

MEN'S HEALTH LETTER

A newsletter by the Men's Health & Education Center



Image courtesy of Aaron Perry.

Take the Lead for Your Health!

By Beth Klein

In case you missed it, on August 16th was the **Rebalance Life Wellness Association Town Hall Forum** - several members of the community met and discussed the health disparities of the black community in Madison. It was a great opportunity for community members and leaders to get together and brainstorm how we all can combat those health disparities on both the community level and as individuals. While there will be opportunities for you to take part in community efforts (see back page), there are things you can do to improve your own health. Here are some specific ideas:

You can reduce your risk of developing **diabetes** by cutting down on the amount of **carbohydrates** you eat. Consider getting the smaller portions of a meal (medium-sized instead of large), or putting aside some for leftovers. You could also consider substituting healthy alternatives in your diet – carrot and celery sticks over fries, baked meat over fried, or fresh fruit over a bag of chips.

If you're concerned about your weight, there are many ways you can **exercise** and burn some calories. Some people prefer to fly solo and go on runs or bike rides. Others find success in numbers and join a class or group. **Black Men Run** is a great opportunity every Saturday to get exercising and to get involved in the community. If you have a sport that you absolutely love, *get yourself in the game!*

High blood pressure is a problem for many black men, and many do not even know they have it. One of the simplest things you can do to lower your blood pressure and prevent problems is reduce the amount of **salt** you eat. One way to do this is to skip using the salt shaker at the dinner table. Another is to make fresh food rather than canned or frozen food, as these tend to have a high salt content for preservation.

For many people, taking the lead to improve their health starts with **baby steps**. Setting small, obtainable goals has proven useful for many people who have successfully turned their health around. For instance, aiming to exercise every day is more difficult to achieve than exercising every other day or even every third day at first and then later adding more days and time.

If you feel you need to make changes but are not quite motivated to start, consider this idea discussed at the forum: *by improving your own health, you are improving the health and livelihoods of the people around you.* A healthier you encourages other people to make healthy changes for themselves. A healthier you is able to contribute to your community with more passion and energy. A healthier you means you will live longer and enjoy more quality time with your family and loved ones. Though health may appear to be a very individualistic thing, your livelihood and steps to improve your health impact your family and your community. **So take the lead, for both your health and your community!**





For the camper in you: How to remove a tick

BY JAKE SVENSON

At this time of year, many people want to be outdoors enjoying the summer weather. However, this is also a time of year that carries a high risk for tick-borne diseases. These diseases can have serious consequences, thus prevention of tick bites is an important consideration. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, you can help prevent tick bites with basic preventive measures such as using insect repellent, making sure pets are up to date on their tick treatments, avoiding wooded or grassy areas, showering after time outdoors, and doing daily tick checks. It is especially important to check in areas where the ticks may be “hiding” such as under the arms or in the belly

button. If you do have a tick, don't panic: they can be removed and should be removed quickly so that there is less time for disease transmission. To remove a tick, you can use tweezers to try to grip the tick as close to the skin as you can, then pull steadily and evenly upwards. Afterwards, it's best to clean the area thoroughly with soap and water or rubbing alcohol.

For more information, you can visit the CDC's ticks page at <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html>.

Join the Fun! Upcoming Events

Black Men Run, Brown Boys Read

Every Wednesday, 5:15-6:45 pm, Olin Park

The first half hour is dedicated to getting young boys to sit down and read. Books are available and are free of charge. Then we all get together for a run – some run slow, others fast, whatever your pace you are welcome to join!

Whole Health for Life

Wednesday, September 5th – 8:00 am – 3:30 pm.

The 6th Annual Madison VA Community Mental Health Summit is dedicated to improving the mental health of veterans and their family members. This year the topic is whole health – how the Veteran's Association is transforming to address overall well-being in additional treatment of disease. Registration starts at 8:00 am, and the summit starts at 9:00 am.

Men's Health Night Out Event

This October (date TBA) the Rebalanced-Life Wellness Association is hosting dinner, a presentation, and a movie at the Palace Theatre. The event is free – keep an eye out for more information!

