



# Health Matters Minute

JULY 2009



## The 2009 Live Well Challenge is here

Registration is under way for one of King County's most popular health events. The Live Well Challenge is open to all employees (e.g. full time, part-time, STT and TLT). Last year, almost 1,000 employees participated in this friendly, healthy competition vying for points, pride, and prizes. New this year:

**Couples Team** – Participate with your spouse/domestic partner (“spartner”). In order to participate, your spartner must be covered by King County benefits.

**Team members enter their own activity** – instead

of providing weekly point totals to their Team Captain.

**Record activities, not points** – record your activity online, and points will be automatically calculated.

Registration runs through July 19th. Due to programming changes this year, **no late registrations can be accepted**. The Live Well Challenge officially begins on July 20th and ends on August 30th, 2009. That's six weeks of fun, friendly, healthy competition! Have questions? Visit [www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters](http://www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters) or call 206-263-7333.



## Practice safe swimming this summer

What better way to beat the heat than a cool dip in a local river, lake, ocean or public pool? But take care; almost 10 people drown every day across the nation. And near-drowning accidents can leave victims with life-long disabilities. Practice safe swimming:

1. Learn to swim; practice floating and treading water
3. Don't swim in strong tides or fast running water
4. Never dive/ jump into shallow or unfamiliar water
5. Wear a lifejacket, particularly when boating

6. Swim where there's a lifeguard
7. Don't swim while under the influence of alcohol or drugs
8. Know your limits – drowning can happen when someone becomes tired
9. Wear sunblock – it won't help you float, but it will protect your skin from sun damage and skin cancer

For more swim-ready resources, visit [www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters](http://www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters) or call 206-263-6085.



## Lunch and Learn series will keep you informed about health

This January, increased co-pays and co-insurance for KingCare<sup>SM</sup> will make it more important than ever to make sure you get the right care at the right time. Health Matters is proud to present free lunch and learn sessions to help you choose the care best for you.

### In Seattle:

**Dr. Larry Mauksch — How to make the most of your 15 minutes with your doctor.**

**Thursday, July 23, noon – 1 p.m., Chinook Building Room 120**



This University of Washington professor has done in-depth research on the doctor-patient relationship and how to make the most of the limited time you have with your doctor.

### In Kent:

**Dr. Wellesley Chapman — How to get the most from your primary care doctor.**

**Thursday, July 23, noon – 1 p.m., Maleng Regional Justice Center**

Dr. Wellesley Chapman is a Family Physician and Medical Center Chief with Group Health. His philosophy: “Very simply, I put my patients at the center of their health care and work with them to define and achieve their health goals.”



For more information on other Lunch and Learn events, go to [www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters](http://www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters) and click on “Lunch and Learn”.

## Possible swine flu resurgence

Although H1N1 activity is decreasing, Public Health - Seattle & King County anticipates significantly more widespread outbreaks this fall and winter.

This is a critical time to prepare for whatever the flu might bring in the fall.

Public Health is collaborating with health care, schools and other community partners to be ready.

Individuals and families should also prepare now for possible school closures, setting up alternative child care, and absences from work.

The flu can be serious for many people. Public Health encourages you to continue to prepare and to check the Public Health site for updated information: [www.kingcounty.gov/health/H1N1](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/H1N1).

## Reduce pesticides exposure

Looking to minimize your exposure to pesticide residue? King County's Local Hazardous Waste Management Program has some tips:

**Buy organic.** Organic produce tends to have lower pesticide residues than conventionally grown produce.

**Choose U.S. grown produce.** Imported produce tends to have higher pesticide levels than U.S. grown. Try your local farmers market, local stands or U-pick farms where you can ask about pesticide use. Start a garden in your yard or join a community garden.

**Wash fruits and vegetables.** Thoroughly wash all produce under running water for at least 30 seconds. For produce with a thick, edible skin such as apples, potatoes, use a scrub brush to clean the outer layer.

Call for more information: 206-296-4692

## Healthy Incentives: improving health and curbing costs

Since inception of the Health Reform Initiative in 2005 King County employees and their partners have shown improvement in 12 of 14 health indicators. These improvements are very significant given the average age of our employees is 47. Improvements in BMI and smoking are particularly notable as these are often the most difficult changes for individuals to make.

Health-Related Behaviors	Directional Change	Biometric Measurements	Directional Change
Moderating alcohol use	■	Body weight to height ratio	■
Managing depression	■	Blood sugar	■
Preventing injuries	■	Cholesterol	■
Maintaining good mental health	■	Systolic blood pressure	■
Eating a healthy diet	■	Diastolic blood pressure	■
Exercising regularly	■		
Avoiding excess sun exposure	■		
Stopping smoking	■		
Managing stress	■		

Key: ■ Improved; ■ Stayed the same; ■ Got worse

Source: King County 2008  
DRAFT Measurement and  
Evaluation Report

## Employee resources

**The Gym Discount Program** supports you and your family to Move More. Twenty-eight organizations participate, representing almost 140 gyms. New facilities are added every month. If you are looking to join a gym, be sure to check out these discounts first. Go to [www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters](http://www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters) and click on "Gym Discount Program" or call (206) 263-6085.

**Move More** – Now is the time to enjoy this weather! Go online for a listing of local events during July including the Searfair Torchlight Run and the Searfair Triathlon. Click on "Move More" from the *Health Matters* site or call (206) 263-6085.

**Eat Smart** – Wonderful recipes await all who come to the Recipe Box. Go to the *Health Matters* site, click on "Recipe Box." This month:

**Patriotic Potato Salad.** Yum!



**Quit Tobacco** - Smoking is expensive. Quitting is free. King County offers comprehensive benefits to help you make the move. Click on "Quit Tobacco" from the *Health Matters* site or call 206-263-6085.

For more information on all these resources and others, go to [www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters](http://www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters) or call 206-205-5017.