THOUGHTS FROM HEALTH PLAN PRESENTATION ATTENDEES

Throughout March and April, Tom Hopkins, Benefits Manager for the University of Maine System, presented information on the state of health care in Maine and in the University of Maine System. Following one of the presentations, Nellie Hedstrom, a Nutrition Specialist for the Cooperative Extension, commented, “we support everything Tom had to say.” However, most of what Tom had to say was not a big surprise to her or to many of the folks who attended the presentations. Most of us already know that smoking, lack of exercise, and poor nutrition can and do cause health problems. One of our biggest goals in this newsletter is to provide useful information to you and your families regarding these issues, so that you can take a more active role in bettering your health and the health of those you love.

Conrad Griffin, also from the Cooperative Extension, and a representative of the University retirement community, echoed these sentiments. He wants to “involve retirees in prevention and get adults involved in their own learning.” The goal of improving your health can never come too late. Conrad believes that the retirement community has a lot to give! He feels that “there should be at least one retiree involved in each campus wellness committee so that they can be better represented.” If you would like to join a committee, please do not hesitate to call the campus representative closest to you.

As Nellie and Conrad’s sentiments suggest, much of the feedback we received from you has been positive. We are excited that so many of you are interested in taking an active part in your own health!

HEALTHY AGING

Aging affects all of us - not just retirees. We all know that with age come health concerns such as diabetes, arthritis, and heart disease. The good news is there are things we can do to help ourselves age in a better and healthier way. Take this test to see if you are doing any of the things that could help you age more gracefully.

1. Are you sleeping 7 to 8 hours per night?
2. Are you controlling your weight?
3. Are you exercising?
4. Are you limiting your alcohol intake?
5. Do you smoke?
6. Do you eat breakfast?
7. Do you limit snacking?
8. Are you socially active?
9. Do you maintain optimism and happiness?

Your answers to these questions should all be “yes” except for number 5 which should be “no.” If you aren’t doing any of these things now, try adopting a few of them gradually. After a few weeks see how you feel! Doing these kinds of things can help us all to live longer, healthier, and happier lives.

For more information please visit the following web sites: http://www.crusades.org/health/tips_aging.html and http://www.helpguide.org/5hltthyaging.html
ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP?

Sleep is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Did you know, according to a recent survey conducted by the National Sleep Foundation, 63% of us don’t get the recommended 8 hours of sleep per night. Adults as well as children are losing sleep which can be counterproductive and unhealthy. The following are some other problems associated with lack of sleep.

← Not getting enough sleep interferes with daily activities

← Not getting enough sleep also means that people are too tired to spend time on leisure and social activities

People who don’t get enough sleep may also suffer from other problems, such as:

- depression
- nighttime heartburn
- diabetes
- cancer
- hypertension
- heart disease
- arthritis
- insomnia
- sleep apnea
- restless legs syndrome

For more information on the National Sleep Foundation’s study and other information regarding sleep disorders, visit www.sleepfoundation.org to find out the answers to your sleep questions!

RETIREMENT NEWS!!!

This is an update for all represented and non-represented employees participating in the Defined Contribution Basic Retirement Plan for Classified Employees.

As you are probably aware, due to the conclusions and recommendations of a recent union/management study, the contribution schedule for this retirement plan will be accelerated as of 7/1/01. This acceleration will apply to both the UMS Matching and Additional Institution Plan contribution schedules.

The original arrangement provided for a full dollar match up to 4% to be effective 7/1/02. In addition, the Additional Institution Plan* contributions were not scheduled to reach 6% until 7/1/03. Both of these changes will become effective 7/1/01.

So what does this mean to you?

This is a great opportunity to review your current contribution percentage to TIAA-CREF. Effective 7/1/01, by increasing your contribution to 4% or more you will now receive a full 4% matching contribution from UMS. That is a 100% immediate return on your own investment. It also means that between your contribution (4%), the UMS matching contribution (4%) and the Additional Institution Plan contribution (6%), a total of 14% will be invested into your retirement plan.

*Only employees with 5 or more years of service are eligible for the Additional Institution Plan contribution.

For more information on the Defined Contribution Basic Retirement Plan for Classified Employees, visit the Human Resources Web site at www.hr.ucla.edu.
SPRING HAS SPRUNG & UNFORTUNATELY SO HAVE MOLDS

The spring months have finally arrived, but that isn’t necessarily good news for the estimated 15 to 39 million Americans with allergic disorders (AD). At this time of year it’s not uncommon for AD patients to experience nasal congestion, paroxysmal sneezing and itching of the eyes, ears and palate. There are also increased symptoms of AD such as: fatigue, weakness, irritability and decreased appetite.

So if you suffer from seasonal or perennial allergies, what should you be doing to alleviate them? Probably one of the most important steps is to consult your physician. Identifying the exact nature of an allergy is important, but it can be difficult. Your doctor’s advice can help find both the problem and a possible solution. If you’d like to do some research on your own, following are several websites set up by different physicians and organizations that can tell you more about allergies.

Test your own knowledge by taking the “Allergy Quiz” at the Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Online Website. http://allergy.mcg.edu

Need some more information about Asthma and Allergies? Check out the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. http://www.aafa.org

Feel like taking a more active role in the fight against Allergies and Asthma? Allergy and Asthma network could give you an opportunity to do so. http://www.aanma.org

Looking for ways to cope with your allergies? The Allergy Center may be able to help. http://www.onlineallergycenter.com

Overall, education is the best defense against allergies. Don’t hesitate to get informed. The more you know about your allergies, the better equipped you’ll be to deal with them!

BREATHE EASY!

Warm sunny days, fresh cut grass, and beautiful flowers mean that spring is here! Unfortunately, this also means more pollen, mold spores and allergens, which often trigger asthma attacks. More Americans than ever before are suffering from asthma, an estimated 17 million nationally, and Maine children make up part of this number, one out of every twelve Maine children is diagnosed with asthma.

Here are some things you can do to help avoid triggering an asthma attack when pollen and mold spore counts are at their highest:

← Don’t hang sheets, towels, or clothing outside to dry.
← Stay indoors on hazy, hot and humid days.
← Stay inside and keep your windows closed when pollen and mold counts are high.
← Avoid sources of mold such as wet leaves and garden waste.
← Avoid exposure to secondhand smoke by not smoking or allowing anyone else to smoke in your home or car.
← Rid sheets and stuffed toys of dust mites by washing them often in hot water.
← Keep pets outside, out of sleeping quarters, and away from fabric covered furniture, carpets, and stuffed toys.
← Lower the moisture in your home to control mold growth.
← Fix leaky plumbing.
← Keep drip pans in your air conditioner, refrigerator, and dehumidifier clean and dry.
← Use exhaust fans when showering, cooking, or using the dishwasher.
← Vent your clothes dryer to the outside.
← Do not leave food or garbage out and clean all food crumbs or spilled liquids right away to keep pests and rodents away.

To learn more about asthma and prevention, visit http://www.epa.gov/iaq/asthma/.

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FOOD FACTS

Did you know that eating healthier foods can reduce your risk of cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, and osteoporosis? Eating healthier foods gives us a sense of satisfaction. We know we are more in control of our own health and the health of our family members. Following are some helpful tidbits of information when making food choices:

10 SUPER HEALTHY FOODS:
- CANTALOupe
- SWEET POTATOES
- BEANS
- BRAN CEREALS
- ORANGES
- WHOLE GRAIN BREAD
- BROCCOLI
- WATERMELON
- SPINACH OR KALE
- SALMON OR OTHER FATTY FISH

AVOID SATURATED FATS, SUCH AS:
- COCONUT
- COCOA BUTTER
- ANIMALS FATS: BEEF, PORK, LARD, SUET, BACON
- BUTTER, FAT IN DAIRY PRODUCTS, AND CREAM

PREFERRED FATS:
- CANOLA, OLIVE, AND PEANUT OILS
- FAT IN AVOCADOS
- FAT IN ALMONDS, PEANUTS, AND PECANS

Source: American Institute for Preventative Medicine