



A newsletter about the My Health, My Choice, My Life initiative across the State of Tennessee.

Tomorrow Starts Today



July 2013

What's inside?

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We Are the Champions!

My Health, My Choice, My Life held its first-ever Championship Games event for Middle Tennessee at Edwin Warner Park in Nashville on June 25, 2013. Over 150 people from 14 peer support centers were in attendance, and everyone enjoyed events like tennis ball throwing, 50-yard dashes, hula hooping, kickball kicking, a tug-of-war tournament, and more.

My Health, My Choice, My Life also presented its first Wellness Awards to one person from each peer support center who made a great stride in their personal wellness journey.

We would like to thank our sponsors, Amerigroup Community Care and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, for their assistance in making the day a success.

Regions 2 and 3 in East Tennessee are the next regions to have the event – mark your calendars for September 19.

For photos of the day's events, turn to page 6.

Do you know your “numbers?”

If you know nothing about your Body Mass Index or waist circumference, turn to page 3. But if you don't want to wait to be healthy, here are some changes you can make right now: Avoid **oversized** portions, fill **half** of your plate with **fruits and vegetables**, choose **whole grains**, switch to **fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk**, **reduce the amount of salt** you add to foods, read **nutrition labels**, and **replace sugary drinks** with water.





Meet John.

He's meeting his goals using small steps.
You can do it, too.

by Mark Bresee, Chattanooga Peer Wellness Coach

John Walters longed to lose weight.

At the doctor's office, he was too heavy for the scale to weigh him. They warned him his weight could lead to diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. John dreamed of taking long hikes on mountain trails. For years he wished he could participate in martial arts, but he could not make even basic moves.

A couple of years ago, his Uncle Billy moved in a couple of blocks

away. John started walking to his house to visit. He struggled at first, but he found that the more times he took the short hike down the street to see his relatives, the easier it got.

Last year, John's mother began attending college classes. She found a way to get back and forth from campus, but the local library where she studied and did research for her papers was a mile away and walking was her only option. John began walking with her to and from the library, two miles total, which he does to this day.

In addition to physical activity, John reduced his food portions and cut back on sodas in order to lose weight. This past year John lost 100 pounds! The scale at the doctor's office is able to measure his weight. He feels much better. He doesn't need to take the elevator anymore. John set his goal to lose another hundred pounds and he possesses the confidence he can do it! His hopes of hiking, participating in martial arts and other meaningful activities are rising slowly like the dawn of a new day.

Wellness Benefits of Hiking

(Information from the National Trails Training Partnership)

Going outside for a walk is a great way to exercise, and we endorse it wholeheartedly. But how often do we think about the benefits of where we walk? Tennessee has a variety of hiking trails in parks across the state where you can get in

touch with nature and improve several dimensions of wellness at once. In addition, using walking trails has other benefits:

- Relieves stress
- Increases overall health
- Helps you avoid air pollution and other environmental stressors
- Helps build stronger bones and avoid osteoporosis

Try getting your physical activity in by using a walking trail today.





Know Your “Numbers”

by Meagan Hinds, Knoxville Peer Wellness Coach

There are many benefits to knowing your Body Mass Index (BMI) and waist circumference (WC). According to the National Institutes of Health, a high BMI and/or WC puts you at an increased risk for diseases such as:

- Heart Disease
- Stroke
- Hypertension (High blood pressure)
- Dyslipidemia (High fat content in the blood)
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Certain types of Cancer
- Gallbladder Disease and Gallstones
- Osteoarthritis
- Gout
- Breathing problems:
 - Sleep Apnea (when someone stops breathing for short episodes during sleep)
 - Asthma

Men

Low Risk: 37 inches

Moderate Risk: 37-40 inches

High Risk: 40 inches or more

Women

Low Risk: 31.5 inches or less

Moderate risk: 31.5-35 inches

High Risk: 35 inches or more

What is a waist circumference?

Your waist circumference is a measurement of the distance around your waist. To find yours, do the following:

1. Hold the end marked 1” of a fabric measuring tape or Myotape at your navel.
2. Spin around to the right or wrap the tape around your midsection until the measuring tape touches the end at your navel or the Myotape holder reaches the end.
3. Place the small, round end into the Myotape holder and press the retractor button. If you’re using a regular tape measure, touch the end to the tape.
4. Record the number closest to the Myotape holder, or see where the measuring tape meets.

Look at the chart above to see your risk level for various weight-related illnesses.

Your Body Mass Index (BMI) is an important number to know because it is a calculation of body mass based on your height and weight.

- 1) Remove your shoes and any bulky clothing
- 2) Measure your height while standing up straight
- 3) Step on a scale and get your exact weight
- 4) Using those 2 numbers, look at the chart below to find your BMI. The different colors will show you which category you fall under – **Underweight**, **Normal**, **Overweight**, or **Obese**.

BMI chart	weight																
	100	110	120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200	210	220	230	240	250	260
4' 10"	20.9	23.0	25.1	27.2	29.3	31.3	33.4	35.5	37.6	39.7	41.8	43.9	46.0	48.1	50.2	52.2	54.3
4' 11"	20.2	22.2	24.2	26.3	28.3	30.3	32.3	34.3	36.4	38.4	40.4	42.4	44.4	46.4	48.5	50.5	52.5
5' 0"	19.5	21.5	23.4	25.4	27.3	29.3	31.2	33.2	35.2	37.1	39.1	41.0	43.0	44.9	46.9	48.8	50.8
5' 1"	18.9	20.8	22.7	24.6	26.4	28.3	30.2	32.1	34.0	35.9	37.8	39.7	41.6	43.5	45.3	47.2	49.1
5' 2"	18.3	20.1	21.9	23.8	25.6	27.4	29.3	31.1	32.9	34.7	36.6	38.4	40.2	42.1	43.9	45.7	47.5
5' 3"	17.7	19.5	21.3	23.0	24.8	26.6	28.3	30.1	31.9	33.7	35.4	37.2	39.0	40.7	42.5	44.3	46.1
5' 4"	17.2	18.9	20.6	22.3	24.0	25.7	27.5	29.2	30.9	32.6	34.3	36.0	37.8	39.5	41.2	42.9	44.6
5' 5"	16.6	18.3	20.0	21.6	23.3	25.0	26.6	28.3	30.0	31.6	33.3	34.9	36.6	38.3	39.9	41.6	43.3
5' 6"	16.1	17.8	19.4	21.0	22.6	24.2	25.8	27.4	29.0	30.7	32.3	33.9	35.5	37.1	38.7	40.3	42.0
5' 7"	15.7	17.2	18.8	20.4	21.9	23.5	25.1	26.6	28.2	29.8	31.3	32.9	34.5	36.0	37.6	39.2	40.7
5' 8"	15.2	16.7	18.2	19.8	21.3	22.8	24.3	25.8	27.4	28.9	30.4	31.9	33.4	35.0	36.5	38.0	39.5
5' 9"	14.8	16.2	17.7	19.2	20.7	22.1	23.6	25.1	26.6	28.1	29.5	31.0	32.5	34.0	35.4	36.9	38.4
5' 10"	14.3	15.8	17.2	18.7	20.1	21.5	23.0	24.4	25.8	27.3	28.7	30.1	31.6	33.0	34.4	35.9	37.3
5' 11"	13.9	15.3	16.7	18.1	19.5	20.9	22.3	23.7	25.1	26.5	27.9	29.3	30.7	32.1	33.5	34.9	36.3
6' 0"	13.6	14.9	16.3	17.6	19.0	20.3	21.7	23.1	24.4	25.8	27.1	28.5	29.8	31.2	32.5	33.9	35.3
6' 1"	13.2	14.5	15.8	17.1	18.5	19.8	21.1	22.4	23.7	25.1	26.4	27.7	29.0	30.3	31.7	33.0	34.3
6' 2"	12.8	14.1	15.4	16.7	18.0	19.3	20.5	21.8	23.1	24.4	25.7	27.0	28.2	29.5	30.8	32.1	33.4
6' 3"	12.5	13.7	15.0	16.2	17.5	18.7	20.0	21.2	22.5	23.7	25.0	26.2	27.5	28.7	30.0	31.2	32.5
6' 4"	12.2	13.4	14.6	15.8	17.0	18.3	19.5	20.7	21.9	23.1	24.3	25.6	26.8	28.0	29.2	30.4	31.6
6' 5"	11.9	13.0	14.2	15.4	16.6	17.8	19.0	20.2	21.3	22.5	23.7	24.9	26.1	27.3	28.5	29.6	30.8
6' 6"	11.6	12.7	13.9	15.0	16.2	17.3	18.5	19.6	20.8	22.0	23.1	24.3	25.4	26.6	27.7	28.9	30.0
BMI category	underweight					normal						overweight			obese		



Five Tips for a Healthier Back

by Dan Armatis, Nashville Peer Wellness Coach

For more, see:

<http://health.howstuffworks.com/diseases-conditions/pain/back/how-to-prevent-back-pain.htm>

I have been plagued with back problems my entire adult life and I'm sure many people can relate. I have seen a variety of specialists and endured countless hours of excruciating pain. Because preventative care is one of the best forms of care, here are five things you can do to protect your back.

1) Protect your back in bed.

You'd think it would be difficult to injure your back while sleeping. But if your bed does not offer enough support, it could be the reason why you wake up with stiffness. If you are in a position that is bad for your back and you stay in it for eight hours while you sleep, you could be damaging your back without knowing it. When you sleep, put a pillow or something soft in between your thighs and lay in the fetal position. Also, stretch once you get out of bed and continue to do so throughout your morning.

2) Wear the right shoes.

Shoes play an important role in the comfort of your feet and your back. Flat, thin-soled shoes can increase back discomfort. When buying shoes, look for shoes with good arch supports and a fair amount of rubber or other soft material under the heel and sole to absorb the shock created when you walk. If you cannot find

these kinds of shoes, find shoe inserts.

High-heeled shoes may cause people to experience lower back pain. Lower heels are a better choice for your back. Try wearing a pair of athletic shoes first, then changing into your dress shoes when required.

3) Protect your back in the car.

If you are like most people, you probably use your car or truck to go almost everywhere. A properly adjusted car seat can reduce the stress and strain on your back.

If you travel long distances, make slight but frequent adjustments in your seat's position. Locking your spine in one position for the length of the ride can cause problems no matter how comfortable you are.

Make use of trips at the gas station and other stops by doing stretches. Stand up straight, place your palms on your hips, and slowly tilt your back away from your abdomen, and

then back to its original position. A few micro-workouts help in the long run.

4) Find the right chair.

Start with a chair designed to fit and support the body and spine. These chairs (called ergonomic chairs) can be expensive, but not as expensive as a damaged back. Whether you have the most advanced office chair or if you have to live with what you have, try the following suggestions to fit your chair to your spine:

If you have a lumbar support, adjust it to fit your lower back's natural inward curve. (The lumbar area is about the height of your belly button.) If you do not have a lumbar support, use a rolled-up towel.

5) Protect your back with exercise.

Exercise strengthens and stretches back muscles, lubricates facet joints, and feeds the disks. Here are some tips:

Choose a variety of exercises that will work out different areas of your back and total body. Make sure your physician approves of your exercise regimen. Some exercises can increase your pain or make your situation worse, so let your healthcare consultant guide you.

Always start slowly and be patient. You didn't get out of shape in a day or a week, so fitness takes time. Starting off too quickly will only increase soreness. To begin, do your exercises three days per week, skipping a day in-between.

Here are some good activities you can do to safely strengthen your back:

- 1) Swimming
- 2) Walking
- 3) Cycling
- 4) Leg lifts
- 5) Press Ups



Don't Fall into These "Food Traps"

by Tiffany Nevin, West Tennessee Peer Wellness Coach

In today's world, food isn't just about eating anymore. The companies that make our foods like to make money, too, and that means they'll hop on any diet bandwagon to sell more products. You want low-carb? They've got that. Low-fat, too. They'll also slap the word "healthy" on just about any food to try to trick you.

Our perceptions of food may also be incorrect. For instance, a lot of people think yogurt is a very healthy food to eat – and it is, so long as it's plain, nonfat yogurt and you add your own fresh fruit to it. Newer yogurts with added fruit and flavoring can actually have more sugar (26 grams, Yoplait website) than a bowl of Lucky Charms (10 grams, General Mills website).

Even restaurants can be guilty of

this deception. Subway has a line of "Fresh Fit" subs, where a 6-inch sandwich supposedly has less than six grams of fat. What Subway doesn't make obvious is that these sandwiches only have less than six grams of fat when you have the sandwich on 9-Grain Wheat bread and don't include most condiments, like mayonnaise, cheese or dressings (Subway's Nutrition Facts page puts this in small print).

Even salads can be somewhat deceiving, especially when purchased at a restaurant. Many of them come with toppings like cheese or fried onions, and this can add a lot of fat to what would otherwise be a healthy meal. When ordering, nutritionists recommend that you request that these kinds of items be left off, and be sure to get your dressing on the side so you can dip your lettuce and avoid eating too much dressing.

What other traps might we fall into? Well, just trusting when a box or restaurant says something is low-fat or low-carb can be a trap, too! You may see a low-fat item on a menu, the nutritional facts may reveal the number of calories to be very high. So the "low-fat" part may be right, but



choosing something based on that alone still isn't the healthiest decision.

What's the trick, then? How do we get around this misleading labeling? Your best shot is to always read the "Nutrition Facts" label on the foods you eat, or try to find nutrition information before you visit a restaurant. That way, you'll know if the "low-fat" food you just picked up also happens to have a lot of carbohydrates or calories per serving, or if the sodium level is just too high for you. **(How many calories, carbohydrates and milligrams of sodium you eat should be based on a doctor's recommendation.)**



Here are some general guidelines for choosing foods, from the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program:

- Try to eat seven servings of fruits and/or vegetables per day.
- Choose foods that are lower in fat (less than five grams per portion).
- Try to eat foods lower in carbohydrates (45-60 grams per meal is the recommended amount for diabetics).
- Reduce the amount of sodium (salt) that you eat.
- Always drink water with meals. A 20-ounce soda contains the equivalent of over 20 packs of sugar (65 grams, according to the Coca-Cola website, and a pack of sugar typically contains 2 to 4 grams).

2013 Championship Games Middle Tennessee





Quitting smoking can actually affect your health positively within just a few minutes. Quit for an even longer period, and the benefits start to stack up. Take a look at how your body heals after tossing the cigarettes (from whyquit.org):



- 🕒 In 20 minutes: Your body's blood pressure, pulse and temperature return to normal.
- 🕒 In 12 hours: Your body's blood oxygen level will increase to normal and carbon monoxide level will drop back down to normal.
- 🕒 In 2 days: Your senses of smell and taste will start to return to normal.
- 🕒 In 3 days: The air sacs in your lungs begin to relax and return to normal.
- 🕒 In 3 months: Your risk for a heart attack due to smoking begins to drop.
- 🕒 In 1 year: Your excess risk for stroke, heart attack and heart disease have dropped to less than half that of a non-smoker.
- 🕒 10 years: Your risk of lung cancer has dropped to between 30 and 50% of a smoker's risk.
- 🕒 15 years: Your risk for coronary heart disease is now the same as someone who has never smoked.

Smoking and your health

by Stephanie Wallingford, Johnson City Peer Wellness Coach

(<http://betobaccofree.hhs.gov/about-tobacco/facts-figures/index.html>)

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable illness and death in the United States. Each year, it causes nearly one of every five deaths. Smoking can cause many different types of cancers as well as chronic lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease – COPD (a disease that gets worse over time and causes wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness and other symptoms) and emphysema (a condition in which the walls between the air sacs in your lungs lose their ability to stretch and shrink back), heart disease, and many other serious health problems. In fact, smoking harms almost every organ of the body.

Here are some facts and figures about tobacco use in the United States.

- 🚫 Cigarette smoking causes an estimated 440,000 deaths each year, including approximately 49,400 deaths due to exposure to secondhand smoke.
- 🚫 8.6 million people live with a serious illness caused by smoking.
- 🚫 On average, smokers die 13 to 14 years earlier than nonsmokers.
- 🚫 Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals. About 70 of them are known to cause cancer.
- 🚫 Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among both men and women in the United States, and 90% of lung cancer deaths among men and approximately 80% of lung cancer deaths among women are due to smoking.
- 🚫 Smoking causes many other types of cancer, including cancers of the throat, mouth, nasal cavity, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, kidney, bladder, and cervix, as well as acute myeloid leukemia.
- 🚫 The chemicals in tobacco smoke harm your blood cells and damage the function of your heart. This damage increases your risk for:
 - Aneurysms (bulging blood vessels that can burst and cause death)
 - Coronary heart disease (plaque builds up in the arteries)
 - Heart attack and damage to your arteries
 - Heart disease
 - Stroke (sudden death of brain cells caused by blood clots or bleeding)



Have you visited the *My Health, My Choice, My Life* booth yet?

by Meagan Hinds, Knoxville Peer Wellness Coach

The *My Health, My Choice, My Life* team visits various events throughout the state to provide information and tips for a healthier life. We'll also calculate your Body Mass Index (BMI) and measure your waist circumference. If you see us, feel free to come say hello!

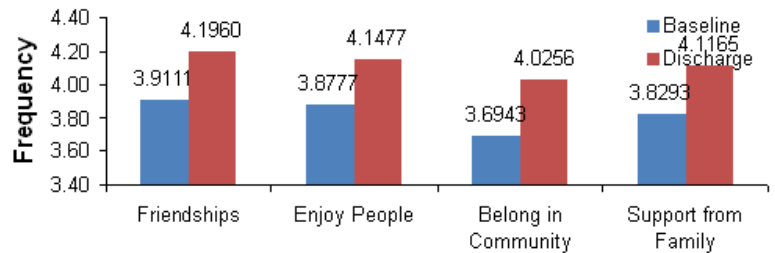
Here are just a few of the many events we'll be at over the next several months:

- July 29 – Nashville Wellness & Recovery Road Show
- August 13 – Jackson Wellness & Recovery Road Show
- September 10 – Memphis Wellness & Recovery Road Show
- September 16-22 – National Wellness Week Celebrations
- September 27 – NAMI Conference (Murfreesboro)
- October 4 – Community Day (Helen Ross McNabb, Knoxville)
- October 14 – Peer Recovery Specialist Conference



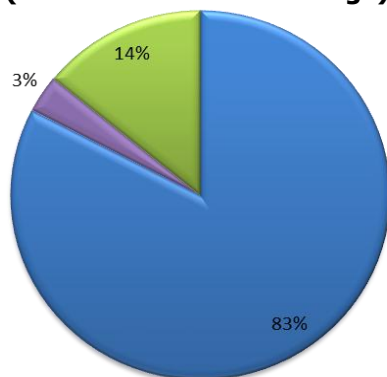
How are we doing?

The *My Health, My Choice, My Life* initiative has been going strong for two years now, and in that time, we've gotten a lot of research done. Take a look at the following charts to see some ways our program participants have made some positive life changes. (All information from Centerstone Research Institute.)



My Health, My Choice, My Life participants report feeling more socially satisfied after completing the six-week Chronic Disease Self-Management Program. The above graph shows improvement from baseline to discharge.

Improvement Summary (From baseline to discharge)



- Highly Significant Improvement
- Significant Improvement
- No Improvement

Instruments:

1. National Outcomes Measurement System
2. Health & Self-Management Questionnaire
3. Recovery Assessment Scale

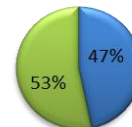
Recovery Oriented



Feel Pain/Fatigue



Health Habits



Wellbeing



Physical/Emotional Interference with Health



Medical/Health/Functioning

