



# WELLNESS

Inspire • Support • Achieve

*A newsletter for wellness information, events and celebrations!*

Volume I

April, 2009

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***Got a wellness  
question, idea  
or story?***

Your input is  
important.

Send  
your email to:

**WellnessIn-Box  
@sanjoseca.gov**



## A Prescription for Wellness



*Rajiv Das, M.D., MPH  
Employee Health Services*

Last month, I described my concept of health and wellness as being able to do what we want to do, when we want to do it. This month, let’s begin to think about how to keep doing what we want, well into our senior years.

The average life span in the United States keeps increasing every year. Americans are now expected to live an average of 76 years. What sort of quality of life do you want in these later years? How do you want to *feel* at 76?

Some of us might think that if we don’t take care of ourselves, well then, we’ll just die sooner. Studies show that this logic doesn’t work, since we very often still live a long time, but will experience a lower quality of life. The lasting effects of lifestyle diseases that develop in our younger years remain in place if a change is not made.

The existence of presumed longevity requires responsibility. It’s often our lifestyle; the food and exercise choices we make, that will predispose us to getting sick and staying sick. Lack of general health puts us at risk for heart attacks, strokes, cancer, diabetes, etc.

Awareness of the cause and effect of self-imposed health problems, as well as the motivation and opportunity to correct poor habits, can be key to living a long, healthy life and *enjoying* it.

***“It’s often our lifestyle; the food and exercise choices we make, that will predispose us to getting sick and staying sick.”***

My wellness prescription for all of us:

- Eat consciously and healthfully
- Consume alcohol in moderation.
- Exercise regularly
- Don’t smoke

Following these simple guidelines can help to tip the balance of health in your favor and increase the likelihood that you’ll achieve a healthy old age!!!

If you have specific medical questions you would like to discuss with me or my EHS staff of nurse practitioners, please call us at (408) 277-4177.

**Get Back on Your Bike!**  
Prepare to participate in the next:



(See page 2 for more...)

## DOT Employee Loses a Bad Habit—and Gains

Dale Bennett, a 25-year Department of Transportation veteran quit smoking and gained 25 pounds. Sound familiar? Ex-smokers will often substitute one habit for another, sometimes replacing cigarettes with food. But Dale’s story can’t be counted as one of those sad statistics – Dale lost his smoking habit and gained 25 lbs of muscle!

What can cause a rough-hewn, but sedentary, heavy equipment operator to realize he needed to make a lifestyle change? In this case, it was a young son’s comment about Dad’s lack of physical fitness that did the trick for Dale 10 years ago.

Dale took this new self-awareness seriously, adding his own personal goal of building muscle onto his (self-professed), formerly slight, physical self. He first began by using the fitness equipment that’s available for employees at the Mabury yard. Not really seeing any progress, Dale sought out important weight coaching advice from his friend Dan Suriaga, another employee with considerable personal experience in fitness & weight training.

Dale understood that if he was really going to make healthful changes, he’d have to lose some of his bad habits. With a strong personal commitment, Dale was successful at turning his back on cigarettes and overriding the “iron-grip” craving for nicotine.

Dale also consciously improved his consumption of fruits, veggies and whole grains and began the process of building himself into an individual of considerable health and wellness. Since his journey began, Dale’s attained a lean and strong physique by placing a personal priority on how he physically feels and looks. Dale reports that not only does he look and feel great, he also recently reached a lifetime goal by bench-pressing 300 lbs! This is over *twice* his body weight. This is quite an achievement for any man, and it’s particularly notable for one who’s also fond of yoga, an unexpected twist of cross-training enrichment.

In his free time, you can find Dale sharing his love of physical activity in the outdoors with his wife and adult children, enjoying a favorite hike in Pinnacles Nat’l Monument or bicycling together along a coastal salt-sprayed beach path.

Thank you Dale, for sharing your inspirational lifestyle change and wellness accomplishment!

**..... Get Back on Your Bike for Bike to Work Day .....**


**Need help to get ready? Attend a free lunch-hour seminar!**

**California’s Bike to Work Day is Thursday, May 14, 2009.**

Get ready to ride by attending a free “Get Back on Your Bike” (GBYB) lunch-hour seminar. This presentation is designed for adults who learned to ride bikes as a child, but perhaps haven’t ridden much as an adult and would like to start riding again. Preparing to ride on [Bike to Work Day](#) is a great reason to get back on your bike!

GBYB info will focus on practical tips for commuting, shopping, and having fun on your bike. Discussion will include what to look for when buying a bicycle, how to ride in traffic, how to take your bike on public transit, etc. **Advance registration required.** To register, email [john.brazil@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:john.brazil@sanjoseca.gov) indicate the date you will attend:

• Wed., May 6, 2009	Room TBD	12 Noon—1 p.m.
• Thurs., May 7, 2009	Room TBD	12 Noon—1 p.m.
• Fri., May 8, 2009	Room TBD	12 Noon—1 p.m.



**BIKE TO WORK DAY**  
MAY 14, 2009

**Join weekly downtown - “Casual Friday” - Bike-to-Lunch rides!**

This casual riding group usually gathers at noon each Friday in the Bamboo Garden at City Hall. Bring your bike, helmet, & lock. Participants determine nearby destination. No RSVP is required.