

Anderson Flen, District 2 Health Promotions Coordinator believes in encouraging all employees to become champions for better health. Anderson works tirelessly to motivate and support people of all ages in our 13-county area to become more active, to eat healthier and to live more fully by engaging groups in our communities to carry the banner for healthy living. With a little prodding by Anderson, Anita Holsenbeck agreed to share her story with employees in our district and at the request of our health director; she now shares her experience with all Georgia Department of Public Health employees.

Anita's Story...

In 2006 I weighed over 250 pounds. I had diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and triglycerides. My diabetes was out of control. I was tired all the time. I was depressed. I didn't exercise and my diet was full of too much fat, carbohydrates and calories. I was 43 years old and I was killing myself.

I used all the excuses in the world not to exercise. I was too tired. I didn't have time. I couldn't exercise in the morning. I couldn't exercise in the evening. I didn't want to exercise by myself and the best one, I was too overweight. Actually, I was afraid to exercise for fear of passing out or having a heart attack because I was so overweight.

Diabetes runs in my family. My paternal grandmother had diabetes and so did my father. I saw my father die too soon because of this disease, so I knew I had to start taking control and change what I was doing to myself.

When school started back in the fall of 2006, my daughter entered the ninth grade. The ninth-grade academy was located right beside the health department where I was working. She wanted to be at school at 7:30 a.m. Since I didn't have to be at work until 8:00 a.m., I would drop her off at school and then walk around the parking lot. I started off slow, walking about 15 or 20 minutes at first. Over time, I gradually increased the length of time and distance of my walking.

In addition to walking, I also changed my eating habits. I began to eat less fat, carbohydrates and overall calories. I also changed the way that I ate. I began to eat several smaller meals a day. A little later, I sought the care of a diabetes specialist who got me on the right combination of medicines to get my diabetes under control.

Today, I am happy to report that I have lost over 100 pounds! My A1C (test for blood glucose) is in the normal range. My blood pressure is great and my cholesterol and triglycerides are in the normal range without medication.

My walking routine has increased to seven miles each week day and four miles on each weekend day. Typically, I walk for an hour in the morning before I get ready for work, and then walk an hour and twenty minutes after work. I love walking! Walking is what "I do" now. I walk in the rain, snow, hail, wind, cold and heat. I very, very rarely miss a day. I am passionate about trying to stay as healthy and fit as I can and I think my family and co-workers are proud of my commitment.



Everything I have done and continue to do can be done by anyone. You just have to get started, be committed to doing it and sticking with it. I hope my story can inspire someone to take control of their health. It takes work and time but it is well worth it!

Anita Holsenbeck -
Operations Analyst
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During September, Anita and Anderson led walks for employees at the district office to put emphasis on Georgia SHAPE Month. These walks were conducted on Thursday afternoons and were approximately two miles. All employees were encouraged to participate and many took advantage of these walks.