



# THE Wellness JOURNEY

on the road to good health

March 2010

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.

## Distracted driving is a danger to your health

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Distractions are the leading cause of motor vehicle crashes and the number one distraction is cell phones. The use of a cell phone while driving is a very high-risk behavior with a significant impact on society.

Millions of people text, talk or e-mail on their cell phones while driving. A recent survey finds that 71 percent of people between the ages of 18 and 49 admit they text or talk on the phone while they drive.

Distracted driving is an epidemic that is sweeping through our country, claiming lives and destroying families. Nearly 500,000 people are injured and 6,000 are killed each year because drivers are talking, texting and e-mailing behind the wheel. Traffic fatalities are preventable, yet they are the leading cause of death for children, for teens, and for everyone between 3 and 33 years old.

More than 50 scientific studies have identified the risks associated with cell phone use while driving.

Drivers who use cell phones are four times more likely to be involved in a crash. Texting while driving increases the risk of a crash by eight times. One recent simulator study compared drivers using cell phones and drivers impaired by alcohol. Cell phone users had slower reaction times than drivers with .08 blood alcohol content and slower reaction to vehicles braking in front of them. Talking on a cell phone while driving can be even more dangerous than driving under the influence of alcohol.

Think you can drive and text or talk at the same time? Science shows your brain just can't keep up. University of Utah researcher David Strayer has been studying distracted drivers for 10 years. "The brain just doesn't work the way we'd like it to work," he said. "We can't multitask the way a lot of people think they can."

When people talk on the phone they get into kind of a tunnel vision. They fail to see the things in the periphery, including cars, pedestrians and traffic signs. Drivers on the phone aren't looking in their side mirrors.

Make your car a phone-free zone. By making minor changes to our driving behaviors, our roads will become safer for drivers and passengers.

## TESSA'S HEALTH TIPS

Limit "screen time" to no more than 2 hours a day. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children who consistently spend more than 4 hours per day watching TV are more likely to be overweight and the more children watch TV or videos, the less they use their own ideas and imagination.

Did you know a 20 ounce bottle of soda contains on average 15 teaspoons of sugar! Instead, choose water...It's calorie free!

Schedule family time at least once a week. As your kids to choose what you'll do that week. Make sure it is something that doesn't involve TV, video games, or computers.

Eat dinner together every night. Studies have shown that this simple ritual improved not just kids' eating habits but their grades, as well.

Shopping Tip of the Week: Health begins in the grocery store: Don't bring home junk food. Shop the perimeter of the grocery store to find the freshest, most nutritious foods. Avoid packaged, processed foods whenever possible.

## Log on to learn more:

[www.Distracted.gov](http://www.Distracted.gov)

[www.Focusdriven.org](http://www.Focusdriven.org)

[www.Zerofatalities.com](http://www.Zerofatalities.com)

[www.oprah.com/oprahshow/End-Distracted-Driving](http://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/End-Distracted-Driving)

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## Smart snacks

For tasty, healthy snacks, try these options.

- 1 whole apple or pear, with a slice of low fat cheddar cheese
- 1 cup of trail mix, including pretzels, dry unsweetened cereal, dried fruit and nuts
- ½ cup of raw veggies (carrots, celery, cucumbers) with 2 tablespoons low-fat ranch dressing
- 1 frozen fruit bar and a small handful of almonds
- 1 cup lowfat yogurt topped with fruit
- Whole grain tortilla spread with 2 teaspoons peanut butter and topped with ½ banana

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## Fruit-Juice Cubes

1.5 tablespoons unflavored gelatin

¾ cup water

6-ounce can frozen grape or apple juice concentrate

1. Very lightly grease 9x5 inch loaf pan or plastic ice-cube trays.
2. Soften gelatin in water in a saucepan for 5 minutes.
3. Add juice concentrate and heat over low heat, stirring constantly, until gelatin dissolves. Remove from heat.
4. Cover and refrigerate. Chill until set.
5. Cut into 1 inch cubes and serve.

(Makes 45 cubes, 10 calories per cube, and trace amounts of total fat)

Both children and adults will enjoy these bite-size fruit-juice cubes. They are a good replacement for sugary drinks, which supply almost no vitamins or minerals.



Mt. Pleasant Community High Schools students play "Distract a Match", a simulation activity that tests the brain's ability to multi-task. The activity was part of an assembly on Distracted Driving at the school in March.



## PRODUCE PICKS

This month, look for healthy crisp produce that starts with "C!" You can crunch on celery, cabbage and cauliflower in salads or as snacks, or serve it up as a side dish for dinner. Dried cranberries are a healthy snack to eat on the go, and citrus fruits are as easy as peel and eat!



## GET MOVING

Spring is here and it's time to get outside and get moving! With daylight lasting later, there's plenty of time for a family walk in the early evening. Get the bikes out of storage and take a ride on the trails. Or head to the park to swing, slide or play a game of catch. Break out the basketball and shoot some hoops. Make the most of warmer temperatures enjoy some family time outdoors.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### The Magical Kingdom at East Lake Park

Wednesday, June 2  
4:30 to 6 pm

Rain date is Thursday, June 3  
Fun for the whole family! Free!