



AHW Weeks 1 & 2

Health Assessment & SMART Goals



The first step in this health and fitness challenge is to make it personal; and ask yourself “Am I healthy?” in a holistic sense. You may be thinking about your weight or state of fitness based on how your clothes fit. Can you get out and enjoy being active without gasping for breath or experiencing pain in your muscles or joints? What are your numbers – pulse rate, blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose? Maybe you have recently been diagnosed with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or pre-diabetes; and that your weight or lifestyle could be a contributing factor. Maybe you’ve had an injury and found your recovery to be slower and more challenging than you anticipated. Let’s take a few minutes to have an honest talk with ourselves about our current health and lifestyle.

Chronic diseases – such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes – are among the most prevalent, costly, and preventable of all health problems. Leading a healthy lifestyle (avoiding tobacco use, being physically active, and eating well) greatly reduces a person’s risk for developing chronic disease.

Look at the table for the leading causes of death in Colorado. Age and family history, key risk factors such as diet, exercise, smoking, obesity and other lifestyle habits play a role in the development of chronic diseases. Not only is it important to recognize the risk factors but also Making sure you are staying on top of your health must also include an annual check-up and regular health screenings that are recommended according to your age, medical history and family history. By ignoring this very important recommendation by doctors, you could be putting your life in jeopardy. Everyone should receive the following health screenings; skin cancer, colonoscopy and blood work.

2013 Leading Causes of Death in Colorado

1. Cancer
2. Heart Disease
3. Unintentional injuries
4. Chronic lower respiratory diseases
5. Cerebrovascular diseases (strokes)
6. Alzheimer’s disease
7. Suicide
8. Diabetes mellitus
9. Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
10. Influenza and pneumonia

Skin Cancer- Monthly, you should check your skin for any change in size, color, texture or shape of a mole, freckle or spot, or for any new marks, as these changes could suggest carcinoma or melanoma, both types of skin cancer. A spouse or someone close to you can help you check your back or hard-to-see places for the same. It is wise to have a dermatologist do a whole-body check of existing freckles and spots to help identify if anything needs further evaluation.

Colonoscopy- A colonoscopy is important for those around the age of 50 and then every 10 years afterward, unless a personal or family history suggests more frequent testing. This screening will identify polyps early so they can be removed before they become life-threatening with colon cancer.

Blood Work- An annual check of blood pressure, and a blood draw showing cholesterol and fasting glucose are important for disease prevention. Blood work also may include checks for hormone levels, liver enzymes, electrolytes and other indicators for doctors. Blood glucose levels can indicate if you are at risk for diabetes. With cardiovascular disease being the number one killer, it would be beneficial to know if you are at risk early, so that you can take measures to decrease that risk.

Eye Exam- A thorough eye exam is recommended to identify conditions, such as glaucoma, early. Glaucoma is a disease of the eye with increased pressure within the eyeball causing changes in the optic disc and therefore vision loss.

The following are health screenings for **women**:

Cervical Cancer Screenings- Most pre-menopausal women have a pelvic exam each year. A pelvic exam can help detect growths on the ovaries and a Pap smear can detect pre-cancerous cells indicating a risk for cervical cancer. The same type of screening should begin after menopause and be followed by three PAP smears over a 10-year period.

Thyroid or TSH Test- A blood test will measure the amount of thyroid-stimulating hormone produced by the body. Thyroid disease is caused by the body over producing or under-producing the hormone, causing many symptoms. The TSH score can indicate to doctors whether medication is needed to treat the disease. Annual TSH tests are recommended for women 60 and older, for men it is recommended to start at the age of 70.

Mammogram- This screening for breast cancer should begin when a woman is in her 40's and should continue every year or two. A mammogram image taken before a woman is symptomatic may show a gray or white shaded area, the hallmark feature of cancer cells. Thus, early detection means better treatment outcomes. A diagnostic mammogram is also done if a lump or other indication of breast cancer is found. Remember to do frequent self-exams, checking for lumps in the breasts and armpit, to help with early detection.

Bone Density Test- The DXA scan or densitometry is used to determine if one has osteoporosis or is at risk for the bone disease. This scan should begin for women at the age of 60 if they are at increased risk for fractures or have low body weight; otherwise the test is started at the age of 65. There is not a set parameter for how often the test should be given after that, so discuss a schedule with your doctor.

The following are screenings for **men**:

PSA Test- Doctors recommend that a baseline for the prostate specific antigen be established at the age of 40. A higher PSA score indicates a higher risk of prostate cancer. If there is a family history, or high PSA score then annual screens are recommended. Otherwise, discuss a schedule with your doctor, which may mean re-screening every two years. Again, catching prostate cancer early makes it treatable and has therefore, caused the number of prostate cancer deaths to decline.

AAA Screening- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm is a weakened, bulging spot in your abdominal aorta, the artery that runs through the middle of your abdomen and supplies blood to the lower half of your body. An ultrasound of the abdomen can detect this condition and should be done at least one time between the ages of 65 and 75, especially if they have smoked or have a first-degree relative with an AAA repair.

If you can answer “yes” for having risk factors for chronic disease or are currently battling any of the listed chronic diseases, the 12 week challenge is a good way to address some of these health issues. It is also a great opportunity to work on habits you would like to improve. Making one or two small, measurable goals will start you out on the right track for better health.

Setting Goals can be a valuable tool and will help you maintain direction and provide measurable results for any type of behavioral change. One template you can use is the SMART acronym:

Specific- what will you do, when will you do it, where will you do it?

Measurable- this is the way you will measure success, for example, how often will you run a mile?

Attainable- set a goal that you know is realistic, this prevents discouragement

Realistic- make the goal practical given your circumstances

Timely- address when you will start and when you will reach your goal

Example: Starting today, I will walk for 30 minutes after dinner at a quick pace, and I will do it 5 times in the next week.

The activities with this lesson in the Putting It into Action will provide some options to help guide you in health assessment, goal setting, and self-monitoring tools. So, tie on your tennis shoes and get to work. Only you can change your health for life!



To Learn More:

Mayo Clinic- More Information on Health Screenings- <http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures>

Live Eat Play Colorado – Tools for Disease Management -

<http://www.liveeatplay.colostate.edu/eat/disease-mgmt/index.php#.VJBU8HvikZA>

National Institutes of Health – Health Information: <http://health.nih.gov/>

2017 A Healthier Weigh

Putting It into Action

Weeks 1 and 2

Choose one of the following activities to apply what you learned about your health and your healthy goal setting. Write a short paragraph (3 to 5 sentences) to describe what you did and learned from the activity selected. Report your Putting It Into Action results by email, fax or hard copy to your county Extension Office. Each team member who completes this by the deadline will earn 25 bonus points for the team.

Option 1: S.M.A.R.T. Goals to Make a Change:

A goal should provide guidance and direction. Goals like ‘lose weight’, ‘eat better’, or ‘have less stress’ are far too vague and unspecific to help very much in making change. Use the S.M.A.R.T. criteria to help put more detail into your goal. Spending some time creating effective goals will be a huge help later on. <http://longevity.about.com/od/makeachange/p/smartgoal.htm>

Option 2: Health Screenings

Select a minimum of two different screenings to take a deeper look at. Explain why you chose these two screenings and if you have had any previous experience with these screenings. Also, if you are not schedule for any of the above screenings and you meet the age range, please speak with your doctor about if these are right for you and when to schedule.