



# Employee WELLNESS



Florida Department of Health in Broward County

December, 2014

*Wishing you and your families a*

# Happy and Healthy Holiday Season



It is holiday time again, and the days between Thanksgiving and New Years can be filled with temptation. From office parties to family celebrations, the holidays are a time of sharing food and entertaining. You don't have to sacrifice taste or traditions to stay on track this holiday season.

### Be realistic and plan ahead:

- Set a goal of maintaining your weight instead of trying to lose weight.
- Try not to arrive to a party hungry.
- Eat a light snack such as yogurt, a piece of fruit, a hard-boiled egg, or a serving of almonds. A snack that includes protein will be more filling.
- Do not skip meals; try to stick to your usual meal plan.

### Helpful tips

- Before and after eating try to stay at least an arm's length away from the food table.
- Look around the food table so you can choose the food you want to eat.
- Choose smaller portions of your favorite foods and eat slowly.
- Before you go for seconds wait a few minutes so you can really feel your body's response to fullness.
- Choose fresh fruits and vegetables. Bring a salad or vegetable dish to a holiday party.
- Choose steamed, grilled, baked or broiled items, avoid fried food.
- Pay attention to portion sizes when eating crackers or pretzels. It is easy to lose track of amounts consumed when socializing.
- Trim off all visible fat from meat and the skin of the turkey.
- Have a taste of your favorite dessert or share a dessert with someone.

### Alcohol

- Alcohol is high in calories and can stimulate your appetite. Try having club soda or a calorie-free sparkling water, or water with lime or lemon or with a splash of juice for a mixer.

### Cooking

- Update family favorites by adjusting recipes to fit a modern palate.
- Choose a healthy menu, full of fresh vegetables and increase flavors by using fresh herbs, chicken stock and low fat dairy products.
- Make sure to skim the fat off of gravy and broth to make lower fat sauces and soups.



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# December 1st

# is World AIDS Day

## “Closing the Gap in HIV Prevention and Treatment”

World AIDS day is celebrated on December first every year to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS. It is the first ever global health day, started in 1988. It provides an opportunity to unite in the fight against HIV, show support for people living with HIV and to commemorate those who have died.

World AIDS Day reminds us that HIV/AIDS has not gone away. There is still a lot of work to do and most importantly, the work starts with you. Increased awareness on the facts, the modes of transmission, prevention, treatment options and on acceptance is needed.

What is HIV/AIDS? The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) targets the immune system and weakens people's surveillance and defense systems against infections and some types of cancer. As the virus destroys and impairs the function of the body's immune system, the person gradually becomes immune-deficient. The immune function of the body is typically measured by CD4 cell count. Immune deficiency results in increased susceptibility to a wide range of infections and diseases that people with healthy immune systems can fight off. **HIV continues to be a major global public health issue, having claimed more than 39 million lives so far.**

Show your support by wearing a red ribbon for the month of December, the international symbol of HIV awareness and support. Make sure you get tested for HIV and educate yourself, your loved ones and your community on HIV/AIDS. For more information on HIV/AIDS, testing, prevention and events view:

[www.browardgreaterthan.org](http://www.browardgreaterthan.org) and [www.cdc.gov/hiv/prevention/research/prep/](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/prevention/research/prep/)

**BROWARD**  **AIDS**  
**BROWARD IS GREATER THAN AIDS**



AIDS-related illnesses have killed more than 39 million people since 1981. That's half as many deaths as in World War II. And it's not over. An estimated 1.1 million Americans are among the 33 million people worldwide who are now living with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

AIDS Memorial Quilt displayed on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.



# The POWER of Sleep

When our heads hit the pillow every night we tend to think we're surrendering our minds to exhaustion, only to spring back into action when the alarm blasts hours later. When the lights go out, our brains begin to work, but not in the same way as when we're awake. During the day, the body is more focused on getting things done than taking care of itself. Getting the recommended seven to eight hours of sleep every night can improve concentration, sharpen planning and memory skills, and maintain the fat burning systems that regulate our weight. Scientists believe if every one of us slept as much as we should, we'd all be healthier and feel better. Sleep is the only time the brain has to catch its breath.

**Did you know?** While we sleep.....

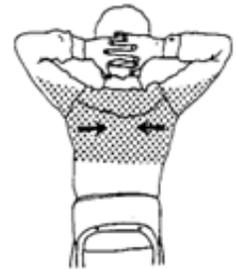
- Brain cells shrink and clean out debris from a busy day
- Skin cells churn to repair damage and maintain elasticity
- Wear and tear is remedied with intensified bone building
- Muscle tears/injuries repair during sleep
- Without sleep we become less able to breakdown sugar from our diet



Poor sleeping habits are seen in children and adults alike. The amount of sleep you need each day changes over the course of your life. Although sleep needs vary from person to person the National Institute of Health offers the following recommendations for different age groups: Pre-school children need approximately 12-13 hours of sleep, school age children need at least 10 hours of sleep a day, teens 9-10 hours and adults 7-8 hours of sleep a day. If you routinely lose sleep each night the sleep loss adds up, it is called sleep debt.

Any light at night (including the glow from phones, tablets and laptops) can throw off our body clocks. Our brains are fooled into thinking it's daytime, so sleep signals don't get heard. Keep your room quiet, cool and dark. Pleasant dreams!

## Stretches you can do at your desk.



With fingers interlaced behind head, keep elbows straight out at sides with upper body in a good aligned position. Now pull your shoulder blades toward each other to create a feeling of tension through upper back and shoulder blades. Hold this feeling of mild tension for 8-10 seconds, then relax. Do several times. This is good to do when shoulders and upper back are tense or tight.

*"For is there any practice less selfish, any labor less alienated, any time less wasted, than preparing something delicious and nourishing for people you love?"*



**A positive lifestyle change is another step in making Florida the Healthiest State in the Nation.**

## **NEW!** *Maintain, Don't Gain!*

# Holiday Challenge Launches November 17<sup>th</sup>



The Florida Department of Health has teamed up with North Carolina State University to offer the *Maintain, Don't Gain! Holiday Challenge*. Rather than focusing on trying to lose weight during the holiday season, this free seven-week challenge provides participants with tips, tricks, and ideas to help maintain weight instead. The challenge runs from November 17<sup>th</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, but sign up is available now at:

<http://www.healthiestweightflorida.com/activities/holiday.html>.

*It's never too late to join! And it's FREE!*

## Physical activity tips for the holidays:

- Power walk around the mall before you shop.
- Make physical activity a part of your holiday plans, walk with your family before or after dinner, enjoy the South Florida parks or the beaches. Start a tradition that brings you and your family outside.
- Stick to your usual exercise plan; if you do not exercise regularly this is a good time to start including walks in your daily activities.



## *Meditation anytime*

We all know the benefits of developing a meditation practice: Less stress, better doctor's checkups, greater enjoyment of day-to-day life, fewer meltdowns over inconsequential things.

It can be easy to get caught up with "meditating perfectly"—the right method, the right pillows, for 20 minutes a day at least. So easy, in fact, that many of us never stick to it. That's why yogi-psychologist Ashley Turner says to get calm fast, meditate in the moment, rather than waiting for the perfect set of circumstances. It couldn't be any easier, "Just *breathe*," Turner says. "The breath is right there with you, always."

Try taking three deep breaths, she suggests. Or inhale for four counts, hold for four, exhale for four, then hold for four again. Try it for five or 10 times that way if you can—eyes closed is great, to help your mind go inward—but it's not a requirement. This way you can pull it off anywhere. If you can, pay attention to where you feel the breath. In your nose? Your belly?

There are no rules, other than "Just breathe", then do it again. Meditation's a muscle; it can be developed through longer workouts. But you can also make major gains with the spiritual equivalent of 10 squats daily.

"As often as you can throughout the day, take a moment. When you get in the car to drive somewhere or arrive, pause, relax, breathe, and feel," Turner says. "Before you pick up the phone to call someone, or walk into a meeting insert those personal moments of pause." Excerpts from [www.ashleyturner.org](http://www.ashleyturner.org)

# **YOGA** starts January 8th!





Our person of change:

# Claudia Lebel

As far back as I can remember I have struggled with my weight. I would lose weight, only to regain the weight I lost. As I grew older, all this yo-yo dieting began to have an effect on my body. Carrying extra weight became a super burden on my body as I found I didn't have the strength. I would injure myself, doing the simplest tasks and I lived with chronic back aches and developed Asthma. I could no longer do the fun things I wanted to do while carrying around so much extra weight. Over the last two years, I found that the more I gained, the more I would gain.

About 14 months ago, I attended a weight loss seminar at Holy Cross Hospital on Bariatric Surgery. I began to attend their monthly support groups where I met new people who were open in sharing their weight loss journey. I made the decision to get my health back and get my life back. I began the journey of getting ready for this life changing event. For six months I had to see my doctor each month. I also had to get a psychological evaluation and all the while attend monthly support groups. On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, I took the plunge and had full bariatric bypass surgery. On December 3<sup>rd</sup> it will have been 6 months since my surgery and I have lost 58 pounds. It has been a journey and will continue to be for the rest of my life. I eat very small quantities (the ol' portion control rule) and I do not eat any complex carbohydrates such as bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, etc. I have totally eliminated sugar from my diet as well. My food intake consists strictly of a high protein diet with vegetables and fruit.

Many people may think I took the easy way out. But in truth, it is not easy. The surgery offers me a lifelong tool to keep me on track. I am still confronted daily with the foods I should not eat and I must make the right choices. I feel better than I have felt in many years. I am able to do projects around the house again. Last week I planted my garden which I have neglected for the last several years, always having to hire someone to do the work for me. Now I can get down and dirty and feel the earth in my hands again. I love to swim and had a solar heat system installed in my pool allowing my partner and I to use the pool an extended number of months throughout the year. I put air in my bicycle tires and finally put myself back on the road. Thanks to my dog, I get out and walk daily. All these were very difficult tasks at first, but one day at a time, as I lose weight and gain muscle, I am able to have fun and exercise at the same time.

Every day I am grateful for the support I get from those around me and for have been given a second chance on life. Oh and by the way, I no longer have asthma and am off all my meds and inhalers. Who knew!

*Claudia, thank you for sharing your story.  
You are a true inspiration to us all.*

FDOH-Broward Employee Wellness

The Walking Club, at noon in front of the Administration Building every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Mark your calendars!



Please consult your healthcare provider before starting on any diet or exercise program.

## Contact Us:

**Jeanette Alonso**  
954-467-4700 x 5711

**Latonya Brown**  
954-467-4700 x 5806

**Rebecca Hacker**  
954-467-4700 x 4300

**Kristin Halldorsdottir**  
954-467-4700 x 3009

**Stacy Lazos**  
954-467-4700 x 4047

**Nickey Lewin**  
954-467-4700 x 4004

**Solia Matthews**  
954-467-4700 x 4010

**Mary Porter**  
954-467-4700 x 5712