



## HEALTH NEWS FROM DR. YU

Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department

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### Get Fit This Year

Prepared January 2010

**January is the time when most of us make New Year's Resolutions.** Oftentimes these resolutions revolve around improving our health. Building healthy habits can lead to improved quality of life. For example, did you know that participating in regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health? It can help control your weight as well as reduce your risk for several diseases including heart disease, diabetes, and some types of cancer. It also helps strengthen your bones and muscles, improves your mood, and increases your chances of living longer.

**Feel like you don't have any time for exercise?** Interestingly, the new Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans stress that you don't need to spend hours a day at the gym. You can meet minimum requirements by getting active for 150 minutes per week. You can even break that up into increments of time as small as 10 minutes and spread them throughout the week.

- For more information about the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, see [www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity)

Another major constraint on our time is the workday. If you're an employed adult you probably spend the majority of your waking hours at work. Thurston County offers a program called WorkWell that helps local employers create healthier worksites. WorkWell provides assistance to employers who wish to change their worksite environment to increase access to physical activity and healthier foods at work. Every February the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce honors local employers who have made changes to support their employees' health at the WorkWell Designation Awards. Last year the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce honored thirty employers who made changes such as sponsoring employee gym memberships and providing healthier foods at company meetings and events. Even a small change at a worksite, for example, posting signs encouraging employees to use the stairs, can add minutes to individual daily activity time. Even small changes, over time, do add up!

- For more information about the WorkWell program, contact Kateri Wimsett at 360-867-2516 or [wimsetk@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:wimsetk@co.thurston.wa.us)

WorkWell also sponsors the LiveWell Program. LiveWell is a six week workshop offered to people living with chronic illnesses developed by Stanford University. Chronic health conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, depression, and heart disease affect millions of Americans. LiveWell workshops help those with chronic health conditions learn new ways to manage their health condition and live healthier lives. LiveWell participants find that there are other people in the community who share the same challenges, concerns, and emotions that they do. Participants report that they are better able to manage their

health and their lives because of the skills that they learn in the LiveWell workshops. LiveWell is recruiting individuals and organizations interested in leading or helping sustain LiveWell in the community.

- For more information about LiveWell Leaders contact Jamilia Sherls at 360-867-2514 or [sherlsj@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:sherlsj@co.thurston.wa.us)
- For more information on how your organization can help sustain LiveWell, please contact Chris Hawkins at 360-867-2513 or [hawkinsc@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:hawkinsc@co.thurston.wa.us)

**Make 2010 the year that you do something to improve your health!**

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