

November Well Aware eNews

Welcome to the November issue of the Well Aware eNews! Read on to learn about—

- this month's wellness champion—a high school teacher who found a way to resume her active lifestyle after a career change interrupted her exercise routine;
- this month's seminar/webinar from Cigna on the causes of diabetes and ways to minimize your risk of developing the disease;
- how to take the sweet-free challenge;
- how to participate in the Great American Smokeout;
- ways to stress less this fall; and
- more!



Wellness Champion Resumes Active Lifestyle after Career Change Interrupts Exercise Routine

Mary Dempsey, classroom teacher, Winston Churchill High School

Before becoming a teacher, Mary Dempsey, classroom teacher at Winston Churchill High School, worked in the restaurant business. Since she worked mostly evenings, she had afternoons and mornings to exercise almost every day. In addition to that, the job was a work-out in itself.

As a teacher, Mary had to adjust to very different hours and to a more sedentary job. She found it hard to find time to exercise and soon began gaining weight, which continued throughout her first two years in the classroom.

"At the beginning of my third year of teaching, I was determined to hold onto some of the healthy habits I had been working on during the summer," Mary said. "I had been exercising regularly and eating more fruits and veggies but, once again, I wasn't sure how I would be able to stay consistently active with such a busy schedule."

During pre-service week that year, Churchill High School staff participated in a rotation of informative wellness meetings and activities. These sessions got Mary thinking.

"I was forced to confront how out-of-shape I was," Mary said. "I spoke with my colleagues about their weight-loss stories and learned that some of them woke up to exercise before school."

Since she was waking up very early already, Mary had thought the before-school option was out of the question for her. Then another thought occurred to her.

"If they can do it, so can I!"

Right away, Mary started waking up 45 minutes earlier every morning to get in a jog or a bit of yoga.

"I kept consistent with my routine and woke up early no matter what," Mary said. I got out of bed and did some kind of workout *no matter what*."

In addition, Mary began tracking her exercise on the online [Well Aware Fitness Log](#) to help her fitness team compete with other wellness teams in the school system.

Also, Mary and her husband started using My Fitness Pal to count calories. They started watching their portions and cut down dramatically on rice, pasta, and bread. They stopped buying chips and cut down on desserts significantly.

After a year of working out and calorie counting, they lost about 50 pounds each. They continue to work on their exercise and diet routines; it has become a constant in their lives.

Mary went from running a few miles every other day to running long distances. She has gotten a lot faster and, in some local races, placed in the top 10 of female finishers.

Perhaps even more impressive is this:

"I ran my first half-marathon two weeks ago," Mary said.



Don't Miss It

This month's free seminar/webinar— Preventing Diabetes

Do you or a family member have diabetes, or an increased risk of developing it? Join Well Aware and Cigna to learn the causes of the disease and how to minimize your risk of developing it.

Wednesday, November 4, 2015
10:00–11:00 a.m.

West Farm Bus Depot
11920 Bournefield Way
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

Wednesday, November 18, 2015
10:00–11:00 a.m.

Bethesda Bus Depot
10901 Westlake Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20852

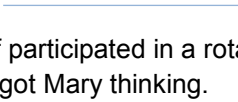
Wednesday, November 18, 2015
4:00–5:00 p.m.

Webinar

Please register for the seminar/webinar by e-mailing [Well Aware](#) with the date and time you plan to attend. You will receive a link in your Outlook e-mail as well as an Outlook calendar reminder.

Spread the word with our [printable flyer](#). See the [Wellness Webinar Library](#).

Presented by:



Your Race, Your Pace—It's On!

Well Aware's fall physical activity challenge, Your Race, Your Pace, is well under way! With 200+ teams registered so far, there is a lot of school and team competition for the grand prize grants! It is not too late to join us!

Through Your Race, Your Pace, Well Aware is encouraging you to choose a challenge, train for it, and achieve it!

[Learn more](#). Print and fill out your personal [race bib](#)! Post it for all of your coworkers to see! Show your spirit and encourage others to participate!

November is American Diabetes Month

Join the American Diabetes Association for American Diabetes Month (ADM). The association's goal for its awareness campaign—and beyond—is to show Americans that it is not too late to start living a healthy, active lifestyle and have fun while doing it.

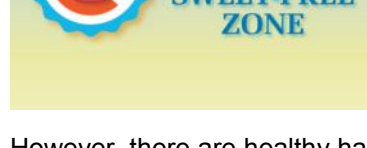
Join the association this month by visiting its [website](#) each week to get tips on staying healthy throughout the holiday season. You also can learn how to host a special, food-themed event, and vote for your favorite recipes to help create the perfect holiday meal.

InStep with Diabetes

Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente have teamed together to offer an eight-week educational diabetes program called InStep with Diabetes. It is geared towards those diagnosed with diabetes to help control the disease as well as those with pre-diabetes to help prevent a further diagnosis. Are you interested in participating in the next session? [E-mail Well Aware](#) to request dates and locations of upcoming classes.

Shopping Tips for Healthy Food Purchases

Do you struggle to make healthy purchases at the grocery store? Watch this [webinar](#) and learn how to shop at the supermarket and still eat a healthy diet. Find out what to say "no" to, how to plan ahead, and how to decode nutrition labels.



Set Your Sweet-free Zone

During the holiday season, you can be easily tempted to eat and drink food items that are high in fat, sugar, and calories. Social events, parties, and gifts throughout the holiday season can influence you to stray away from your healthy diet.

However, there are healthy habits and practices you can follow during the holidays to stay on track with your diet, and avoid overindulging in an excessive amount of sweets. They include—

- staying active on a daily basis,
- drinking water to stay hydrated and decrease hunger,
- getting an adequate amount of sleep to help decrease cravings,
- eating foods rich in natural sugars as opposed to those rich in processed sugars, and
- enjoying your favorite holiday treats by limiting portion size.

Is your school or office interested in taking the sweet-free challenge? During the holidays, post this [flyer](#) on the staff lounge or break room door to designate the area as a sweet-free zone. Feel free to share these ideas with the PTA to promote a culture of wellness during the holiday season.

Be sure to [e-mail Well Aware](#) to let us know how your staff is celebrating the holiday season in a healthy way.

The Great American Smokeout is Next Thursday, November 19

The American Cancer Society marks the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November each year by encouraging smokers to use the date to make a plan to quit, or to plan in advance and quit smoking that day. By quitting—even for one day—smokers will take an important step towards a healthier life, a step that can lead to reducing their cancer risk. Consider joining many other smokers from around the country who will participate in the smokeout next Thursday, November 19.

Need additional incentive to quit?

If you plan to be covered by an MCPS-provided medical insurance plan in 2017, and you and your spouse are tobacco-free throughout 2016, you will avoid a 3 percent surcharge on the total cost of your MCPS-provided health insurance in 2017!

Need help to quit?

[Take this quick quiz](#) to find out.

Ready to quit?

One helpful method is to attend Well Aware's free tobacco cessation program, [Quit for Good](#). If you and/or your spouse are interested in taking the spring class, [e-mail Well Aware](#).



Wellness Initiatives: Reduce Your Share of Health Insurance Costs

Did you miss your opportunity to save money on your 2016 health insurance through the Wellness Initiatives program? Did you know that every year you can earn up to 2 percent on your health insurance premium by simply completing a biometric health screening and filling out an online health risk assessment?

Learn how you can reduce your share of health insurance costs in 2017 by visiting the [Wellness Initiatives website](#).

Stress Less This Fall

Unlike a traditional workout, yoga and tai chi focus on precise movements that allow the body to slowly transition from one position to the next. Both practices attempt to coordinate the muscles, bones, heart, and mind with the positive energy that surrounds the body. Join Well Aware and treat your body to a relaxing tai chi or seated yoga class this fall.

Seated Yoga

Wednesdays, through December 9, 2015

4:30 p.m.
Café 45 (lower level)
45 West Gude Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Tai Chi

Thursdays, through December 10, 2015

4:30 p.m.
Café 45 (lower level)
45 West Gude Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

To register, [e-mail Well Aware](#).

Diabetes Corner

People are unique and have different needs when it comes to managing diabetes. Well Aware is excited to offer you self-paced, monthly resources with content tailored to where you are in your diabetes journey. We will explore monthly topics including healthy eating, active living, diabetes medication, and blood sugar tracking.

[Learn more](#) about what your blood sugar reading means.

For more information or to register to receive the monthly information and booklets, [e-mail Well Aware](#).

The employee wellness newsletter is brought to you by the Employee and Retiree Service Center (ERSC). To learn more about employee wellness, visit our [website](#). To view this e-mail newsletter as a .pdf document, click [here](#). Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or [e-mail Well Aware](#).