

Regional Safety Committee

September Newsletter



Have you ever wanted to be good looking and wealthy? Who hasn't, right? For those of you (and I) who dream of youth, health, and vigor revisited with a few nickels to rub together, ***this is your lucky day!***

You might say to yourself, "This is too good to be true." Well, my friends, we would **never** mislead you. Read on for information ***that will change your life!***

The **LOSE-A-POUND** contest for the month of October is the answer to *all of your dreams*. No longer will we dream of improving ourselves without meaningful action. ***This is it, my friends! This is the day we have all awaited!***

Everyone who is employed or volunteers in any aspect of EMS in the EMSI region is eligible to participate. The rules are simple: You must weigh yourself on the first or second day of October, on the scale of your choice, and record the number in a secret place, known only to thineself. You must weigh yourself on the 30th or 31st of October and compare these numbers.

If you are at your ideal body weight (<http://www.healthcentral.com/diet-exercise/ideal-body-weight-3146-143.html?2,6,1,240,3>) **OR** you have lost one pound, you are eligible to participate in a random drawing of participants with three **one hundred dollar gifts certificates to be awarded!!!!**

So, you say, "what's the big deal? Anybody could lose a pound!" Only real winners, that is! And we think you are just that. (Besides, if we are down a pound, that means we didn't gain any weight for the month!)

EMail me at ghellier@nogaems.com on or before November 1, with the statement "I do solemnly swear I have lost a pound" or "I am at my ideal body weight" ***and you will be in the drawing for BIG BUCKS!***

Service chiefs should calculate the percentage of eligible participants using the formula of participants divided by all employees X 100 and e mail me with the result. The service with the greatest percent participation will receive a **glorious fruit basket!!!**

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View from the Street:

Matias Ayala

In last month's newsletter we challenged all agencies to read [Task and Health Improvement Recommendations for Emergency Medical Service Practitioners](#). We hope that you have had a chance to not only read it but also begin planning a strategy to implement the recommendations within your EMS agency.

In EMS we strive to deliver the best quality care, yet we want to do it in a simple and logical manner. We would have the same expectations with a personal health and wellness program. One common concern I always hear in the field is that the odd and busy hours leave little if any time to eat, much less to eat healthy. As a road medic I can sympathize with these concerns, but, I also believe that it is possible to eat healthier.

I currently work for a company that runs on eight hour shifts which makes it easier to eat on a more steady time schedule. But, I have also worked at agencies that run 12 and 24 hour shifts, and yes, I worked at these

companies when I began to pursue a healthier lifestyle. While I agree that the extended shifts are not the ideal work hours to consume a healthier diet, I also know from personal experience that it is still possible to live healthier. It just takes some effort, a little bit of time, and some discipline.

Before I go ahead and give you some of my personal advice based on my experiences, let's take a look at some resources. I recommend doing some research before starting a healthy diet. Everyone has different dietary needs and therefore you must find an appropriate and personalized diet plan. As part of the research process I also recommend talking to your primary care physician and seeking his or her advice. Try and avoid doing any fad diets. Many of them are not safe and very few provide a long term plan to maintain the results after the program is over. A good starting point in your research process is to read the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010](#). This is a government funded study and it is updated every five years with new recommendations. It is a very extensive read, but well worth the time. It will help you pinpoint exactly what suits your needs. It has a variety of plans to meet special dietary needs such as the various vegan/vegetarian diets and even certain health specific diets such as reduced sodium diets.

During the research process you may find a common theme relating to the importance of creating a caloric deficit or maintaining a caloric balance. This can

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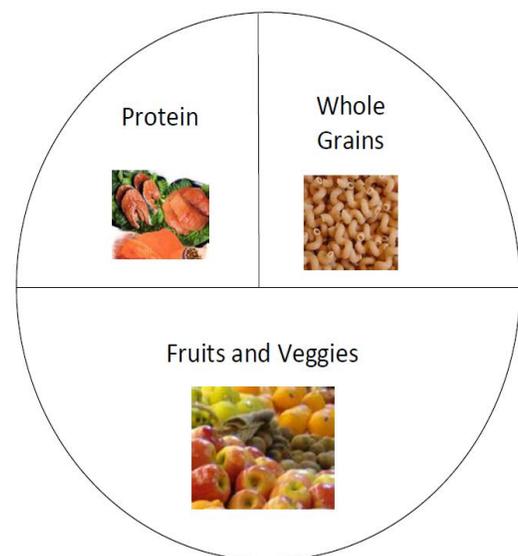


sometimes be enough of a reason to cause an individual to avoid a better nutritional plan. Many of us just do not like the idea of counting calories. Do not let this sway you. There are many resources that can make this easier to accomplish. There are various phone and computer apps which can be downloaded for free, with extensive libraries of foods and their nutritional values. My advice is to download one of these apps and plan your meals ahead of time while keeping your nutritional needs in mind. One of these programs worth looking at is choosemyplate.gov. It includes the Super Tracker app which helps estimate and track your nutritional needs on a day to day basis.

I know how busy life can get. If you cannot find the time to start the research process to find the apps that work for you, don't delay the process. Instead, start by setting both short term and long term goals, to stay on target, and try to implement some of the following tips. Eat more nutrient dense foods and limit the consumption of fast foods. Instead of eating a few big meals, begin by eating several smaller portioned meals throughout the day. Remember to eat slowly because it takes some time for your brain to process the fact that you are full. Decrease the amount of calories you consume from beverages and increase your water consumption. If you implement all of these tips gradually you will begin to lead a healthier lifestyle. It will encourage self-reliance and self-regulation and lead to healthier choices. As I mentioned last month, start off with baby steps. Eventually, you will be consuming a completely healthy

diet without much ongoing effort. I also recommend planning and preparing some meals ahead of time. Think food safety when doing this. Buy some storage containers to help keep your food cold or hot for your shift. All of this will help you to eat healthy while on the run instead of having to go to the local fast food place because of the "time convenience."

As part of starting small, for this month I challenge everyone to try and make at least one positive change to their diet. Once again think baby steps. Try implementing one of the previously mentioned tips or start with the American Heart Association's recommendations on [portion control](#). Hopefully once you take that initial step you will find that eating healthy isn't as hard as you initially expected.



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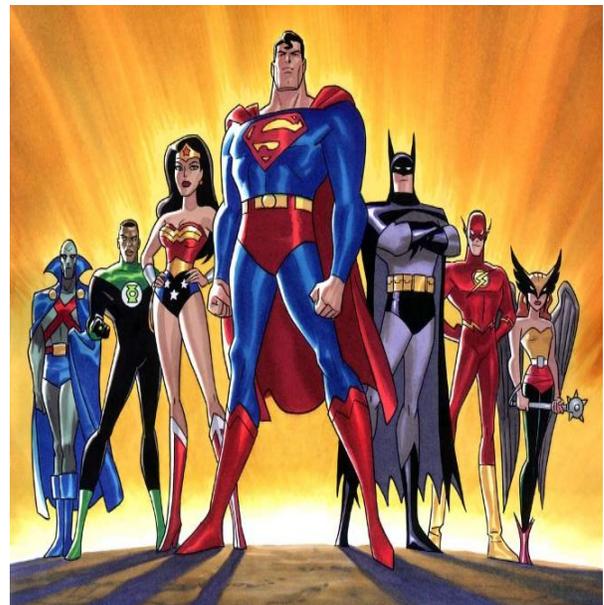
A Letter from our Chairman, Chief Chris Dell, about our "Safety Champions" initiative



The RSC is in the middle stages of developing a Safety Champions Training Program. The goal of the

program is to provide a very in-depth safety program for individuals who accept the responsibility for oversight of safety initiatives in their organization. Topics will include Safety Committee Development, The NAEMT Safety Course, Perfecting Patient Care-A program of The Jewish Healthcare Foundation, and much more. While we target to have the full program up and running in early 2014, we are scheduling Module I: An

Introduction, for later this year. We plan to do the program three times, in three convenient locations. Please watch your email for further information!



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Letter from the Editor:

The Last Ride of the “Doughnut Fairy”

Dr. Shaw looked at me over his reading glasses. We were in his office. “Greg,” he began. I squirmed. “I want you to volunteer to be the ALS medical director for Prestige Ambulance.” I considered this, and whined, “Can’t you make one of the other kids do it?” “No,” he said. “I want you to volunteer **today.**”

Just like that, I became involved in EMS. Sixteen years later, I must say, my EMS affiliations have truly been one of the joys of my career. My friends and colleagues in EMS represent the longest lasting professional relationships that I enjoy. Why these people still deign to talk to me after all this time, has caused me to reflect upon this. (By the way Dave – this is formal notice I want a fifteen year pin at the Christmas party this year).

My efforts at being ER director, sadly, were not met with universal approval. I fancied that I knew something about emergency medicine, being trained and all. Maybe this is the nugget of understanding, as I have never felt that I knew much about EMS.

Most of the time in EMS, I have found myself a learner- clumsy perhaps -“Hey Mike, what’s that noise?” “Take your foot off the horn, Doc”- but a willing learner, none the less. I often have felt that my most valuable contribution to our days together was buying lunch, as I felt that I owed something back to my hardworking mentors for my education.

An outreach of this goodwill, was that I became the “Doughnut Fairy.” Imagine, if you will, Alan and I bravely riding the response truck, station to station, playing “Ride of the Valkyries” and delivering doughnuts to our front line colleagues.

This brings me to the point of this letter. **No more doughnuts!!!** For the month of October, we are all going to lose a pound. I have to decide if I want to lose a pound for each ALS service (easy), each transporting service (not too hard), ALS / BLS/ QRS service (now that hurts) or every EMS / Public Safety / AED service I serve (get skinny in a month).

Johnny Appleseed sounds a lot more manly than the doughnut fairy, anyhow. Here’s to our health!

Greg Hellier