



**NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
RETIREMENT SYSTEM**



Coordinator Newsletter

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Celebrate National Nutrition Month by eating more fruits and vegetables and using less salt.

Enjoy the taste of eating right

Registered Dietitian Lori Howard of Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota (BCBSND) encourages everyone to consume less salt and eat more fruits and vegetables. The two go hand-in-hand in fighting high blood pressure.

As part of National Nutrition Month, Americans are encouraged to enjoy the taste of eating right. While it's easy to grab the salt shaker when cooking or eating, you can enhance flavors with herbs and spices.

Howard says if you're not sure which herbs to use, Mrs. Dash salt-free seasoning blends are a great way to get started.

You can use fresh squeezed lemon or lime juice on cauliflower, broccoli, peas, cabbage and sweet corn. Try using a few tablespoons of homemade chicken stock over steamed vegetables. You can sauté your favorite vegetables in olive oil with garlic (don't use garlic salt) and onions. Or try simmering carrots in cinnamon and nutmeg.

For more creative ideas on how to use herbs and spices when you cook, check out suggestions from the [American Heart Association's website](#).

Experimenting with herbs and spices can be good for your health. The 2010 U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend that most people aim for 2,300 mg of salt or sodium a day. That amounts to one teaspoon! But if you have high blood pressure, diabetes, chronic kidney disease or are older than 50 or African American, you should limit sodium intake to 1,500 mg a day. It's very easy to go over the limit when you add up the sodium contained in processed foods and soft drinks.

Howard offers these simple solutions to help you consume less sodium:

- Cook more at home
- Eat more whole foods
- Eat less processed foods
- Check food labels for sodium content

And finally, when you're preparing your meals, Howard says to fill half of your plate with vegetables and fruits. Just be sure to season them with herbs and spices and not salt.



Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association

Noridian Mutual Insurance Company

Food choices can reduce colon cancer risk

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colon cancer survival rates are now at 90 percent. Along with regular medical screenings, there are plenty of foods and vitamins to keep your digestive system healthy for life.

Studies show that eating five to nine servings of a variety of fruits and vegetables, including beans, can reduce your risk of colon and rectal diseases. That's because fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants, phytochemicals, fiber and other nutrients that fight against pre-cancer and cancer cells. Adding even one fruit or vegetable to your current intake can help.

Considering eating these foods for prevention:

- Dark, green leafy vegetables
- Vegetables—choose orange, yellow, red, green, purple and white
- Whole, fresh fruits—berries, citrus and apples with skin on
- Beans, legumes, lentils
- Raw, unsalted nuts and seeds
- Whole grains—natural oatmeal, 100% whole wheat bread and pasta, brown rice, high-fiber/low-sugar cereal
- Vitamin-D-fortified skim milk and yogurt

Exercise is great for every part of the body, including your digestive system. Incorporate 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise most days of the week, accompanied by at least two days of strength or weight-bearing exercise.

Your risk for developing colorectal cancer increases with age. Likewise, if you eat a high-fat diet or consume a lot of red meats, processed meats and alcohol, you are at risk. Other risk factors include smoking, having ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease, or being very overweight or obese.

In addition to eating right and exercising, it is important to be screened to identify any colon problems before they develop into cancer. You should be screened if you are age 50 or older. A colonoscopy allows your doctor to look at the inner lining of your large intestine through a thin, flexible tube. The test helps find ulcers, colon polyps, tumors and areas of inflammation and bleeding.

Your doctor may suggest you begin screening at a younger age if you have a strong family history of colorectal disease. Talk with your doctor about screening options as well as when and how often you should be tested.

BCBSND's wellness programs help improve NDPERS members' health

BCBSND's wellness programs are making a difference in lives of NDPERS members. In the second annual survey, 93 percent of survey respondents reported satisfaction with their HealthyBlue experience. That's up from 87 percent in 2012.

BCBSND surveys NDPERS members who are eligible for HealthyBlue and Health Club Credit. Eighty-nine percent of those surveyed stated HealthyBlue



A variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains can reduce your risk of colon and rectal diseases.

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helped them develop and maintain healthy behaviors, up 1 percent from 2012. Slightly more than half listed the incentives as the primary reason they joined HealthyBlue.

This year, the NDPERS survey also included questions about the Health Club Credit program. A total of 98 percent of survey respondents were satisfied with Health Club Credit.

"We are really pleased with the results and the feedback about the Health Club Credit and HealthyBlue programs," said NDPERS Wellness Consultant Stacy Duncan. "These programs are a great way to encourage and reward healthy lifestyles."

Here are some comments from employees about the programs:

- "It is worthwhile as it helps one to exercise and you get a financial benefit as an incentive. It is like free health club usage."
- "It is nice to be rewarded for healthy lifestyle."
- "It really motivates me to go more often, knowing I get the credit on my account."
- "Enables both wife and me to belong to health club."
- "Wonderful way to make yourself accountable, learn more about healthy living and get rewards."

Join HealthyBlue

Each employee and spouse (18 and older covered under NDPERS health plan) can earn rewards for using the HealthyBlue online wellness tool. HealthyBlue creates a confidential, personalized wellness plan, tailored to each employee's lifestyle and wellness goals. Based on each individual's preferences, HealthyBlue will provide resources to execute a plan and track success. Members also receive bi-weekly health topic of the month newsletters, access to a variety of health workshops, and quarterly wellness related trend presentations. To get started:

Go to www.ndpersHealthyBlue.com

1. Click on "Not registered? Sign Up Now"
2. Register and record your username and password
3. Complete the Health Assessment

Watch HealthyBlue for a physical activity challenge coming at the end of March.

NDPERS members complete Sochi fitness challenge

More than 1,000 NDPERS members participated in the Walk to Sochi fitness challenge through HealthyBlue. They logged approximately 71,400 miles, which is enough to walk to Sochi, Russia and back to North Dakota—six times!

The challenge ran from Jan. 20 through Feb. 10 and was open to NDPERS members registered in HealthyBlue. Participants who registered and logged steps earned 300 HealthyBlue points.

"Congratulations to all the participants who helped us walk to Sochi and



NDPERS members express satisfaction with HealthyBlue and Health Club Credit programs.

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back to North Dakota,” said NDPERS Wellness Consultant Stacy Duncan. “This challenge was a huge success. Keep up the great work and continue down that path of a healthy lifestyle.”

The next challenge is scheduled for April.

Plan to participate in the National Walk@Lunch Day

Many employees would like to control weight, reduce stress or increase their energy levels. Taking part in the National Walk@Lunch Day on Wednesday, April 30, is a great way to get started.

A regular routine of brisk-paced walking daily can help you lose weight, lower cholesterol, strengthen your heart and reduce the likelihood of serious health problems down the road. And with America spending more than ever on preventable health problems like heart disease, osteoporosis, type 2 diabetes, and conditions associated with obesity such as arthritis, every step counts.

Created to improve personal health and decrease the costs of health care for employers and employees, National Walk@Lunch Day is the start of your new daily walking routine, helping you to improve your health step by step.

Participation is fun and easy. On Wednesday, April 30, local Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies, businesses large and small and state legislatures across the nation will encourage employees to wear comfortable shoes and take a walk at lunch.

BCBSND and NDPERS will host a walk with Lt. Governor Drew Wrigley at the Bismarck Capitol from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., starting at Memorial Hall. We encourage you to join us if you are in the area, or plan to host a walk at your own worksite. If you're unable to participate in the walk at the capitol, you can use Google maps or MapMyRun to plot out a route near your workplace.

Fit-Friendly Worksites: Get your company the healthy recognition it deserves

The American Heart Association's Fit-Friendly program recognizes employers who champion the health of their employees and work to create a culture of physical activity and health in the workplace. Worksites can apply on an annual basis for basic Gold level recognition and/or the advanced Platinum level recognition. In addition, worksites can apply annually for the unique "Innovation" award. These are awarded to worksites that creatively implement programs to promote physical activity in the workplace and/or community. Recognition is valid for one year and worksites must renew annually. To review the recognition criteria go to <http://startwalkingnow.org>.

Becoming a Fit-Friendly Worksite is simple and fast with an online application tool at <http://ffc.heart.org>. Take your first step in becoming a Fit-Friendly Worksite! You can renew your application there, too! The next application and renewal deadline is April 1, 2014.



Plan to walk on April 30 on
National Walk@Lunch Day!

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National Walking Day – Tied to be fit

These days, adults are spending more time at work than ever before. An unfortunate side effect is that Americans are becoming more inactive. Alarming, physical inactivity doubles the risk of heart disease!

But take heart! It's a problem you can help fix by encouraging your company to take part in the American Heart Association's National Walking Day on Wednesday, April 2.

On this day, Americans are encouraged to lace up their sneakers and take at least 30 minutes out of their day to get up and walk. It's a great way to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity and to get your family, friends and coworkers started on a healthier way of life. It is a great day to highlight your existing workplace wellness initiatives or kick off a new program.

It's easy to participate in National Walking Day. Complete the online registration form to receive the National Walking Day Toolkit. It includes lots of fun materials and tips to easily promote National Walking Day in your workplace. Your registration confirmation email will include links to a how-to guide, posters, flyers, email scripts and more. Visit www.heart.org/nationalwalkingday.

Nominate someone who's living out their New Year's resolution

Do you know of an employee who is living a healthy lifestyle? We are looking for success stories and would like to start regularly recognizing these efforts. If you know an employee who is demonstrating a healthy lifestyle through exercise, healthy eating or smoking cessation, we encourage you to nominate him or her as a "Wellness Star of the Month" by the 15th of each month.

Please contact Stacy Duncan at stacy.duncan@bcbsnd.com or (701) 277-2884. You can also download the application form in HealthyBlue by clicking on NDPERS Wellness Stars.

Attend Gearing Up for Worksite Wellness Training

If your organization is like most, unhealthy employees outnumber the healthy ones, costing you in productivity and profits. That's why worksite wellness programs are so important. Find out how to start a worksite wellness program by attending the Gearing Up for Worksite Wellness Training two-day workshop.

The cost, which includes lunch and a snack, is \$149 and \$129 for each additional person from the same company, but NDPERS Wellness Coordinators qualify for the discounted rate of \$99.

The training will be from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. on April 7-8 at Dakota Medical Foundation in Fargo.

To register, go directly to the online registration site: <http://guwww-fargo2014.eventbrite.com>



Plan to attend the worksite wellness training!

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Wellness Coordinator Summer Workshops announced

Be sure to mark your calendars for the upcoming workshops this summer.

Location	Date of Training	Times
Bismarck, Bismarck State College	June 17 & July 16	8:30–11:30 a.m. & 1–4 p.m.
Fargo, BCBSND Building	June 24	9 a.m.–noon
Dickinson, City Hall	July 15	1–4 p.m.
Williston, Upper Missouri Valley Dist Health	June 18	1–4 p.m.
Grand Forks, County Office Building	July 31	8:30–11:30 a.m.
Minot, MSU	TBD	TBD

To pre-register for the Wellness Coordinator Summer Workshops, please contact Stacy Duncan at (701) 277-2884 or stacy.duncan@bcbsnd.com. Pre-registration is not required but strongly recommended.

Healthy Activities Spotlight

The American Heart Association has free, downloadable materials, quizzes and tip sheets about nutrition education. Check out the link for more information: http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyDietGoals/Nutrition-Education-Handouts-and-Resources_UCM_321883_Article.jsp

Healthy Recipe

Try this healthy snack recipe from the American Heart Association.

Take-a-Break Snack Mix

Serves 8; 1/2 cup per serving

Ingredients

Cooking spray
1/4 cup sliced almonds
1 tablespoon light brown sugar
2 teaspoons water
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 cups whole-grain oat cereal with yogurt-flavored coating
2 cups whole-grain wheat and bran flakes with raisins
1/2 cup dried unsweetened cranberries
1/2 cup dried unsweetened blueberries

Cooking Instructions

1. Put a piece of aluminum foil about 12 inches square on a platter or baking sheet. Lightly spray with cooking spray. Set aside.
2. In a small nonstick skillet, dry-roast the almonds over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes, or until lightly golden brown, stirring occasionally.



Check out this healthy snack!

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3. Stir in the brown sugar, water, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes or until the liquid has evaporated and the almonds are coated with the mixture, stirring constantly. Transfer to the foil. Let cool completely, 15 to 20 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, stir together the remaining ingredients.
5. Add the cooled almonds to the cereal mixture, stirring to combine. Store in an airtight container for up to 7 days.

Cook's Tip: Whether your schedule is go-go-go or hurry-up-and-wait, you'll be glad you packed these tasty tidbits for healthy snacking.

For variety, substitute different nutrient-dense dried fruits, such as cherries, apricots, and plums, for the cranberries and blueberries. Cut them into 1/4- to 1/2-inch pieces before adding them to the cereal mixture.

Monthly Wellness Consultant call/webinar schedule

Mark your calendar for these WC calls and webinars:

- Wednesday, March 5 at noon CST
To join the March call/webinar: Go to (#794 012 330)
<https://meetingcenter33.webex.com/meetingcenter33/j.php?ED=192340372&UID=494098687&RT=MIM3>
- Wednesday, April 2 at 1 p.m. CST
To join the April call/webinar: Go to (#793 726 678)
<https://meetingcenter33.webex.com/meetingcenter33/j.php?ED=192566457&UID=494098687&RT=MIM3>
- Wednesday, May 7, at 11 a.m. CST
To join the April call/webinar: Go to (#797 368 750)
<https://meetingcenter33.webex.com/meetingcenter33/j.php?ED=194880947&UID=494098687&RT=MIM3>
- Wednesday, June 4, at noon CST
To join the June call/webinar: Go to (#793 238 989)
<https://meetingcenter33.webex.com/meetingcenter33/j.php?ED=195469002&UID=494098687&RT=MIM3>

For audio: Dial 1-888-330-1716 Code: 704446

Friendly reminder: Please mute your phones during the calls as a courtesy to other listeners. If your phone does not have a mute button, dial #0 and then select option 1. To comment or ask a question, you can un-mute by again dialing #0-1. We would also like to ask that you avoid putting your line on hold, as the background music can be heard by all other participants. Thank you.

Coming up in April

Consider promoting these events next month!

- Alcohol Awareness Month
- Facial & Foot Health Awareness Month
- National Walk to Work Day: First Friday
- World Health Day: April 7
- National Public Health Week: April 7-13
- National Walk@Lunch Day: April 30



Mark your calendar for these WC calls and webinars.

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A Partnership for Worksite Wellness

NDPERS and BCBSND are working together to support and provide you and your fellow employees the opportunity to have a healthier and more engaged worksite through Worksite Wellness tools. We appreciate feedback on all our wellness tools to serve your worksite better and welcome your suggestions.

Please take time to fill out surveys we may submit to you from time to time to evaluate these programs.

Here is a list of contacts that will be useful to you as a Wellness Coordinator:

Stacy Duncan

NDPERS Wellness Consultant
701-277-2884
stacy.duncan@bcbsnd.com

Stacy is your main resource contact. She can help you with general wellness program questions and assist you with enhancing your worksite wellness programs.

Rebecca Fricke

NDPERS
rfricke@nd.gov
Rebecca can help you with 1% premium questions, points on programs, updating coordinator information and the status or questions about the application process or forms.

Kathy Allen

NDPERS
kallen@nd.gov
Direct funding program questions to Kathy.

Onalee Sellheim

BCBSND
onalee.sellheim@bcbsnd.com
Direct questions about benefit plans or schedule Member Education programs through Onalee.

Jodi Crouse

BCBSND
jodi.crouse@bcbsnd.com
To collect aggregate data on your employer from the Health Reimbursement Arrangements, HealthyBlue and Health Club Credit, contact Jodi.

Milissa Van Eps

BCBSND
milissa.van.eps@bcbsnd.com
701-795-5360
Contact Milissa to set up a Member Education program if you are located in eastern North Dakota.

Heather Horner

BCBSND
heather.horner@bcbsnd.com
701-200-3905 (cell)
Contact Heather to set up a Member Education program if you are located in western North Dakota.



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