

CONNECTIONS

MAY 2016

NEWSLETTER OF THE FULTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH (PICH) PROGRAM

Get Fit And Don't Quit!

During May, The Fulton County PICH Program is joining the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition to commemorate National Physical Fitness and Sports Month.

The PICH Team challenges everyone to make physical activity a part of their daily routine starting in May and continuing for the rest of their lives. To help Fulton County residents improve their fitness, PICH educates residents about suggested healthy lifestyle changes and works with community partners to expand access to physical activities for people of all ages.

Let's Make Every Kid Healthy

To make youngsters healthier, PICH is funding the new creative Physical Education instruction materials used in Fulton County elementary and middle schools. Sadly, one in three children aged 2 to 17 in Fulton County is estimated to be either overweight or obese. Less than half of Georgia high school students are physically active for at least an hour a day. Health experts say that if these trends continue, this generation will be the first in history to live shorter lives than their parents.

Getting 60 minutes of exercise a day can help youngsters stay fit and have an easier time maintaining healthy weight levels. Additionally, physical activity can help kids focus, improve behavior and boost positive attitudes. Research shows that students who earn mostly As are almost twice as likely to get regular physical activity as those who receive mostly Ds and Fs.

On Your Mark...

Time focused on electronic devices is time kids aren't active. Parents can make a plan to limit kids' screen time to no more than 1-2 hours a day.



Try these Tips from PICH to raise activity levels:

- remove the TV from kids' bedrooms
- encourage kids to dance, do yard work or jog while listening to downloaded tunes
- help them join a sports team or organize outdoor activities with friends and go along to cheer them on
- protect them from Zika during outdoor activities by using EPA-registered insect repellent containing DEET.

Connect With Us!

CONNECTIONS is the information-sharing vehicle for the people and organizations involved in the work of the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH) Program. PICH and its partners support the implementation of evidence-based strategies and initiatives that promote physical activity, good nutrition, smoking cessation and healthy community design with the goals of reducing health disparities, lowering the incidence of chronic disease and promoting healthier lifestyles throughout Fulton County.

To join the *CONNECTIONS* network and submit your ideas or news items, send the content plus your name, organization, title and email address to pich.grant@fultoncountyga.gov.



Start Weight Watching Early

A recent research study from University of Michigan confirms what many pediatricians and parents suspected: Toddlers who eat plenty of desserts develop sweet-tooth cravings that put them at significant risk of becoming obese. In Georgia, 13% of children aged 2 to 4 from low-income families are obese. Furthermore, 30% of early care and education providers in Fulton County do not follow healthy weight practices. PICH is funding an effort to train day care center staff in developing and implementing such protocols. Prompted by research evidence, doctors recommend that parents take sweet desserts, snacks and drinks out of children's diets and begin watching their weight at an early age.

Tip from PICH: Substitute fruit and low-sugar snacks to calm sweet-tooth cravings in kids.

ACTIVE LIVING

It's Never Too Late to Start Living Actively

Obesity and inactivity rates among Fulton County's adults also are troubling. Nearly 20% are physically inactive, a factor contributing to that group's 22% obesity rate. Staying active helps adults age gracefully by:

- lowering their risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some types of cancer
- improving their strength and balance
- reducing their chances of becoming depressed
- improving their ability to think, learn and make decisions

To help address the problem, PICH is recruiting adults in faith-based organizations as part of its Interfaith Active Living initiative. The program helps the groups create health-conscious fellowship activities. For details, call PICH at 404-612-9467 or go to the Active Living section of the PICH website listed below.

Getting Started

Experts recommend 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise five times a week for adults.

Tips from PICH: see your doctor first; start slowly; don't overdo it and use EPA-registered insect repellent containing DEET to protect yourself from Zika during outdoor exercise.



Focus on Asthma Factors

May is also Asthma Awareness Month. The symptoms are well-known: coughing, trouble breathing, wheezing and chest-tightening. Asthma, a swelling and narrowing of the airways that carry air from the nose to the mouth, is more prevalent than ever and now affects one in 14 people. It is the leading chronic disease in children and afflicts minorities disproportionately (80% higher rate for Puerto Rican-Americans and 47% higher for African Americans). Doctors list cigarette smoke, indoor allergens and poor air quality among the big reasons for rising asthma rates. To aid the fight against asthma and its risk factors, PICH is funding air-quality tests around Fulton County.