



eNews

The education you need for the health you want

June Well Aware eNews

Welcome to the June issue of the Well Aware eNews!

Read on to learn about—

- How this month's wellness champion has *Quit for Good*,
- Upcoming summer events,
- How men can better manage their health,
- Tips for a healthy summer, and more!

Wellness Champion Quits for Good



Meet Stan Bain:
Paraeducator,
Cresthaven
Elementary School

Stan Bain first tried smoking as a 20-year-old Army recruit. He hated it. It made him sick, and he decided never to do it again. But the influence of peers is a powerful thing. Three decades and an Army career later, Stan picked up the smoking habit from a close friend. The habit stuck with him for seven years.

Of the seven years Stan smoked, nearly half of that time (three years now), he has thought about quitting. He set quit dates and even completed a smoking cessation program offered by Holy Cross Hospital. And he was successful—for a while. After being smoke-free for 90 days, Stan made a classic smoker's mistake: he decided to celebrate his success on Thanksgiving by enjoying a cigarette. Stan says, "Thanksgiving soon became Christmas which soon became New Year's and I was still smoking."

In February, Stan decided it was time to take back control. "I was tired of letting a four-inch cancer stick dictate my life and my actions," says Stan. Also tiring was



Don't miss it! Summer Events from Well Aware

Seminar: Yoga for Relaxation

Tuesday, June 12, 2012
4:30–5:30 p.m.
45 W. Gude Dr.
Maple Room
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Seminar: Men's Health Tune Up

Tuesday, June 19, 2012
4:30–5:30 p.m.
Carver Educational Services
Center Cafeteria
850 Hungerford Dr.
Rockville, Maryland 20850



Free Event: Health Screenings

Wednesday, July 18, 2012
10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

the smell of smoke on his clothing, in his hair, and on his breath; the nicotine stains on his teeth; and the inability to tell friends and healthcare providers truthfully that he was smoke-free.

Stan was resolved, but he knew he couldn't do it alone. He again enlisted the power of peer influence—but this time to help him make a positive change. Stan says, "I knew I was going to need someone, some others on my team, on my side." He enrolled in the MCPS *Quit for Good* program. *Quit for Good* was a good fit, according to Stan, with "constant connection and communication" as well as "guest speakers and visiting professionals [who] were supportive and informative."

After a week of being smoke-free, Stan had a sudden health scare completely unrelated to his quitting smoking. He suffered a pulmonary embolism—blood clots in his lungs. The experience alerted Stan to how quickly his life could change, and strengthened his determination to improve his health by permanently quitting his smoking habit.

Stan's hard work already has begun to pay off. On the last day of the *Quit for Good* class, participants received a carbon output reading. Stan's carbon output was equivalent to that of a non-smoker. And he's still going strong, officially being a non-smoker now for more than three months.

"I stay smoke-free by taking it one day at a time. I'm learning to eat well, sleep well, work and play well," says Stan. "This time it's for real."

Maple Room
45 W. Gude Dr.
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, body mass index, Dermascan skin, health coaching, and education materials. Choose your appointment time [here](#).

Seminar: Practical Relaxation for the Working Professional

Tuesday, July 24, 2012
4:30–5:30 p.m.
Carver Educational Services
Center Cafeteria
850 Hungerford Dr.
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Share the printable men's health flyer [here](#) and the printable summer seminars flyer [here](#).

Presented by:



Are You Ready to Quit for Good?

Follow in the footsteps of this month's Wellness Champion. Plan to join the next session of *Quit for Good* this fall.



Quit for Good is a free, course-based tobacco cessation program for MCPS employees and their spouses. The program is eight weeks long and consists of once-a-week classes led by a nurse practitioner with assistance from Kaiser Permanente clinicians and health experts. Each course will assist 25 people at a time to ensure the personal attention necessary to support you in your goal of quitting. The program is free for all participants, regardless of whether or not you carry Kaiser Permanente health insurance.

Two sessions will be held this fall—choose the session most convenient for you. Both sessions will begin on September 27 and end on November 15.

4:30–5:30 p.m.
45 W. Gude Dr.
Maple Room
Rockville, Maryland 20850

10:00–11:00 a.m.
Department of Transportation,
Shady Grove Depot
16651 Crabbe Branch Way

Register now to reserve your spot! E-mail Well Aware at wellness@mcpsmd.org to register or to express an interest in a future session.

Want to Know More?

You can also learn more about the program, including week-by-week course content by visiting the [wellness website](#).

Tips for a Healthy Summer

For many of us, summer is a less chaotic version of life during the school year. It is the perfect time to check up on your health and adopt healthy behaviors. Here are five ideas for using your summer to a healthy advantage:



1. Get a check up. With a slower schedule, summer is a great time to visit your physician for an annual

exam. Adults and children have a number of screenings they should receive on an annual basis to check for risk factors for certain diseases. Check your annual exam off your “to do” list.

Need a little help? Get a free snapshot of your current health status at the Well Aware Know Your Numbers screening. Learn more [here](#) or register [here](#).

2. Resume stress management. Summer is a great time to resume some stress management techniques you may have abandoned during the busy school year, whether that means taking a vacation, planting a garden, participating in a hobby, or getting some physical activity. Stress management can help lower your blood pressure, heart rate, and stress hormones such as cortisol, which contributes to a widening waist and an increased risk of heart disease.

Need a little help? Join Well Aware for the stress management seminar series. Learn more here or register at wellness@mcpsmd.org.

3. Grill up some tasty treats. Summer is notorious as the best time to grill. By making healthy choices, your summer barbecue can be nutritious and delicious. Choose chicken breasts, turkey meat, and lamb kabobs instead of high sodium and high calorie hot dogs and hamburgers. Grilling vegetables adds flavor. Make kabobs out of fruit and grill on low heat until the fruit is hot and slightly golden. This is a great alternative to the rich and fat-filled summer desserts.

Need a little help? The Mayo Clinic offers this [healthy grilled fruit recipe](#).

4. Stock up on fresh, local, and in-season fruits and veggies. Whether you get your food from a local farmer’s market, grocery store, or right out of your own garden, fruits and vegetables are extremely easy to incorporate into your diet in the summer. Because they are in season, they are also least expensive during summer months. Stock up and enjoy a range of colorful options.

Need a little help? Montgomery County has an abundance of local farmers’ markets. See a full list [here](#).

5. Start a skin care routine. Summer is a great time to be outdoors. but the

dangers of the sun can make outdoor activities risky. Make sure you are wearing a minimum of SPF 15 sunscreen and that you are reapplying an ounce (the equivalent of a shot glass full) at least every two hours. If you need to wear bug spray, apply it before sunscreen. Try and avoid being outside during the most intense sun exposure, and if you are outside, wear protective clothing and make sure to stay hydrated.

Need a little help? The American Academy of Dermatology offers information to help you understand how to choose a sunscreen. Visit their sunscreen Q&A [here](#).

For Men: Doctors are Good for Your Health

When it comes to managing personal health, men are missing the mark. Consequently, men are missing opportunities to detect and address medical problems in their early stages, when many conditions are more treatable and less threatening to overall health.

What are they thinking?

Men's tendency to seek healthcare services only in "crisis" situations—and to see themselves as strong and healthy enough to skip checkups and recommended screenings—is no surprise to psychologists. Numerous studies have concluded that men of all ages are less likely than women to seek help for problems, including physical and emotional health issues. This is a learned behavior, some experts say. Many men are raised to act stoic, tough, and independent—to stay in control and hide their vulnerability. Consequently, they come to view themselves as immune to disease. Men also may fear that others will interpret their nonemergency doctor's visits as unmanly or weak, especially if the men around them also avoid preventive medical care.

Screenings men can't live without

The United States Preventive Service Task Force and other medical organizations encourage men to undergo regular health screenings to detect serious health problems early. Men should ask their doctors about tests for the following:

High cholesterol. Beginning at age 35, men should get their cholesterol checked regularly—at least every five years. Men younger than age 35 could benefit from cholesterol testing if they smoke, have high blood pressure or diabetes, or have a family history of heart disease.

High blood pressure. All men should get their blood pressure checked at least every two years—or more often, if recommended by a healthcare provider.

Diabetes. Men should schedule a blood glucose test for diabetes if they have elevated cholesterol or blood pressure of at least 135/80 or higher. They should also have this test if they notice symptoms of diabetes, such as frequent thirst and urination, fatigue, and blurred vision. Healthy men should get screened every three years, starting at age 50.

Colorectal cancer. Screenings should begin at age 50, or earlier if there is a personal or family history of colorectal polyps. Tests for hidden fecal blood should be conducted annually. Your health care provider may order additional screening tests, such as sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy.



Speak to your doctor about the right method of screening for you. The next

Speak to your doctor about the right method of screening for you. The age at which you begin screening depends on several things, including family history and your ethnicity. You and your doctor will decide which screening method (physical exam or blood test), if any, is best for your situation.

Read the full article from CareFirst BlueChoice [here](#).

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 email as a .pdf document, click [here](#).

Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or wellness@mcpsmd.org.