



# Indian Health Service/California Area Office Patient Newsletter

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## Area Director's Message Ms. Margo Kerrigan, MPH

### Physical Fitness and Sports

Fitness and sports are about celebrating, commemorating, and affirming life, even when shadowed by tragedy. This was demonstrated during the original Olympic marathon in 1896. The event was to commemorate a fabled battle messenger's long run to carry news of a victory home. The Boston Marathon continued this sentiment by being held on Patriots Day, in honor of Paul Revere. To affirm life after the horrific bombings in 1995, the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon was established.

We can choose to celebrate physical fitness and sports by being as physically active as we can personally be. We can help raise awareness about the benefits of physical activity, both at home and in our larger community. The benefits of physical activity are immense, and research continues to reveal more physical, emotional, and spiritual benefits. Here are a few benefits of

physical fitness:

- For children and adolescents, it improves muscular, bone, and heart health fitness and focuses attention
- For adults, it lowers risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer, and obesity
- For older adults, it lowers risk of falls and improves cognitive functioning.

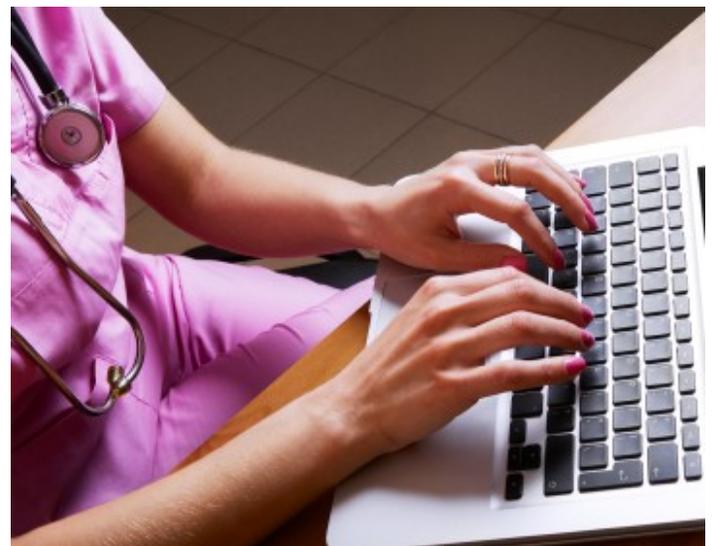
There are many resources for communities interested in physical fitness and sports. The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans provides science-based recommendations to help achieve a range of health benefits. Tribal and urban Indian communities are sharing what works locally regarding physical fitness on the Just Move It website. The Let's Move and Let's Move in Indian Country are America's initiatives to raise a healthier generation of kids, which includes being physically active on most days.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Health Information Exchange By Marilyn Freeman, RHIA

The ability to exchange health information will improve healthcare quality and safety. With this in mind, the Indian Health Service has developed a Health Information Exchange (HIE) to improve healthcare for American Indians/Alaska Natives. The IHS HIE provides a complete view of a patient's health information by allowing for the secure exchange of information within and outside of a facility. This increases patient safety, reduces medical errors, enhances decision-making, and increases the effectiveness of treatments. Plus, the data is protected and remains private and confidential.

For more information about the benefits of an HIE, listen to Regina Holliday talk about how her husband's life could have been saved if medical information had been immediately available to his healthcare providers: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msBYOYYeHPw>.



## West Nile Virus

By Susan Ducore, RN, BSN, MSN, PHN

More than 30,000 people in the United States have been reported suffering with West Nile Virus disease and over 1,200 have died from it. West Nile Virus is most commonly spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected with the virus from feeding on infected birds and then pass the virus to other animals and to humans when they bite. Everyone who spends time outside is at risk of contracting the disease. The more time spent outdoors, the higher the chance that you will be bitten by an infected mosquito.

Symptoms of West Nile Virus may include fever, headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Some may develop a serious neurologic illness that causes inflammation of the brain or surrounding tissues. About 10% of people who develop neurologic infection due to West Nile Virus will die.

People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, and organ transplants, are at greater risk for serious illness. These individuals may need to be hospitalized to receive treatment. Persons who have milder illness generally will recover without treatment, but may suffer with symptoms for several weeks.

There are no medications to treat West Nile Virus and there are no vaccines to prevent it. The best way to avoid the disease is to prevent mosquito bites by following these tips:

- When outdoors, use insect repellent containing an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered active ingredient such as DEET. Follow the directions on the package
- Dusk and dawn are times when mosquitoes tend to be most active so be sure to use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants at these times or consider staying indoors during these hours
- Remove mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets and barrels. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths weekly. Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out. Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when they aren't being used

For more information, visit:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/WestNileVirus/>

## Preventing Heat Stroke

By Christine Brennan, MPH

Heat stroke, also called sun stroke, is a condition where the body becomes overheated. If not treated very quickly, heat stroke can be fatal. Heat stroke occurs when a person's body temperature rises too rapidly and the individual isn't able to sweat fast enough to cool the body down. This often results from a combination of prolonged exposure to high temperatures and dehydration. When a person suffers heat stroke, their body temperature can rise to 105 degrees or higher within 10 to 15 minutes.

Infants, toddlers, and the elderly are the most vulnerable to heat stroke due to their bodies being unable to regulate temperature well. Certain health conditions, such as heart disease, kidney disease, obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes can also put someone at great risk for heat stroke. There are quite a few prescription medications that are also associated with an increased risk. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are on medication and will be exposed to excessive or prolonged high temperature, such as during a heat wave, to determine if you are at increased risk of heat stroke.

Symptoms of heat stroke include:

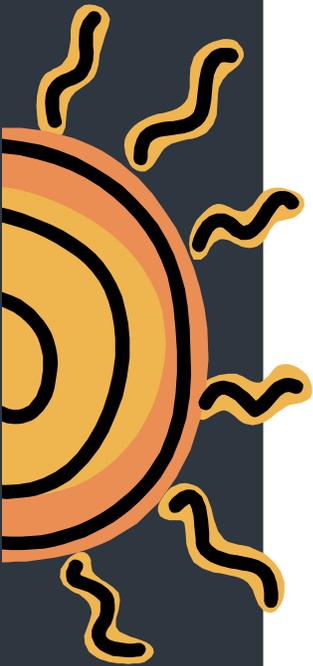
- Body temperature of 105 or higher
- Headache
- Dizziness and/or lightheadedness
- Red, hot, and dry skin (lack of sweating)

- Nausea
- Rapid heartbeat
- Confusion or disorientation
- Unconsciousness

If you think someone is suffering from heat stroke, call 911 immediately. Also, try to cool the person's temperature as quickly as possible by keeping the person shaded; fanning air over the person while wetting him/her down with cool water; applying ice packs to the patient's armpits, groin, neck, and back; or, placing the individual in a cold tub or shower.

The best way to prevent heat stroke is to stay in a location where air-conditioning is available during high temperatures. If that is not possible, follow these steps to prevent heat stroke:

- Wear light-weight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing
- Drink extra water, fruit juice, vegetable juice, or a sports drink that is rich in electrolytes (avoid drinks containing caffeine or alcohol)
- Avoid exercising outside during the hottest part of the day
- Wear sunscreen (30 SPF or higher)
- Monitor urine color, as dark urine is a sign of dehydration



## Physical Fitness and Sports (continued from page 1)

Resources and reasons to be physically active are plentiful. Consequences of not being physically active can be severe. Deciding to be as physically active as you personally can be isn't necessarily easy, but it is something you can decide to do.

For more information and motivation, visit:

- Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans  
<http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/>
- Just Move It  
[www.justmoveit.org](http://www.justmoveit.org)
- Let's Move!  
<http://www.letsmove.gov/>
- Let's Move! In Indian Country  
<http://www.doi.gov/letsmove/indiancountry/index.cfm>



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## Outdoor Food Safety By Elizabeth Berger, Environmental Health Intern

Summer is here and, despite the heat, many will spend time at picnics and grilling with family and friends outdoors. Since illness-causing bacteria thrive in warm, moist weather, summer presents a big challenge for keeping your food safe. Despite this, there is plenty you can do to prevent bacterium from entering or growing in your food. Here are some tips to keep your food safe:

Before taking food outside:

- Prepare as much food as you can inside a clean kitchen
- Wash your hands and any dishware which will come in contact with food
- Rinse off any vegetables and fruit that are not already prepared
- Keep marinating or defrosting foods in the refrigerator
- Keep cold foods in the refrigerator as long as possible
- Cover all foods before taking them outside to avoid pests

#### Cooking Temperatures:

Reheating food	165° F
Chicken, stuffed meat	165° F
Ground beef	155° F
Steaks, fish, and pork	145° F

When grilling:

- Preheat your grill before placing food on it
- Use a thermometer to make sure you cook foods to the correct temperature and kill all bacteria
- Use separate dishes and utensils for raw and cooked foods

- Eat the food as soon as possible to prevent it from going into the **Danger Zone** (where food is at the optimal temperature for bacteria to grow, between 41° F and 145° F)
- Leave leftovers outside for no more than two hours and no more than one hour if the temperature outside is over 90° F

When packing for a picnic:

- Bring separate coolers for your drinks and food, in order to keep your food cold while having easily accessible drinks
- Pack coolers with fresh ice, and repack them when the ice starts to melt. Keep cold foods below 41° F to prevent growth of bacteria
- If coolers aren't an option, freeze foods so they can thaw out throughout the day, or pack foods that are safe if not kept at a certain temperature

For more information, visit:

Food Safety, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/facts.html>

Eating Outdoors, Handling Food Safely, U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/BuyStoreServeSafeFood/ucm109899.htm>

How to Avoid Summer's Health Woes, WebMD  
<http://women.webmd.com/features/avoid-summer-health-woes?page=2>



## Piercings: There can be problems! By Steve Riggio, DDS

Tongue piercing as well as piercing of the lips and cheeks has gained in popularity. There are a number of risks associated with piercings, including:



- **Infection:** The most common risk of piercing is infection. Infection can occur at the site of the piercing. The jewelry makes it easier for food to collect and bacteria to thrive at the site of the piercing. It is possible for bacteria to enter the bloodstream during the piercing process and cause infections in the heart (endocarditis)
- **Bleeding:** Tongues have numerous blood vessels and serious bleeding can result from a tongue piercing
- **Swallowing and inhalation:** If the jewelry comes loose, it can easily be swallowed or, even more dangerous, be aspirated into the lungs
- **Chipped teeth:** Teeth, fillings, and dental crowns and bridges can be damaged. Repair can be expensive. There have been cases where teeth were fractured beyond repair, requiring extraction
- **Damage to the gums:** The constant contact with the jewelry can cause gum tissue to recede from the teeth and roots, which can create sensitive teeth and increase the risk of root decay. It is also possible for gums irritated by the jewelry to grow excessively. The gum tissue can grow over the jewelry and become stuck in the gums

Whether you already have a piercing or are considering one, please think of the possible risks!

## Annual California Diabetes Program Day—May 23, 2013 By Helen Maldonado, PA, CDE

Every year, staff from California's tribal and urban diabetes programs get together for the newest information available and to learn from each other. They do this because they want to offer the best care possible to their communities. This year's meeting was held in Sacramento on May 23.

The meeting featured experts such as Dr. Andrew Narva (Director of the National Kidney Disease Education Program), Dr. Ann Bullock (Acting Director of the Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention and Clinical Consultant for the IHS) and Dr. Darryl Tonemah (Behavioral Health Consultant to the IHS). They provided technical, but very useful information to all of the attendees.

Many of California's healthcare programs gathered the evening before the event to meet and share what they are working on for their patients on displays or "poster boards". This was well-attended and everyone felt it was very helpful. All participants were eager to work together.

Old friends were able to see each other again and new friendships were formed. As you know, diabetes is tough to overcome—it truly takes a team. These California medical professionals always have the benefit of the patient in mind. If you struggle with the chronic condition called "diabetes", make sure you reach out to the people in your clinic that are in the diabetes program. You are the captain of your medical team that is there to work with you to overcome the effects of diabetes. If you have any questions or difficulties finding a program near you, call (916) 930-3927.

**Pictured on right (top to bottom):** Andrew Narva presenting on Chronic Kidney Disease, staff reviewing diabetes "poster boards", Sherry Caldwell (SCIHP) with Kathy DiPiero.

