

Extension Notes

Personal Column for September 7, 2010

By Gary Hall, ISU Regional Extension Education Director

### **National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month**

September is “National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month.” Let’s take a moment to bring awareness to the condition of “Childhood Obesity.” Over 23 million American children and teens ages 2 to 19 are obese or overweight, a fourfold increase in 40 years. Obesity puts extra strain on children’s body’s making them susceptible to adult ailments such as Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke.

Unfortunately the epidemic does not stop with our children; in fact, it begins with adults, namely parents who have succumb to overweight or obesity themselves and find they are perpetuating the cycle with their children. Almost 65% of adults are overweight or obese, 32.2% of males and 35.5% of females, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The chronic diseases associated with overweight/obesity account for 70% of the deaths of Americans each year. And the “Obesity Epidemic” hits Americans’ pocketbooks hard as well, costing the nation a whopping 1 trillion dollars. The staggering reality of obesity in this country prompted the U.S. Congress to declare September as “National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month.

This is a time for everyone to:

- realize the dangers of unhealthy foods and the lack of physical activity in our society;
- make the small changes that will result in healthier kids;
- take responsibility for our health and help stop the rising obesity statistics.

In an effort to assist young families with children as they strive to lead a healthier life, health and nutrition professionals from the nation’s oldest university system, land grants, are pooling their knowledge and applying their research in the eXtension Community of Practice (CoP), Families, Food and Fitness. Families, Food and Fitness is a trustworthy source of science-based, peer reviewed information to help you raise a healthy family. Find out more at [www.extension.org](http://www.extension.org).

Hectic schedules and the abundance of unhealthy options can make healthy lifestyle decisions almost impossible to stick with. Couple that with health and nutrition recommendations that seem to change daily, and you’re left with overwhelmed and exhausted parents. Together, we can change the future for our children. Start today by moving more and eating better.

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