

Guidelines for a Healthy Heart and Cardiovascular System

By Ruth Brown, District Nurse

With the winter holidays rapidly approaching, following a few simple guidelines can increase our sense of well being in the short term, and in the long run, help us maintain a healthy heart and cardiovascular system.

Consider a family soccer game before your holiday feast to increase your appetite, your metabolism, and to just have fun! The American Heart Association recommends aerobic activity such as walking, jogging, biking, swimming for 30-60 minutes, five times/week to improve cardiovascular health. Just 40 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic activity 3-4 times a week can lower cholesterol and blood pressure, which reduces chances of stroke and heart attack. Don't practice the "all or none" rule. Doing 15 minutes of exercise is always better than nothing, and in the long run, is beneficial to our health.

We live in a dining and food mecca in the Bay Area, so eating out is often a temptation. Keep in mind that restaurant food contains more saturated fats, salt, and sugar, (associated with high blood pressure and cholesterol) than home-cooked meals. If you're eating out, try to select restaurants that offer "Dietician-Approved" healthy dining menu items. Fresh foods such as fruits, vegetables, chicken, fish, and beans are rich in vitamins, minerals, fiber, and nutrients that are beneficial to cardiovascular health. Try to make the majority of your meals consist of fresh foods rather than packaged, processed, and prepared. When purchasing packaged or prepared foods, read the labels so that you're aware of the hidden ingredients contained in these products.

Too much sodium increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. Salt is just one source of the sodium you consume every day. About 75 percent of sodium in the typical American diet comes from processed foods and beverages. Many foods contain sodium in other forms, too. Some medicines are high in sodium. Be aware of all your sources of sodium and aim to eat less than 1,500 mg of sodium per day.

We all know that life in the Bay Area can be highly stressful, which can increase habits such as overeating, drinking, smoking, all factors associated with heart disease. Finding time to decompress and reduce stress is critical to good health. Talking with friends, meditation, yoga, exercise, or just finding time for recreation and relaxation should be a regular part of our daily routine.

For more information about maintaining a healthy cardiovascular system, I suggest visiting the American Heart Association website, which is a wealth of information. Always feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns.

Best wishes to all for a healthy, happy holiday season!

Featured Articles...



Employee health benefits Q&A with Sonia Ramirez de Figueroa

Page 2



Teen Talk is now Health Connected!

Page 2



Update on Sequoia Health Care District's Healthy Schools Initiative

Page 3



Need some ideas for healthy holiday treats?

Page 4

Save the Date: Youth Heart Screening

Free screening for students on March 22, 2015

We are excited to host the Sequoia Healthcare District's Youth Heart Screening event on March 22, 2015 at Sequoia High School. Students ages 12 to 19 are eligible to receive a free heart screening, which detects undiagnosed heart conditions and has the potential to save lives! Follow the Sequoia Union High School District on Facebook and Twitter to stay up-to-date on the latest information!



Like us on [FB.com/SeqUHSD](https://www.facebook.com/SeqUHSD)



Follow us [@SeqUHSD](https://twitter.com/SeqUHSD)

If you would like more details about WAC or are interested in attending a meeting, please contact Dr. Karen Li at kli@seq.org.

benefits@seq

With Sonia Ramirez de Figueroa
Human Resources/Benefits

Q: Does the SUHSD provide staff Vision benefits?

Sonia: Yes, the district contracts with VSP to provide services that support eye health.

Q: What types of services and products does the vision benefit cover?

Sonia: Coverage with a VSP Doctor includes an annual WellVision Exam and savings on prescription glasses, frames, contact lens care, and other services. Information can be found at seq.org under benefits.

Q: Are family member's vision needs also covered?

Sonia: Yes, a staff member's spouse is covered. The maximum age for dependent children under VSP is age 19, or age 24 for full-time students taking 12 units or more.

Q: If I have an HMO like Kaiser, should I use VSP?

Sonia: It would be your decision as an employee to use Kaiser or VSP for vision care.

Q: What dental plan does the district provide?

Sonia: Delta Dental Plan of California is our provider, and details of coverage can be found at seq.org under benefits. There is no deductible, with an in-network maximum of \$2200 per person per calendar year.

Q: Are routine check-ups and teeth cleaning covered by our dental plan?

Sonia: Diagnostic and preventative services like exams, cleanings and x-rays are covered at 80%.

Q: Are there any waiting periods for dental services that I should consider?

Sonia: The district's plan has no waiting periods for covered basic benefits, major benefits, or orthodontics.

Q: Are family members eligible for dental services under our plan?

Sonia: In addition to the primary enrollee (staff member), your spouse (includes domestic partner) and eligible dependent children to age 19 or to age 24 if dependent is a full-time student (12 or more units), are eligible for coverage.

NOTE: Starting Jan 1, HMO members may access both chiropractic and acupuncture services. Refer to the CalPERS 2015 health benefits summary at seq.org.

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A Collaborative Project: Counting Carbs with San Francisco State University

By Nora DeCaro, Director of Food Services

San Francisco State University Nursing Students Gina Thelen, Lilly Ho, Victoria Pearce and Sequoia Healthcare District Dietitian Jennifer Gabet working on a carbohydrate counting project with Nora DeCaro (not pictured) for the Sequoia Union High School District Food Service Program. This collaboration also included Dr. Karen Li and the school nurses. The project goal is to provide key information needed by diabetic students across the district.



TEEN TALK SEXUALITY EDUCATION IS NOW HEALTH CONNECTED

In September 2014, one of SUHSD's close partners, Teen Talk Sexuality Education, changed its name to Health Connected.



Teen Talk, now Health Connected, provides comprehensive sexual health education to roughly 2,000 SUHSD students every year. While serving youth throughout San Mateo County remains a central part of their work, over the last several years their parent support programs and trainings for education professionals have also expanded and developed. Their new name is a reflection of that growth.

Health Connected will serve as an "umbrella" for all of their sexual health programs. They will retain Teen Talk as the name of their flagship youth services program, which served well over 6,000 students (through direct teaching and through community events) in the 2013-14 school year, along with Parent Talk, their parent services program, and their Training & Technical Assistance program for education professionals.

We look forward to our on going partnership with Health Connected to ensure that SUHSD students continue to get engaging, effective sexual health programming.

WAC Executive Committee Members:

- Nora DeCaro, Director of Food Services
- Gigi Kruse-Silva, Carlmont High School teacher
- Karen Li, M.D., District Wellness Coordinator
- Charlene Margot, Parent Education Series, Founder/ Program Director
- Maureen Rafferty, District Nurse
- Dana Schuster, MS, Health and Fitness Instructor
- Marie Violet, Director, Sequoia Hospital Health and Wellness Center

Update on Sequoia Healthcare District's Healthy Schools Initiative

By Gwen Hautefeuille, Web and Social Media, Sequoia Healthcare District

Sequoia Healthcare District launched the Healthy Schools Initiative (HSI) in 2010 to assist schools in supporting healthy school environments that foster the social, emotional, and physical well being of their students and staff. Based on the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Coordinated School Health Model (CSH), the Initiative supports School Nurses, Counselors, Physical Education Coaches, Outreach Specialists and Wellness Coordinators as well professional development, health curriculum, and community programs that provide an array of school-based services.

Recognizing the importance of this role, Sequoia Healthcare District is excited to welcome four new Wellness Coordinators who will serve the Menlo Park City School District, Las Lomas Elementary School District, Portola Valley School District, and Woodside Elementary School District, in addition to the four Wellness Coordinators serving San Carlos School District, Belmont-Redwood Shores School District, Sequoia Union High School District and Redwood City School District.

HSI and Community Grants Information Meeting

By Pamela Kurtzman, Director of Grants and Programs, Sequoia Healthcare District

Sequoia Healthcare District will be holding two grants information sessions for non-profit or government agencies that are seeking funding for their health related community or school-based programs. The sessions will be held on Tuesday, Jan 6th at 9:30 a.m. and on Thursday, Jan 8th at 4 p.m. at the Sequoia Healthcare District Offices located at 525 Veterans Boulevard, Redwood City. District staff will provide an overview of their Caring Community and Healthy Schools Initiative Grants Programs and explain how to apply for the 2015-16 grants cycle. If you would like to attend one of the sessions, please sign up at:

sequoiahealthcaredistrict.com/rsvp-2015-16-grants-information-sessions/

SEQUOIA HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

By Mike Johansen, StarVista

StarVista's Youth Development Initiative promotes and advocates for the healthy development of youth in the community. As part of this initiative, Sequoia High School's Youth Advisory Board (YAB) serves as a vehicle for developing youth and adult partnerships. Each year, the Youth Advisory Board offers a Needs Assessment Survey (NAS) to Sequoia students that is written and administered by YAB members and supported and funded by adult allies. The NAS seeks to identify and report on the major areas of need that most impact the Sequoia campus and its community. In addition, survey data allows YAB students to create their own student-led projects and campaigns to address critical issues. For more information, contact mjohansen@seq.org. To read the full article discussing the results of the Needs Assessment Survey, visit: <http://www.seq.org/?id=164>.

Parent Education Series Tackles Tough Issues

By Charlene Margot, The Parent Education Series, Founder/Program Director

Since 2007, The Parent Education Series—now with programs at Menlo-Atherton, Sequoia, and Woodside High Schools—has offered parent education programming designed to support the mental, physical, and social-emotional health and well-being of students in the Sequoia Union High School District. Over the past six years, more than 10,000 parents, students, and community members have attended Parent Education Series events. The Parent Ed Series is now a district-wide initiative with plans to extend parent education to all schools in the SUHSD. As always, the Series is grateful to the Sequoia Healthcare District and the Sequoia Union High School District for their continued support.

Since the beginning, founder and program director Charlene Margot has been willing to tackle tough issues facing parents and teens today. Often asked to explain how she selects topics for Parent Education events, Charlene explains that she keeps a close watch on what is happening with kids and parents in our community. In response to the heartbreak of recent teen suicides in Palo Alto, the Parent Education Series has addressed sensitive subjects like adolescent depression/anxiety, sexual health, gender identity/sexual orientation, parenting student athletes ("the long ride home"), and reducing the stress of college admissions. Highlights this fall include programs on "The Perseverance Process" at M-A, "Performing Gender: Why It's Important to Support Your Teen's Identity" at Sequoia, and "The Second Goal Parent: Building a Positive Experience for Student Athletes" at Woodside.

Parent Education Series events are free and sponsored by the Sequoia Healthcare District and the Sequoia Union High School District, along with the Menlo-Atherton PTA, the Sequoia HS Education Foundation, and the Woodside PTSA. For more information, contact Charlene Margot, Program Director, at cmargot@csmconsulting.net or 650.868.0590.

Sequoia Union High School District is now on Facebook and Twitter

By Steven Tsujisaka, Social Media Intern

We are excited to announce that the Sequoia Union High School District is now on social media! Please take a minute to follow us on Facebook ([FB.com/SeqUHSD](https://www.facebook.com/SeqUHSD)) and Twitter [@SeqUHSD](https://twitter.com/SeqUHSD) and share the news with your students so you all can stay up-to-date with the latest events and district news.

Food Advisory at Club Days

By Dana Schuster, WAC Community Member

Members of the Food Advisory Executive Committee (FACE), along with additional WAC volunteers, staffed a table at each of the four comprehensive high schools' Club Rush days. The focus at our table was to provide information about the district Food Services program, promote water consumption, distribute reusable water bottles to 9th grade students, and assess student knowledge of the location of their campus water bottle filling stations.

Menus, information about the weekly specials, suggestions for helping the lunch lines move more efficiently, and maps of the food service windows were distributed to students. Most of the students we spoke with not only knew of the location of their water stations, they also indicated that they used them regularly. Students would like to have additional locations to fill water bottles, and shared their suggestions as to where on campus these might best be placed.

As staff members, do you know where the water bottle filling stations are located on the school campuses? We hope that you are also using them to fill up your water bottles and stay hydrated...let us know!

Soft Baked Banana Breakfast Cookies



Ingredients:

3 very ripe bananas, mashed, 1/4 cup coconut oil (melted), 1 cup old fashioned oats, 1/4 cup wheat germ, 2/3 cup almond meal, 1/4 cup pure maple syrup, 1/2 cup rough chopped walnuts, 1/2 tsp baking powder, 1 tsp vanilla, and 1/2 cup unsweetened flaked or shredded coconut.

Step 1: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two sheet trays with parchment paper and set aside.

Step 2: In a large bowl, mix together the mashed banana, melted coconut oil, vanilla and maple syrup. In a smaller bowl, combine the oats, wheat germs, almond meal, baking powder, walnuts and coconut. Add dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and stir well.

Step 3: Drop extra large spoonfuls of batter onto prepared cookie sheets. Bake for 16-18 minutes until golden.

*Recipe and image courtesy Eat Live Run

Fresh Cranberry Relish



Ingredients:

12 oz. cranberries
1 1/2 cups sugar
1/4 cup water
1/2 cup orange juice
grated zest of 1/2 an orange

In a large pan, mix together all the ingredients, and cook uncovered, over a medium heat, for five minutes, until most of the cranberries have popped open and the mixture has thickened. At the beginning you will need to stir the mixture, until the sugar has dissolved.

Leave to cool, and serve. This can be made a few days in advance and stored in a jar in the fridge.

*Adapted by Mel Bebbington, based on A Joy of Cooking recipe