

Community

New health improvement "product" is great for women over 65

If you're a woman over 65, there's a great new health improvement "product" available to you. It will help you live longer, decrease your risk of heart attack by 50 percent, lower your "bad" cholesterol, increase your endurance and reduce your body fat. It will reduce your risk of diabetes and increase your muscle mass. It is considered relatively safe and low-risk. Too good to be true? Not at all, according to a study in the *American Journal of Geriatric Cardiology*. That "product" is regular exercise.

The older you are, the more good regular exercise will do for you. One study showed that older women's endurance of women aged 62 through 82 increased 40 percent. The greatest improvement in endurance was in women who started out

the most sedentary and wound up with the highest exercise intensities. The good news for people who don't exercise is that starting an exercise program, no matter how old you are, can help you live longer and better.

Benefits to muscles and bones, due to exercise, have been well documented. Without exercise, you may expect your muscle mass to reduce by as much as 15 percent per decade, double that after age 80. But with regular exercise, combining both endurance and resistance training, muscle strength in senior women actually increases. Resistance training in older women results in increased muscle mass, muscle strength, lung capacity and reduces weight and body fat density. These improve-

ments in strength are associated with an increased flexibility and range of motion.

During the last ten years, 36 percent of women between the ages of 65 and 74 and one-half of women over 75 and older reported no leisure-time physical activity. In this same time period, according to the American Heart Association, the death rate due to cardiovascular disease in women increased. Accompanying that increase were increases in glucose intolerance, hyperlipidemia, and high blood pressure.

Type 2 diabetes increases with age for people with a sedentary lifestyle and obesity. But in one group of healthy older women who undertook six months of high-intensity endurance training three times a week, there was an improvement in insulin sensitivity.

In studies of cholesterol levels and exercise, both women and men benefit, but women have a greater benefit from exercise. A one year study of cardiac rehabilitation subjects showed that women who exercised regularly had a 20 per-

cent increase in HDL "good" cholesterol and significantly lower levels of LDL "bad" cholesterol.

A study of women aged 50-69 years of age showed that regular aerobic exercise reduced blood pressure, lowering the systolic pressure by ten points, and the diastolic an average of six points.

A research project on heart attacks showed other benefits of moderate leisure-time physical activity. In that study, middle-aged and senior women showed a 24-38 percent reduced rate of mortality. They suffered 50 percent fewer heart attacks.

San Francisco researchers studied about six thousand mostly white, healthy women age 65 or older, evaluating their mental faculties and exercise levels over a six to eight year span. Those women in the highest quartile of exercise, which was measured by calories expended walking or engaging in other rigorous activities, were 26 percent less apt to develop cognitive decline than those who got the least amount

of exercise.

So what to do to get started? If you've been sedentary, you may want to begin by engaging in "lifestyle activities," such as walking up stairs, gardening, housecleaning, and other physical tasks that can be incorporated into everyday life. Studies have shown that benefits derived by becoming more active throughout the day are similar to those obtained through a structured exercise routine.

Before starting an exercise program, see your physician. Then ask for your doctor's guidance in starting out. Physicians have good resources for starting exercise programs. Other resources include the library, a local gym, or the Internet.

Women over 65 are the fastest growing segment of the nation's population. That trend will continue for the next twenty years. During the past 30 years, studies have shown that exercise and physical activity improve health, reduce the risk of illness and enhance the quality of life. Exercise may be the best health-care "product" that you can invest in.

Hazardous/toxic household waste disposal event scheduled May 4th

Columbia County residents may take advantage of a free Hazardous Household Waste disposal event on Saturday, May 4 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the St. Helens Maintenance Facility, 58555 McNulty Way in St. Helens.

Some of the items classified as Hazardous Household Waste include yard and garden chemicals, household cleaners, paint, fluorescent lights, automotive products, solvents, mercury thermometers, medical sharps only, and used batteries.

Items which cannot be accepted are tires, radioactive materials, explosives, medical wastes, industrial or commercial waste, propane tanks and techno wastes (computers and monitors).

The event is jointly sponsored by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Columbia County, City of St. Helens, CEPA, Waste Management and Hudson Garbage & Recycling.

For more information, call 503-366-6508 or Jim Huff at 503-397-2185.

Visitors pay parking fees at Vernonia Lake

The City of Vernonia will be implementing park fees at Vernonia Lake beginning April 18. The entrance fee is \$3.00 per vehicle per day or \$12 per vehicle per year. The fee does not pertain to those residing in the Vernonia 47J School District. A "Friends of Vernonia Parks" sticker is available at Vernonia City Hall with proof of residence.

Donations to Vernonia Parks are always gladly accepted.

Volunteers needed at Columbia Co. WRC

The Columbia County Women's Resource Center is seeking male and female volunteers of all ages. A number of volunteer opportunities are available, including the following:

- Volunteer Advocates answer the 24-hour hotline at The Women's Resource Center. Crisis line counselors are linked between victim, law enforcement, hospitals, other resources in the community and to provide peer support to help people who call in crisis. They

are also responsible for working with residents and walk in clients in a 24 hour facility.

- Youth Services Facilitator does presentations in area school districts for the Child Abuse Prevention Program, Teen Healthy Relationship and Date Rape Prevention. Facilitators must be available to be scheduled for daytime classes.

- Child Care Providers must be willing to provide temporary childcare of clients and residents children when the parent is participating in case meetings, support groups, training or medical appointments.

- Transportation Providers

provide emergency transportation to appointments and to shelter.

- Donation Coordinators are responsible for donation calls and for inventory and putting away.

- Maintenance and Yard Workers provide routine maintenance in The Women's Resource Center and yard work on the grounds.

WRC offers volunteer training twice a year. The next training starts April 22.

For more information, call Theresa, the Volunteer Services Manager, at 503-397-7110.



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