

# Health and Wellbeing Newsletter

Welcome to the Autumn 2016 Health and Wellbeing Newsletter. Since the last Newsletter the Health and Wellbeing Forum has met and a number of proactive training programmes designed at raising awareness and providing practical support and advice have been approved and will take place in September and October. Read more about our Wellbeing Champions, useful tips on keeping hydrated, the flu vaccination programme and Occupational Health and Wellbeing Week which is taking place from 17th – 21st October 2016.



## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING WEEK



Mark, Rachele and Hal from Health, Safety and Environment launch Occupational Health and Wellbeing Week!

Bigger, and even better than last year! Occupational Health and Wellbeing Week 2016 is back! Running from 17th - 21st October the Health, Safety and Environment department has extended the programme, offering health checks, talks, information and demonstrations across nine main locations. We would love for all of you to take part and enjoy as many of these checks as possible across all our depots, especially those who haven't received a health check in the past. Cancer Focus NI Van and Skin Scanners, NI Chest Heart and Stroke, Vital Nutrition, Blackwell Associates, Namaste Belfast and Cloud NI yoga are some of the organisations offering Life checks, taster classes and Health MOTs. There will also be the chance to win your very own Fitbit!

Rachele Glendinning, Safety Officer, hopes the extended programme will encourage more staff to think about their health and wellbeing and make positive changes! "We have introduced yoga this year and extended our focus on mental wellbeing with added Mindfulness sessions and Personal Resilience training. This week offers a holistic approach to your health and wellbeing, encouraging staff to take small steps towards a better diet, positive mental health and keeping active in the months ahead. We hope as many staff as possible get involved so check out the enclosed schedule and keep an eye on noticeboards and the wire for more details."

## MENTAL WELLBEING TRAINING



To help employees become more resilient, including managing overall wellbeing, we have developed a Resilience training programme for employees in conjunction with the training provider, BRC Partnership.

The Personal Resilience training will be a half day programme aimed at providing employees with strategies to become more resilient, including managing wellbeing.

Courses are available by booking through Myview. Those employees who have already registered an interest will be allocated to one of the above dates.

If you do not have access to Myview please contact Daphne Moore on 028 38368955 to book a space.

The training will take place on the following dates:

**Wednesday 28 September 2016: Carn (Large Portacabin) 9.15am – 12.15pm**

**Wednesday 12 October 2016: Dargan Conference Room 1.30pm – 4.30pm**

**Thursday 13 October 2016: Ballymena Conference Room 9.15am – 12.15pm**

### Read what's inside!

- 2** Read more about how a Fitbit is encouraging a more active lifestyle!
- 3** Learn more about signing up for the flu vaccine programme and how you can stay hydrated at work
- 4** Enter our fantastic competition to win a Fitbit and see how you can take simple steps to keep your heart healthy.

## GET FIT, GET A FITBIT!

*Denis Kelly, Metering Developments Manager talks football, Fitbits and motivation!*

As Kelvin said "If you can't measure it you can't improve it!" A liking for sport and for gadgets made a Fitbit the perfect present for me last Christmas. The app allows daily targets for exercise to be set, and the present and past day's achievements to be viewed. The Fitbit model I use also monitors heart rate and sleep quality. The standard app display shows distance covered, steps taken, floors climbed, exercise completed, a heart rate trace and calories burned.

The main benefit in having a Fitbit is that it pushes me to go that bit further when exercising, whether it is in my weekly 7-a-side match, coaching football during the week or (less enthusiastically!) during trips to the gym. Interestingly, an hour's football burns off about the same calories as two hours in the gym for me. This is probably due to a weights and stretching type gym workout compared to more stamina based exercise on the football pitch. The Fitbit is also a motivator for more casual or incidental exercise. Looking at the display in the evening and noticing you are two flights of stairs off the step target, or that you could reach a weekly distance goal by walking another 0.75k may be enough to encourage that evening walk.

The sleep quality monitor is a useful feature and the app displays both the quantity and quality of sleep gained on a bar chart. Despite seeming to clock up eight hours sleep, actual sleeping time is always less due to naturally occurring periods of restlessness and wakefulness. Indulging in a late meal, coffee, or alcohol can chip away approximately 50 minutes of quality sleep, so avoiding these things and winding down in good time seems to be the key. If you're a night Owl, at a set time Fitbit can also be programmed to tell you to wise up and get ready for bed!

*Has Denis convinced you? If so, then turn to page 4 for your chance to win a Fitbit!*



*Me and my Fitbit! Denis Kelly stepping towards his daily target!*

## CHICKEN AND CHORIZO STEW!

2 tbsp olive oil  
4 skinless chicken breasts cut into rough cubes  
1 onions, sliced  
2 cloves of garlic, crushed  
2 sticks of celery sliced  
300g butternut squash, cubed  
410g can chopped tomatoes  
300ml chicken stock  
100g chorizo, chopped  
Grated zest of 1 orange  
Fresh parsley, chopped



A healthy warming stew for those colder autumn nights, or reheat for a tasty lunch the next day!

Heat the oil in a large casserole dish and fry the chicken until golden.

Add the onion, garlic, celery and butternut squash and fry until the onion is tender, then pour over the tomatoes and stock.

Bring to the boil then cover and simmer for 35 minutes.

Add the chorizo and butter beans simmer for a further 5 minutes.

Just before serving stir in the orange zest and chopped parsley.

You can serve with jacket potatoes, brown rice or wholemeal crusty bread.

## TALKING TEAMWORK!



*Northern Ireland volleyball star, Zara Bolton (pictured front row, far right) from our Ballymena office talks about the importance of teamwork.*

From a young age, I've always had a keen interest in sport and at the age of 14 I started playing volleyball while at Dalriada School, and quickly knew it was the sport for me. This stemmed from having such an enthusiastic and encouraging coach who was also a teacher at the school. Within a year of playing volleyball, I was asked to join training sessions in Craigavon for the NI U16 Girls squad. My commitment to this squad paid off and I competed in the World Youth Games 12 months later.

The next step for me was to join the NI U19 Ladies squad which again involved training sessions in Craigavon as well as Belfast and

Ballymoney. The intensity and skill level of these sessions grew as our long term goal was to compete in the Junior European Championships Small Countries Division which were to take place in San Marino in 2009. Again, I was successful in being selected for the team travelling to the Championships which meant more frequent training sessions as well as doing our own strength and conditioning exercises and being careful about what we ate in the build up to the event. I was part of the NI Senior Women's Squad in 2010 and 2011 and, after a three year break to complete my postgrad, I rejoined in 2014 when the team was preparing for the CEV Small Country Division Women's qualifying round. Although we played well against strong teams, we didn't progress to the finals. On a positive note, we were still able to come off court with our heads held high, knowing we had done our best. We are committed to using this experience to learn, grow and develop both as individuals and as a team.

*If you are interested in learning more about getting involved in sport in your area visit [Sportni.net](http://Sportni.net)*

## WATER WATER EVERYWHERE . . .

Water is essential for life. But do I really need to drink 8 glasses of water on top of all my other drinks? Is it true that tea and coffee do not count towards my fluid intake? Well the answer to both of these questions is no! Let us see if we can clear up some of the confusion.

### Why is it important to stay hydrated?

The body depends on water for survival. Your body requires water to maintain its temperature, to remove waste and to lubricate joints. Water is a great drink choice as it delivers the fluid required without adding calories or potentially damaging teeth.

### How much water do I need?

Your body is two-thirds water, so it is really important that you consume enough water to stay hydrated and healthy. The amount of fluid you need depends on many things including how much physical activity you do, if you have a temperature, vomiting or diarrhoea, or if the weather is very hot.

Recommendations for daily water intake suggest six to eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day; a reasonable goal. For some people fewer than eight glasses may be enough while others may need more than eight glasses.

### Am I drinking enough?

If you are concerned that you may not be drinking enough water, check your urine. If your urine is consistently colourless or light yellow you are most likely staying well hydrated. Dark yellow or amber coloured urine is a sign of dehydration; increase your water intake!

### Does it matter which drinks I choose?

When you choose your drinks it is important to remember that although they all provide water and some may contain essential vitamins and minerals they may also provide energy in the form of sugar adding extra calories to your daily calorie intake. For most people, water is all that is needed to maintain good hydration. Sports drinks contain carbohydrates and electrolytes that can increase your energy and help your body absorb water, so if you are planning on exercising at a high intensity for longer than an hour, a sports drink may be helpful. Energy drinks contain large amounts of caffeine and other stimulants (e.g. guarana, ginseng or taurine). Your body does not require these and most of these drinks are also high in added sugar.

### Tips for staying hydrated

- Keep a bottle of water with you during the day.
- If you don't like the taste of plain water, try adding a slice of lemon or lime.
- Be sure to drink water before, during and after a workout.
- When you feel hungry, drink water. Thirst is often confused with hunger. True hunger will not be satisfied by drinking water.
- Remember that drinking water may also contribute to a healthy weight loss plan by helping you feel full.
- If you have trouble remembering to drink water, drink on a schedule e.g. drink water when you wake up, at breakfast, lunch and dinner and before you go to bed.



## DON'T GET THE FLU, GET THE VACCINE! . . .



NIE Networks, in conjunction with our occupational health provider, Blackwell Associates, provides a flu vaccination programme to all employees every year.

The seasonal flu vaccine protects against influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season, which begins usually around October each year.

An agreed level of vaccines has now been purchased. Qualified professionals from our Occupational Health Advisor, Blackwell Associates, will be administering the vaccine at a number of NIE Networks locations on the following dates:

Monday 24th October: **Ballymena**

Monday 31st October: **Craigavon**

Wednesday 2nd November: **Omagh**

Monday 7th November: **Campsie**

Friday 4th November: **Dargan**

Friday 11th November: **Dargan**

If you already receive the annual flu vaccine from your own GP please continue to do so.

If you haven't already registered your interest, and you are interested in receiving the flu vaccine, return the enclosed slip to Human Resources, Danesfort, indicating your preferred location and vaccination date no later than Wednesday 28 September 2016.

## THANK YOU . . .



With 78% of Employee Surveys returned the company has donated £500 each to your chosen charities, Alzheimer's Society and PIPS. In addition to this, as mental health is a focus for the Health and Wellbeing Forum, NIE Networks Staff and Pensioners Charities Fund will donate a further £2500 to each of these worthy charities. The Charities Fund will also be making further similar donations in support of other mental health charities and we will bring you news of these projects later in 2016.

## GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Keeping your heart healthy, whatever your age, is the most important thing you can do to help prevent and manage heart disease. Read our useful tips of what you can do to help maintain a healthy heart.

### Healthy Eating

A healthy diet can help reduce your risk of developing coronary heart disease and stop you gaining weight, reducing your risk of diabetes and high blood pressure.

- ✓ Eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables daily
- ✓ Eat plenty of starchy foods such as bread, rice, potatoes and pasta, choosing wholegrain varieties
- ✓ Incorporate some milk and dairy products
- ✓ Choose lean meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein
- ✓ Reduce foods and drinks high in fats and/or sugar

### Staying Active

Physical activity can help reduce your risk of heart disease. It can also help you control your weight, reduce blood pressure and cholesterol and improve your mental health, helping you to look and feel great.

- ✓ Be realistic about your goals
- ✓ Make exercise part of your day
- ✓ Keep moving
- ✓ Set reminders where you can see them
- ✓ Keep an eye on your progress
- ✓ Reward yourself

### Manage your weight

Your weight can make a real difference to your risk of heart disease. Research shows that reaching and keeping to a healthy weight cuts your risk of heart disease because it helps prevent and manage conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes that put you at greater risk of coronary heart

disease. Even if you don't have any of these conditions, it's important to keep to a healthy weight so you don't develop them in future.

### Reduce Alcohol Consumption

Drinking more than the recommended amount of alcohol can cause abnormal heart rhythms, high blood pressure, damage to your heart muscle and other diseases such as stroke, liver problems and some cancers. Alcohol is also high in calories so it can lead to weight gain. Always keep within the guidelines and try not to drink more than 14 units of alcohol each week. If you drink alcohol every day, you should aim to have some days off. Drinking large amounts of alcohol in one go can cause additional damage to your body, so avoid heavy or 'binge' drinking.

### Quit Smoking

Quitting smoking is the single best thing you can do for your heart's health. Smokers are almost twice as likely to have a heart attack compared with people who have never smoked. Stopping smoking has huge benefits and it's never too late to give up. By quitting you'll be improving your own health by dramatically reducing your risk of coronary heart disease, stroke and a variety of cancers. *To register to join our 'Quit Smoking' programme, email [Anna.McWhirter@nienetworks.co.uk](mailto:Anna.McWhirter@nienetworks.co.uk).*

### Reduce Stress

Stress is not a direct risk factor for cardiovascular disease, but it's possible that it may contribute to your risk level. Changing your lifestyle in a positive way can help you feel better able to cope with some of the demands put on you. A balanced diet and regular physical activity will help you cope with stress. Some people find that physical activity, yoga or other relaxation techniques can help.

*For further useful information about keeping your heart healthy visit [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)*

## CHAMPIONING WELLBEING!

The Health and Wellbeing Forum is pleased to publish a full list of our Wellbeing Champions. The role of the Wellbeing Champions will be to work closely with the Health & Wellbeing Forum representatives, managers and employees in their own areas to promote health and wellbeing. Responsibilities include:

- Champion the area of health and wellbeing in NIE Networks
- Lead and encourage staff members in their location/department to participate in wellbeing programmes.
- Promote team events
- Organise exciting local events
- Signpost employees to all the available resources
- Provide ideas and information on what services and initiatives would be popular with their colleagues.
- Encourage colleagues to join national health campaigns

Contact details of our Wellbeing Champions can be found on the Wire (click on HR) and local noticeboards.

## COMPETITION TIME!

We've got a fabulous FitBit to give away in this edition of the Health and Wellbeing newsletter. We want you to keep on the move, whatever the weather, and a Fitbit will help you set and attain fitness goals.

Create a logo or a strapline for the Health and Wellbeing Forum. We'll use the winning logo or strapline on future newsletters and other Health and Wellbeing initiatives.

Email or post your ideas to Julia Carson in Danesfort, [Julia.Carson@nienetworks.co.uk](mailto:Julia.Carson@nienetworks.co.uk) by the end of September 2016 for your chance to win!

## We want to hear from you!

Got some health tips to share, protein smoothie recipes or a new health article you've found online?

Share it on our new Health and Wellbeing Blog in the Knowledge Centre on the wire or email [Julia.Carson@nienetworks.co.uk](mailto:Julia.Carson@nienetworks.co.uk).