



# THE Wellness JOURNEY

on the road to good health

May 2009

A MONTHLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER TO EDUCATE, INFORM AND MOTIVATE PARENTS, TEACHERS AND CAREGIVERS AND ENCOURAGE THEIR HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AS THEY REINFORCE THE INFORMATION YOUTH RECEIVE THROUGH WELLNESS JOURNEY PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES.

## ***Just say no – to sweetened beverages***

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When it comes to health, many Americans -- both youth and adult – have a serious “drinking” problem. Most people don’t realize how much sugar they consume as they quench their thirst every day. In fact, they are drinking large quantities of sugar, which can lead to health problems ranging from obesity and diabetes to heart disease and weakened bones.

Surprising amounts of sugar are found in soda, fruit juice, sports drinks, energy drinks and bottled coffee and tea beverages. On average, four out of five U.S. children and two out of three U.S. adults drink sugar-sweetened beverages every day. Teen boys average more than a quart of sugary drinks a day.

Each 12-ounce can of soda or juice typically has 10-12 teaspoons of sugar and 150 calories or more. Drinking just one can a day adds two full cups of sugar to your diet in a week! Choosing a 20-ounce bottle of pop or container of juice nearly doubles that amount. Drink just one can of sugar-sweetened soft drink every day, without cutting back on calories elsewhere, and you could gain up to 15 pounds in one year.

While people tend to compensate for a larger meal or a snack by taking in fewer calories later, that doesn’t appear to happen when the calories come in through sugary drinks. Fluids often don’t lead to a feeling of fullness so there is a tendency to continue eating. At the same time, sweet drinks may stimulate the appetite for other sweet foods.

### ***Sweet drinks lead to health problems***

Over time, a diet rich in easily-digested carbohydrates (like those found in sweetened beverages) can lead to weight gain and type 2 diabetes. Obesity and diabetes are both high risk factors for heart disease, and the first long-term study of the link between drinking sugary beverages and heart disease found a strong connection.

Cola-type beverages present a challenge to healthy bones. The high level of phosphate in colas, combined with a lack of calcium, can have a damaging effect on bones. And because sodas are often substituted for milk in the diet, milk’s nutritional benefits (calcium, vitamins D, B6 and B12) are lost when soda or juice are served instead.

### ***Healthier choices to quench your thirst***

So as the warm summer months approach, how do you quench your thirst without sugar? Water is your best bet. Water delivers everything your body needs without any calories. For a little variety, add a slice of lime, lemon or cucumber to your glass. Crush in some mint. Or make a pitcher of iced green tea for a refreshing change.

### **TESSA'S HEALTH TIPS**

Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables may help you control your weight and your blood pressure.

Physical activities that move the legs and arms are especially good for the heart. Such activities include walking, running, swimming, bicycling and dancing.

Are you looking for a workout program that's easy to learn, requires little or no equipment, and soothes your soul while toning your body? Try yoga!

Soda and other sweetened drinks add extra calories and get in the way of good nutrition. Water and milk are the best drinks for kids.

Unrefined whole-grain foods contain fiber that can help lower your blood cholesterol and help you feel full, which may help you manage your weight.



### **PRODUCE PICKS**

Go green with early season produce and add a splash of red for fun! Spinach and asparagus pack a nutritional punch. You’ll find them at supermarkets and farmers markets throughout the area. Rhubarb is a tangy treat. Strawberries are coming into season – slice some over your cereal, add to a green salad, or just wash and eat!

**For more information, log on to:**

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-drinks/sugary-vs-diet-drinks/index.html>

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-drinks/how-sweet-is-it/index.html>

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/>



Pearl Krieger, a student in Mrs Shappell's third grade class at Van Allen Elementary, won first place in the Turn Off the TV Week poster contest. Pearl chose the theme "Unplugged and Ready to...Read!" Her school will receive \$100 for non-screen related activities. Second place went to Matthew Thorne and third place to Danielle Coffin.

## **Super Snack**

### **Veggie Tortilla Roll-ups**

Spread four whole wheat tortillas with 3 ounces non-fat or reduced-fat cream cheese.

Top with 2 cups of fresh baby spinach, 1 cup of diced tomatoes, ½ cup chopped cucumber, ¼ cup chopped red onion, and ½ cup sliced red or green bell peppers.

Roll up tightly.

Eat and enjoy!

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **The Magical Kingdom at East Lake Park East Lake Park Softball Complex Wednesday, May 27th. 4:30-7:00 p.m.**

Free family fun! Visit Cinderella's castle, play in the 100 acre word, have fun at Emerald City, meet Snow White, Pooh, Tigger, Tinkerbell and your other favorite characters.

### **Pedal Power East Lake Park Wednesday, June 10th. 4:30-7:00 p.m.**

Featuring Safety Town for children ages 3-5, the Bike Rodeo for children kindergarten through fifth grade, and Ride Right for older elementary-age children.

*For more information on the Wellness Journey programming, topics or events, contact Tessa Allworth, Wellness Coordinator, at 319-385-6595 or by e-mail at [allwortht@hchc.org](mailto:allwortht@hchc.org).*