



# the CommonHealth Compass



## Red Velvet Insanity Cupcakes

Servings: Makes 12 cupcakes  
Adapted from "Hungry Girl: 200 Under 200: 200 Recipes Under 200 Calories" by Lisa Lillien.

### Cupcakes

- ¼ cup mini semi-sweet chocolate chips, divided
  - 2 (25-calorie) packets diet hot cocoa mix
  - ½ cup boiling water
  - 1 cup cold water
  - 1 cup moist-style devil's food cake mix (¼ of an 18.25-ounce box)
  - 1 cup moist-style yellow cake mix (¼ of an 18.25-ounce box)
  - ½ cup fat-free liquid egg substitute
  - 1 tablespoon red food coloring
  - 1 teaspoon granulated no calorie sweetener
  - ½ teaspoon salt
  - Nonstick cooking spray, optional
1. Pre heat the oven to 350 degrees.
  2. Mix half of the mini chocolate chips and the contents of both cocoa packets. Add boiling water and stir until the chips and cocoa mix have dissolved. Add the cold water and mix well.
  3. Pour the cocoa mixture into a large mixing bowl. Add the cake mixes, egg substitute, remaining chocolate chips, food coloring, sweetener and salt. Whisk until smooth. The batter will be thin, but don't worry - your cupcakes will puff up once baked!
  4. Line a 12-cup muffin pan with baking cups or nonstick spray. Fill cups ½ full with batter. Bake in the oven 15 to 20 minutes, until puffed and shiny.
  5. Cool the cupcakes completely before frosting.

### Frosting

- 6 tablespoons Jet-Puffed Marshmallow Creme
  - ¼ cup fat-free cream cheese, at room temperature
  - 1 tablespoon granulated no calorie Sweetener
  - 6 tablespoons Cool Whip Free, thawed
- Combine the marshmallow creme, cream cheese, sweetener and mix well. Fold in the Cool Whip and refrigerate, covered, until the cupcakes are cool. Lightly frost cupcakes.
- Each cupcake:* 149 calories; 4 grams protein; 25 grams carbohydrates; 1 gram fiber; 4 grams fat; 2 grams saturated fat; 3 mg. cholesterol; 262 mg. sodium.

## Think Greener Virginia!



The Greener Virginia CommonHealth program will help state employees to eat green, live green and save green.

### Did you know...

- Americans throw away enough aluminum to rebuild our entire commercial fleet of airplanes every three months?
- Cigarette butts and filters take 12 years to biodegrade?
- If every American recycled just one-tenth of their newspapers, we could save about 25 million trees each year?
- Many businesses, organizations and individuals are making the commitment to "go green". What does it all really mean?
- You can reduce your electric bill and put money in your pocket.

With the coming Greener Virginia program, CommonHealth will be awarding cash gift cards as incentives. What could be greener? They are much more cost effective and require no boxing, shipping and delivering. All the participant needs to do is sign in with their ID number and they will be added to the drawing list. There will be a monthly drawing for several \$10, \$25 and \$100 winners in every region. At the end of the quarter, one lucky person's name will be drawn for a \$500 cash prize. Everyone appreciates money! Winners will be subject to tax, and will receive a letter with details.

Visit [www.commonhealth.virginia.gov](http://www.commonhealth.virginia.gov) for more information.

## By Saving Money on Cigarettes, They Could Hit the Open Road



My husband, Peter, and I have been smoke free since April 27, 2009. We used to spend about \$250 a month on cigarettes. Now we own a beautiful, brand new motorcycle! Just think of what **YOUR** cigarette money can buy? We quit

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## October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

It's important for both women and men to learn the signs of breast cancer. If you are a woman, consider getting an annual mammogram. Getting the facts about breast cancer isn't just for the ladies; men can develop breast cancer too.

According to the American Cancer Society, about 440 men will die from breast cancer in 2009 in the United States. Detected early, this cancer is treatable and the survival rate high.

The most common sign of breast cancer is a new lump or mass. A painless, hard mass that has irregular edges is more likely to be cancerous, but breast cancers can be tender, soft, or rounded. For this reason, it is important that any new breast mass or lump be checked by a health care professional experienced in diagnosing breast diseases.

Other possible signs of breast cancer include:

- swelling of all or part of a breast (even if no distinct lump is felt)
- skin irritation or dimpling
- breast or nipple pain
- nipple retraction (turning inward)
- redness, scaliness, or thickening of the nipple or breast skin
- a discharge other than breast milk
- Sometimes breast cancer can spread to underarm lymph nodes and cause a lump or swelling there, even before the original tumor in the breast tissue is large enough to be felt.



There is help available from the National Cancer Information Center. The Trained Cancer Information Specialists are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to offer the comfort of live support and to answer questions about cancer, link callers with resources in their communities, and provide information on local events. Spanish-speaking information specialists are available, and callers who speak languages other than English and Spanish can also be assisted. To reach the NCIC, call 1-800-227-2345.

## Seasonal Flu Shots Free to State Employees



Had your flu shot yet this fall? State employees and family members covered in a state health plan may get seasonal flu shots for free through participating pharmacies and doctor's offices.

Flu vaccinations can be obtained at pharmacies participating in the State Health Benefits Program's flu shot program. Visit the DHRM Web site at [www.dhrm.virginia.gov](http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov) for a list of COVA Care, COVA Connect and COVA HDHP network pharmacies that are part of the program for this flu season. The site also has Frequently Asked Questions about the program for each plan. You may also ask your Benefits Administrator if one of the participating state plan pharmacies will be giving an onsite flu clinic at your agency location.

Remember that doctor's offices also provide flu shots at no cost for all state plans, including the Kaiser Permanente HMO plan. Kaiser members may also receive free flu shots at Kaiser medical centers.

Stay tuned for more on H1N1. The H1N1 flu vaccine is expected to be available soon. More information will be distributed when details are known.



## Tempted to Overeat During the Holidays?



How can you get through about six weeks' worth of too much food and beverage? Here are a few more tips from the American Dietetic Association on healthy holiday eating habits:

- **Be realistic.** Don't try to lose weight during the holidays – this can be a self-defeating goal. Instead, strive to maintain your current weight.
- **Be active and keep moving.** Walk the aisles of the mall, go ice-skating with your family, or plan a party that involves fitness, like bowling, skiing, dancing or hiking.
- **Choose lower-calorie party foods.** Raw vegetables with a small amount of dip -- just enough to coat the tip of the vegetable – are a good choice. Or try boiled shrimp or scallops with cocktail sauce or lemon. Go easy on fried appetizers and cheeses, though.
- **Budget your eating throughout the day.** This doesn't mean skipping a meal, just eating less.
- **Position yourself away from the food table at parties.** Focus on the people at the party rather than obsessing about food. Survey the many food choices and allow yourself the three most appealing items; serve yourself a single moderate portion of each item.
- **Exercise.** It will reduce stress and burn off some of the extra calories.

## MONTHLY PASS Another Weight Watchers Option

There's another payment option for Commonwealth of Virginia participants in Weight Watchers. The Monthly Pass lets you attend Weight Watchers meetings as many times per month as you like – all for one monthly fee. You also have access to a suite of online eTools at no additional cost.



The latest Monthly Pass offer includes free registration, unlimited meetings each month, free eTools and Internet weight-loss companion and the lowest price per week for Weight Watchers services.

You may take advantage of Monthly Pass and the Commonwealth's reimbursement of 50 percent of your fees if you meet participation requirements. You must join online to receive savings. Go to [www.weightwatchers.com](http://www.weightwatchers.com) to join today.

**If you prefer to purchase a block of time/meetings or join online you can still call the toll free number and order at 1-866-614-9129.**

## By Saving Money on Cigarettes, They Could Hit the Open Road

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together and have had some very trying moments since then and still remain smoke free. We just wanted to encourage other people to jump on the wagon with us. The freedom is exhilarating! It feels like the ball and chain has been removed from our lives. We want to thank "Quit for Life" for their support and helpfulness, and all of my co-workers here at the Louisa County Health Department for their words of encouragement and well wishes.

We did it together! So can all of you, who have become slaves to the cigarette. It just feels so good to wake up ready for the day with a fresher set of lungs....

Sincerely, Darlene Wampler, Louisa County Health Department



# A Good Night's Sleep May Keep Weight Off

Fifty to 70 million Americans suffer from insomnia. It's more common among women and those who are obese or have high blood pressure, anxiety or depression. Additionally, more and more studies are linking weight gain with sleep loss. One theory is that lack of sleep disrupts important hormones, such as leptin and insulin, which regulate appetite and body weight. Another explanation is that sleep deprivation leaves us drained and too tired to exercise. And since losing sleep can also make us moody, we may turn to food to cope. A new study in the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine* suggests that adults should sleep eight to nine hours per night to help maintain a healthy weight. So the question is "How can we get a good night's sleep?"



## Get Regular exercise

Aside from many other wonderful health benefits, exercise usually makes it easier to fall asleep and sleep better. As little as 20 to 30 minutes of activity helps even if broken up into five minutes here or there.

## Don't Nap

If you are having trouble sleeping at night, try to eliminate napping. If you must nap, do it in the early afternoon, and sleep no longer than about thirty minutes.

## Restrict Alcohol, caffeine, smoking

**Alcohol:** Many people think that a nightcap before bed will help them sleep but alcohol reduces overall quality of sleep and wakes you up later in the night.

**Caffeine:** You might be surprised to know that caffeine can cause sleep problems up to 10 to 12 hours after drinking it! If you rely on coffee, tea or caffeinated soda to keep you going during the day, consider eliminating caffeine after lunch.

**Smoking:** Nicotine is a stimulant, which disrupts sleep. Additionally, smokers actually experience nicotine withdrawal as the night progresses, making it hard to sleep.

## Invest in a good mattress

You spend a third of your life in bed, so invest in something comfortable. Experiment with different levels of mattress firmness and pillows that provide more support. If your mattress is too hard, you can add a foam topper for additional softness.

## Prepare Your Room

Ideally, to maximize sleep, your room should be quiet, dark and at a comfortable temperature. A fan or white noise machine can help block outside noise. Earplugs may also help, but make sure they don't block out important noises like an alarm clock. Keep your room dark during sleep hours. Early morning light or a street lamp can send your body clock the wrong signal that it is time to wake up. Heavy shades can block light from windows, or you can try an eye mask to cover your eyes.

## Stop stress and worry

As much as possible, avoid things that may trigger worry or anxiety before bed, like upsetting news or gory television shows. Make the time before sleep a time of peace and quiet. Relaxation techniques set the stage for quieting the mind. Some simple preparations for the next day, like a to-do list or laying out the next day's clothes and shoes can also help.

## CommonHealth Web Site Offers Ideas for Healthy Living

- Quarterly programs.
- Healthy recipes.
- Wellness videos.
- Success stories from your colleagues.
- Fitness center discounts.

These resources and more can be found at your fingertips on the new and improved CommonHealth Web site. Visit [www.commonhealth.virginia.gov](http://www.commonhealth.virginia.gov) today!

