



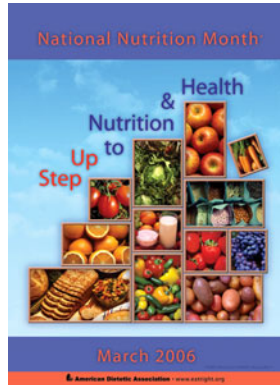
Family Matters

March/April 2006

A Family Newsletter prepared by Iowa State University Extension Family Specialists

March is National Nutrition Month®

The American Dietetic Association has created National Nutrition Month® to promote healthful eating. Through the theme “Step Up to Nutrition and Health” they are providing practical nutrition guidance and focusing attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound physical activity habits. By March, many of our New Year’s resolutions to improve health habits have gone by the wayside. Therefore, step up today to:



Be physically active. It affects your health today and in the future.

Make smart choices from every food group.

More variety in your diet equals better nutritional value.

Get the most nutrition out of your calories. Pick foods packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients and low in calories.

Find your balance between food and physical activity to be at a healthy weight.

Crackers

Some crackers supply as many calories and fat per ounce as cookies or a candy bar. Shop wisely. **Look for whole grains:** whole wheat or whole rye should be the only flour or at least the first ingredient. Don’t be fooled by “hearty wheat,” “stoned wheat”, or “multi-grain” - which are made from refined wheat flour. **Look for at least 3 grams of fiber and less than 4 grams of fat** per ounce.

Counting Calories?

The bottom line to weight loss and weight maintenance is calories. Calories are a measure of energy and can be obtained from carbohydrates, protein, fat and alcohol. Eating more calories than we burn in our daily activities leads to weight gain, burning more calories than we eat leads to weight loss.

Calories supply the energy that fuels your body. Foods provide calories at the following rates:

Fat - 9 calories per gram

Alcohol - 7 calories per gram

Carbohydrate - 4 calories per gram

Protein - 4 calories per gram



Remember - all foods give us calories, the amount of calories depends on *WHAT* the food is and *HOW MUCH* we eat.

Wine is Good - Grape Juice even Better

Drinking one to two glasses of wine a day has been shown to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease but scientists are not sure why. Wine and grape juice contain compounds, called polyphenols, that act as anti-oxidants. Anti-oxidants may protect the artery wall from damage, which is the initiating factor of plaque formation. Because wine consumption can lead to addiction, some experts recommend purple grape juice instead.

Consumer Lessons from Natural Disasters

Many groups are trying to learn lessons from recent hurricanes, wildfires and other disasters – lessons that might help to prevent future disasters or at least make recovery easier. From city planners to federal administrators, lessons are being learned.

What about you?

There are lessons for consumers to learn as well. Now, as spring approaches, is a great time to act on these lessons.

Insurance. One lesson disasters teach is the importance of insurance. Homeowner, generally carry insurance, but need to check periodically to make sure their coverage is keeping up with the value of their home. Renters are at greater risk of being uninsured. A TV news report after the Oklahoma wildfires included an interview with a 30-year-old mother of two who had lost everything. Starting over was going to be an extra struggle, because she had no insurance. Renter's insurance is available for about \$10 a month – a real bargain. Whether you live in a rented house, an apartment building or a college dormitory, renter's insurance is valuable protection.

Household Inventory. Think of all the possessions in your home. Even with good insurance, replacing lost items can be complicated if you don't remember what you have lost. That's where a good inventory of your possessions comes in.

Recent disasters can serve as the motivation to complete your household inventory, or update it. We have an enormous number of possessions to inventory. Making a written list of everything we own, which might have been realistic 60 or 80 years ago, is completely unthinkable for most of us now.

A camera can simplify the process. You can take a lot of pictures in the time it would take to list the items in just one closet! Use a video camera and speak while filming - recording information like model or serial numbers, date of purchase, and other



features that would be helpful if you ever need to make an insurance claim.

Whether you are using a still camera or a video camera, don't be shy. These pictures will be viewed in case of a disaster, and then you'll be *very* glad to have them. Open up your closets, your dresser drawers, even storage boxes, and take pictures of it all.

Even *with* a camera, doing a full household inventory may seem like a huge task. To avoid procrastination or discouragement, divide the task into manageable steps. For example, you might divide by types of rooms, or first floor, second floor, garage, or whatever makes sense to you.

For your most valuable possessions, a written inventory is still a smart step. Make a written inventory of major electronic equipment, valuable collections, or high quality tools. In that written inventory, list what you know about the items: the model name or number, purchase date and price (exact or approximate), special features, and other comments that affect their value and ability to be replaced.

Photographic and written inventories will take some time to complete. As each portion is completed, be sure to store the pictures, lists or computer files in a safe location *away* from your home.

Medicare Prescription Drug Plans: NOW is the Time!

If you (or someone you care about) have been putting off decisions about the new Medicare Drug Coverage, sometimes known as Medicare Part D, it's time to get down to business.

The ***deadline is May 15*** – if you don't enroll now, you will pay higher premiums if you ever wish to enroll in the future. Contact SHIIP (Senior Health Insurance Information Program) at 800-351-4664 or your local Agency on Aging for assistance.

Children Act Fast . . . So Do Poisons!

Each year unintentional poisonings from medicines and household chemicals kill about 30 children and promote more than one million calls to the nation's poison control centers. Use these basic poison prevention tips to check your home now.

- Use child-resistant packaging properly by closing the container after use.
- Keep all chemical and medicines locked up and out of sight.
- When products are in use, never let young children out of your sight - even if you must take them along when answering the phone or doorbell.
- Keep items in original containers.
- Leave the original labels on all products, and read the label before using.
- Do not put decorative lamps and candles that contain lamp oil where children can reach them. Lamp oil is very toxic.
- Always leave the light on when giving or taking medicine. Check the dosage every time.
- Avoid taking medicine in front of children. Refer to medicine as "medicine," not "candy."
- Clean out the medicine cabinet periodically, and safely dispose of unneeded medicines when the illness for which they were prescribed is over. Pour contents down the drain or toilet, and rinse container before discarding.

Americans can use a single toll-free telephone number to reach a poison control center anywhere in the nation. Callers dialing 1-800-222-1222 will be automatically linked to the closest poison center.



Family First

Recreate family closeness and enjoy the benefits. Too often, we eat meals separately and spend considerable time with the TV, video games and internet. The family speaks one tenth as many words together as they did a generation ago.

Keep your family bond close and loving by creating predictable family rituals. Here are a few to try.

Ritual meals. Have at least two ritual meals a week. There will be no TV, just good conversation led by adults.

Good manners. Hello, good-bye, please, thank you. We let other people finish their sentence and look people in the eye when others are speaking.

Ritual bedtimes. A story, sharing all the positive things that happened that day.

The ritual of keeping things in order. Things in their place and a place for things.



Source: Jeannette Lofas, Family Information Services, Minneapolis, MN

Create Peace: Stop Yelling

Parents usually yell because they're provoked and they need to exert their authority. How do you stop yelling?

One way is to disconnect those buttons your children love to push. When they do the things that make you mad, just stop. Take a deep breath or a time out for yourself. When you know what you want to say, say it: speaking quietly and using as few words as possible is always more effective than yelling. You can be firm and decisive without being unkind or loud and you'll have a much greater effect on your children.

Source: Cheryl Erwin Sparks, Family Information Services, Minneapolis MN