

Visiting
Nurse &
HEALTH SERVICES
OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

WINTER 2012

HEALTH &
HOMECARE
NEWS

Living Well

Welcome to *Living Well*,
Visiting Nurse & Health Services
of Connecticut's quarterly
Health & Homecare newsletter.
We have included some topics we
hope you'll find informative. Take a
look inside and thank you for being
a member of the VNHSC family!



You're Never Too Old

Keep Active as You Age

We've all heard that exercise is good for you. Did you know that it's as true for older people as it is for any age group? You're never too old to get moving, get stronger and improve your health.

Fitting exercise and physical activity into your day can enhance your life in so many ways. Regular physical activity can improve your balance and boost or maintain your strength and fitness. It may also improve your mood and help you manage or lessen the impact of conditions like diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis and depression.

Despite these proven benefits, exercise and physical activity rates among older people are surprisingly low. Only about 30% of people ages 45 to 64 say they engage in regular leisure-time physical activity. This falls to 25% of those between the ages of 65 and 74 and 11% of people age 85 and older.

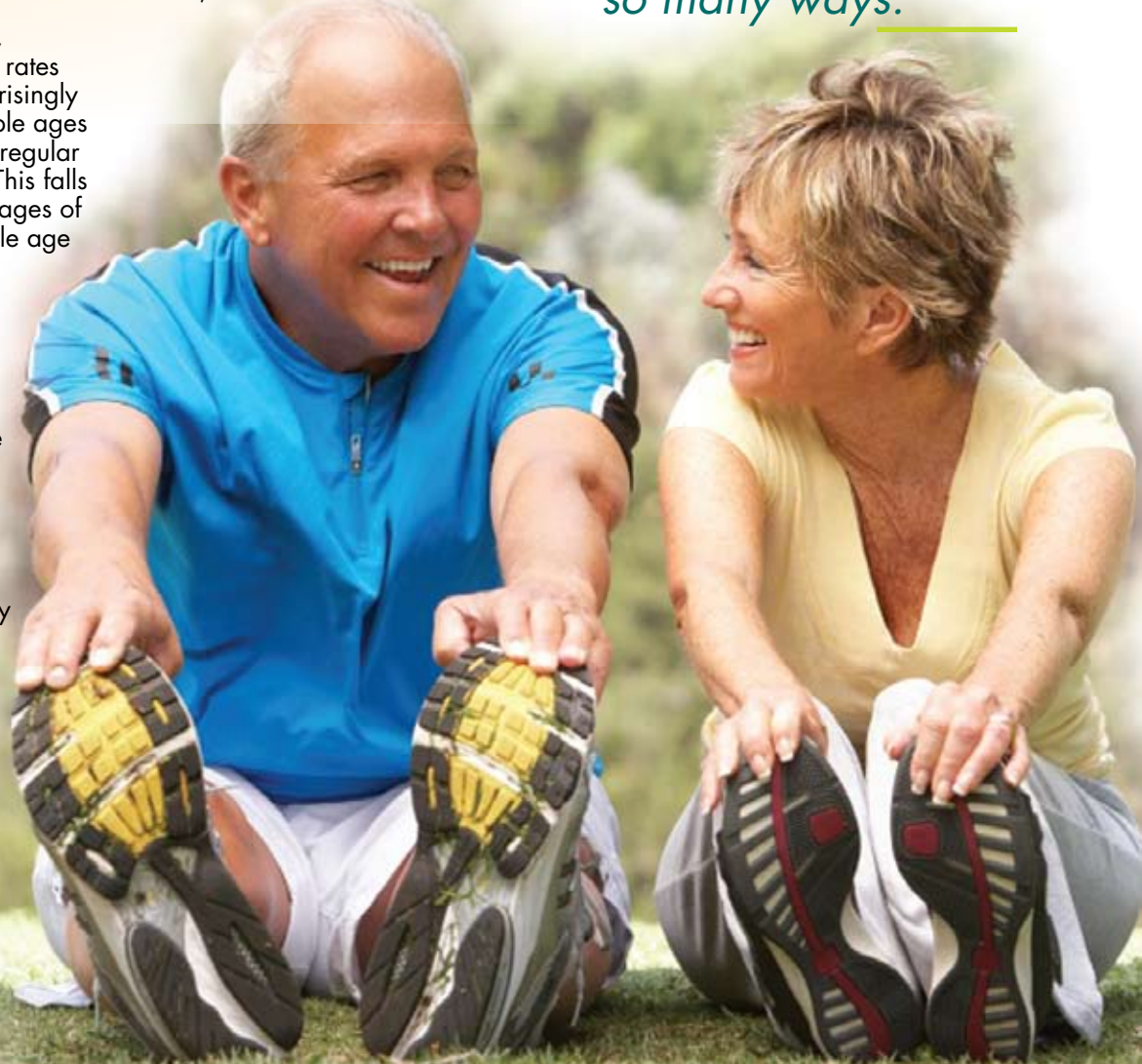
Experts recommend 4 types of exercise for older adults: endurance, balance, strength and flexibility. Brisk walking, dancing and other endurance exercises improve the health of your heart, lungs and circulatory system. These exercises can make it easier for you to mow the lawn, climb stairs and do other daily activities. Strength exercises

include lifting weights or using resistance bands. They can increase muscle strength to help with activities such as carrying groceries or lifting grandchildren. Balance exercises can help prevent falls—a major health risk for older adults. Stretching, or flexibility exercises, can give you more freedom of movement for bending to tie your shoes or looking over your shoulder as you back out of the driveway.

"Even if you haven't been active previously, it's important to get started and stay active," says Dr. Richard J. Hodes, director of NIH's National

Institute on Aging. "We know that people want to live independently for as long as they possibly can. By exercising regularly and including more physical activity in their daily routine, older people can preserve their physical function, which is key to doing the everyday things they want to do."

"Fitting exercise and physical activity into your day can enhance your life in so many ways."



Content provided by
the National Institutes
of Health (NIH)

Weighing in on Dietary Fats

Some Fats Are Healthier Than Others

With the winter holidays upon us, you'll likely be surrounded by family, friends and plenty of good food. Many of these foods, though, can be high in fat. Learn which fats are naughty and which are nice to your health. Then you can make smarter food choices.

We need a certain amount of fat in our diets to stay healthy. Fats provide needed energy in the form of calories. Fats help our bodies absorb important vitamins—called fat-soluble vitamins—including vitamins A, D and E. Fats also make foods more flavorful and help us feel full. Fats are especially important for infants and toddlers, because dietary fat contributes to proper growth and development.

Problems arise, though, if we eat too much fat. Dietary fats have more than twice as many calories per gram as either proteins or carbohydrates like sugar and starch. Excess calories, of course, can pack on the pounds and raise your risk for diabetes, cancer and other conditions.

Foods can contain a mixture of different fats. Unsaturated fats are considered “good” fats. They're sometimes listed as “monounsaturated” and “polyunsaturated” fat on Nutrition Facts labels. These can promote health if eaten in the right amounts. They are generally liquid at room temperature, and are known as oils. You'll find healthful unsaturated fats in fish, nuts and most vegetable oils, including canola, corn, olive and safflower oils.

The so-called “bad” fats are saturated fats and trans fats. They tend to be solid at room temperature. Solid fats include butter, meat fats, stick margarine, shortening, and coconut and palm oils. They're often found in chocolates, baked goods, and deep-fried and processed foods.

Experts say that the total fat intake for adults ages 19 and older should be 20% to 35% of the calories eaten each day. For children ages 4 to 18, it should be 25% to 35%.

Visiting Nurse & Health Services of Connecticut

SUPPORT GROUPS

Stroke Support Group

- 3rd Tuesday of every month from 2:30 - 3:30 PM and
- 2nd Tuesday of every month from 10:00 - 11:00 AM at the Enfield Senior Center. For more information call (860) 872-9163.

Alzheimer's Support Group

- 3rd Wednesday of every month from 9:30 - 11:30 AM, and
- 3rd Tuesday of every month from 1:00 - 2:30 PM at the Enfield Senior Center. For more information call (860) 872-9163.

Caregiver's Support Group

- 3rd Thursday of every month from 10:00 - 11:30 AM. Pre-registration is required. Call (860) 872-9163, ext. 2426.

Bereavement & Grief Support Groups

are provided year-round to our hospice families. Community education concerning grief and loss is available as needed. Pre-registration is required. Call (860) 872-9163, ext. 2425.

Diabetes Support Group

- 2nd Thursday of every month from 1:00 - 2:00 PM at the Enfield Senior Center, and
- 3rd Wednesday of every month from 1:00 - 2:00 PM at Mark Twain Congregate Housing. For more information please call (860) 872-9163.

Ostomy Support Group

- 1st Tuesday of every month from 7:00 - 8:30 PM. For more information please call (860) 872-9163, ext. 2388.



Yoga or Stretching Eases Low Back Pain

Weekly classes of yoga or intensive stretching can reduce low back pain and improve back movement, a new study shows. Both types of classes were equally effective, and their benefits lasted for months after the classes ended.

Low back pain is the most common cause of job-related disability and a leading reason for missed work. Many treatments exist, but none have proven highly effective against long-lasting back pain.

Small studies have hinted that yoga might help. Yoga often combines physical postures, breathing techniques and relaxation. Some experts suspected that yoga's mind-body focus might give

it an edge over other exercise treatments for back pain.

To investigate, NIH-funded scientists randomly divided over 200 people with low back pain into 3 groups. One had weekly classes of yoga for 3 months. Another had classes of intensive stretching. The third group received a self-care book that suggested exercises and lifestyle changes to reduce back pain.

After 3 months, the yoga group had less pain and more back movement than the self-care group. The yoga group remained better even at 6 months. However, stretching was just as effective as yoga.

“Low back pain is the most common cause of job-related disability.”



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or current resident

Winter Weather: Outdoor Safety

When the weather is extremely cold, and especially if there are high winds, try to stay indoors. Make any trips outside as brief as possible, and remember these tips to protect your health and safety:

Dress Warmly and Stay Dry

Adults and children should wear:

- a hat
- a scarf or knit mask to cover face and mouth
- sleeves that are snug at the wrist
- mittens (they are warmer than gloves)
- water-resistant coat and boots
- several layers of loose-fitting clothing

Be sure the outer layer of your clothing is tightly woven, preferably wind resistant, to **reduce body-heat loss** caused by wind. Wool, silk, or polypropylene inner layers of clothing will hold more body heat than cotton. **Stay dry**—wet clothing chills the body rapidly. Excess perspiration will increase heat loss, so remove extra layers of clothing whenever you feel too warm. Also, **avoid getting gasoline or alcohol on your skin** while de-icing and fueling your car or using a snow blower. These materials in contact with the skin greatly increase heat loss from the body. **Do not ignore shivering.** It's an important first sign that the body is losing heat. Persistent shivering is a signal to return indoors.

"...reduce body-heat loss, stay dry, do not ignore shivering."