Take Charge

a Wellness Connection newsletter

April 2013

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Spring yourself free from indoor workouts.

Grab your sunscreen and go for a walk, run or bike ride.

Increase your energy levels, decrease feelings of depression, and increase your commitment to healthy living with outdoor exercise.

Go outside. Get inspired. And get healthy.

Open Enrollment, meetings underway

You must re-enroll in a city medical plan by April 15, or you will be defaulted into the Cigna Open Access Plan. If you have previously waived medical coverage, your waiver will be retained.

For more information or to view an open enrollment presentation visit houstontx.gov/oe.

Got questions? Attend an open enrollment meeting:

611 Walker, Garden Level Auditorium

- Thursday, April 4, 9 a.m.
- Wednesday, April 10, 10 a.m.
- Friday, April 12, 2 p.m.

E.B. Cape, 4501 Leeland, Auditorium

- Monday, April 8, 10 a.m.
- Wednesday, April 10, 2 p.m.

Upcoming wellness campaigns and programs

- The annual health assessment begins in July
- NEW! Wellness incentive program: May 1, 2013 – April 30, 2014

Prevention Tips

This spring, don't stay locked indoors trying to avoid pesky allergens. Instead, breathe easy, and keep itchy eyes and a sneezy, runny rose from ruining your springtime fun with these tips from WebMD.

Get tested. Visit your allergist to find out what allergen is causing your symptoms. Whether it's tree pollen, grass, mold or weed spores making you sneeze, identifying your triggers will help know how to treat and manage your allergies this season, according to WebMD.

Track your allergen. Monitoring allergen levels will help you know what to expect and how to prepare. Visit pollen.com to track daily allergen levels, get allergy forecasts, sign up for allergy alert emails, or download a smartphone allergy app or desktop widget.

Prevent symptoms. There is no cure for allergies. But, taking your allergy medication 30 minutes before going outdoors can help reduce symptoms. Limit your time outdoors when allergen levels are high. Also, when returning indoors, make sure to change and shower to remove allergens on you.

Take your meds. Finding a medication that works for you can take time. Common medications used to treat allergies include antihistamines and decongestants. Whether you take over-the counter or prescribed medication, following dosing instructions is important to avoid adverse side effects. Speak with your doctor or allergist to find out what medication is best for your depending on your current medication regime, health and medical history.

Department Wellness Spotlight

- NEW! Wellness incentive program: May 1, 2013 – April 30, 2014
- Monthly awareness campaigns
- Department-specific wellness programs

The wellness team is striving to improve employees' health. Take charge of your health. Participate in monthly wellness campaigns and programs. Be on the look out for wellness team members at your building.

MS150 volunteers needed

Don't miss out on the fun! Volunteers are needed at the halfway point in LaGrange, Texas. Help out in the tent, or cheer on city of Houston team riders. Contact Certeria Johnson at Certeria.johnson@houstontx.gov for more information, or to register to volunteer.

Weight Watchers

You can sign up for Weight Watchers at a discount with no joining fee, thanks to the city Wellness Connection initiative.
You can pay the monthly-pass fee of $39.99 plus tax with a debit or credit card, and the card information will be used for your pass to be automatically renewed each month until you cancel it.

Come to the following meeting to find out more and talk with a Weight Watchers instructor.

Every Thursday
9:45 - 10:45 a.m.
1200 Travis St., 24th floor, ADR conference room

Or sign up today for your monthly pass:

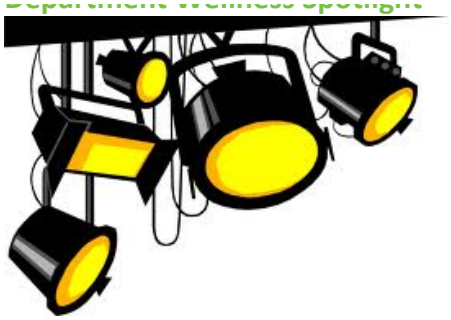
- Log on to https://wellness.weightwatchers.com
- Enter the following
  - Company ID: **56929**
  - Company pass code: **ww56929**
- Sign up for a location convenient for you.

If you have any problems purchasing your monthly pass, please call Weight Watchers at 866-204-2885.

National Women's Health Week happening in May

Ladies—it's time to improve your health. From May 12-18, celebrate women's health week with a commitment to living healthy.

Department Wellness Spotlight



The wellness team salutes employees who completed their wellness engagement by March 31. The city's overall participation was 91 percent.

In January, more than 600 city employees signed up for the Find What Fits with Shape Up Houston's Walk a Marathon in a Month Challenge! Between Jan. 7 and Feb. 7, more than 100 employees completed the challenge, reaching the 26.2 mile mark. Great work everyone!

PWE Mission Slimpossible Shape Up Houston group getting ready for their routine walk.

The Office of Business Opportunity began a walking challenge within their department. Director Carlecia Wright informed her staff that she will win!

The Housing and Community Development department hosting their Fitness Challenge kick-off, encouraging employees to get fit for the new year.

- Get a preventive health screening
- Start eating healthy
- Start exercising
- Raise awareness about women's health in your community
- Stop practicing unhealthy habits

What will you do to ensure you live a long and healthy life? Log on to womenshealth.gov to learn what steps you can take.

24-hour health information line

Call the Cigna customer service line, 800-997-1406, to talk to a nurse about health issues, get assistance, or access a health information audio library to learn about a wide range of health topics. Registered nurses will speak with you 24 hours a day.

Get help:

- Locating doctors or pharmacies if you're away from home.
- About emergency services if you need emergency care.
- Answering questions about your symptoms.
- On self or professional care.

Cigna's customer service line number is located on your Cigna health insurance card.

##TrackImpression##