March Staff Wellness Newsletter

Getting to the “heart” of the matter...

Fast facts about coronary heart disease:

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the term used for a condition affecting arteries that carry oxygen to the heart. In moderate cases, the heart receives enough oxygen to support normal activity. Emotional and physical stress can result in chest pain. If oxygen supply to any part of the heart muscle becomes completely closed off, a heart attack can occur.

⇒ 4 major risk factors for developing CHD: smoking, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol levels and diabetes.
⇒ Other risk factors: family history of CHD, a personal history of heart problems, obesity, inactivity and gender. Men are at greater risk, although growing evidence shows that postmenopausal women are also at risk.
⇒ Your diet and exercise program can play a major role in the prevention of CHD.

Sweet dreams: eating chocolate prevents heart disease

If you are a chocoholic, the news out of Norfolk, England is tantalizing: middle-aged and older adults who eat up to 3.5 ounces of chocolate a day (that’s more than two standard Hershey bars) seem to have lower rates of heart disease than those who spurn chocolate.

In most studies on the chocolate-heart connection, experts have found that only dark chocolate offered any cardiovascular protection. However, in the Norfolk study, any type of chocolate, including milk chocolate, seemed to have the same beneficial effect. Scientists aren’t sure what it is about chocolate that seems to boost heart health. It may be related to flavonoids, a type of antioxidant produced by plants. Flavonoids are found in tea, red wine, blueberries, apples, pears, cherries, and nuts.

Wellness Challenge was a SUCCESS!

Thank you to all staff who participated in the 1,600 minute Wellness Challenge this year. We had a record number of participants! “We Are Willmar” t-shirts will be distributed this week to all sites. We look forward to planning the next event for our staff members!

Resources:

◊ Harvard Health Blog
◊ American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation
◊ Pam Vruwink, Community Ed & Rec
◊ Jessica Slavik, Willmar Senior High Athletic Trainer
Community Ed & Rec Update

- Bike Open House, April 7, 5-7pm at the City Auditorium
- Facebook link to the Bike Open House event: www.facebook.com/events/165990313786215

- Info about the event:
  Join the conversation and learn about biking initiatives in the Willmar Area! It’s the perfect opportunity to talk with other cyclists and share your ideas to help make Willmar a safer, healthier, more bike-friendly city. Light refreshments will be provided, all ages are welcome. Drawing for a youth bike! Opportunity to learn about the Yellow Bike program and new the mobile app, offer input to the Kandiyohi County Trails plan and the Willmar Bike and Pedestrian plan, learn about upcoming community bike rides, and talk with members of the Bike Alliance of MN and Tri4evr.

2016 Biometrics & Wellness Incentive Information

All information about the Biometrics & Wellness Incentive will be sent out by Abie Vick. Please look for an email from her. She is sending out email reminders daily. You can also find the information on the District’s website. On the home page, click on the “Staff” tab. You will see the drop down menu. Look for “Staff Wellness Committee.” All of the information and links that you will need can also be found here.

- There are 4 easy steps to complete this year. It takes an average of 13-15 minutes to fill out the information.
- If you would like to sign up for the optional biometrics screening, sign ups are in the main office at your site.
- Yes, the screening is optional, but it is important to know your numbers to support prevention of serious disease or illness in the future. The numbers are for your benefit.
- Please remember that ALL 4 steps must be completed by April 10th. If you are worried that Step 3: Submission of Verification and Authorization form will not get to Kelly at EBIS in time, please fax it to: 1-800-482-0199
Recipes from our healthy cooking classes:

Chicken and Gnocchi (Italian Dumpling) Soup
Louisiana Gumbo with Brown Rice
Pasta e Fagioli Soup
Spicy White Chili
Sausage and Lentil Soup

**Chicken and Gnocchi Soup**

- 2 Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breast, Diced
- 2 Tablespoons Smart Balance Margarine
- 1 ½ cup Chopped Onions
- 1 cup Chopped Celery
- 2 Teaspoons Minced Garlic
- ¼ cup Flour (1/2 White, ½ Whole Wheat)
- 3 cans Evaporated Fat Free Milk
- 3 Cups Water
- 2 Teaspoons Chicken Base
- 1 ½ Cups Shredded Carrots
- 2 Cups Fresh Spinach
- ¼ Teaspoon Thyme
- 1 Tablespoon Parsley
- 1 Pound Packaged Gnocchi, Broken Apart
- ¼ Teaspoon Black Pepper

Chop the vegetables.
Dice chicken breast and cook in a skillet sprayed with vegetable spray. Set aside.
Place a large stock pot over medium heat and melt the margarine. Add onion and celery and cook, stirring frequently for about 5 minutes. Add garlic and stir until fragrant, about 1 minute.
Sprinkle flour into the pan and whisk to coat the vegetables and absorb the margarine, about 1 minute. Gradually whisk in the evaporated milk, stirring and simmering over low heat for 5 minutes until thickened. Gradually add the water and chicken base, whisk for another 2 minutes.
Stir in the cooked chicken, carrots, spinach, thyme, and parsley; then drop in the gnocchi and continue to cook over low heat. Stir occasionally, for 5-8 minutes until gnocchi are cooked and float to the top. Add black pepper. Garnish with Parmesan Cheese. Yield: Approximately 9 – 12 ounce Servings.

**Nutritional Information:**

219 Calories Per Serving, 385 mg. Sodium, 19.6% Total Fat, 9.7% Saturated Fat, 0 gm Trans Fat
**Louisiana Gumbo**

1 Pound Turkey Sausage, Cut into ¼ Inch Rounds  
¼ Cup Canola Oil  
2 Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breast, Diced  
2/3 cup Flour (1/2 White, ½ Whole Wheat)  
2 Cups Chopped Onion  
½ Cup Chopped Green Onion  
2/3 Cup Chopped Green Pepper  
1 Tablespoon Parsley Flakes  
1 Tablespoon Minced Garlic  
1 Pound Shrimp, Peeled and Deveined  
8 cups of Water  
¼ Teaspoon Black Pepper  
¼ Teaspoon Cayenne Pepper  
1 Teaspoon Thyme  
2 Bay Leaves  
Brown Rice, ½ Cup Per Serving

Dice chicken breasts. Chop the vegetables. Slice the Turkey Sausage.  
In a large skillet sprayed with vegetable spray, brown the sausage over medium heat. Remove from pan, and drain on paper towels to remove some of the fat. Wipe out the skillet with paper towel.  
In the same large skillet, heat the vegetable oil over high heat. Brown the chicken. Transfer the chicken to a dish, leaving oil in the pan.  
Make a roux by whisking flour into the hot oil. Turn down to low. Continuing cooking flour and oil mixture until it’s a dark brown color. The darker the color, the better the final gumbo. When the roux is a dark brown color, quickly add the sausage, onion, green onion, green pepper, parsley and garlic. Cook over low heat until the vegetables are wilted, about 5 minutes.  
Stir in 2 cups of water and spices. Add chicken. Add the rest of the water slowly. Bring mixture to a boil, and reduce heat. Simmer about 30 minutes or to desired consistency or flavor.  
Add shrimp to gumbo; cook about 8-10 minutes. Remove bay leaves. Serve gumbo in deep bowls. Place Brown Rice in the center of the gumbo. Yield = 10 – 12 oz. Servings

**Nutritional Information for Gumbo Only:**

240 Calories Per Serving, 400 mg. Sodium, 35% Total Fat, 8% Saturated Fat, 0 gm Trans Fat
**Pasta e Fagioli Soup**

1 – 15 oz. Can of Cannellini or Great Northern Beans, Drained and Rinsed
1 Tablespoon Olive Oil
1 Cup Chopped Onion
1 Cup Chopped Celery
1 Cup Chopped Carrots
1 Cup Diced Turkey Ham
2 Teaspoons Minced Garlic
1 – 28 oz. Can Low Sodium Diced Tomatoes, Blended
4 Cups Water
3 Teaspoons Beef Base
1 Teaspoon Thyme
1 Bay Leaf
1/8 Teaspoon Black Pepper
2/3 Cup Whole Grain Shell Pasta

Drain and rinse the beans and set aside.

Chop the vegetables. Dice the turkey ham. Blend the tomatoes.
In a large stockpot, heat the oil over medium, heat until hot. Add the onion, celery and carrot and cook stirring occasionally for 5 minutes. Add ham and garlic and cook, stirring for 1 minute.
Add blended tomatoes to the stock pot along with beans, water, beef base, thyme, bay leaf and pepper. Bring to a boil and simmer for 30 minutes, covered.
Add pasta and bring pot back to a boil. Simmer until pasta is tender, about 10 minutes.
Yield = 8.5 – 12 Ounce Servings.

**Nutritional Information:**

186 Calories Per Serving, 400 mg. Sodium, 13% Total Fat, 1.5% Saturated Fat, 0 gm Trans Fat
Spicy White Chicken Chili

2 Cups Chopped Onions
4 Teaspoons Minced Garlic
2 Cans (4 Ounces Each) Chopped Green Chilies
2 Teaspoons Ground Cumin
1 Teaspoon Oregano
¼ Teaspoon Cayenne Pepper
¼ Teaspoon Ground Cloves
20 Ounces Water
3 Teaspoons Chicken Base
2 Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breast, Diced
3 Cans Great Northern Beans, Rinsed and Drained
Garnish with Monterey Jack Cheese

Chop the vegetables. Dice the chicken.
In a large stock pot/sauce pan sprayed with vegetable spray, sauté onions until tender.
Stir in the garlic, chilies, cumin, oregano, cayenne, and cloves; cook and stir for 2-3 minutes.
Add the water, chicken base, oregano, and beans. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, un-
covered for 15 minutes. Yield = 8 -12 Ounce Servings.

Nutritional Information:

269 Calories Per Serving, 450 mg. Sodium, 8.5% Total Fat, 3% Saturated Fat,
0 gm Trans Fat
Sausage and Lentil Soup

1 Pound Green Lentils
1 pound Ground Italian Turkey Sausage
1 Cup Chopped Onions
1 ½ Cups Chopped Celery
1 ½ Cups Chopped Carrots
1 ½ Cups Chopped Kale (Can Use Zucchini Instead)
1 Tablespoon Minced Garlic
1 Teaspoon Ground Black Pepper
½ Teaspoon Red Pepper Flakes
1 Teaspoon Basil
1 Teaspoon Oregano
1 Teaspoon Thyme
6 Cups Water to Start, Add 2 Cups as Soup Thickens
4 Teaspoons Chicken Base
2 – 14 ½ Ounce Cans Low Sodium Diced Tomatoes, Undrained and Blended

In a large bowl, cover the lentils with boiling water and allow to sit for 15 minutes. Drain. Chop the vegetables. Blend the tomatoes.
In a large stock pot sprayed with vegetable spray, over medium heat, brown the Italian turkey sausage until cooked through.
Add in the onions, celery, carrots, garlic, herbs and spices. Cook for about 15 minutes, stirring often.
Add the water, chicken base, canned tomatoes and drained lentils. Bring to a boil.
Reduce the heat to low and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes or until lentils are cooked through and tender, stirring occasionally. If the soup gets too thick, add more water.
Add the kale and heat through 1-2 minutes. Yield = 12 – 12 Ounce Servings.

Nutritional Information:

232 Calories Per Each, 450 mg. Sodium, 15.33% Total Fat, 5% Saturated Fat, 0 gm Trans Fat