

# Spokane Valley Fire Department WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

*Diet, Nutrition & Exercise*

*Fall 2009*

## The Value of an Annual Physical

Until I became a member of the Spokane Valley Fire Department, I had not worked for an organization that followed NFPA Standards that outlines the criteria for member physicals. In fact, I would estimate there are very few fire departments nationwide that apply these standards or have a Wellness Program. I have always been fairly consistent in getting a physical, but it was the SVFD Policy that made sure I was going to go annually.

It was in April of 2007 that I was scheduled to have my annual physical with Dr. Vangerpen. Two weeks before my physical, I had fasted for my blood work so I would have my results when I went to see him for my complete physical evaluation. I ended up having to cancel the physical due to some family issues. The week of April 23rd Dr. Vangerpen gave me a call to tell me he didn't want to delay giving me the results of the Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) test because there had been a fairly significant jump in the values from my 2006 test results. He thought I should immediately make an appointment to see my personal physician. By the middle of June, I had my results from a biopsy that showed I definitely had prostate cancer.

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It was during this same time that I was trying to get in touch with my best friend from junior high and high school to commiserate with him about what was going on in my life. I called him several times over the course of a few days and left messages. In early May

of 2007, I received a call from his father to tell me my best friend had passed away that day from prostate cancer. Apparently, he had been having severe back pains for some time and never

went to the doctor to find out what was going on. When the pain got so bad he almost couldn't walk, he went to the doctor and was diagnosed. The cancer had progressed to the point where he opted to not have treatment. From the day he was diagnosed until he passed was 8 months. If only I could have had the chance to tell him about the importance of having an annual physical.

The end of my story is that I was diagnosed early, went through my treatment, and it's been over 2 years with no signs of cancer. I continue to go in for yearly evaluations and I suspect that will be the routine for a few more years. I truly appreciate the value of having that annual physical.

*-- Chief Thompson*

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# Be Good to Yourself

## Flu: It's That Time Of Year

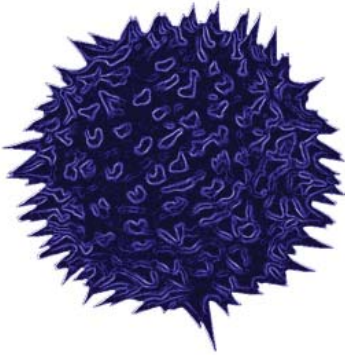
A firefighter's risk of exposure to the flu is higher because of the nature of their work with the general public. This means a higher exposure risk for their families as well. Check EMS Chief Olson's regular updates regarding exposures for SVFD.

The single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each year.

There are two types of Flu vaccines:

- **The "flu shot"**— an inactivated vaccine (containing dead virus) that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot is approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.
- **The nasal-spray flu vaccine** — a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu (sometimes called LAIV for "live attenuated influenza vaccine" or FluMist®). LAIV (FluMist®) is approved for use in healthy people 2-49 years of age who are not pregnant.

The flu shot does not protect against the H1N1 Virus also called the "Swine Flu." A separate vaccine is being developed. Contact Spokane Regional Health District for more information.



H1N1:  
Swine Flu Virus

## Here Come the Holidays

The holidays are right around the corner! Along with strands of lights, house and chimney fires, it can be a time of additional stress. Here are a few tips to build up your reserves for the season:

- **Make the holidays your own.** Think about what traditions are meaningful to you and which you would enjoy continuing.
- **Figure out what you want from the holidays.** Think of it in terms of what you want to do, not what you think you should do.
- **Make a list of No's.** Make a list of the things that you don't want to happen at the holidays. Include everything that makes you nervous just thinking about it.
- **Plan ahead.** There are some stressors that may not be able to be avoided, especially when it comes to family. However, you can plan on how to handle those situations to avoid them entirely or to help you navigate through them with a minimum of stress.

Source: APS Healthcare Helplink "Make the Holidays Your Own"

## Strategies for Back Health

- Alternate between sitting and standing. When sitting, rest your feet flat on the floor, and use a chair with good lower back support. When standing for long periods, rest one foot on a low stool.
- When you lift something heavy, hold it close to your chest, bend your knees (not your back), and reposition your entire body, rather than twisting or reaching as you lift.
- Split heavy loads into smaller loads. Get help when something is too heavy or awkward to lift by yourself, or use a cart.
- To help protect your back whenever you lie down, use a medium-firm mattress, and lie on your back or side — not on your stomach. Place a small pillow between your knees for additional support and comfort.
- When driving, adjust the seat to keep your knees level with your hips, sit up straight with both hands on the wheel, and use a lumbar support for your lower back.
- Whenever you do anything for a long period of time, take frequent rest breaks to change position and stretch.

Source: American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine



# Common Antioxidants, Benefits And Sources

VITAMIN OR MINERAL	WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR	WHERE TO GET IT
<b>Vitamin A</b>	Vision, bone growth, cell reproduction	Fortified nonfat milk, carrots, beef liver, sweet potatoes, whole eggs, spinach, apricots
<b>Vitamin C</b>	Antioxidant and immune system booster	Citrus fruits and juices, broccoli, peppers, strawberries, Brussels sprouts, bok choy
<b>Vitamin D</b>	Teams up with calcium to build strong bones	Fortified milk, salmon, shrimp. Exposure to the sun also helps your body make vitamin D.
<b>Calcium</b>	Strong bones and muscles; strong teeth in children	Nonfat milk, yogurt, and cheese. Fortified orange juice and cereal. Broccoli, figs.
<b>Vitamin E</b>	Basic antioxidant	Canola oil, safflower oil, sunflower seeds, wheat germ
<b>Thiamin</b>	Converts food into energy	Fortified cereals and grains, beans, baked potatoes with skin, pork chops
<b>Riboflavin</b>	Converts food into energy	Nonfat milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, spinach, beef liver, fortified grains, pork chops
<b>Niacin</b>	Converts food into energy	Fortified grain products, whole baked potatoes
<b>Folate</b>	Important before and during pregnancy	Spinach, dark leafy greens, beets, pinto beans, fortified cereals, avocados, beef liver
<b>Vitamin B-12</b>	Healthy nerves and red blood cells. Needed to make DNA	Spinach, dark leafy greens, beets, pinto beans, fortified cereals, avocados, beef liver
<b>Iron</b>	Red blood cells	Chicken liver, turkey, oatmeal, lentils, beans, lean beef
<b>Potassium</b>	Helps control blood pressure	Bananas, whole baked potatoes, most fruits and vegetables, lima beans
<b>Zinc</b>	Boosts immune system	Whole grains, fortified cereals, oysters, red meat, nuts

Source: NHWI

## Antioxidants Fighting the Cellular Fire Within

Inflammation is a reaction in our cells and tissues to harmful chemicals, damaged cells, irritants and some germs. The body tries to remove the unwanted "invader" by changing the internal environment, lighting an internal



**Blueberries are loaded with Antioxidants**

fire to rid itself of the problem and begin the healing process. Unfortunately, if inflammation is experienced too often it can become chronic. **Chronic inflammation has been found to contribute to diabetes mellitus, and may be**

**one of the root causes to many serious diseases including heart disease and cancer.** So why is this important to firefighters? In the industry we know that the average firefighter's risk of exposure to harmful chemicals and germs is greater than that of the average person. We also know that the leading cause of on-duty death is from heart attack, and that firefighters have a high degree of heart disease upon retirement. So the average firefighter is experiencing a greater degree of inflammation at the cellular level.

### Antioxidants to the rescue!

Antioxidants are dietary substances, nutrients and some vitamins and minerals that can prevent damage to your body cells and repair some damage that has been done. Think of them as water to put out the cellular fire of inflammation. They work by slowing and many times preventing the damage within the body caused by oxygen released from inflammatory processes, sometimes referred to as free radical damage. **Antioxidants may also improve immune function and lower the risk for infection and cancer.** The best part is they are easy to get from our diet, especially fruits and vegetables. A general rule of thumb – the darker the fruit or vegetable, the more rich in antioxidants.

# Recipe

## Oven Roasted Vegetables

- Nonstick canola oil spray
- Any vegetable cut into strips or sticks (For example: 1 pound eggplant, unpeeled, cut into ½ inch rounds, 1 pound asparagus spears, 3 small zucchini, cut into ½ inch thick sticks, 3 yams or sweet potatoes, peeled and cut lengthwise into sticks, 2 bell peppers any color cut into strips)
- 1 packet seasoning or dressing mix such as fajita, Italian or ranch dressing mix
- 1 large Ziploc bag

Place vegetables into bag. Spray five, 5-second sprays of oil into the vegetables in the bag. (You may need to adjust depending on how many vegetable you have.) Add the seasoning to the bag. Shake bag to coat vegetables with oil and seasoning.

Roast in 400 degree oven for 15-25 minutes.

Good to eat warm, cold or at room temperature!

Source: NuCulinary



## Fast Facts

### • Breast Cancer Awareness

Early detection is the most critical issue in breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. That's why regular mammograms are so important for all women over 40 or earlier for others at high risk. **Mammography can find cancer when it's most treatable, often one to three years before a woman can feel a lump with the recommended monthly breast self-exam.** There are a wealth of organizations that can help you learn more about breast cancer.

A good place to start is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbcdp/info-bc.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbcdp/info-bc.htm) or the American Cancer Society, 1-800-ACS-2345, [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

### • Prostate Cancer

The IAFF reports that Firefighters have an increased risk of prostate cancer at a younger age. Problems urinating are symptoms of prostate cancer but the disease often has no symptoms. That's why annual screening beginning at age 50 or earlier for others at high risk is so important. **When caught and treated early, prostate cancer has a 99.3% survival rate.** The National Prostate Cancer Coalition at [www](http://www).

[pcacoalition.org](http://pcacoalition.org) is a source of valuable information.

### • On average, Americans now consume 3,800 calories each day

This is roughly twice what we need to meet basic nutritional requirements.

Source: Holistic Primary Care, Vol. 5, #1

### • Recycling

Whenever you recycle newspapers, carry your groceries in a reusable bag, or recycle other paper products, your efforts are not wasted. **Each ton of recycled paper can save 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, three cubic yards of landfill space, 4,000 kilowatts of energy and 7,000 gallons of water compared to non-recycled paper production.** This represents a 64% energy saving, a 58% water saving, and 60 fewer pounds of air pollution. Plus, those 17 saved trees can absorb a total of 250 pounds of carbon dioxide from the air each year.

Sources: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Center for Ecological Technology; Earth 911