July-September 2015

DHSS Worksite Wellness Committee

W@W

Winning @ Wellness

This Issue:

Be Healthy @ Work
Employee Buzz
Eat Smart @ Work
Ounce of Prevention

Be Healthy @ Work: Quit that Sit!

Do you spend most of your work day sitting? If you do, you are not alone. Most of our workdays consist of sitting in front of our computers doing our work. We also spend many hours at home watching television or playing with our electronic devices. Researchers have linked sitting for long periods of time to a number of chronic health concerns such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes and premature death.

How long do we sit during an average day?

On average, Americans spend about 5 hours and 42 minutes sitting at their desks each day.

Studies show that even a few hours of continuous sitting can cause metabolic changes. It can increase blood sugar levels and decrease the amount of fat that our bodies use for fuel-which increases the amount that goes back into your body stored as body fat.

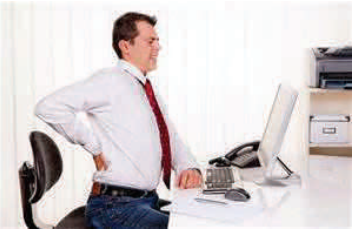
Too much sitting can also change the way your body processes sugar and fat. When you are active, the fat that circulates in your blood will migrate towards your active muscles to be used as fuel. When you are sitting still, the enzyme (lipoprotein lipase) that moves fat out of your bloodstream and into your muscle cells shuts down.

Studies have shown that when lipoprotein lipase is suppressed to ten percent of its normal level, it can result in fat retention, lower levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL), or “good cholesterol” and a slower metabolic rate.

Sitting does not do your body good.

Too much sitting can also have negative effects on the rest of your body.

- **Gluteus maximus.** Your glutes and hamstrings help to extend your hips when walking. If your hip flexor muscles are too tight, they can inhibit the ability of the muscles on the other side of the joint to contract, which will reduce muscle tone and your ability to produce force.
- **Lower back.** When you sit, your hip flexor muscles are in a shortened position. These muscles connect into your pelvis and femur bones. When these muscles tighten up, they can limit your hip’s ability to extend, which in turn places pressure on your lumbar spine.



- **Abdominal fat.** If you sit more than 360 minutes a day, you are 2.5 times more likely to be obese when compared to people who sit for less than 30 minutes per day.
- **Heart and lungs.** Sitting for more than eight hours daily can affect your aerobic efficiency. It can also elevate your low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or “bad cholesterol,” which can increase your risk of high blood pressure or coronary artery disease.
- **Head.** If you have poor posture while sitting, your head moves to a forward position, which can cause your upper back, shoulders and neck muscles to tighten up. It can also reduce the oxygen flow to the lungs. All of these can potentially cause headaches.

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- **Brain fog.** Moving your muscles helps to pump fresh blood and oxygen through the brain and triggers the release of brain and mood enhancing chemicals. When you sit for extended periods, everything in your body starts to slow down, including your brain function.
- **Poor circulation.** Sitting for long periods of time can cause the fluid in your legs to pool. This can cause swollen ankles, varicose veins and deep vein thrombosis (dangerous blood clots).

What can you do to "Quit the Sit"?
The good news is that you can do some things to help you move more at work and home.

- **Use a stability ball.** When you sit on a stability ball, you engage more muscles than when using a traditional chair. You also move around more on a stability ball than in a traditional chair. When you are at home watching television try sitting on one during your favorite show.

- **Use an adjustable desk.** More people are opting for adjustable workstations that will allow you to both sit and stand at your workspace.
- **Set reminders.** Setting a reminder to get up from your desk and move is an effective way to remember to move.
- **Stretching.** Taking stretch breaks from your work will help ease the tension in your shoulders, neck and back.
- **Take the stairs.** Taking the stairs helps you breathe deeper and increases your heartbeat, which in turn enhances the blood flow throughout your body.
- **Ditch your phone and e-mail.** Instead of calling or e-mailing a co-worker, take a walk over to their desk. It will help you get up and move; and away from your desk.
- **Walking meetings.** Instead of sitting at a conference room table, take your meeting outside for a walking meeting. Participants are more energized, alert and creative when they are physically active.

- **Exercise during commercial breaks.** Instead of sitting through the commercials while watching television, get up and move! You can march in place, dance, jump rope or stand!
- **Walk and talk.** When you are on a conference call or watching a webinar at work, walk around your office. You can also move around when you are on your phone at home too!

There are many ways you can combat the "quit the sit" syndrome. Your body and your health will thank you for being more active during your day.

Resources:
www.medicinenet.com
http://www.mayoclinic.org
http://www.sparkpeople.com
http://www.acefitness.org

"When the sun is shining I can do anything: no mountain is too high, no trouble too difficult to overcome."

Wilma Rudolph

Worksite Wellness News

Strive For Wellness Ambassador Update

The Strive for Wellness program continues to develop and make available helpful resources for healthy living for state employees and their families. Resources include healthy moment videos showing how to make healthy recipes and offering tips for making lifestyle changes; recipes; a menu planning tool; ideas for being active and articles about many different wellness topics. Their latest feature is a "Quit the Sit" campaign to provide tips and encouragement for getting "unstuck" from your chair. Visit the website to find additional tips for what you can do to sit less.

As the Be Healthy @ Work article notes, too much sitting may lead to an increased risk of chronic disease. Employees covered by Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan are encouraged to check out the Disease Management Program. Employees are able to work with a nurse one-on-one to identify strategies to manage their medical condition and are eligible for reduced prescription costs. (See website for more information.)

Sincerely,
Pat Simmons & Meredith Curry
DHSS Wellness Ambassadors

Upcoming Wellness Events

Walking Wednesdays
The **1st and 3rd Wednesdays** of every month are **Walking Wednesdays**. But don't forget that if there is a ***5th*** Wednesday in a month, that too is a Walking Wednesday! Approved t-shirts to be worn are: Worksite Wellness, Tackle the Flu and 100 Missouri Miles Challenge. **REMINDER: T-shirts are not approved to be worn on Fridays.**

DHSS Scavenger Hunt
Get ready to participate in the DHSS Scavenger Hunt! Throughout the month of August, take pictures of you and your co-workers participating in five of the 11 activities listed in the challenge instructions. Look for more details in upcoming weekly messages.

The State Employee 5K
The 3rd annual Missouri State Employee 5K Run/Walk is scheduled for Saturday, September 12th in Jefferson City! Watch the Worksite Wellness messages for more information!

Worksite Wellness Website
Don't forget to check out the Worksite Wellness website for information on upcoming events, programs, archived newsletters and a list of locations of blood pressure machines.

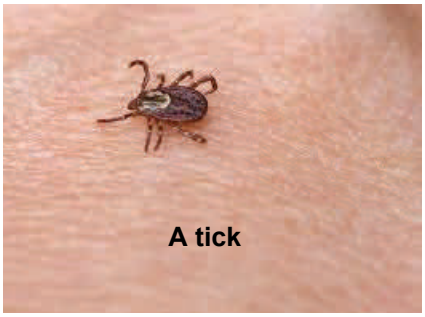
"Courage is the first of human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees all others."

Winston Churchill

An Ounce of Prevention: Beware of Bugs

Mosquitoes

It's Tick and Mosquito Season
Warmer temperatures do not agree with some people because they bring ticks and mosquitoes. These bugs thrive in warmer weather, and can transmit West Nile virus and tick-borne illnesses like Rocky Mountain spotted fever and ehrlichiosis. Using an appropriate insect repellent and applying it properly allows you to continue to play and work outdoors with a reduced risk of mosquito and tick bites. Prime mosquito-biting hours are usually dusk to dawn, but mosquitoes can bite at any time so protection for both the day and night is important. Young ticks are so small that they can be difficult to see, but both young and adult ticks hungrily look to animals and sometimes people to bite.



A tick

Protect Yourself
To protect yourself from tick bites, avoid tick-infested areas (especially places with leaf-litter and high grasses), wear light-colored clothing so you can see ticks crawling on you and use repellent containing at least a 20% DEET concentration. Children over two months old can use up to a 30% DEET product. You can also treat clothing with permethrin, which protects through several washings. Always follow the directions on repellent packaging! After you have been outside, check your body, your clothing, your children and your pets for ticks. Check out these links on how to check for ticks, how to remove them from your clothes and how to remove them from skin safely if they've already bitten you. Remember you must get the whole tick, not just the body! Consult your healthcare provider if you become ill within one to three weeks following a tick bite.

Pesticides, vegetation-free play areas and landscaping techniques for tick-free zones can also help limit your exposure to ticks and other insects. For additional information contact the Office of Veterinary Public Health at 573-526-4780.

(Information excerpted from a 2010 Summer Safety CDC Feature article.)

Links in the order used in article:
http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/resources/pdfs/wnvFactsheet_508.pdf
http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/resources/Hunterfactsheet.pdf
http://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/tickscarrydisease/pdf/repellentposter.pdf
http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/prev/on_people.html
http://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/tickscarrydisease/pdf/99TickCheckBookmark.pdf
http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/prev/in_the_yard.html

"Start by doing what is necessary; then do what's possible; and then suddenly you are doing the impossible."

Francis of Assisi

Eat Smart @ Work: The Newman Reuben

Ingredients:

- 2 slices marble rye bread
- 1 tbsp. thousand island dressing
- 2 slices deli sliced ham
- 2 slices deli sliced smoked turkey breast
- 2 tbsp. sauerkraut, drained
- 1 sandwich sliced kosher dill pickle, cut in half
- 1 slice swiss cheese

Preparation:

1. Spread 1 bread slice with dressing.
2. Fill bread slices with remaining ingredients.
3. Cook in skillet sprayed with cooking spray on medium heat for 3 minutes on each side or until golden brown on both sides. Covering the skillet with a lid will heat the sandwich faster.

*To lower the sodium look for meats and cheeses with lower sodium content.

Yield:
1 serving

Adapted from: http://www.kraftrecipes.com/recipes/the-newben-reuben-114160.aspx

Nutritional Information

Amount per serving:
Calories: 330
Fat: 13 g
Cholesterol: 40 mg
Sodium: 1290 mg*
Carbohydrate: 36 g
Dietary fiber: 4 g
Protein: 18 g

The Employee Buzz...

"What is your favorite vacation spot and why?"

"I love going to the Lake of the Ozarks for New Years. My dad has a time share and the back of the condo is on the water. It's quiet and we love to use the gas grill on the balcony and watch the water. It is very relaxing. I love shopping at the outlet mall." **Lynette Jackson, AOSA, Section for Environmental Public Health**

"Gulf Shores, Alabama—to relax on the beach." **Anonymous**

"Taos, New Mexico—I love the beauty of the mountains and the art and architecture of the southwest." **Kathleen Gregory, AOSA, Bureau of Community Health and Wellness**

"I love to go to the Colorado mountains. It is calm, quiet and serene." **Jackie McCoy, Center for Local Public Health Services**

"My favorite vacation spot is sitting on my front porch watching my hummingbirds." **Marcia Davis, Bureau of Community Health and Wellness**

"We want to hear from you for the next Employee Buzz! "What is your plan for staying healthy during the holiday season?" For example, "I plan to continue my workouts at the gym." Email your response to **worksitewellness@health.mo.gov**. Please tell us if you do not want your name included with your quote.

DHSS Wellness Superstar

Ammanda Ott works for the Division of Regulation and Licensure's Central Office Medical Review Unit (COMRU) as a Facility Advisory Nurse III.

Ammanda's challenges to wellness
When Ammanda was in high school, she played volleyball and basketball for one year. Since high school, her activity level went up and down, depending on her life responsibilities. After she graduated nursing school and got a job giving direct care, her activity level increased. But once she moved to a desk job, her activity decreased and she began to gain weight. She also gained weight with each of her two sons.

Ammanda also started to experience some health issues. Her healthcare provider informed her that her hemoglobin A1C levels were elevated and she was considered pre-diabetic. She also had elevated cholesterol levels. Ammanda was told she would need to take medications to lower her levels if she did not make some lifestyle changes.

The journey begins
In January 2014, Ammanda and her sister Krystal enrolled in the YMCA's Weight Challenge program. They began working out with a friend and really kept on track through constant encouragement to each other-they had to have a good reason to not work out! Ammanda gives a lot of credit to her weight challenge Coach, Nick Baker. He was "awesome." In addition to workout sessions, they had classes on psychology and nutrition, and challenges to participate in. They took "In Body" measurements on a scale that measures body fat, water and muscle. One thing Ammanda liked about the program is she could work out at her own level.

Ammanda is on the left

In the short term Ammanda felt much better. The longer term result was losing 55 pounds! Because of her success, she won the weight challenge for the highest percentage of body weight lost. Ammanda and her sister have also completed several local 5Ks.

Support was key for lifestyle changes
Several months ago, Ammanda was not exercising as much and as a result, was not feeling as well. To get back on track she started the YMCA Weight Challenge again. Her goal is to lose another 40 pounds. Her sister is also working out with her as well as several friends and co-workers! Even her brother has joined the challenge.

"It is hard to find the time to exercise since I have two small children and my husband works nights," said Ammanda. But once she is at the gym, she is motivated to get her workout completed. Ammanda also eats several smaller meals throughout the day, watches her choices and has learned how to alter recipes to make them healthier. She loves salads, especially Greek chicken salad. It does help that her family is very supportive of her healthy lifestyle. Ammanda's is setting an example for her children-and they are elated that their Mommy is a much happier person!

Fitness at work
Ammanda tries to incorporate her new healthy lifestyle into her workday. She participates in various DHSS Worksite Wellness activities, such as the "Fit in 15" Challenge, and sits on a stability ball at her desk. She has also noticed that her co-workers are bringing in healthier choices for snack days!

Ammanda is on the right