

Healthy Options for yourself as well as ways Lions can participate in healthy initiatives in your community.

Dear Lions

In my last newsletter I stressed the importance of having regular checkups as a preventative measure for good health. I wonder how many Lions took up the challenge. This year is flying by and before you know it, we will be welcoming 2014 and if we don't look after ourselves, who will?

So first things first. Summer is around the corner and in the warmer, longer, lazier days of summer, the living may not be easy, but your life hopefully feels less chaotic. That's why this is a perfect time to improve your health in a fashion so seasonally laid back you'll barely notice the effort.

To get you started to boost personal health I sourced eight tips for a healthier you:-

1. Give Your Diet a Berry Boost -If you do one thing this summer to improve your diet, have a cup of mixed fresh berries -- blackberries, blueberries, or strawberries -- every day. They'll help you load up on antioxidants, which may help prevent damage to tissues and reduce the risks of age-related illnesses. Blueberries and blackberries are especially antioxidant-rich. A big bonus: Berries are also tops in fiber, which helps keep [cholesterol](#) low and may even help prevent some cancers.

2. Get Dirty -- and Stress Less To improve your stress level, plant a small garden, cultivate a flower box, or if space is really limited, plant a few flower pots -- indoors or out. Just putting your hands in soil is "grounding." And when life feels like you're moving so fast your feet are barely touching the stuff, being mentally grounded can help relieve physical and mental stress.

3. Floss Daily - You know you need to, now it's time to start: floss every single day. Do it at the beach (in a secluded spot), while reading on your patio, or when watching TV -- and the task will breeze by. Flossing reduces oral bacteria, which improves overall body health, and if oral bacteria is low, your body has more resources to fight bacteria elsewhere.

4. Get Outside to Exercise - Pick one outdoor activity -- going on a hike, taking a nature walk, playing games such as tag with your kids, cycling, roller blading, or swimming -- to shed that cooped-up feeling of gym workouts. And remember, the family that plays together not only gets fit together -- it's also a great way to create bonding time.

5. Be Good to Your Eyes -To protect your vision at work and at play, wear protective eyewear. When outdoors, wear sunglasses that block at least 99% of ultraviolet A and B rays. Sunglasses can help prevent [cataracts](#), as well as wrinkles around the eyes. And when playing sports or doing tasks such as mowing the lawn, wear protective eyewear.

6. Vacation Time! - Improve your heart health: take advantage of summer's slower schedule by using your vacation time to unwind. - Vacations have multiple benefits: They can help lower your blood pressure, heart rate, and stress hormones such as cortisol, which contributes to a widening waist and an increased risk of [heart disease](#).

7. Alcohol: Go Lite - Summer's a great time to skip drinks with hard alcohol and choose a light, chilled alcoholic beverage. A sangria (table wine diluted with juice), a cold beer, or a wine spritzer are all

refreshing but light. In moderation -- defined as one to two drinks daily -- alcohol can protect against heart disease.

8. Sleep Well - Resist the urge to stay up later during long summer days. Instead pay attention to good sleep hygiene by keeping the same bedtime and wake-up schedule and not drinking alcohol within three hours of bedtime.

Now looking how we can be of service to our community – what about Clubs getting involved with a special health project. The Cansa association is currently promoting “ Cuppa for Cansa” and there are so many ways in which we can assist our local Cansa office in raising awareness and most importantly funds for this wonderful NGO. Lions can host teas in their homes individually or as part of a club project and even small amounts raised go a long way to assist. Log onto the Cansa Website for exciting ideas and ways to assist. www.cansa.org.za There are even prizes for innovative ideas for this project.

The SA Diabetes Association hosts an innovative project where they take children who have recently been diagnosed with Diabetes on a weekend camp . This frightening condition is lifechanging for the Diabetic Child and whole family and the innovative camp includes all family members who are given information and assistance so that their lives can become relatively normal and coping strategies are learnt. Diabetes is a debilitating disease in so many ways as the costs are prohibitive and because it is imperative that the diabetic complies with the medication, as well as a stringent diet, the cost of the camp is in the region of R20 000.00. Lions Clubs can contribute in whatever way they wish to assist the Diabetic Association to meet the costs of this initiative. Donations can be made to the District Project account - please ensure that you state what the donation is earmarked for so that your club can be acknowledged.

A healthy Lion is able to achieve so much more , so be kind to yourself, pace yourself and listen to your body.

Warm Regards

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