

TO YOUR HEALTH

Carleton-Willard Village Out-Patient Clinic - 100 Old Billerica Rd., Bedford, MA 01730

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SPRINGTIME BEGINNINGS

by Barbara Chenoweth, NP

Finally winter is over and spring is here! It's time to get outdoors, feel the fresh air and sunshine. After being cooped up for those long, cold months, it's energizing to think about getting back to outdoor activities and exercise.

With new enthusiasm to get out and start walking, it's easy to do too much too quickly. If you haven't been walking, start conservatively. In the first two to three weeks, walk at lower intensity and add time in five-minute increments. Beginning with 10 minute walks, three days a week, gradually add five minutes to the walk after one or two weeks. Next add another 5 minutes with the goal of building up to 20 - 30 minutes, 5 to 6 times each week.

Listen to your body: expect to feel some muscle soreness after adding time to your walk. If the soreness lasts more than three days, you overdid it. If you experience shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, dizziness or chest pain, stop and seek medical attention.

Preventing injuries is crucial. Choose a walking path that avoids cracked sidewalks, potholes, low-hanging limbs or uneven turf. Consider using walking poles to decrease the risk of falling.

Stay safe:

- **Be prepared:** carry a cell phone, tell someone where you will be walking

- **Carry identification** such as a note that includes your name, address or relative's phone number; wear a medical alert bracelet if you have diabetes or allergies
- **Walk in familiar areas;** walk clear of parked cars and bushes
- **Stay alert,** walk against traffic and leave ear phones at home
- **Use discretion** in acknowledging a stranger
- **Be visible;** if you walk after dark, wear reflective materials
- ***Wear your CWV ALERT button while on CWV grounds***

Dress for the occasion. Make sure that worn-out shoes are replaced. If you walk two miles a day, five days a week, you'll walk more than 500 miles in a year. Shoes should be replaced every 300 to 400 miles, even if there are not visible signs of wear, (*Walk Your Way to Fitness*, Mayo Clinic, 2011). If walking in wooded areas, wear clothing that covers your arms and legs, shirt tucked in and hat. This is the best way to avoid ticks that live in our area.

Wearing a hat also protects your face from the sun. Just as important is sun screen (number 30). Apply liberal amounts of sun screen to any exposed parts of the body. Because it wears off, it may need a second application if you are outdoors for lengthy periods of time, walking, gardening or simply sitting.

Springtime is a good time to make changes in one's eating. After winter, it is not uncommon to gain 5 pounds or more. Exercise definitely helps to get rid of those extra pounds but often exercise alone will not be successful. Making small changes in eating is more important than going on a "diet." For example, deciding not to eat sugar, snacks, desserts and candy can have an influence on weight as well as on general health. Substituting fruit and vegetables is easier in the spring and summer when fresh food is more available. For those who do well with a specific plan, *The Mayo Clinic Diet*, Good Books, 2010, emphasizes a healthy diet of real food, giving up processed food and changing eating habits. It also has a two-week "jump-start" on weight loss that proceeds a life-long plan to permanently change your relationship with food.

And finally, as the weather becomes warmer, drinking adequate fluids to avoid dehydration is essential to a healthy springtime. While daily fluid recommendations vary, most sources suggest 6 to 8 8-ounce glasses of fluid per day. Any kind of fluid works. Even foods have fluid, and they usually account for 20%. However, an hour of light to moderate exercise requires an extra two to three cups of fluid. On a hot day, extra fluid is needed to replace the fluid that is lost, even if you do not notice any sweating, (*Health After 50*, Johns Hopkins Medicine, March 2012). Know the warning signs of dehydration: dark colored urine, dry mouth, dizziness, loss of skin elasticity and rapid heart rate. Carry water when you are outside in warm weather; hydrate yourself before and after exercise.

Spring time is even good for the spirits. →

Sometimes just looking at the blue sky and sunshine lifts our hearts and gives us new energy. Enjoy this new spring!

AMAZING FACTS

The Clinic keeps tracks of the number of emergency calls that occur each year. In 2013, there were 152 emergency calls when the response team went out to a Resident's apartment or the grounds. Of the 152, 84 were because someone fell. Only 10 of the falls resulted in the person going out to the Emergency Room! Please press your **ALERT** button if you fall. Wait for help! Unless the fall is serious, you will simply be helped up!

GRIEF WORKSHOP

"*A Checklist of Practical Matters After a Death*" has been rescheduled to Friday, May 2nd. The registration and refreshments will start at 9:00am in the Rotunda and the workshop will be from 9:30 – 10:30 in the Auditorium.

HEALTH EDUCATION LECTURE

May 7, 2014
10:30 am – 11:30 am
Center Auditorium

"Alzheimer's Disease: Current Clinical Trials." This discussion will be an update on current research and will present opportunities for participation in research studies through Boston University.

BEDFORD DRUG PICK-UP

Friday, May 9, 2014
8:30 am – 12:30 pm

Please drop off any prescription or over-the-counter medications at the Clinic during these times and on the date of pick-up.