

WIC News



Celebrating
a Good
Workout

Texas
On the Move

Physical Activity — Another Piece of the Health Puzzle

When we look around our offices it is evident what our goals are. There are pictures of nutritious food and breastfeeding moms on the walls. There are displays that illustrate how much sugar is in a can of soda. There are diagrams that teach clients how to read nutrition labels. Our goal is to keep our WIC families healthy. We talk a lot about the importance of a well-balanced diet, but this edition of WIC News focuses on another piece of the “health” puzzle — physical activity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) nearly 66 percent of Texas adults and 32 percent of Texas teens are overweight or obese. Research tells us that breastfeeding and a healthy diet are key strategies for weight loss; but physical activity is the element that keeps the weight off. Small changes add up, and moving your body doesn't necessarily have to mean jumping jacks and push-ups. On page six you'll see how the whole family, including toddlers, can have fun being active without even realizing they're exercising.

Pregnant moms can be active too! Several of our expecting colleagues shared their tips with us on how they continued working out, despite their growing bellies.

Physical fitness of course goes beyond our size, shape, and weight. Being physically

healthy also means being physically safe. It's scary to know that Texas' domestic violence rate is higher than the national average. Turn to page 16 to learn what you can do in your role to help victims that may connect with you in the WIC clinic.

The themes in this month's WIC News remind me of two things I learned as a child: never take good health for granted, and take care of the people in your life. The lines of kin are blurred by others who care for us, or play multiple roles in shaping and supporting us. We play more than supporting roles in the lives of WIC clients. To some of our clients, we are family. Let us continue to assist them and put them on a path for physical health and well-being, just as we would our loved ones at home.



From the Texas WIC Director

- Lindsay Rodgers, MA, RD, LD

in this issue



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Updates to Women's Health Programs in Texas

HEALTHY
TEXAS
WOMEN



by Sherlena Boehm
Program Specialist
Healthy Texas Women
Women's Health Services
Health and Human Services Commission

More women in Texas will soon receive free health and family planning services. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) launched a new program on July 1, 2016 marking a transformative day for women's health care in Texas. The Healthy Texas Women (HTW) program provides free health and family planning services to eligible women throughout the state. The two former programs, Texas Women's Health Program and the Expanded Primary Health Care program, were combined to form the new HTW program. The combination offers an opportunity to improve service delivery and efficiency for clients, providers, and the state.

Changes in policy and additional funding have significantly altered the landscape of state-funded women's health services in Texas. The new program offers expanded services and expanded eligibility to clients in need of care. The program anticipates serving 300,000 women by 2017.

Some of the services offered include:

- Pelvic examinations.
- Screening for hypertension, diabetes, and elevated cholesterol.
- Contraceptive services for pregnancy prevention and birth spacing (intrauterine devices, implants, oral contraceptive pills, injections, permanent sterilizations, etc.).
- Pregnancy testing and counseling.
- Preconception health screenings for obesity, smoking, and mental health.
- Sexually transmitted infection screenings and treatment.
- Breast and cervical cancer screenings.





The program serves women who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Between the ages of 15 to 44 (clients age 15-17 must have parental consent).
- A Texas resident and a U.S. citizen.
- Not pregnant.
- Reported household income does not exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Clients can apply for HTW benefits online at YourTexasBenefits.com or with a paper application. A program enhancement allows eligible pregnant women covered under Medicaid to be automatically enrolled in HTW once their Medicaid coverage ends. This allows for the continuum of care for new mothers throughout the state.

Health and Human Services' Office of Women's Health Services offers an alternative program for those who may not meet the above criteria. The Family Planning program provides family planning and reproductive health services to Texas residents ages up to age 64 (male and female) whose household income does not exceed 250 percent of the federal poverty limit. Participating providers for this program will

screen for client eligibility onsite.

The program website, www.HealthyTexasWomen.org, offers information for both clients and providers on all women's health service programs. A client can find application details, locate a provider, or learn about other important benefits that may be available to them. Providers can learn about program procedures, client eligibility rules, and valuable contact resources.

As a representative of the Texas WIC program, you play an important role in advocating for women in need of services. Applications and outreach materials for the HTW program are available for distribution and can be displayed in WIC offices to promote awareness during client visits. Program materials can be ordered online from the HHSC warehouse at <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/WomensHealth/brochure-request.asp>.

To learn more about HTW or to assist a client with locating information, please visit www.HealthyTexasWomen.org.

“Let’s Get the Wiggles Out, Mom!”

Why and How to Help Children Stay Active

by Erica Harris, MS, RD, LD
Nutrition Education Consultant

Being active is good for the body and mind. This is especially true for children. The good part is — children naturally want to be active. In the words of my 4-year-old daughter, sometimes she just has to “get the wiggles out.” Exercise for kids is all about fostering opportunities for active play. Whether it’s jumping, dancing, hopping, or climbing, being active is both fun and healthy for children.

Creating regular opportunities for physical activity is a win-win for the whole family. Parents benefit when children have an outlet to burn off their seemingly endless energy, and children are setting the stage for lifelong healthy habits. Physical activity helps kids:

- Build healthy bones and muscles.
- Increase strength and coordination.
- Keep a healthy weight.
- Build self-confidence.
- Lower stress levels.
- Lower the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol.

The key is to find activities children enjoy, include the whole family when possible, and make being active part of family routines. The entire family benefits from better moods and health. Doing activities together also helps build bonds and memories to last a lifetime.

How much activity do children need?

Young children benefit from both structured and unstructured activity. Structured activity includes team sports or other adult-led activity, while unstructured activity is free play in a safe environment indoors or outdoors. Toddlers and preschoolers need at least 30 to 60 minutes of structured activity per day, plus at least an hour — and up to several hours of unstructured activity per day.

Physical Activity Guidelines for Young Children

Age	Recommendation per day
Toddlers (1–2 years)	1 ½ hours (30 min. structured activity plus at least 60 min. unstructured activity)
Preschoolers (3–5 years)	2 hours (60 min. structured activity plus at least 60 min. unstructured activity)

SOURCE: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION, 2011



What kind of activities are best?

Below are some ideas of age-appropriate activities for young children. Physical activity doesn't have to happen in full 30 or 60 minute segments, and can be in smaller segments that add up throughout the day.

Age	Structured activities	Unstructured Activities
Toddlers (1-2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sing songs kids can move to (jump like a frog, gallop like a horse, etc.). - Help kids act out stories. - Encourage simple games like tag or chase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Play on safe playground structures. - Push or climb on age-appropriate toys. - Play with balls.
Preschoolers (3-5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move to music together. - Play simple games in pairs or groups. - Throw or kick balls or other safe objects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climb, swing, run, dance, or anything that gets kids moving.

As children mature into school age and adolescence, they continue to need at least an hour of activity per day. Children ages 6 to 17 need a mix of aerobic activities that get the heart rate up plus activities that strengthen muscles and bones. Activities like push-ups and sit-ups build muscles while running and jumping keep bones strong. As children grow and learn to move their bodies with a variety of age appropriate activities, they develop strength, flexibility, and endurance that will set them up to enjoy being active throughout their lives.

Set a positive example

Children are copycats and follow their parents' lead, so being a positive role model is key. The whole family can do activities like go on walks and hikes, fly a kite, play tag, toss a ball around, rake leaves, or garden. My daughter loves to take walks and join me in simple yoga moves. Her favorite poses are "cat" pose, "cow" pose, and "happy baby" pose — what young child wouldn't get a giggle out of that? Whatever activities families choose, make it fun and do it together. Involve kids in planning, and try keeping a calendar of fun activities on the fridge to stay motivated.

Screen time

It goes without saying that setting limits on screen time is important to ensure children stay active. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screen time for children under 2 years of age, and no more than two hours per day for children over 2 years old. Creating "screen free" zones in children's bed-

rooms and turning off the TV during mealtimes and playtimes are helpful habits. Instead of reaching for the remote or mobile device, have a dance party in the living room with the kids. Have fun!

Young families are busy and need support and encouragement to make staying active easier. National efforts like First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" initiative have increased awareness of the issue in recent years. Public health champions of the WIC program have a powerful opportunity to impact millions of lives. WIC staff are educators, listeners, cheerleaders, and experts in local community resources throughout Texas. Every WIC interaction is an opportunity to inspire and support a family. Let's help Texas children "get the wiggles out" — it's fun and good for everyone.

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Fitness Changed My Life

Debbie Lehman, PhD, RD,
WIC Nutrition Evaluation Specialist
WIC Wellness Works Coordinator



Running Saved My Life, Many Times

The middle school track coach wouldn't take me, not for any track event. I just assumed I wasn't the athletic type. I found my self-expression playing music for many years. When music was no longer an option, I lost my identity. I needed something new. A friend asked me if I wanted to go on a jog with her. It hurt at first, but it was fun to talk. One mile turned to two miles. Two turned to three, three to four, four to five, and so on. Soon I was winning medals in races, doing triathlons, and suddenly I was "athletic" — not me, no way.

Running became my escape. I jogged through the stress of graduate school deadlines, the first crazy job, and the hormones of pregnancy. I jogged through the wails of my heart post-divorce and through the tears of my dad's death. Beyond the tears surrounding me were nature and life. I saw wild flowers, fountain grass, bird families, roly pollies, buds of growth, lizards sunning themselves, rain and strong winds, even a baby rattle snake and a wandering coyote. I found the combination of running and nature uplifting.

While I ran, I let the emotions run out of me, to pass through the emotion. To express everything...and then to see beauty all around me. To see that all we really have to do is keep moving one foot in front of the other day by day. The scenery will change. Life is sure to change. And the other side of change is often beautiful.

I've been jogging and running for 20 years (half my life now), some years slower than others, but I just keep going.

Linda Zeccola, RN, IBCLC
Breastfeeding Training Specialist

How Being Active Has Affected My Life

Ballet has been a part of my life since my childhood. In recent years I had been away from ballet, feeling like my maturing body meant I was no longer able to do it. I have been going to modern dance class for some years at Café Dance in Austin and really enjoying it. It was certainly easier on my body. My teacher and artistic director told me she teaches ballet at Austin Community College (ACC). The news lit a fire in me because she is an amazing teacher, and I thought I had to pursue it. My first day in ballet class I was so nervous, but I knew I had done the right thing almost immediately. I am now in my fourth semester of ballet at ACC. My teacher makes it fun and she has broken down a lot of the mystery of the positions and how to execute steps. I am constantly challenged, and continuing to improve. I am so thrilled to find out I can still jump and turn and do a plie, plus I am getting more flexible and stronger. What a great feeling for me! Last year I worked on dancing with passion. This year I am going for flow and fluidity. I am so glad I didn't let fear get in the way of following my dream and getting back to what I love.



Lindsay Rodgers, MA, RD, LD
Texas WIC Director

Yoga Gave Me the Tools to Deal with Life's Challenges

Before I had any notion of a career path, I completed a degree in dance in college. I wouldn't trade that experience for anything, and it's where I was introduced to yoga. Twenty years later, I'm not sure how I could have navigated all the twists and turns of my life without my yoga practice. It centers me, challenges me, and keeps me on the path of striving to be the best person I can be. Yoga gave me the tools I needed to breathe through labor pains, helped me forgive and let go, accept my flaws and failures, and even helped me gain the courage to accept the position of Texas WIC Director. The fitness component of yoga is a nice secondary benefit, but I practice because yoga has become an integral part of how I cope with life and grow as a human being.



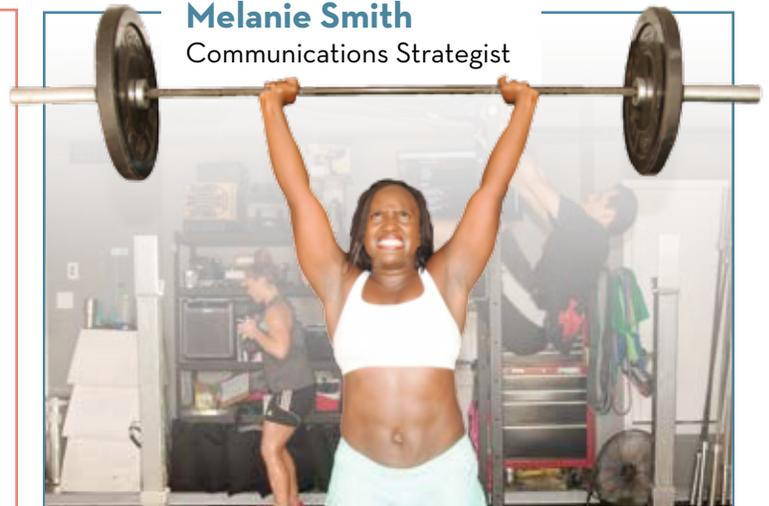
Kristina Arrieta, MPH, IBCLC
Peer Counselor Coordinator

Fitness is a Family Affair

My youngest daughter is my only child who doesn't like sports, but she seems to really like hiking and walking with the dogs, so I started hiking with her. It not only gets both of us moving, but it allows us to spend time together and catch up from our busy week. Recently we hiked 17 miles around the lake (next time we'll bring sunscreen). My third child and I lift weights together in the morning and stretch. Again, this gives us time to talk. Sometimes his girlfriend tags along. My second child and I are training for a marathon. She's much faster than I am but I can go further than her as of right now. My oldest says he'll run with us when he gets back from Japan.



Melanie Smith
Communications Strategist



How Fitness Took Away the Pain

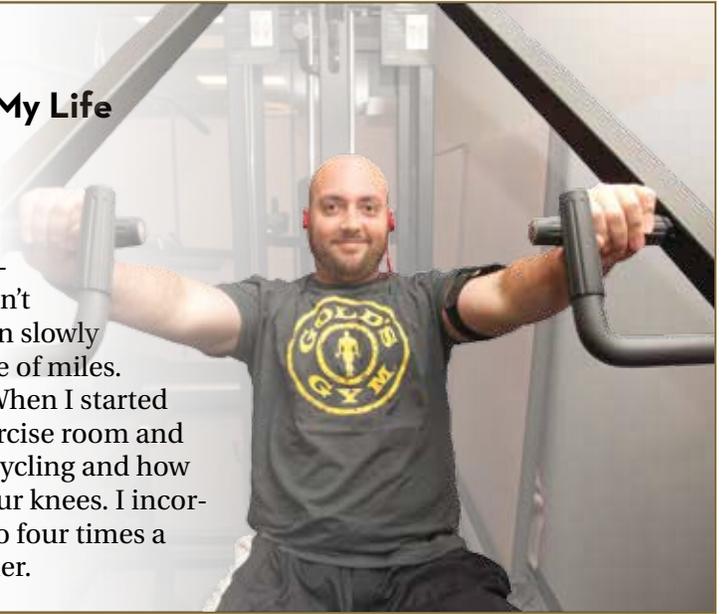
As an adult my weight has gone up and down. I enjoy exercise but I also enjoy food. In Summer of 2015 my knees began giving me problems. My doctor confirmed what I suspected, arthritis from years of being an athlete. I was given a prescription to deal with the pain. They also recommended physical therapy, but that same week I had decided to start personal training with my neighbor who is a certified CrossFit trainer. Within three weeks of training I no longer needed the medications. My doctor said the muscle I've built up now supports my body and there's less stress on the joints, which is why I have very little pain. I've also discovered a love and talent for weight lifting. I entered my first competition this summer and plan to do more in the future!

Jeff Lopez

Vendor Outreach Specialist

Exercise Has Made A Positive Impact On My Life

Last year I weighed close to 270 pounds with almost 40 percent body fat. I would get winded walking up stairs. When I tried to play basketball with my boys I couldn't make it past two to three points without calling a timeout. I had to roll out of bed because I couldn't sit-up. I had enough, so I started doing cardio. I began slowly — walking, then jogging, and finally running a couple of miles. I lost some weight but it wasn't near my target goal. When I started working at the WIC office I took advantage of the exercise room and started lifting weights. Then my boss told me about cycling and how she enjoys the aerobic workout with less stress on your knees. I incorporated cycling into my routine and go about three to four times a week. I now weigh 230 pounds and feel much healthier.



Patricia Koym, MS, RDN, LD

Formula Specialist

The Importance of Warm Water Therapy

Many years ago a fall on concrete caused

numerous problems for me. I knocked three gold crowns in my teeth loose and chipped a tooth. For several months I could only carry a billfold and my cell phone in my pocket. I had to use a cart to carry books or anything over five to ten pounds. I learned to deal with the pain through warm water therapy. In the years that followed I found warm-water therapy helpful for my osteoarthritis pain. I usually go to the pool two or more times a week. One day, I left work early because of extreme pain. After exercising in the warm-water therapy pool at the YMCA, I felt much better.



Yolanda BazDresch

WIC EBT Engagement Coordinator

Running Keeps Me Fit

Running helps me maintain my weight, and therefore my budget, because I don't have to replace my clothes every season! Health-wise, I believe the daily 30-40 minute, 1.5 – 3 mile run has helped me prevent the on-set of diabetes. Both my parents and one sister are diabetic. My blood pressure is usually on the low end of the 120/80. Running is what helps me deal with stress. On nights when I can't sleep because I'm fretting about the issue du jour, I can turn my mind off knowing that I will immerse myself in my thoughts in the quiet, cool, early morning

hours during my run. While running

I turn my attention to the beautiful moon and stars, and clear my mind of all that I think is going wrong.

At the end of every run, I feel accomplished, confident, and ready to face the world. And I

have the best running partner who never turns me

down for a run — Otis my dog!



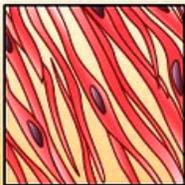
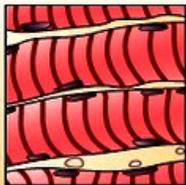
Amazing Human Body 101: How Our Muscles Work

CONTRIBUTED BY DEBBIE LEHMAN, PHD, RD, WIC WELLNESS COORDINATOR

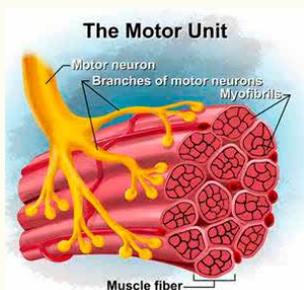
Experts say we have around 650 skeletal muscles. Muscle is a soft tissue designed to create force and motion. Tendons attach the muscle to two bones across a joint. As one muscle contracts, the other relaxes, which results in motion. This action actually starts with a nerve impulse from our brain.

Muscle Types: Smooth, Cardiac, and Skeletal. There are three types of muscle (figure 1). Smooth muscles line our digestive system, lungs, and blood vessels. Cardiac muscles make up the lining/wall of the heart. And skeletal muscles attach to our bones and control physical movement. Skeletal muscle is the only type under our voluntary control.

Figure 1.

	SMOOTH	CARDIAC	SKELETAL
Location	Wall of hollow organs, vessels, respiratory passageways	Wall of heart	Attached to bones
Cell characteristics	Tapered at each end, branching networks, nonstriated	Branching networks; special membranes (intercalated disks) between cells; single nucleus; lightly striated	Long and cylindrical; multinucleated; heavily striated
			
Control Action	Involuntary Produces peristalsis; contracts and relaxes slowly; may sustain contraction	Involuntary Pumps blood out of heart; self-excitatory but influenced by nervous system and hormones	Voluntary Produces movement at joints; stimulated by nervous system; contracts and relaxes rapidly

What are muscles made of and how do they work? Our muscles are composed of several motor units, each unit includes muscle fibers and a motor neuron.



The neurons send the signals from our brain that tell the muscles to contract or relax. Myofibrils are the site of actin and myosin filaments, which are proteins responsible for the muscle contractions.

(Continued on WWW — Insert D)

Correction: In the July/August WIC Wellness Works article, Building Better Bone Health, almonds were incorrectly listed as containing vitamin D in the table provided in insert D. While almonds are a good source of calcium, they do not contain any vitamin D. We sincerely apologize for the error.

A Step Towards More Steps: 10,000 Steps a Day

CONTRIBUTED BY BRITTANY MARKIDES, TEXAS STATE DIETETIC INTERN

It only takes one person in the office with a recently acquired activity tracker to get the physical activity conversations going again. How many miles is equivalent to the 10,000 steps the tracker wants me to achieve?

- Why 10,000 steps?
- Should I make 10,000 steps my goal?
- How do I add more steps to my day?

And if you don't have a step tracker, keep reading. We will give some tips for how to estimate how many steps you have taken.

1. Why 10,000 Steps?

The American Heart Association recommends individuals take 10,000 steps each day in order to improve their health and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Taking 10,000 steps, which usually adds up to five miles of walking, has been associated with improved cardiovascular fitness, lower blood pressure, lower glucose levels, and better body weight maintenance.

2. Should I make 10,000 steps my goal?

Although 10,000 daily steps is an excellent long-term goal to improve health, the Mayo Clinic recommends people first set short-term goals, such as taking an extra 1,000 steps daily for one week. For example, if you are currently taking 3,000 steps on a typical day, a good short-term goal would be to reach 4,000 steps each day for a week. By increasing your goal by 1,000 daily steps each week, you will gradually and sustainably improve your fitness level until you reach your long-term goals, which could be 10,000 steps... or more!

3. How do I reach my step goal? Especially if I don't have a pedometer or step tracker?

While walking at a moderate pace, most people take 1,000 steps and walk a quarter of a mile every 10 minutes. You can reach your goal of an extra 1,000 steps by working in an extra ten minutes of walking.

Walking at a quicker pace will greatly increase the number of steps you take during a period of time. For example, walking very fast (like you're trying to catch a bus) for 10 minutes will result in 1,350 steps.

There are many ways to increase the amount of time you spend walking each day; we've provided a short list below. After reading our tips, reflect on your typical day and write down the ways you can incorporate more steps into your daily activities.

Take a Walk

We're starting out with the basics. Taking two 25-minute walks every day (for example, one before and one after work) could add 5,000 steps to your day, which is enough for many people (in combination with their regular daily activities) to reach the 10,000 step goal. If you're new to walking, you can start small by taking a ten minute walk after work and gradually increase the length or frequency of your walks to reach your goal.

Multitask

Can you think of anything you do during the day that can be done while walking? How about that meeting with your colleagues or the telephone conversation with your friend or family member? Take it outside and walk while you talk! A half-hour conversation can add up to 3,000 extra steps.

Choose Steps

Think about the choices we make that save a little time by avoiding a bit of movement. By embracing the less efficient, more active choice, we can really rack up the steps. For example, parking or getting off the bus a little farther away from work can add up: for every five minutes you walk to and from work (10 minutes round trip), you can increase your daily step count by about 1,000. Get even more 'inefficient' by taking the stairs, walking to a coworker's office instead of emailing, choosing a

(Continued on WWW — Insert D)



recipe

Spiced Chickpea “Nuts” Football Snack

Makes 4 servings, ¼ cup each

You can roast chickpeas in the oven for a super crunchy treat that is lower in fat than nuts!

Ingredients

- 1 15-ounce can of chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried marjoram
- ¼ teaspoon ground all-spice
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Preparation

1. Position rack in upper third of oven; preheat to 450°F.
2. Blot chickpeas dry and toss in a bowl with oil, cumin, marjoram, allspice and salt. Spread on a rimmed baking sheet.
3. Bake, stirring once or twice, until browned and crunchy, 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool on the baking sheet for 15 minutes

Nutrition Information Per Serving

103 calories, 5g total fat (0g saturated fat), 0mg cholesterol, 303mg sodium, 15g carbohydrate (5g dietary fiber), 4g protein

Source: From *Eating Well* September/October 2009
http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/spiced_chickpea_nuts.html



Mind Games

Can you correctly match the opposing muscle pairs (i.e. the agonist and antagonist)?

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Biceps | a. Hamstrings |
| 2. Rectus abdominis | b. Latissimus dorsi |
| 3. Iliopsoas | c. Triceps |
| 4. Pectoralis major | d. Gluteus medius |
| 5. Quadriceps | e. Erector spinae |
| 6. Hip adductor | f. Gastrocnemius |
| 7. Deltoids | g. Gluteus maximus |
| 8. Tibialis anterior | h. Trapezius/rhomboids |

Answer key:

1. Biceps – c. Triceps
 2. Rectus abdominis – e. Erector spinae
 3. Iliopsoas – g. Gluteus maximus
 4. Pectoralis major - h. Trapezius/rhomboids
 5. Quadriceps – a. Hamstrings
 6. Hip adductor – d. Gluteus medius
 7. Deltoids – b. Latissimus dorsi
 8. Tibialis anterior – f. Gastrocnemius

Texas Seasonal Produce




Fruits:
 Apples, cantaloupes, honeydew, oranges, pears, persimmons, watermelon




Vegetables:
 Beets, green cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, green onions, lettuce, mushrooms, field peas, hot peppers, sweet peppers, potatoes, pumpkin, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, zucchini

Share your wellness success stories for a chance to be spotlighted in Texas WIC News and inspire other WIC staff! Contact your State Wellness Coordinator, Debbie Lehman, at Debbie.Lehman@dshs.state.tx.us or 1-512-341-4517.

Amazing Human Body 101: Muscle

(Continued from WWW — Insert A)

What nutrients are involved in muscle function?

Calcium, sodium, potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, and iron are key players needed for muscle contraction. Calcium must be present for the actin and myosin muscle proteins to contract. After contraction, calcium is pumped back out of the muscle cell, leading to muscle relaxation. The flow of sodium and potassium in and out of cells and the presence of magnesium are also necessary for muscle contractions to occur. Phosphorus is part of ATP, the universal energy source for cells and main energy source for muscles. Iron is a necessary part of the protein myoglobin which is needed to deliver oxygen to the muscles.

Moving and exercising, eating a balanced diet, and rest keeps our muscles healthy. Healthy muscles support our body and allow us to move freely. Use them, challenge them, and be thankful for them. Muscles love to work.

Resources

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National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS), NIAMS Kids Pages. NIH. Healthy Muscles Matter. http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Kids/healthy_muscles.asp

A Step Towards More Steps

(Continued from WWW — Insert B)

bathroom on a different floor or the other side of the building, and taking multiple trips at home with the laundry.

Time It

This tip works especially well for people who sit at a desk for most of the day, but is an easy way for anyone to schedule a bit of extra activity during the work day. Set an alarm to remind you to move every hour. When the alarm goes off, take a three-minute walk around the office. Grab some coffee, get some air — anything to get up and move for a short bit. Repeating this every hour (for a total of seven times) will add up to 20 minutes of walking or 2,000 extra daily steps.

Get extra bang for your buck by spending at least one of those walking breaks walking up and down a flight of stairs.

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by Noemi Hernandez, MBA, RD, LD, IBCLC
Clinic Services Quality Assurance Coordinator

The prevalence of overweight and obesity remains a top concern in the United States. According to the 2011-2012 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), an estimated 16.9 percent of U.S. children and adolescents ages 2 to 19 years are obese. Another 14.9 percent are overweight. As a result, numerous preventative measures addressing obesity continue to be developed.

As health experts seek innovative ways to combat obesity, an underlying trend has emerged. We'll call it "staying fit with nutrition." The techniques focus on the importance of a healthy diet to reach fitness goals. One of the most important parts of this technique is incorporating evidence-based systems to increase the effectiveness of current and future obesity prevention measures. Three examples of evidence-based systems are dietary guidelines, registered dietitians, and nutrition tracking applications or apps.

2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines

The American Dietary Guidelines are designed for professionals to help all individuals over age 2 consume a healthy, nutritionally adequate diet.

- Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan.
- Focus on variety, nutrient density, and amount.
- Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake.
- Shift to healthier food and beverage choices.
- Support healthy eating patterns for all.

Registered Dietitians

Registered dietitians (RD) provide expertise in healthy eating patterns throughout the lifespan. They focus on the importance of good dietary behaviors in connection with health goals. RD's serve as a source for dispelling myths of the latest diet fad and provide evidence-based healthy eating recommendations. An RD means more successful intervention results.

Nutrition Tracking Apps

Additional savvy tools in obesity prevention

are mobile apps available for tracking diet and fitness. To ensure evidence-based information, three RD's have reviewed the top-rated free nutrition tracking apps with ratings based on a scale of 1 to 5 stars.

Listed are the top five apps recommended for weight management:

- eaTipster – 5 ★★★★★
- Calorie Counter & Diet Tracker by MyFitness Pal – 4.5 ★★★★★
- Calorie Tracker by Livestrong.com – 4 ★★★★★
- Calorie Counter: Diets & Activities – 4 ★★★★★
- Calorie Counter – 4 ★★★★★

Obesity is one of the most common, costly, and preventable health problems. Nevertheless, with continuous efforts advocating the "staying fit with nutrition" message, it is a winning endeavor. It is increasingly necessary for everyone to incorporate the dietary guidelines, maximize the RD role, and promote nutrition tracking apps available to help individuals stay fit with nutrition.

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Get Your Groove on Mama: Real Talk!

by Katie Coyne, MS, IBCLC
Breastfeeding Training Specialist

It's easy to preach the benefits of exercise after having a baby. But what if we told you, and our WIC clients, getting back in shape would be easier if you exercised during your pregnancy? I know, I know. If you are pregnant, or have ever been pregnant, you may think "I really don't have the time or energy to exercise. Plus, half my pregnancy I needed to hide in my office to maintain composure." It's true, starting or even keeping up with physical activity when pregnant is really hard both mentally and physically — but you and your baby are worth it. Studies show many benefits like increasing energy levels, improving sleep, reducing pregnancy discomforts, preventing extra weight gain, and helping your body get ready for the stamina needed in the delivery room. We talked to real women, who also happen

to work for WIC, for real advice on exercising while pregnant. They get it. They balance work, the symptoms of pregnancy, and staying active. But how?!

Real question #1: What was challenging about exercising in pregnancy?

"During the first trimester, exercising was very challenging for me because I was very tired and had no desire to workout. I was also very nervous and afraid that exercise would harm the baby, because I was a high risk pregnancy."
– Nara Reed, LA 54

"Being tired was my number one issue. At the beginning, I tried to do too much. I had too high of expectations."
– Rebecca Reed, LA 46

"During my first trimester I was not able to exercise much because of the nausea and being so tired. The first few weeks my normal workouts were very difficult."
– Ana Ochoa, LA 01



Real question #2: So how did you do it?

“My support system. My friends would keep me accountable when going to workout classes, and my family and doctor would remind me to trust myself and my skill set.” – Nara Reed, LA 54

“The main thing was to try and keep the same routine as before I was pregnant. If I was tired, I would still do something, just not as intense. I thought any activity was better than sitting on the couch! So if all I could do was walk a mile, that’s what I would do.” – Jaclyn Huxford, LA 54

“I would look at videos and pictures of pregnant women working out! I also bought a calendar and wrote down the parts of my body I want to work on that day. That helped me stay motivated — plus it’s always satisfying crossing something off your list!” – Ana Ochoa, LA 01

Real question #3: What activities did you enjoy most while pregnant?

“I ran for the most part. Running is something I did pre-pregnancy and wasn’t hard for me. I also enjoyed the spin bike. Both running and cycling were familiar to me, so I felt comfortable doing them.” – Ashley Johnson, LA 39

“Because I was pretty active before pregnancy, my doctor approved me for almost anything! I continued to do all my weight lifting activities, just with less weight. I would also jog at least three times a week.” – Rebecca Reed, LA 46

“I love, love, love Zumba! I love all forms of music and dance, but what I love the most is being there with all my friends and feeling the amazing energy from everyone.” – Nara Reed, LA 54

Real question #4: Were you told to limit any activity?

“I was not. My doctor told me to keep doing what I was doing. If I felt short of breath or uncomfortable, I would slow down or stop.” – Jaclyn Huxford, LA 54

“I was definitely told to ‘listen to my body’ and people often seemed concerned if they saw me eight months pregnant running outside at 5 am. I felt, as long as I was listening to my body and

not overheating, I could stay active and safe at the same time.” – Ashley Johnson, LA 39

“During my last trimester, it was very hard for me to stay hydrated balancing full-time work and exercise three to four times a week. I started having some contractions, so my doctor asked me to stop Zumba and running — so I did.” – Nara Reed, LA 54

Real question #5: How did staying active affect you?

“To me it is a 100 percent necessity. I obviously listened to my body, because it did tell me when to settle down. But for the most part, the only time I felt my best was when I was active. Also, I swear it made for a faster delivery and recovery! Pushing can be a difficult task!” – Rebecca Reed, LA 46

“I’m currently 35-weeks pregnant and have had a wonderful pregnancy so far. I still have energy and attribute that to staying active. I feel great!” – Jaclyn Huxford, LA 54

“Staying active during my pregnancy made me feel way better since it allowed me to forget about any discomforts I had. It also increased my appetite, which was great because I wasn’t eating enough at the beginning of my pregnancy. Continuing to exercise allowed me to stick to a healthy diet and gain the weight I needed to.” – Ana Ochoa, LA 01

If you are unsure about exercise, or want to start a new routine, it is always best to check with your doctor first. It takes enormous motivation to be active during your pregnancy, and like these real women, you will benefit from encouragement from friends, coworkers, and family. It’s worth it to feel your best, have a healthy pregnancy, a smoother delivery, and a quicker recovery. If having a baby is not in your near future, know that you also play a huge role in encouraging your friends, family, and WIC clients to stay active — whatever that looks like to them.

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SUMA Study: The Path to a Better WIC Shopping Experience

by Melanie Smith
Communications Strategist

“Allison” checked her shopping list as she walked down the aisles of the grocery store. The cereal, peanut butter, beans, tuna, and milk were all in her cart. She looked for the labels on “least expensive brand” (LEB) items as WIC staff suggested. When it was time to pay, there was a problem. The cashier told her one of the items she’d selected was not WIC eligible.

The above scenario is not unusual. In fact, according to the SUMA study, it is quite common. Suma Social Marketing Inc. (SUMA) conducted qualitative and quantitative research to determine how to improve the WIC shopping experience. The company’s research included focus groups, grocery store shopping observations, observations of clinic staff with clients, and surveys. Researchers also conducted one-on-one interviews with grocery store staff, vendor liaisons, WIC directors, and local agency staff.

The goals of the project were to gain insight on the shopping experience for both WIC clients and grocery stores, and examine how to increase retention and program participation. The results show shopping is a challenge for WIC clients, but there are specific things WIC, as a whole, can do to improve the experience.

One of the key findings was that most Texas WIC clients have found themselves in the same situation as “Allison.” Eighty-five percent of Texas WIC clients who participated in the study say they have selected the wrong product at the grocery store at least once. The error is despite the fact that many clients felt they were ready to shop. Sixty-two percent of survey respondents said the WIC clinic staff prepared them “very well” for their first shopping trip. Another 28 percent said they were “well” prepared. Misunderstandings about WIC-eligible foods can result in thousands of dollars in unredeemed benefits. It is also a source of frustration for clients and grocery stores. SUMA researchers attribute the source of frustration, in part, to client confusion about LEB selections, confusion about what brands or what foods are allowed, and confusion about inaccurate signs and labels.

WIC clinic staff members are familiar with the challenges clients face and have been proactive in searching for solutions. Some of the avenues, however, were not as effective. For example, nearly half (43%) of the clients who were given the “Smart Choices, Healthy Families” DVD did not watch it. This information highlights the importance of making sure new participants watch the DVD in the clinic if possible. SUMA researchers endorsed the idea of having the DVD playing in the waiting room since most of the clients who did see the DVD said they saw it at their local agency.

Local agencies are taking creative approaches to educate clients on shopping. Local Agency 22 in Waco added a mini grocery store to its classroom. Health Nutrition Program Supervisor Teri Watters was inspired to create the grocery mock-up after WIC clients complained



about problems shopping. The display features items that often result in shopping errors (eg. bread, juice, yogurt, milk, and beans.) The mock grocery store is used during breastfeeding classes, infant-feeding classes, or when a client has a question. Watters says it works. “Clients like it and they are learning what items they can purchase..., and sometimes they realize they simply grabbed the wrong size yogurt,” Watters explained. The display is so effective that staff insisted they keep it when it was time to remove it.

Mock shopping is not just for clients. Some local agency directors are using the state agency vendor shopping experience to educate their staff so they are better prepared to train clients. At Local Agency 01 in Austin, WIC Area Coordinator Katlyn Le says the shopping experience gave her staff a better understanding of how difficult shopping can be. “The biggest takeaway is... they are able to provide a better explanation of what the client should expect when they go to the store.” Arranged through the state agency vendor outreach management team, the vendor shopping experience allows staff to select WIC-eligible foods and go through the checkout process just as clients would.

Meanwhile, the state agency is working on a new tool local agency staff can use to educate clients. The job aid will be a flip-style guide. On the client-facing side, visual aids will familiarize the client with their benefits card, the shopping guide, and the shopping and checkout

process. It will even include a page on what to do if an error occurs. The staff-facing side will have key bullet points to educate and empower the client. This training tool should be available in early 2017.

The SUMA study also found a significant opportunity to connect with WIC clients in a way never done before — with technology. During the focus groups, a prototype of the Texas WIC app, *myTexasWIC*, was tested. Participants received cell phones or tablets to test the application. The reception of the app was overwhelmingly positive, and most clients believe it will address some of the issues that occur when they shop. In fact, 75 percent of the participants said they are “very likely” to use the app. Another 20 percent said they are “likely” to use it. Clients were so excited about the opportunity to use their smartphones to help them shop that expediting the release of the app was recommended. With *myTexasWIC* nearly complete, WIC plans to pilot test the app next.

Texas WIC is taking action on the issues raised in the SUMA study, and plans to do even more in the future to improve the shopping experience. There is little doubt that between creative ideas, research, and a collective team effort, this goal will become a reality.

If your agency is interested in participating in a shopping experience contact Jeffrey Lopez at Jeffery.Lopez@dshs.state.tx.us or 512 341-4662.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

by Krista DelGallo
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Texas Council on Family Violence

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The original purpose and the enduring focus of Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) centers around three themes: honoring victims killed by their abusers, celebrating survivors, and connecting those who work to end domestic violence. The month of October provides a ripe opportunity for those outside the domestic violence advocacy arena to consider, elevate, and emphasize how your daily work impacts survivors of this preventable yet persistent public health problem.

Domestic violence is associated with significant negative health ramifications, leading up to, and including, early death and homicide. Texas' rates of domestic violence are higher than the national average. One-in-three Texas women report being victimized by a current or former partner. This high prevalence of domestic violence in our state underscores the need for a broader and deeper response that includes the many sectors that touch survivors and their children.

Part of DVAM is a day dedicated specifically to the health community's response. Health Cares about Domestic Violence Day is Wednesday, October 12. This nationally recognized day aims to reach members of the health-care community and educate them about the importance of building a comprehensive response to domestic

Domestic violence is defined as a pattern of behavior and tactics used to gain or maintain power and control over a current or former intimate partner that can include physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is another term often used to describe the dynamics of domestic violence, particularly in the health care arena.

violence within their practice. Futures without Violence, which facilitates the National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence, has a variety of resources, including an online action kit for providers to prepare and participate in this day. For more information see www.futureswithoutviolence.org/health/health-cares-about-domestic-violence-day/.

The health-care arena, specifically providers and educators working with pregnant women and new mothers, can play a crucial role in sharing information with survivors, helping to reduce isolation, and connecting them with resources. This is incredibly important as pregnant women may be particularly vulnerable to domestic violence due to heightened relationship stress and the increased physical, social, emotional, and economic demands of pregnancy. Additionally, domestic violence during pregnancy significantly impacts pregnancy outcomes as well as the short- and long-term health of mother and baby.

Pregnancy, childbirth, and having young children all prompt increased interaction with health-care providers and services, including WIC services, offering a window for WIC staff to incorporate trauma informed approaches to discuss domestic violence with pregnant women and mothers and promote safety and connection among WIC families. WIC is a program aimed at improving the health of pregnant women, new mothers, and infants, and thus it is critical that domestic violence is effectively addressed among WIC staff, within clinics, and with families receiving services.

Texas has focused on the health-care response to pregnant women and new mothers through the House Bill 2620 Task Force on Domestic Violence. This task force created a report with recommendations submitted to the Legislature and state health and human services leadership in September 2015. Components of the report are the guiding principles created to serve as the foundation for future work and policy.

Guiding principles of the House Bill 2620 Task Force on Domestic Violence are

- Domestic violence is a preventable public health epidemic that adversely impacts the health and well-being of pregnant women, mothers, and their children.

- A child’s health and well-being is dependent upon the health and well-being of his or her mother.
- Health-care providers have an ethical duty and are uniquely positioned to improve outcomes for pregnant women, mothers, and their children affected by domestic violence.
- Effective care must be driven by individual patient needs and requires a meaningful connection between health-care providers and pregnant women, mothers, and their children affected by domestic violence.
- An intentional, coordinated, and comprehensive approach among health-care providers, health-care systems, domestic violence experts, and other community stakeholders promotes the health and safety of pregnant women, mothers, and children affected by domestic violence.

The report specifically identifies WIC clinics as “high priority settings” to display and share information about health and domestic violence.

A network of support is available to WIC clinics and staff around this emphasis on domestic violence. The National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence offers online training and resources for clinicians as well as public awareness and outreach materials free of charge. The Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV), the statewide coalition promoting safe and healthy relationships by supporting service providers, facilitating strategic prevention efforts, and creating opportunities for freedom from domestic violence, is poised to provide technical assistance, guidance, and facilitation of relationships with local domestic violence programs. Meeting

and engaging with local service providers will enable WIC staff to understand what is available and enhance confidence in providing “warm referrals” to services when needed.

During DVAM, WIC clinics and staff are encouraged to look around their spaces and ensure information and messaging regarding domestic violence and resources are prominently displayed and available. Clinics can partner the local domestic violence services agency for collateral regarding area resources as well as creating protocols for staff around discussing domestic violence and making appropriate referrals. Finally, WIC clinics and staff can plan for Health Cares about Domestic Violence Day on October 12 and use this day as an opportunity to spring board enhanced approaches to addressing domestic violence in your settings.

The WIC program is well positioned to significantly impact domestic violence prevention and intervention efforts with families across Texas.

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Resources

National Domestic Violence Hotline

www.thehotline.org • 1-800-799-7233 | 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

Loveisrespect

www.loveisrespect.org • 1-866-331-9474 | 1-866-331-8423 (TTY) • Text: loveis to 22522

Texas Council on Family Violence

www.tcfv.org • 512-794-1133

House Bill 2620 Task Force on Domestic Violence Report

www.hhsc.state.tx.us/reports/2015/task-force-on-domestic-violence-report.pdf

National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence

www.futureswithoutviolence.org/health/national-health-resource-center-on-domestic-violence/

Vendor Training Just Got Easier



by Carolyn Pittman
Vendor Management
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Texas WIC's Vendor Management and Operations (VMO) unit launched an interactive online training for WIC vendors. The goal is to increase the knowledge of grocery store associates equipping them to make shopping with WIC benefits less stressful for WIC clients and reduce issues at the register.

The WIC experience for clients begins in the clinic with income screening and nutritional risk assessment leading to the issuance of WIC benefits. Clinic staff work hard to serve the many participants that come through the clinic doors. When clients go shopping, VMO would like for the great experience they had in the clinic to continue in the store.

Many times local agency staff members are faced with questions from clients about their shopping experience. For example, "Why couldn't I get juice, milk, or vegetables at the

store if it is in my shopping guide?" Online training will reduce those barriers in your office by educating more store staff. Increasing access to interactive modules for store staff not only gives the participant the answers to their questions, but also provides them assistance in finding the correct items in the store.

Per state policy, each store location must have one employee take vendor training conducted by the state. When in-person training was offered, the store had to consider travel expenses and staff time when deciding how many employees to send. Now, with vendor online training, more store employees are able to complete the interactive modules in a shorter amount of time and with no travel expense. Vendor online training takes an estimated two hours. Store staff can take it all in one sitting or stop and start to accommodate their work schedule.

The training is made up of eight different modules:

1. **Program basics** – Introduces the viewer to the WIC program, the services we provide, qualifications for participants, and an overview of the training.
2. **Approved foods** – Goes over the types of food a client can purchase with their WIC benefits, the advantage of a store selling WIC items, goes over the Approved Foods Shopping Guide, pink stickers, and different sizes of foods clients can get.
3. **Least Expensive Brand (LEB)** – Explains what type of items are LEBs, that LEBs should be labeled with pink stickers, and what to do if the store is sold out of their designated LEB.
4. **EBT receipt and system review** – Educates vendors about the hot card list, the three receipts to be given to WIC participants at check out, the Authorized Product List (APL), and troubleshooting tips at the register.
5. **Labels and signage** – How to properly label WIC items in the store: more info about the pink label and information about the white label.
6. **Vendor monitoring** – Describes who monitors the vendors, how they are monitored, different monitoring that is performed, sales compliance, and penalty for non-compliance.
7. **Resources** – Different ways the state agency communicates with the vendors, fillable approved foods form, ordering WIC approved materials, training cards, and our website.
8. **FAQ's** – Frequently asked questions.

This method appeals to the vendor community for a number of reasons. For one, they do not have to go off site to complete their state requirement and receive valuable information about the WIC program. Training is available at no cost to all of their staff and can be taken anywhere with internet access. Another great feature is that store employees in a wide variety of jobs within the organization can access the training easily including cashiers, store managers, and executive staff.

Response from the vendor community is overwhelming. So far over 1,800 store staff completed vendor online training. Many stores plan to make WIC vendor online training part of their new hire orientation. Our goal is to empower the grocery store associates that come in contact with WIC families as well as the management that back them up to handle situations that come up in the stores. The more we can educate the cashier and front end managers, the better quality service they can offer.

VMO encourages a teamwork approach with the vendor community. Working together as a team we can accomplish many things. The new WIC vendor online training is a resource for all working to provide nutritious food to Texas families! The next interactive training to be released to WIC vendors is a customer service module. Please feel free to contact the vendor outreach branch at WICVendorRelations@dshs.texas.gov.

Training: Face to Face vs Online



