

May is National Stroke Awareness Month

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in Maine and a leading cause of disability.

A **stroke** is an interruption of blood flow to the brain that kills brain cells and can cause brain damage, resulting in impaired speech, movement, and memory.

Early signs of stroke often come suddenly and include:

- Numbness in the face, arm or leg
- Slurred speech
- Blurred vision
- Dizziness or loss of balance

Because every second counts when it comes to restoring blood to the brain, the more quickly a person is treated for stroke the better their chances of survival. Know the signs and call 9-1-1 immediately if you see them

To lower your risk of stroke:

- Watch your weight
- Avoid smoking
- Exercise regularly
- High cholesterol
- Know your blood pressure and get treatment if it's too high

Act F.A.S.T.

FACE

Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the **face** droop?

ARMS

Ask the person to raise both **arms**. Does one arm drift downward?

SPEECH

Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Are the **words slurred**? Can he/she **repeat** the sentence correctly?

TIME

If the person shows any of these symptoms, **time** is important. Call 911 or get to the hospital fast. Brain cells are dying.

At the first sign of stroke, call 9-1-1 immediately. **Time lost is brain lost.**

For more info go to: www.stroke.org

May is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

Asthma is a chronic disease of the airways. Though the causes of asthma vary for different people, the results are always the same. When airways come into contact with what is known as an asthma trigger, the airways become inflamed, narrow, and fill with mucus.

Eighty percent of people with asthma have allergies to airborne substances such as tree, grass, and weed pollens, mold, animal dander and dust mites.

To help you learn about asthma signs, symptoms, medications and triggers go to:

www.medicinenet.com



Physical Activity For Children Starts at Home

Children need 60 minutes of active play every day to grow up to a healthy weight. This might sound like a lot but children 8-18 years old spend an average of 7 ½ hours every day using computers, video games, cell phones and watching TV and movies. Follow these tips to help your entire family get fit and have fun together!

- **Focus on fun.** You don't have to call it "exercise," just call it an activity. Find out which ones your child likes and encourage those.
- **Limit TV and computer time.** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than two hours of daily media exposure for children ages two and older. When they are watching TV or using the computer, make sure they take breaks and move around.
- **Schedule play dates.** The key word here is "play." Have your child get together with a friend and play a game of tag, race down the block or kick a ball around.
- **Get fit as a family.** Create some funny dance moves. Put up a net and shoot hoops. You could visit a park, play miniature golf or enjoy other activities where walking is required.
- **Choose gifts that encourage activity.** Give a jump-rope, mini-trampoline, hula-hoop or a bike, instead of a video game.
- **Clean up.** Chores don't have to be a bore. Sing a silly song with your child as you wipe tables and counters together. See how long both of you can hold a funny face while folding and putting away clothes. Older kids can help wash the car. On a hot day, this can turn into water play.
- **Skip the mall.** Go to the playground instead. Fresh air always does a body good.
- **Be a model of fitness.** It's easier to motivate kids to be active if you lead an active lifestyle yourself. It can encourage them to do the same.
- **Encourage walking or biking.** If you live near stores, libraries or other places you visit regularly, leave the car at home. If you live in a remote area, find a safe route to tour on bike or on foot with your child.
- **Support fitness at your child's school.** Do you know how much physical activity your child gets at school? Now is the time to find out. If you don't like the answer, gather support from other parents to promote positive changes.

For more ideas and information go to:
www.letsgo.org

What You Do For You

Is today's fast paced world changing how you eat? Do you grab a bite behind the wheel of a car? Or eat leftovers while standing in the kitchen? Busy lifestyles can rob us of the pleasure of eating.

Choose one meal a day and follow these tips to make dining what it can be, one of the most pleasant parts of the day.

Reduce stress before eating. Relax with deep breathing, a calming piece of music or a leisurely walk.

Clear Some Space. Clean areas make us more at ease. So get rid of clutter and chaos.

Turn off the TV. Computers and cell phones can distract too. Doing several things at once makes it hard to focus on the great tastes and smells of food.

Eat slowly and take smaller bites. Do nothing but enjoy the flavor, texture and smell. There's a good chance you'll feel full while eating less too. Feed more than just your stomach. Take pleasure in eating every day!

For more info: www.letsmove.gov