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Falmouth Magazine: Mark Marsters feature article

Life Changing Decisions Are Never Easy

Healthy lifestyle changes are hardly easy. If they were, the United States wouldn't be seeing a rise in obesity, diabetes and other preventable conditions.

For those who make a change, it usually comes down to one defining moment. That moment is different for everyone. For Mark Marsters, senior vice president with CIGNA and Falmouth runner, that moment came almost four years ago in his doctor's office.

"I was pushing 40 years old, I was overweight and my cholesterol was much too high," recalled Mark. "My doctor said I needed to begin cholesterol medicine immediately. I didn't want to be on medicine. I felt I was too young!"

Mark weighed 230 pounds with a 40 inch waistline. Hearing his doctor's words, he started recalling articles he read through CIGNA's health awareness emails and remembering the advice from his health risk assessment. Then, he looked into his future and tried to imagine what he wanted for himself.

"Oddly enough, I started thinking ahead to retirement in 20 to 25 years. At that stage in life, it's all about health," Mark continued. "If I wanted to enjoy my life after work, I needed to start changing my habits now."



Mark believed health came down to three key factors: genetics, eating and physical activity. He knew he could control two out of three, if he put his mind to it.

But he had a challenge when it came to physical activity: very bad knees. Through a friend's advice, he found that exercising on an elliptical machine wouldn't be as hard on his knees as a treadmill.

"I started out with a modest goal of 15 minutes on the elliptical every day and started eating healthier," Mark said. "For someone whose job requires a lot of travel, I made sure I took the time I needed to fit in exercise – no excuses."

After about a year maintaining this routine and keeping his promise to himself, he was 20 to 25

More about Mark:

Falmouth experience: 4th year

Favorite marathon: Death Valley

Encouraging others: "May you log many more healthy miles in the marathon of life before your 'soles' wear thin"