

# *What is a Fitbit?*

I wasn't sure what a Fitbit was a month ago, but wearing it for two weeks has made me a believer and has definitely improved my motivation and fitness level.

A Fitbit is a small wireless device that is used to track your activity throughout the day and night. Some people say it is like a personal trainer that fits in the palm of your hand, and although it won't yell at you to run one more mile, it will keep track of your healthy habits and keep you motivated! When worn during the day, the device will monitor the steps taken, distance walked and calories burned, and depending on the model will track floors climbed. The Fitbit can be worn at night to track an individual's sleep habits as well.

Data from the Fitbit can be uploaded onto the online Fitbit website and it will create a profile for you. If you are interested there are many tools you can use, for example you can enter the food you consume and then with the Fitbit tracking the calories you burn it will let you see how much progress you are making over time. It will give you daily and weekly readouts, plus there are very motivational awards or 'badges' that keep you going. The sleep information can help pinpoint problems with tiredness. It can be imprecise when some activities are performed like running or riding a bike - although it can be put into a sock which has been reported to be accurate, but you can input your own activities into the online database for a more accurate profile.

There are different types of models of the Fitbit; the Amherst Pelham Health Claims Trust will be ordering the **Fitbit One** and the **Fitbit Flex**. Be sure to take a good look at the comparison on the first page for the differences between these two models. For example the Fitbit Flex has light display dots which show how far you have progressed towards goals while the Fitbit One has numbers readout, time display incentive type displays such as a fun message like "Way to Go!" On the other hand, the Flex is convenient in that it goes around your wrist and may not get lost as easily as the One. On either model, the information can be downloaded at the end of the day. For a preview of the Fitbit profile and for more information, try the Fitbit website at <http://www.fitbit.com/>

For questions about the program or more information, please feel free to contact me by email at [brownj@amherstma.gov](mailto:brownj@amherstma.gov) or by calling 413-259-3077.

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