

# My Health, My Choice, My Life

March 2013 Newsletter



“Tomorrow Starts Today”

## A Story of Success

- Bill Bowers  
New Start Peer Support Center  
Greeneville

I have struggled with my weight most of my life. At one point, several years ago, I weighed in at 407 pounds. My waist size

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was 60 plus, and I was wearing 4-5XL shirts. I was experiencing a lot of serious health problems and was even looking at a future knee replacement surgery. I knew I couldn't live this way much



Before



After

longer and had to do something to change it, so I underwent Gastric Bypass Surgery in April 2011.

Many people may look at this surgery as quick and easy fix, but for me it was not an easy process. I had to make the choice to work hard and follow the strict guidelines that were given to me. I had to give up things I enjoyed, such as sodas, sugar, and even white bread.

The first few months were tough as I was getting use to the changes, but with a lot of discipline and support from my wife, I was successful! As of now I have lost 227 pounds and weigh in at 180 pounds and I feel great. I have learned a lot throughout this process and have made some major lifestyle changes. I have

learned the importance of healthy eating and exercise and my wife and I make it a part of our weekly routine.

Since the surgery, I no longer have high blood pressure or cholesterol and do not have to have knee replacement surgery. I am healthier now than I have been in a long time. It has not always been easy, but it has been very rewarding. I now have a lot of energy and feel better than ever!

## National Nutrition Month

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Finding Your Way to a Healthier You.

<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/html/brochure.htm>

**M**arch is National Nutrition Month. In honor of this, take time to educate yourself about nutritional choices. Making wise nutritional choices not only helps you feel better today, it helps you stay healthy for tomorrow. Eating right and being physically active are keys to a healthy lifestyle. With healthful habits, you may reduce your risk for many chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and certain cancers. Plus, you will increase your chances for a longer life.

Eating a nutritious diet does not have to be boring. Try these tips to keep your diet healthy and exciting:

- Eat a variety of fruits - preferably fresh, but frozen, canned, or dried are also acceptable.
- Eat more dark green vegetables, such as broccoli, orange veggies, such as carrots and sweet potatoes, and beans and peas.
- Eat at least 3 ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta every day.
- Choose lean meats and poultry. Bake it, broil it, or grill it.

## 5 Healthy Cracker Options

-Meagan Hinds  
Wellness Coach, Knoxville

Crackers are a great on-the-go snack, but they can be loaded with hidden fat and sodium. Here are 5 healthier options to check out the next time you're in the grocery store:

### Reduced Fat Wheat Thins

- Serving Size: 16 Crackers
- Calories: 130
- Total Fat: 3.5g
- Sodium: 230mg
- Carbohydrates: 22g



### Reduced Fat Triscuits

- Serving Size: 7 Crackers
- Calories: 130
- Total Fat: 2.5g
- Sodium: 160mg
- Carbohydrates: 23g



### Reduced Sodium Saltines

- Serving Size: 5 Crackers
- Calories: 70
- Total Fat: 2g
- Sodium: 160mg
- Carbohydrates: 12g



### Reduced Fat Ritz

- Serving Size: 5 Crackers
- Calories: 70
- Total Fat: 2g
- Sodium: 150mg
- Carbohydrates: 11g



### TownHouse FlipSides Pretzel Crackers

- Serving Size: 5 Crackers
- Calories: 70
- Total Fat: 3.5g
- Sodium: 190mg
- Carbohydrates: 10g



*\* Serving sizes of crackers are fairly small (5-15 on average), so keep that in mind the next time you're snacking.*

## Healthier Fast Food Options

- Stephanie Pierce

Wellness Coach, Johnson City

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/fast-food/MY01268>

Lets face it, eating healthy is not always easy, especially when we are on the go. Thankfully, fast food restaurants are beginning to offer healthier menu items. The key is choose wisely when ordering. Here are a few tips to help you.

1. **Keep portion sizes small** – Many fast food restaurants offer several sandwich sizes, but remember to order the smallest size. Avoid burgers that have two or three patties, which can have more than 1,000 calories and 70 grams of fat. Instead, choose a regular or kids sized hamburger, which has about 250-300 calories. Skip the large order of fries or onion rings. Switching from a large to small can save you about 300 calories.



2. **Choose a healthier side item** – Take advantage of the healthier side items fast food restaurants added to their menus. Instead of an order of fries, go for a side salad with a light dressing or apple slices.

3. **Go for the greens** – Skip the burger and order a large salad. Try a grilled chicken salad or a fresh garden salad with a light or fat free dressing. Be aware though, not all salads are healthy. Salads topped with breaded chicken or fried toppings can be high in calories.

4. **Opt for grilled** – Fried or breaded foods such as crispy chicken or breaded fish are high in calories and fat. Instead, order grilled or roasted meats like chicken or turkey.



5. **Build your own meal** – Don't settle for what comes on your sandwich or with your meal. Ask for light mayonnaise or mustard on your sandwich instead of the regular toppings. You can also ask for a side salad instead of fries.

6. **Watch what you drink** – Many beverages contain a high number of calories. A large soda has about 400 calories. Instead, order a diet soda, water, or unsweetened tea. Also, skip the milkshakes and other ice cream drinks, which can contain more than 1,000 calories and enough saturated fats for the entire day.

## Mindful Eating

- Dan Armatis

Wellness Coach, Nashville

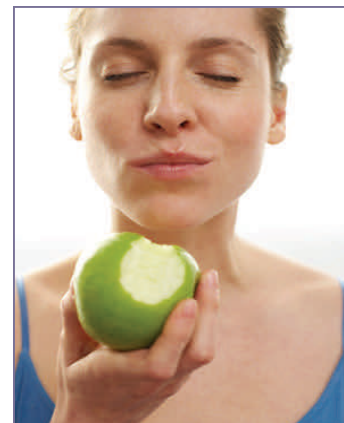
Changing eating habits can be very difficult. In order to begin to eat healthy, you have to change the way you eat. This can be very challenging! Often, people get frustrated when they still feel hungry after they eat, and believe that there is something wrong with them (if you have ever felt this way you are not alone).

To get around this, trying doing something called *mindful eating*. This is where you eat your food slowly, without taking bite after bite. For example, if I am eating a meal and scarf it down quickly, I will likely feel unsatisfied after I am through. On the other hand, if I take my time with each bite and think about the way the food tastes, and how it feel going down my throat, I am much more likely to feel content after my meal.

Also, when you take your time eating, you allow your body to properly digest the food. You also avoid overeating, which can make you feel really uncomfortable after a meal. I have done this before, and afterwards I always wished I had not eaten so much. There was one I time when I ate until I had no food left on my plate, now I eat until I am full and save the rest for later.

To practice mindful eating, take the food you are eating and slowly bring it towards your mouth. Before taking a bite, enjoy its aroma and take pleasure in the way it smells. By doing this, you might notice your mouth begin to salivate. This is your body's way of getting ready to digest food. Bring the food to your mouth and take a bite. Notice how it feels in your mouth and allow it to settle. Just before you swallow, breath out through your nose to capture every savory note of flavor. Think about how it feels going down your throat. Absorb the sensation and take a moment to observe how your body now feels. Before you take another bite, pause and appreciate your opportunity to enjoy this food. Be grateful for this experience. You may want to image the different ways your food was created. You may want to image how it was grown and cultivated. Get lost in your own experience, and when you are ready, resume by starting the process all over again.

Mindfulness is a great way to see things from another angle. While this practice might not always be practical due to many people's busy lifestyles, do your best to enjoy this activity as much as possible. This is also an experience you can share with friends and family. Eating does not always have to be a process by which to consume calories, nor does it have to be boring. With this activity you can turn eating into something, fun, healthful, and uplifting.



## Peer Wellness Coach Shares at Art for Awareness

In March, the 8th Annual Art for Awareness was held in Nashville providing an opportunity for consumer artists across Tennessee to share their artwork and their experiences.

Co-sponsored by the TDMHSAS and the Healing Arts Project, Inc. (HAPI), this year's event's theme was "Art-One Path to Wellness". Mark Bresee, the Peer Wellness Coach out of Chattanooga, was the guest speaker and touched on several aspects of wellness in a speech he called "The Great Eight". Mark shared openly about his experience with mental illness and how there were times in his life that he felt mediocre and miserable.

Mark encouraged the audience to live the GREAT life by being devoted to all areas of wellness which include emotional, environmental, physical, financial, social, spiritual, occupational, and intellectual wellness. To stay motivated, Mark gave three suggestions. First, go big! Set exciting goals that YOU want to do. Second, do small! Set small goals, and as you reached those small goals, you begin to build momentum towards bigger and better things. Finally, have fun! Make your goals fun, creative, exciting, and silly. Mark named his goal "Sexy at Sixty"!!



## Move of the Month

- Meagan Hinds  
Wellness Coach, Knoxville



Here's an exercise to try out this month that will strengthen and tone your leg muscles. It's low-impact and gentle enough for all ages and ability levels. All you have to do is stand up and sit down. For added benefits, tighten the muscles in your abdomen and buttocks while standing up. Try to repeat this move 10 times.



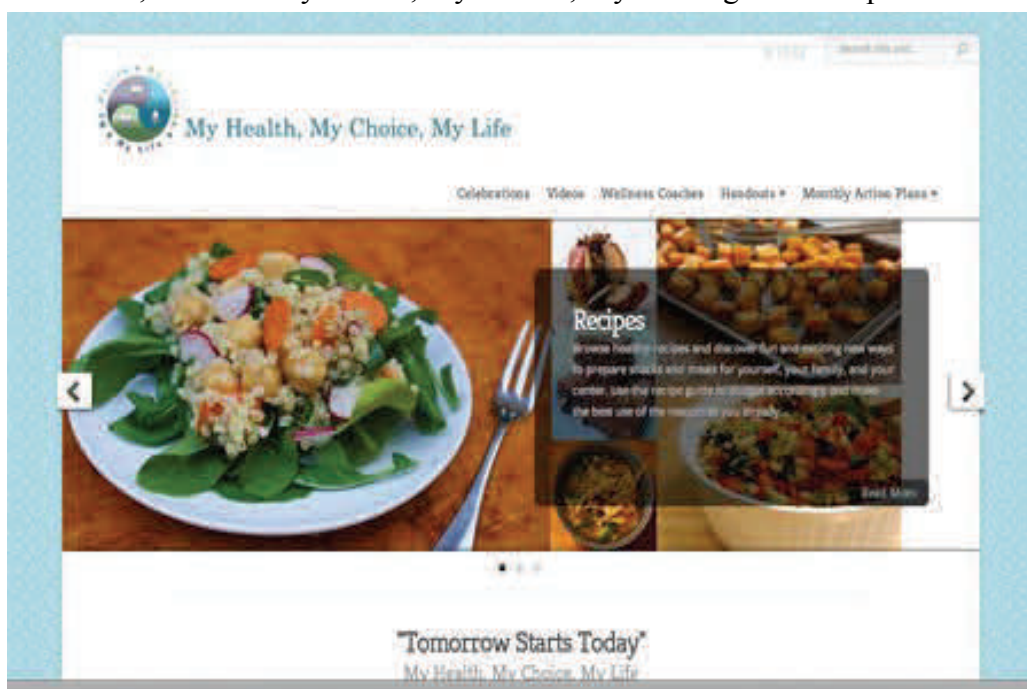
## Introduction to the *My Health, My Choice, My Life* Website

- Dan Armatis

Wellness Coach, Nashville

One way My Health, My Choice, My Life would like to help support a person on their wellness journey is through the My Health, My Choice, My Life website ([www.myhealthmychoicemylife.org](http://www.myhealthmychoicemylife.org)). Whether you are interested in looking at pictures of our Graduation Celebrations, looking up healthy recipes, or downloading My Health, My Choice, My Life handouts, this site will provide you with more goodies to satisfy your appetite for greater wellness.

The home screen provides access to every area of [myhealthmychoicemylife.org](http://myhealthmychoicemylife.org). If at any point you want to return to the home screen, click the My Health, My Choice, My Life logo at the top-left section of the screen.



### Navigation Menu

Many of our pages can be found by following the links at the top right of the homepage. These links are:

- Celebrations
- Videos
- Wellness Coaches
- Handouts
- Actions Plans

### Celebrations

This page is full of image galleries of our Graduation Celebrations and Wellness Week Celebrations. To view a Celebration photo gallery, hover your mouse over one of the images and click the center of the image. This will immediately take you to the image gallery for that celebration. Be sure to check this page periodically as we often update it with pictures!

## Introduction to the *My Health, My Choice, My Life* Website

- Dan Armatís  
Wellness Coach, Nashville

### Videos

Our videos page contains a variety of videos about wellness. Many were created by members of the My Health, My Choice, My Life team. To view a video, click the video of your choice and wait for it to load.

◊ *Videos might take a little while to load for those with slower internet connections.*

### Wellness Coaches

This page contains short bios about My Health, My Choice, My Life Peer Wellness Coaches!

### Handouts

Under handouts, you will find all the supplemental hand-outs needed when co-facilitating the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program workshop (CDSMP) and the Diabetes Self-Management Program workshop (DSMP).

For Peer Support Centers who complete Monthly Wellness Action Plans, the Monthly Wellness Action Plan form and Feedback form are available. Also available is a handout with descriptions of the Physical Health domains.

### Monthly Action Plan

As another resource for Peer Support Centers who complete Monthly Wellness Action Plans, there is the Monthly Action Plans tab. Under this tab are real examples of Action Plans Peer Support Centers across the state have made for their center. Read through some of the Action Plans that Peer Support Centers are doing, and hopefully you will be inspired to try some new things too!

### Home Screen

On the My Health, My Choice, My Life Home Screen, there is additional links to recipes, My Health, My Choice, My Life newsletters, and program information like descriptions about the CDSMP, DSMP, and wellness coaching.

Our website is designed to provide people with the My Health, My Choice, My Life experience from the click of their mouse. If you have any questions or suggestions about the site, please email Dan Armatís at [dan.armatis@centerstone.org](mailto:dan.armatis@centerstone.org).

## Save the Date for the Recovery & Wellness Road Show!

### Coming to a city near you!

Upper East TN - April 9, 2013

Knoxville - May 14, 2013

Chattanooga - June 11, 2013

Nashville - July 16, 2013

Jackson - August 13, 2013

Memphis - September 2013 (Date TBD)

Brought to you by a collaboration between Amerigroup, UnitedHealthCare, VSHP and My Health, My Choice, My Life Program

## Wellness Activity Corner

### Cowboy Caviar

#### Ingredients

- 4 cans of black beans
- 3 cans of corn
- 2 cans of RoTel
- 4 cans of diced tomatoes
- 2 bunches of green onions
- ½ cup of cilantro
- Garlic powder to taste
- 4 jalapenos
- Salt and pepper to taste



#### Directions

1. Drain and rinse black beans
2. Drain corn
3. Drain RoTel and diced tomatoes
4. Chop the green onions and cilantro
5. De-seed and chop jalapenos
6. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl
7. Season with garlic, salt and pepper
8. Chill in the refrigerator
9. Serve with tortilla chips

### WORD SCRAMBLE

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HLTHEAY

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WLLNESES

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HAIBT

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## Stay Connected

My Health, My Choice, My Life

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