

To Your Health

Start the Year A Healthy Way

... Lighten Up Iowa

Lighten Up Iowa is a team based program designed to help members make positive changes during a "100 Day Challenge" - January 16- April 24, 2008.

A "team" consists of 2-10 people who are positive and motivated to change their lifestyle. You can form a team with friends, family, co-workers or neighbors. There are two divisions to compete in - weight loss and minutes of activity. A team can compete in one or both divisions.

Throughout the challenge, Lighten Up Iowa will offer encouragement by having physical activity ideas and tips on healthy eating and nutrition available.

Want to give the "100 Day Challenge" a try?

Go to www.lightenupiowa.org for all of the details!

Put together a team. Choose a team name and captain. Have the captain register

online or download the entry form and mail it in.

The registration fee is \$15 per person. The fee includes a t-shirt, weekly nutrition and physical activity tips, chances to win monthly incentives and prizes, access to online resources - and more!

... Go the Distance - for children

This is a free, "100 Day Challenge" - January 23 - May 1, 2008 - designed to encourage young Iowans to increase their physical activity levels and make better food choices. It is a way to teach children about the importance of being physically active and show them ways to make physical activity fun!

Go the Distance is also a way for youth teams to win monetary awards for their school or organization to be used toward new playground equipment or physical education classes.

Each team needs an adult captain (who has e-mail). A team may have 5-30 youth members - from a class at school, an after school program, scout troop, 4-H club, etc.

Want to help a team of kids with Go the Distance?

Go to www.iowasportsfoundation.org/goTheDistance for all of the details and to register.

Exercise Builds Strong Brains

Kids who play hard every day may be making their brains, as well as their bodies, stronger. A new study reports that children who play vigorously for 20 to 40 minutes a day may be better able to organize schoolwork, do class projects and learn mathematics.

(to page 2)

The study was financed by the National Institutes of Health and involved researchers at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, and the University of Georgia in Athens. One author of the study says exercise "may well improve the underlying mental processes that are involved in a lot of behaviors and academic tasks." Another author says, "School systems need to know that to reach their achievement targets, they need to add physical activity to the school day rather than reduce it."

Add More Steps to Your Day

Household chores, neighborhood walks and errands are good opportunities for adding steps to your day.

- Circle around the block once when you go outside to get the mail. If you live in the country, do an extra "lap" to the mailbox and back.
- Make several trips up and down the stairs to do laundry or other household chores.
- Stroll the halls while waiting for a doctor's appointment.
- Invite friends or family members to join you for a walk.
- Take your dog for a walk. Don't have a dog? Take the neighbor's dog for a walk.
- Walk on a treadmill on snowy days or when it's too icy or too dark to walk outside.
- Walk in place while watching your favorite television show.
- Escape the stress of a difficult day by excusing yourself for a few minutes of walking.
- Encourage co-workers to join you on walks during breaks.

Source: *America on the Move - Steps to a Healthier Way of Life™*

Cut 100 Calories

Small changes in the types of foods you eat and in the portion sizes you choose will quickly add up to 100 reduced calories - or more.

• No one tip, by itself, will equal 100 calories exactly, but selecting a few each day will get you on your way.

- Select nonfat (skim) or 1% milk instead of 2% or whole milk.
- Choose light yogurt made with no-calorie sweetener.
- Put lettuce, tomato, onions, and pickles on your burger or sandwich instead of cheese.
- Choose a 3- to 4-ounce portion of meat, poultry or fish (about the size of a deck of cards).
- Satisfy your sweet tooth with a sliver, bite or taste of dessert instead of a full portion.

Source: *America on the Move - Steps to a Healthier Way of Life™*

Kitchen Makeover

These tips will help launch your 2008 "better health" resolution.

- Eliminate bottled salad dressings. Instead choose vinegar or lemon juice with a little olive oil.
- Add color to your meals by choosing a variety of fresh vegetables.
- Use butter, margarine and other saturated fats sparingly.
- Eat sweet potatoes more often. Scrub under running water; trim out blemishes; bake in the microwave or oven.
- Choose nonfat (skim) milk or water instead of a soft drink.
- Plan ahead! Create a weekly menu that limits processed foods, and includes more whole grains, vegetables and fruits.

Source: *Food for Fitness and Fun*, January 2007, ISU Extension www.extension.iastate.edu/food