

Coordinator Letter

Taking Care of You

Dear Wellness Coordinator,

Welcome to the **WIC Wellness Works** program — a worksite wellness program for Texas WIC staff! Your support and enthusiasm can make a difference in the lives and health of your employees. We appreciate all that you do.

Taking Care of You! is about your co-workers taking care of themselves. WIC employees spend their day educating WIC participants about healthy food choices, encouraging them to be more physically active, and discussing ways to manage their stress. But what about WIC staff? Are they practicing what they preach? Are there areas of their own health they would like to improve?

Taking Care of You! has several tools to help your co-workers take care of themselves. The **Wellness Lifestyle Inventory** includes a broad checklist of wellness areas so employees can assess their strengths and determine what areas they are ready to improve. The **Take 3 to Make a Difference** tip sheets outline quick, easy steps employees can incorporate into their daily lifestyle choices right now! WIC staff can use the **Goal Setting Sheet** to write down what is most important to them and outline steps to help them achieve that goal, big or small!

Take **WIC Wellness Works** to your co-workers by:

- Distributing *Taking Care of You!* packets and the complimentary sun block to your employees at your next staff meeting;
- Encouraging employees to take time to complete the **Wellness Lifestyle Inventory** and set at least ONE goal;
- Displaying the *Taking Care of You!* poster in your WIC waiting room; and
- Organizing a group activity from the **Idea List**.

We hope your co-workers will enjoy focusing on their own health. Remember, although WIC employees likely spend most of their time caring for family and clients, this packet is about *Taking Care of You!*

Sincerely,

The University of Texas Wellness Team



Taking Care of You

Idea List

Taking Care of You Wellness Lifestyle Inventory

Introduce this packet at your next staff meeting and give your employees some quiet time to complete the comprehensive **Wellness Lifestyle Inventory** found in the employee packet.

Ready, Set, Goal!

Goal setting is an essential element to successful behavior change. Lead a discussion about the value of writing goals down, what makes a good goal (see goal setting information in the employee packet), and then ask employees to take 5-10 minutes to create at least one wellness goal based on their wellness inventory results.

Taking Care of You Self-Care Screening Poster - Pass it On

Display this informative poster in a place where employees and WIC participants can read it. Make copies of the black and white screening schedule found in this packet for employees and **Pass it On** to WIC participants as well.



On the Medical Front – Monthly Topics for Taking Care of You!

Keep the **Taking Care of You!** theme going year round. Check out the National Health Observance Calendar for timely health topics to discuss at a monthly staff meeting. Consider organizing an activity associated with the monthly theme. welcoa.org/observances/

To Get You Started with a monthly "On the Medical Front" – Try this topic:

National Cholesterol Education Month — September

Check out pages 5 and 6 for specific ideas and information sheets for National Cholesterol Education Month. Read these to see if your agency or clinics might be able to organize an event.

Other resources for "On the Medical Front" ...

- Visit the *American Heart Association's* website for information on important heart health risk factors – high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, and stroke as well as others. Click on a topic, print off information you think would be most helpful, and distribute to your employees. Pick a different topic each month.

heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/Conditions_UCM_001087_SubHomePage.jsp

WIC Wellness Works

- Visit the *American Cancer Society's* website for information on cancer and cancer prevention. cancer.org/docroot/home/index.asp
- The United States saw a 136% increase in the number of people with diabetes between 1980 and 2007. Now, nearly 24 million Americans have the disease, possibly including many of the employees in your agency. The *American Diabetes Association* is at the forefront of the fight to prevent, treat, and cure diabetes. For life saving information visit diabetes.org/.
- The *Mayo Clinic* is a wonderful resource, not only for wellness information but for disease information. If you have an employee who would like more information on a particular health concern, direct them to: mayoclinic.com/health/DiseasesIndex/DiseasesIndex



Community Resource List

Ask everyone in your clinic to help identify low-cost or free health resources in your community and create a list for the staff. Typical resources might include screenings for resting blood pressure, fasting cholesterol, glucose, triglycerides, and body mass index, or good, low-cost health clinics or gym membership discounts. Check with your local hospital, health department, near-by pharmacy, or grocery store for upcoming screenings. Share this list with WIC participants as well.

Emotional Wellness - Gratitude Journal

During the next staff meeting, give employees a moment to give thanks. Using the **Gratitude Journal** page found in this coordinator guide, make copies and distribute to your staff. Provide a few minutes for personal reflection and ask if anyone would like to share. A **Gratitude Journal** helps to promote a healthy, positive outlook on life.

Financial Wellness – Grocery Tip Swap

With food costs on the rise, help your colleagues save big money at the grocery store by holding a **Grocery Tip Swap**! Ask each staff member to write down their best money-saving grocery tip. For example, they might say that Wednesday is double ad day at your area store, or they might suggest a great, healthy recipe that is under \$10 to prepare. Staff can either share their tip or one co-worker can read all the tips for the group. Consider writing the tips down and making your own clinic tip sheet! These resources can be shared with WIC participants as well.

Let's Get Physical

Don't forget about encouraging everyone to stay physically active as an important part of overall good health. Incorporate physical activity breaks into meetings, organize walking breaks, put in an exercise DVD at lunch, or just remind everyone to get up and move (even if only for 30 – 60 seconds) at least once each hour.



Gratitude Journal

Count your blessings.

Reflecting on all that is good in your life helps to develop a positive attitude toward the people, things, and events in your life. Expressing gratitude is a life-affirming way to strengthen your emotional resilience while reducing your stress. That's because realizing all that we have to be thankful for can lift our mood and offer us a new perspective, often making life's difficulties seem smaller and more manageable.

Take a few private moments to reflect on the positive elements in your life by writing down what you are grateful for, whether it be big or small (traffic was light today, children woke up without a fuss, my mom's health is getting better).

Make it a habit and give thanks every day, perhaps at the end of your evening as you prepare for bed.



Today I am grateful for---

1.
2.
3.

Taking Care of You

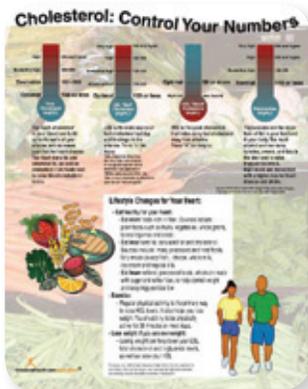


September is National Cholesterol Education Month

September is National Cholesterol Education Month so why not pass on some life saving information to your WIC staff? Consider the ideas below to help your staff continue "Taking Care of You!"

Awareness: Post it!

Display posters or informational fliers on your clinic's bulletin board reminding employees to have their blood cholesterol levels checked. Consider making your own or purchase a colorful one at nutritioneducationstore.com/products/Cholesterol_Poster-155-1.html



Take Action: What are your numbers?

There are many ways for employees to have their fasting cholesterol levels tested. Locate low-cost or free screenings in your community and encourage employees to attend. Encourage employees to visit their physician for a simple blood test. Better yet, contact your local hospital or health department to see if they have a worksite outreach program that will send someone to the worksite to administer the test.



Education: Cholesterol Fact Sheet

If you are unable to discuss this topic during your September staff meeting but still want to get the information out to your co-workers, copy and distribute the fact sheet (found on the next page) to each employee's workstation.

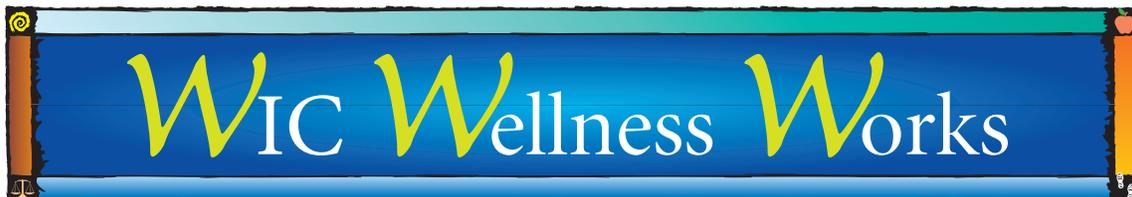
High Blood Cholesterol: What You Need to Know

Download and print a few copies of this in-depth, educational booklet about high blood cholesterol. Share it with co-workers, post it on your bulletin board, or leave a copy on the break room table or anywhere your employees gather. High Blood Cholesterol: What You Need to Know: hp2010.nhlbi.nih.gov/cholmonth/



Ask a Dietician

Ask your clinic's dietician to talk about cholesterol: what it is, how to control it, and what foods are high, low, and cholesterol-free. Your dietician can be a great resource for information.



September – National Cholesterol Education Month

Do you know your numbers?

Cholesterol Fact Sheet

- High blood cholesterol puts you at risk for heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States.
- Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that your body needs. But, when you have too much in your blood, it can build up on the walls of your arteries. This can lead to heart disease and stroke.
- Approximately one in every six adults—16.3% of the U.S. adult population—has high cholesterol. The level defined as high total cholesterol is 240 mg/dL and above. People with high cholesterol have approximately twice the risk for heart disease as people with lower levels.

If you have heart disease, lowering your cholesterol can reduce your risk for having a heart attack, needing heart bypass surgery or angioplasty, and dying from heart disease. Even if you do not have heart disease, you can reduce your risk of developing it by lowering your cholesterol. This is true even if you have normal cholesterol levels.
- There are steps you can take to prevent high cholesterol or to reduce your levels, including exercising, eating a healthy diet, and not smoking. Check with your doctor for more helpful ways to reduce your cholesterol levels.
- There are no symptoms of high cholesterol. As a result, many people do not know that their cholesterol is too high. Doctors can do a simple blood test to check your levels. The **National Cholesterol Education Program** recommends that adults get their cholesterol checked every five years.

Desirable Cholesterol Levels

Total cholesterol	Less than 200 mg/dL
LDL ("bad" cholesterol)	Less than 100 mg/dL
HDL ("good" cholesterol)	60 mg/dL or higher
Triglycerides	Less than 150 mg/dL

Do you know your numbers? See your physician for a simple blood test to check your levels.



Taking Care of You

Self-Care Screening Schedule

Are you **Taking Care of You?** Refer to the list of major screening tests and adult immunizations to take charge of your health. Schedule the screenings/immunizations you need and make note of when others should occur; the steps you take might save your life.

The following recommendations are from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and are made for healthy adults. If you have specific medical concerns, please consult your physician immediately. Infants, children, and pregnant women need other types of preventive care which are not addressed here.

Blood Pressure Screening

When: Every 2 years unless it is 120 - 139/80 - 89 mmHg or higher. Then have it checked every year.

If you have diabetes, heart disease, kidney problems, or certain other conditions, you may need to be monitored more

Body Mass Index

When: Weigh yourself every three months. Calculate BMI using an online calculator.

If you are in the overweight or obese category based on your BMI, you should consult

Prostate Exam

When: Most men, age 50 or older, should discuss screening for prostate cancer with their health care provider. African American men and those with a family history of prostate cancer should be examined at age 45.

Screening tests may include the PSA blood

Immunizations

When: You should receive a flu vaccine every year after age 50.

Ask your doctor if you should get a vaccine to reduce your risk of pneumonia.

You should have a tetanus-diphtheria booster vaccination every 10 years.

Colon Cancer Screening

When: Adults between the ages of 50 and 80 should be screened for colorectal cancer. African Americans should start screenings at age 45.

People with risk factors for colon cancer such as long-standing ulcerative colitis, personal or family history of colorectal cancer, or history of large colorectal adenomas may need a

Cholesterol Screening

When: Men over age 34 should be checked every 5 years. Women over age 44 should be checked every 5 years.

If you have diabetes, heart disease, kidney problems, or certain other conditions, you may need

Osteoporosis Screening

When: All women ages 50-70 with risk factors (white or Asian descent, BMI less than 19, low calcium intake and tobacco use) for osteoporosis should discuss screening with their doctor.

All postmenopausal women with fractures should have a bone density test (DEXA scan). Women under 65 who

Breast Exams

When: Beginning at age 20, women should do a monthly breast self-exam. A complete breast exam should be done by a health care provider every year.

Women should contact their doctor immediately if they notice any change

Pap Smear and Pelvic Exam

When: Women should have a Pap smear done once every 2 years starting within 3 years of onset of sexual activity or age 21, whichever comes first. Pelvic exams may be done more often to check for other disorders.

If your Pap smears have been normal 3 times in a row, your doctor may tell you that you only need a Pap smear every 3 years. Women who have had a total hysterectomy (uterus and cervix removed) may choose not to have Pap smears. Sexually active woman should be screened for

Eye Exam

When: Adults over the age of 40 should have regular eye exams every 2 years. Once you turn 45, make sure your eyes are checked for glaucoma.

Mammograms

When: Women over the age of 40 should have a mammogram done every 1 - 2 years, depending on

Physical Exam

When: Every 2 - 5 years. Physicians don't recommend annual physicals any more.

Your height, weight, body mass index (BMI), and recommended screenings and immunizations should be checked at each exam. Routine diagnostic tests (x-rays, etc...) are not recommended.

Dental Exam

When: Annual visit to dentist for an exam and cleaning. Brush and floss teeth everyday.

Information provided by **Medline plus** – A service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health

References

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