (according to the National Hurricane Center), an average of

11 tropical storms develop each year over the Atlantic, Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. Six of these become hurricanes and three of these are major hurricanes (defined as a category 3 or greater on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale). In an average 3-year period, 5 hurricanes strike the U.S. coast. Projections from the National Hurricane Center for the 2010 season include the possibility of 14 to 23 named storms and 8 to 14 hurricanes, three to seven of which might be major ones.

The word hurricane is derived from 'Hurican,' the Carib god of evil. The Caribs borrowed the word from the Mayans whose creator god, 'Hurakan,' blew across the chaotic water and brought forth dry land. In English, the words hurricane and typhoon (used in the Northwest Pacific west of the dateline) are regionally specific names for a strong tropical cyclone. Tropical cyclones with maximum sustained surface winds of less than 39 miles per hour (mph) are called tropical depressions. Once the wind speeds reach 40 mph, they are called tropical storms and given a name. If the wind speeds reach 74 mph, they become hurricanes.

Hurricanes are nature's most powerful storms and can cause damage hundreds of miles from where they

make landfall. The four hazards of hurricanes are storm surge, high winds, tornadoes and heavy rainfall. Peak storm activity runs from mid-August to mid-October.

Region 8 has three counties on the Gulf Coast: Jackson, Victoria and Calhoun. Although the rest of the Region's 25 counties are not coastal, they can be affected by storms in the Gulf and those in the Pacific. We also know that due to San Antonio's status as a shelter and response hub, Region 8 staff will be called on to respond no matter where the storm strikes our state.



Hurricane Ike bears down onto the upper Texas coast line, September 2008.

In order to be ready to provide public health response before, during and after a hurricane or tropical storm, I ask that you be prepared at home too. As hurricane season approaches, make sure your home and family are protected. Here are a few simple things you can do to get ready:

- If you live in a coastal area, make an evacuation plan. Fill the cars with gas. Know your route. Have a go-kit packed with clothes, water, snacks, medical supplies, cash and important documents for your trip. Make arrangements for a place to stay.

- If you do not live in a coastal area, you may still be affected by power outages, tornadoes or flooded roads. Having a stash of food, medical supplies, cash and water will help your family until the power is restored.

Your family will need to know that you may be working long hours during a response. If your home or community is damaged, please take the time you need to make sure your property and family are protected and safe. Once they are safe, be prepared to join regional staff in helping others. Thank you for your commitment to the public health of Region 8.



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If you are seeking creative ideas, go out walking. Angels whisper to a man when he goes for a walk.

– Raymond Inmon



Breaking Physical Activity Barriers

Mandy Seay, Texas State Dietetic Intern

Are you ready to start an exercise routine?

On a scale of 1-10, if 1 is no interest at all and 10 is being absolutely ready and motivated, where do you find yourself? If you are a 7 or above but find it hard to get started, move on to the tips below. If you are below 7 take a moment to review all of the benefits exercise has to offer:

- Stress relief and mood elevation
- Boosts self esteem
- Reduces risks for chronic disease
- Weight management

“I’m too overweight/out of shape”

If you are not sure you are physically able to start exercising or you have a medical condition, talk to your doctor. There is something everyone can do to improve their physical fitness.

If you’re embarrassed at other people watching you, activity doesn’t have to happen in a gym to improve your health. Walk

around the neighborhood, rent a walking or low-impact workout DVD from the library, or enlist a friend or family member for moral support.

“I don’t have time”

If you have time to watch TV, you have time to work out. In fact, studies have shown that watching television puts the body in a vegetative-like state which slows calorie burn. Believe it or not, quietly reading a book burns more calories than watching television.

Next time you turn on the television try doing some jumping jacks, sit-ups, or pushups. If you want something more tame, grab weights or a resistance band to get your heart pumping. Switch it up every night for best results.

If you rarely have a moment to even glance at the television, try some other techniques like taking the stairs instead of the elevator, parking in the farthest spot at the grocery store, or being active during your lunch break.

“I don’t have money for classes, gym memberships or equipment”

No problem, you don’t need any of these items to get fit. If walking or jogging in your neighborhood does not appeal to you, go online for ideas. YouTube has lots of videos that you can browse for tips, techniques and moves. If you have cable, you probably have a couple of fitness channels with a wide variety of exercise shows. If you still have a VCR, you can find exercise video tapes for sale online or at garage sales for less than \$1 per video.

“I don’t know where to start”

- Start off slow. Doing too much too soon could lead to injury. Set goals. Do a little at first and then work your way up.
- Find something you enjoy doing that you will stick with.
- Consistency pays off, set aside some time each day. Make physical activity a priority – your health is important.
- Ask a friend, family member or coworker to join you, having company makes everything more enjoyable.

Region 8 Lost an Employee!

Congratulations to the 46 Region 8 employees who participated in the Region 8 Weight Loss Challenge!

Participants split into two teams to see which team and individual could lose the greatest percent of body weight in 11 weeks. Everyone faithfully weighed in every week, and engaged in some

friendly competition.

In the end, Team 1 lost the greatest percentage, losing a total of 2.4% of the team’s body weight, compared to 1.8% lost by Team 2. The biggest individual loser was Marie Brown, and second place went to Matthew Williams.

A total of 198 pounds was lost by

the group, or the equivalent of one person, as one participant noted!

A big congratulations goes out to all the participants for their hard work and dedication!

Do you have some ideas for the next group challenge? Email [Alexa](#) with any suggestions or thoughts.

Lose the Sodium, Keep the Flavor Mandy Seay, Texas State Dietetic Intern

What foods are high in sodium (salt)?

- Processed and prepared foods (restaurants, frozen, pre-cooked)
- Lunchmeats
- Condiments
- Sauces
- Canned soups and vegetables

How can high sodium affect me?

Some people are more sensitive to sodium than others and their bodies have a harder time getting rid of the extra. For these people, eating too much sodium can cause fluid retention and lead to high blood pressure, a risk factor for cardiovascular and kidney

diseases. If you are unsure of how sensitive you are to sodium, talk to your doctor to find out what amount is best for you.

What amount of sodium should I aim for?

Current recommendations for the average person are 2400 milligrams/day (about 1 teaspoon) but that may soon change to 1500 milligrams/day. Keep in mind this is not only what you add to your foods, but also what may have been added during processing. The best way to monitor this is by reading food labels.

What about salt substitutes?

Salt substitutes may not be the answer. The taste can be very different and even unappealing, which can quickly derail good intentions. Additionally, many salt substitutes have high levels of potassium which can be harmful for people taking certain heart and blood pressure medications or for those with kidney problems. Instead, experiment with spices and herbs to add flavor and slowly decrease your salt intake. Salt is an acquired taste, after a couple of weeks of decreasing your salt intake, you will notice a decreased desire for it.

Nutrition and healthy eating. 2010. Mayo Clinic Web site. Available at: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/sodium/>



Here is a list of spices that pair well with many favorite foods:

Basil - eggs, asparagus

Chili powder - hamburger meat

Crushed Red Pepper - pasta sauce, hamburger, steak

Cumin - meat sauces, enchilada

Cumin - meat sauces, enchilada sauce, hamburger meat, Curry - chicken, rice

Lemon Pepper - chicken and steak, asparagus, vegetables

Marjoram - squash, eggs, chicken, asparagus

Oregano - eggs, chicken, steak

Rosemary - potatoes, chicken

Tarragon - chicken, asparagus

Thyme - steak, chicken, vegetables, meat sauces

Turmeric - chicken, rice

Chili Coated Tilapia with Asparagus & Lemon (Serves 4)

- 2 pounds asparagus, tough ends trimmed, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1 pound tilapia, Pacific sole or other firm white fish fillets
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice

In a large sauce pan (or steamer), bring 1 inch of water to a boil. Place asparagus in a steamer basket, place in the pan, cover and steam until tender-crisp, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a large plate, spreading out to cool.

Combine chili powder, garlic powder and 1/4 teaspoon salt on a plate. Dredge fillets in the spice mixture to coat. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the fish and cook until just opaque in the center, gently turning halfway, 5 to 7 minutes total. Divide among 4 plates. Immediately add lemon juice, the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt and asparagus to the pan and cook, stirring constantly, until the asparagus is coated and heated through, about 2 minutes. Serve the asparagus with the fish.

Per serving: Calories 210, Carbohydrate 3 g, Protein 24 g, Fat 10 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Sodium 418 mgCholesterol 48 g, Dietary Fiber 4 g, Potassium 645 mg.

Source: Food Network <http://www.foodnetwork.com>

Most of the sodium in our diet comes from processed, canned, or restaurant prepared foods. Starting with unprocessed food and adding salt at the table is an easy way to consume less sodium. You'll actually use less salt than a manufacturer would add during processing!

Go Red for Women's Heart Disease Awareness

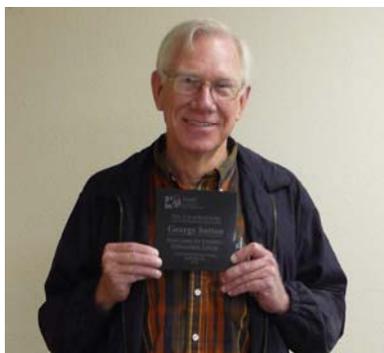
National Wear Red Day is held the first Friday of every February as a way to raise awareness about the impact of heart disease on women. Employees throughout Region 8 showed their support by wearing red to work. Many employees also attended education sessions about heart disease, and the lifestyle changes that can be made to prevent it.



George Sutton Wins Coveted *Most Cases for Escalated Enforcement Actions* Award

Gale Morrow

George Sutton, Food Establishments Sanitarian for Region 8 in Uvalde, was awarded the Food Establishments Group award for *Most Cases for Escalated Enforcement Actions* at the Group's annual meeting in San Antonio in May 2010. With twenty-two years of state service under his belt, George has been a consistently high performing sanitarian. His



win this year follows a string of

awards for quality inspections during his tenure with the Department of State Health Services and, previously, with the Texas Department of Health. George came to public health after serving in the United States Air Force and running his own air conditioning company in Uvalde.

Congratulations, George!!



Del Rio Tuberculosis Investigation Presented

Joanna Nichols

On March 12, 2010, I represented DSHS Region 8 in Orlando, FL at the International Union Against TB and Lung Disease—North America Regional Conference. I was selected for a poster presentation I co-wrote with Dr. Rohr-Allegrini and Dr. Guerra.

DSHS received a report of a case of laryngeal TB from Methodist Hospital in January 2009. This

individual resided in Del Rio, attended Del Rio Middle School, and had been symptomatic for 1 year calendar year, which would stretch in to two academic years. A second TB case, also a student at Del Rio Middle School, was identified through the contact investigation. Rather than have a second contact investigation around this second case, and to avoid angering parents concerned as to why their child was not

tested, DSHS decided to test all students attending the Del Rio Middle School for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.

Since the time span of possible exposure lasted one calendar year, and two school years had to be included, the Del Rio High School freshman class was tested, as well. In all, 1856 students, staff and faculty were evaluated. No other cases of TB were identified.

“Importantly, we found that many students crossed the border daily to attend school in the US or to visit family in Mexico. Legal cross-border traffic has the potential to introduce TB into a congregate setting.”

Welcome to new employees!

Please join us in welcoming the newest employees of Region 8:

- The Department of Case Management & Social Work Services has two new staff members who are case managers in the San Antonio office:
 - Leticia Guerra
 - Shelly Braun
- Family and Community Health has one new staff member. Debra Vasquez is a Human Service Tech 1 in the Floresville office.
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness has two new staff members in Region 8 Headquarters:
 - Sammy Sikes, Program Specialist III
 - Colin Davis, Program Specialist III
- EMS Compliance welcomes Douglas Alejandro, EMS Specialist, in the San Antonio office.

If you haven't already, please extend a warm welcome to our newest employees!





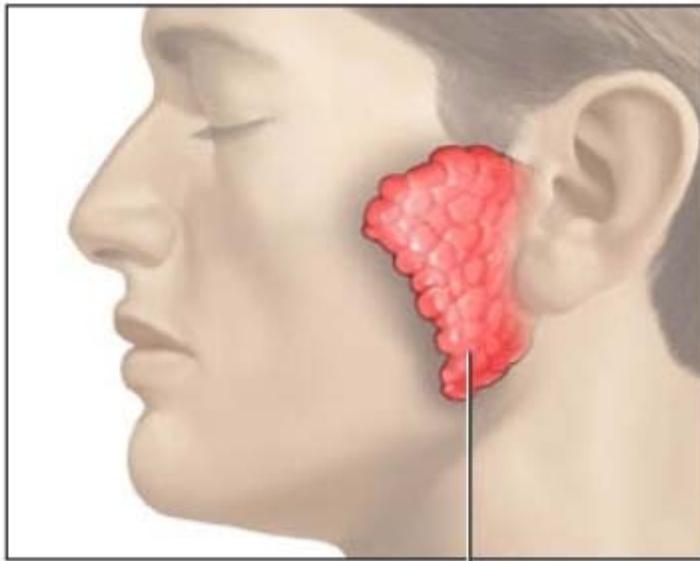
HEALTH SERVICE
REGION 8

Mumps On The Rise

Region 8 Epidemiology Response Team

Since January, 2010, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has seen more than 20 laboratory-confirmed cases of mumps across the state. At least two confirmed cases have been reported in Region 8.

DSHS is requesting that any new case of mumps be confirmed through viral isolation, in order to identify strains present in Texas and to assist with surveillance, prevention and control efforts.



Swollen parotid gland

The classic symptom of mumps is swelling of the salivary gland (parotitis) on one or both sides. Other symptoms such as body ache, loss of appetite, headache and low-grade fever may accompany or precede parotitis. For additional clinical information, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/mumps/clinical/qa-disease.html>

Any person suspected of having mumps should be reported to the Region 8 Epidemiology Response Team at 210-949-2121 as soon as possible, so that timely follow-up can be done to obtain appropriate viral samples (serum and buccal swab). Mumps virus can typically be isolated within four days of parotitis onset.

The MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine is the best way to prevent mumps. The MMR vaccine should be routinely given when children are 12-15 months old, and a second dose should be given when they are 4-6 years old. Two doses of the vaccine are more effective against mumps than one dose and prevent most, but not all, cases of mumps and mumps complications.

To minimize the spread of mumps, in addition to ensuring all patients are up-to-date with age-appropriate

MMR immunizations, any patient suspected of having mumps should be counseled to:

- Stay home from work or school for 5 days after onset of parotitis or until a negative mumps laboratory result is received
- Minimize close contact with other people, especially unvaccinated infants and immune compromised individuals
- Cover coughs and wash hands diligently
- Avoid salivary contact with household and close contacts (including not sharing drinks or eating utensils)
- Regularly clean surfaces that are frequently touched (such as toys, doorknobs, tables, counters) with soap and water or with cleaning wipes

Please contact Alexa George with any comments, suggestions or submissions.

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