

Mayflower Municipal Health Group

BEneficial WELLness NEWS

ISSUE 2

SPRING 2013

HOT TOPICS:

- **Name This Newsletter Winner Announced!** Congratulations to Marshfield's Deni Michele Goldman for submitting the winning newsletter name—**"BEneficial WELLness NEWS"**! Deni wins a wellness goody bag. Thanks to all for submitting excellent suggestions.

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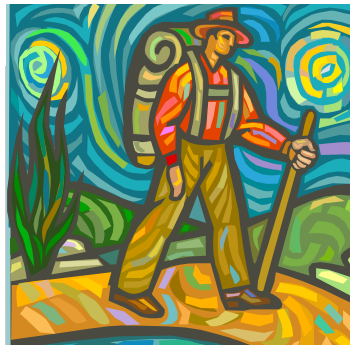
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Join the MMHG Spring Walking Challenge!

Sneakers a little dusty? Time to shake off the cobwebs and lace them up! The Mayflower Municipal Health Group (MMHG) is pleased to announce the "Spring Walking Works Challenge",

Walking Works is an 6 week program with online tracking that helps you set goals and view your progress. All employees, retirees and their spouses, from MMHG member units can register for the program. All participants who take part in the challenge will:

- Have access to the *Walking Works* online tracking tool — be amazed as you view your progress on a graph!
 - Receive motivational emails with new challenges each week!
 - Be eligible to win one of 20 \$20 gift cards!
- A certificate of achievement will be awarded to the member unit team that:
- Walks the most miles
 - Has the highest rate of participation



For more information visit www.mmhg.org.

**8 Week WalkingWorks Program
Starts April 1, 2013 and ends May 31, 2013**

Signing up is easy:

- ☐ Go to: www.walkingworks.com and click "Sign Up"
- ☐ Click "Yes" when asked if you are participating through a special program or your workplace
- ☐ Select "Massachusetts, Blue Cross and Blue Shield" for your Plan (you do not need to be enrolled in Blue Cross and Blue Shield to participate)
- ☐ Select "Mayflower Municipal Health Group" for your Group and "Spring Walking Challenge" for your Program
- ☐ Select your "Town or Governmental Unit" for your Team
- ☐ Complete the registration information and click "Submit"

Playlist for Walking

Want to add some new songs to your iPod before you head out for an afternoon walk? Try these!

Walking on Sunshine— Katrina and the Waves

These Boots are Made for Walking— Nancy Sinatra

Walk the Line— Johnny Cash

Walk on By— Dionne Warwick

Walk on the Wild Side— Lou Reed

Walk this Way— Aerosmith

Walking After You— Foo Fighters

Walk On— Neil Young

Walking After Midnight— Patsy Cline

What's your favorite song(s) to walk to? Let us know. Send us an email at wellness@mmhg.org and you'll be entered in a random drawing to win a walking kit/goody bag. We'll share the MMHG playlist next newsletter.

14 Local & Family Friendly Walking Spots

Walking with friends and family at new and interesting places is a great way to spend time with people you care about and get fit. Here's a list of local and family friendly places worth visiting.

Ellisville Harbor State Park— Plymouth

Blue Hills Reservation— Milton

Two Mile Farm— Marshfield

Governor Oliver Ames Estate— Easton

Norris Reservation— Norwell

Whitney and Thayer Woods— Hingham & Cohasset

Cape Cod National Seashore— Cape Cod

Boston Harbor Islands— Boston

East Over Reservation— Rochester

Ames Nowell State Park— Abington

Miles Standish State Forest— South Carver

The Arnold Arboretum— Boston

Charles River Reservation— Boston

Cutler Park Reservation— Needham, Dedham

MMHG Wins BCBSMA Innovation Award



Mayflower Municipal Health Group (MMHG) was presented the prestigious Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA) **Municipal Blue Innovation Award** along with a **\$5000 wellness grant** at it's March 20, 2013 Wellness Coordinator meeting held at the Halifax Town Hall.

The annual Municipal Blue Innovation Award is given by BCBSMA to select cities and towns

in recognition for successfully implementing health and wellness initiatives and plan design changes to make health care more affordable, while improving employee health.

Massachusetts Senate President Theresa Murray made this statement about the award:

"I'd like to congratulate the Mayflower group for proving that significant cost reductions are possible without sacrificing quality care. Some towns in my district will see lower premiums and employees will experience better health thanks to innovative plans and wellness programs that are now available. This is real progress that can be duplicated across the Commonwealth and the nation. Since passing landmark health care reform in 2006, Massachusetts has continued its mission of expanding access, improving health and finding ways to bring down costs. Through everyone's ongoing collaboration, I hope we will see more results like this. The Mayflower Municipal Health Group deserves to be recognized for its achievement."

"As wellness coordinator my job is to reach out to as many people as I can."

*- Maureen Adams West
Bridgewater Wellness
Coordinator*

Spotlight: West Bridgewater Employee Wellness

West Bridgewater employees have had a lot of opportunities to improve their health. According to wellness coordinator Maureen Adams, the town has offered flu shot clinics, seminars in skin cancer and stress management, as well as health screenings for glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol. "We offer fitness programs after work like yoga, zumba

and boot camp." says Adams "On Valentine's day we even scheduled 10 minute chair massages!" Adams believes employees are appreciative of the worksite wellness programs and enjoy participating. "We always take part in the MMHG Walking Challenges" adds Adams "and we are looking forward to putting a team together for the 2nd Annual

MMHG Walk for a Cause." Adams credits West Bridgewater's Town Selectman and Department Heads for being supportive of the employee wellness program from the beginning. "One thing I do know" says Adams "is that stress levels go down and morale levels go up when employees feel appreciated by the people they work for."

Next Issue: Spotlight Halifax

MMHG Announces 2013 Annual "Walk for a Cause"

MMHG Walk for a Cause 2012- The "Halifax Hustlers" team walked with other MMHG members in the 14th Memorial Walk to Benefit Old Colony Hospice.



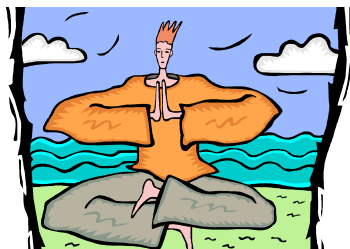
The MMHG Wellness Committee voted unanimously at it's March 20th meeting to participate in this year's **"21st Annual Miles of Memories: Walk for Hope"** to benefit **Hope Health** for the **2013 "MMHG Walk for a Cause"**.

The 4 mile walk takes place Sunday, May 19, 2013 at the Cape Cod Canal, Buzzards Bay Recreation Area. MMHG member units are

encouraged to form teams and participate in this family friendly event. All MMHG member unit teams will be entered in a raffle to win one of three \$75 Papa Gino's gift cards.

Join other MMHG members and their families and have a great time walking for a good cause! For more information visit www.mmhg.org or you can **Register here.**

Wellness Resources at your Fingertips



Attention Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) and Harvard Pilgrim (HP) members– did you know there are a wealth of wellness resources available to you with just a click of the mouse?

Both BCBS and HP offer their members access to a wide array of health and wellness information through their websites.

BCBS members– Check out www.ahealthyme.com– this website is your entryway to anything that has to do with you and your families health. You can access a medical encyclopedia and health library, listen to podcasts, watch videos, learn how to prevent disease and manage chronic conditions. There's alternative medicine information and you can even download the [Eat Better GoalGetter App](#) to help track nutrition and exercise.

HP members– Click on the HP Member

[Health and Wellness page](#) and start exploring! There is a wealth of great information including health topics A– Z and a web library, There are quizzes, classes, newsletters and a great section on [mindfulness](#). There's even information on pets and your health! Whether you are a young adult or an older and wiser adult you can find health and wellness resources tailored specifically for you.

Be sure to take advantage and access these online health and wellness resources– these are part of your insurance benefit!

Next issue: There's an App for that!

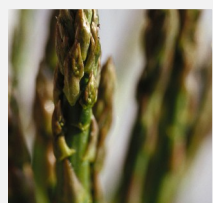
Have You Tried– Zumba?

If you like the idea of dancing yourself into shape to the soundtrack of high energy latin music then Zumba may be just for you!

Zumba is often called a “fitness party”. It incorporates red hot international music with easy to follow choreography taken from dance styles around the world- like salsa, merengue, cumbia, and samba. Zumba classes blend cardio, toning and strength training to provide an intense total body workout that is fun and exhilarating.

Zumba classes are available at most local health clubs and gyms and many community centers. Several MMHG member units, including Halifax, have offered Zumba classes as part of their wellness program. “Zumba got our feet moving, blood pumping, and souls laughing. It stole our hearts!” says wellness coordinator Linda Cole “We are now entering our second year of classes and we still love it. The quick pace, the music, and the ability to laugh at ourselves has made this a popular program.”

Next Issue: Have you tried–Yoga?



The Incredible Vegetable– “Asparagus”

There are few spring vegetables more delicious and

eagerly anticipated than asparagus. Low in calories and high in folic acid, asparagus is a good source of potassium, fiber, thiamin and vitamins A, B6, and C. Besides being nutritious, asparagus is both delicious and ver-

satile.

Tips: When buying asparagus look for smooth skin, bright green color, compact heads and freshly cut stems. Before cooking cut or snap off tough woody ends of asparagus stalks and discard.

Here are 4 simple ways to prepare asparagus:

Boil– Lay the spears in a large skillet, cover with one inch of water and boil up to 5 minutes (depending on thickness of stalks).

Stir Fry– Cut spears on the diagonal into 3 inch pieces, cook in hot skillet with 1 T. of olive oil until crisp tender

Roast– Place spears on a baking sheet sprayed with cooking spray and cook in 350 degree oven for 10-15 minutes.

Grill– Preheat grill for high direct heat, coat spears with olive oil and cook until nicely charred and tender.

Try tossing roasted asparagus, crushed garlic, lemon juice, chopped cherry tomatoes and parmesan cheese with hot whole grain pasta– yum!

Next Issue: The humble “zucchini”

Prevent Lyme disease!

Wear repellent

Check for
ticks dailyShower soon after
being outdoorsCall your doctor
if you get a
fever or rashShare this widget | More info
www.cdc.gov/Lyme

Lyme Disease— Prevention is your Best Defense

If you live in Massachusetts and you've never been diagnosed with Lyme disease you probably know somebody who has. Lyme disease is caused by bacteria that are spread to humans and animals by infected deer ticks. Early symptoms of Lyme disease may include a characteristic skin rash (erythema migrans) which may have a "bull's eye" appearance and flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, and fatigue. Left untreated Lyme disease can spread to joints, the heart, and nervous system. Lyme disease is best treated during the early stage of the disease with antibiotics. Prevention is your best defense against Lyme disease.

Avoid likely tick habitats.

Ticks live in brushy, woodsy, and grassy places. Take special precautions when you and your family are outside in these areas. Wear light colored long sleeve pants tucked into your boots or socks and long sleeve shirts. Stay on the trail when hiking in the woods.

Repel ticks with DEET or Permethrin. Always follow directions carefully when using insect repellants. For more information on the safe use of insect repellants go to <http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppre/insect/>

Check for ticks as soon as possible when coming indoors. Take a shower right away and

do a thorough body check to locate ticks. Deer tick nymphs can be as small as a poppy seed- use a magnifying glass and mirror. Check pets, gear and any clothing that may have carried ticks into your home. [Dry clothing](#) for 5-10 minutes in hot dryer before washing to kill ticks.

Be informed. Educate yourself and your family about the risks and symptoms of Lyme disease and other tickborne diseases. To learn more contact your local health department or visit:

www.mass.gov/dph/ticks

www.cdc.gov/Lyme

<http://www.tickencounter.org/>

Brochures to Download:

[MA DPH-Preventing Disease Spread by Ticks](#)

[CDC- Lyme Disease: A Public Guide](#)

What's Happening?

Pictures from MMHG member units

Whitman Hanson RSD employees "Flex, Stretch and Strengthen" at a recent HP seminar held after work hours in the school library.



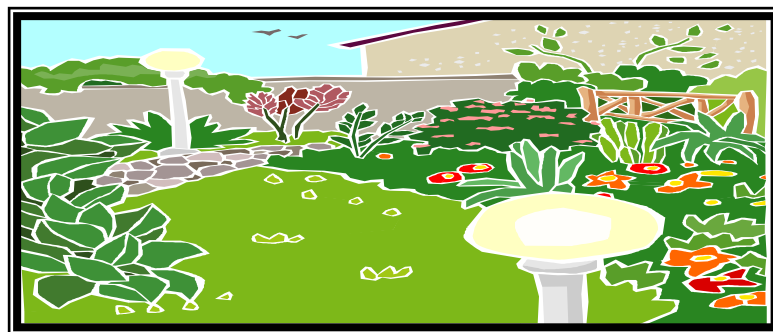
Get Out & Grow: Your Own Mosquito-Repellent Plants

Get Out & Grow: Your Own Mosquito-Repellent Plants

By Judy Pote

Spring is in the air! Our thoughts turn to getting outside to start our gardens and spruce up our yards. Along with warmer weather, spring also brings those pesky biting insects like mosquitoes. Luckily, for those of us who prefer not to spray ourselves with stinky chemicals like DEET, there are several beautiful herbs you can grow that smell great to people but mosquitoes really hate them!

Herbs such as Lime Basil, Catnip and Thyme contain compounds, called volatiles that repel mosquitoes as well as DEET. The trick is they release these compounds in large quantities only when the leaves are damaged. You can plant some or all of the following herbs in pots on your porch and around your patio where you like to sit. Pick and crush a few leaves from any of the plants, then rub the crushed leaves on your skin and clothing to discourage mosquitoes. To protect a larger area if you have enough plants, break off the stems and leaves and



throw them on the ground as “strewing herbs” on your patio. Crush the stems and leaves underfoot as you and your guests walk around to release the volatiles.

All of these plants should thrive throughout most of North America and would make a lovely display on or near your patio or deck.

Lime Basil (*Ocimum americanum*, also called “hairy basil”) is a culinary and medicinal annual that’s an effective repellent when burned and when grown nearby.

Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*) is a perennial in the mint family. Note: Some cats love catnip and some ignore it. If you have a catnip-lover, you may need to grow your catnip under a wire basket to keep your cat from killing the plant.

Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) is a low-growing perennial culinary herb.

Sacred Basil (*Ocimum sanctum*, also called “holy basil”) The leaf extract discourages mosquitoes from feeding, and the seeds, floated on water, kill mosquito larvae.

Rose-scented Monarda is a colorful perennial especially rich in geraniol, a compound that smells like roses. Turns out, geraniol is highly repellent to mosquitoes, according to an Israeli study published in the *Journal of Vector Ecology*. For plant sources and more information about growing your own mosquito-repellent plants, follow the link below to the article in Mother Earth News online magazine.

<http://www.motherearthnews.com/natural-health/natural-mosquito-repellents-zm0z12jjzhun.aspx#axzz2ONHbrSVG>

Get out and grow!

When Judy is not gardening, she is employed as a Financial Analyst at Group Benefits Strategies in Auburn, MA.





Thinking about quitting? Email us at wellness@mmhg.org and we'll send you a Smoking Cessation kit with a CD Rom and informational materials to help get you started.

Thinking About Quitting?

How would you like to win a free cruise, or maybe a 7 day all inclusive vacation to Cancun? Maybe you'd rather a fancy new set of patio furniture to enjoy the summer months or shop for a flashy new bicycle? The American Lung Association estimates the average price of a pack of cigarettes in Massachusetts is **\$7.23**. If you smoke a pack of cigarettes a day and quit that's **\$2638.95** back in your pocket each year. That's a lot of money— but what's even more valuable are the health benefits you'll experience from being smoke-free. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) **people who stop smoking greatly reduce their risk of disease and premature death.**

Most smokers want to quit— but it's hard. Many smokers try to quit— but can't. The experts

say that quitting usually requires multiple attempts— don't give up! The CDC statistics are hopeful—since 2002 the number of former smokers in the US has exceeded the number of current smokers. **If others can quit so can you!**

Decide to quit— set a date and get ready. **Explore** support options— there's a lot available.

Talk to your doctor about a smoking cessation program that is right for you. According to the CDC using proven cessation treatments, such as FDA-approved medications and/or individual, group or phone counseling, can *double your chance of success*. Call the customer information phone number on the back of your health insurance card to find out what smoking cessation benefits are available under your plan.

BCBS members should check out their "[Living Healthy Smoke Free](#)" program.

HP members can find [quitting smoking resources](#) online.

Useful Links:

<http://www.smokefree.gov/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/index.htm>

<http://makesmokinghistory.org/quitting.html>

Download:

American Cancer Society's "[Guide to Quitting Smoking](#)"

Telephone: 1-800-TRY-TO-STOP (1-800-879-8678)



South Shore Votech Employees—Big Weight Loss Winners!

Perhaps you've already read about it in a [local newspaper](#)? Employees from MMHG member unit South Shore Regional Vocational School in Hanover are creating a lot of buzz by being losers— *biggest losers!*

School nurse Colette Worrall organized the weight loss contest for school employees based on the "Biggest Loser" television reality show. The competition which ran from January 11th to March 28th challenged employees to

eat healthy, exercise more and lose weight.

"A total of 49 participants competed" says Worrall "All chose alias names from Disney characters so nobody really knew who anyone was." Worrall posted weekly weigh-in results under the alias names as a percentage of weight lost and awarded small prizes to the weekly winners.

"It was awesome" says Worrall "We were all in it together, talking, sharing ideas and encouragement." To keep motivated the participants scheduled healthy pot-luck lunches and after school

workouts. The school restaurant even created a healthy lunch option specifically for participants. "The school's IT department helped us with apps to monitor calories and exercise," adds Worrall. "I am so proud of how the staff came together."

Together employees lost an **amazing 345 pounds!** Participants paid a \$10 entry fee which brought the prize jackpot to \$490. The 1st place winner won \$390, the 2nd place winner \$100 and the 3rd place winner got back their entry fee. Great prizes— but it looks like in this case everyone was a big winner!

"Employees lost a total of 345 lbs., the 1st place winner lost 16.45% of body weight!"
-Colette Worrall



Recipe Corner— Healthy Strawberry Recipes



Strawberries are high in vitamin C, fiber and antioxidants. Native, locally grown strawberries taste best and usually begin appearing at [farmer's markets](#) in June. Try these simple recipes featuring the healthy and delicious strawberry.

Strawberry Smoothie

Ingredients

- 1 medium sized ripe banana
- 1 cup of fresh strawberries, hulled
- 1 cup nonfat milk
- 1 T honey
- 2-3 ice cubes

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Serve immediately. Makes 2- 8 oz. servings

Spinach & Strawberry Salad

Ingredients

- 1 bag of baby spinach, washed
 - 1 cup fresh strawberries, sliced
 - 1/3 cup toasted pecans
 - 2 oz. crumbled goat or feta cheese
 - Bottled light raspberry vinaigrette
- In large bowl gently toss spinach, strawberries, pecans, and cheese with vinaigrette. Serves 4

Strawberry Salsa

Ingredients

- 1 pint fresh strawberries, hulled and chopped finely
 - 3 T fresh lime juice
 - 1/4 cup white onion, chopped finely
 - 1 fresh jalapeno, chopped finely
 - Salt to taste
- In medium bowl mix strawberries, lime juice, onion and jalapeno. Add salt to taste. Serve with grilled fish or chicken. Serves 4

Strawberry Granola Parfait

Ingredients

- 1 6 oz container plain greek yogurt
 - 1 T honey
 - 1/4 t pure vanilla extract
 - 1/2 cup strawberries hulled and chopped finely
 - 2 T low fat granola
- Mix yogurt, honey and vanilla in small bowl. In tall glass layer yogurt, strawberries, yogurt, strawberries, yogurt and top with layer of granola. Serves 1

Final Thoughts— What does Wellness Mean to You?

By Maureen Adams

Two years ago I was given the opportunity to join the newly formed MMHG Wellness Committee sponsored by the Mayflower Municipal Health Group. Our first goal was simple: Endeavor to lower the cost of health insurance by promoting the health and well being of our membership. With a lot of work and valued guidance from both BCBS and Harvard Pilgrim, we are now beginning to see wellness programs become part of the working culture for many of

our governmental units. Programs such as skin cancer awareness, stress management and smoking cessation are now being offered during the work day. Fitness programs such as Zumba, Cardio-Conditioning and Yoga are being scheduled after work at town halls and schools at a reduced cost. MMHG Wellness is also online. Join us on our home page www.mmhg.org or on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). The newest addition to our wellness initiative is this newsletter. It is filled with information aimed at helping you to live

well. I hope that you enjoy it. The MMHG Wellness Committee is investing in you because we believe that healthy and happy employees are worth the investment. All we ask in return is that you consider yourself worth the investment too.



Maureen works for the Town of West Bridgewater and is Co-chair of the MMHG Wellness Committee



**Mayflower
Municipal Health
Group**

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www.MMHG.org

AVAILABILITY OF SUMMARY HEALTH INFORMATION

As an employee, the health benefits available to you represent a significant component of your compensation package. They also provide important protection for you and your family in the case of illness or injury.

Your plan offers a series of health coverage options. Choosing a health coverage option is an important decision. To help you make an informed choice, your plan makes available a Summary of Benefits and Coverage (SBC), which summarizes important information about any health coverage option in a standard format, to help you compare across options.

The SBCs are available on the web at: http://www.mmhg.org/Benefit_Summary_CC_HIPAA.html. A paper copy is also available, free of charge, by calling your benefit coordinator.

MAYFLOWER MUNICIPAL HEALTH GROUP INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING GOVERNMENTAL UNITS: ~Abington ~ Bridgewater ~ Bristol County ~ Brockton Area Transit Authority ~ Carver-Marion-Wareham Regional Refuse Disposal District ~ Halifax ~ Hanover ~ ~Hanson ~ Hingham ~ Hull ~ Kingston ~ Marshfield ~ Norfolk County ~ North River Collaborative ~ Norwell ~ Onset Fire District ~ Pembroke ~ Plympton ~ Plymouth County ~ Plymouth County Retirement Association ~ Rochester ~ Rockland ~ Scituate ~ Silver Lake Regional School District ~ Southeastern Regional Transit Authority ~ South Shore Educational Collaborative ~ South Shore Regional Emergency Communication Center ~ South Shore Regional School District ~ South Shore Tri-Town Development Corporation ~ Wareham Fire District ~ Water Works (Abington-Rockland) ~ West Bridgewater ~ Whitman ~ Whitman-Hanson Regional School District ~



Get a Colonoscopy in 2013 and Get a \$50 Gift Card!

Eligible MMHG subscribers are reminded that they can receive a **\$50 gift card** for having a colonoscopy in 2013!

The incentive is available to all Blue Cross Blue Shield and Harvard Pilgrim subscribers age 50 and over or high risk and enrolled in non Medicare plans. Visit **www.mmhg.org (What's New)** to learn more about the details of this program.

Colonoscopy screenings are recommended for anyone who may be at higher than average risk for colorectal cancer. Colonoscopy screenings save lives by detecting precancerous polyps early so they can be removed before turning into cancer.