

# To Your Health

## Too Busy - For physical activity, healthy food choices

"I don't have time" - that's a common excuse for not getting more physical activity and making better nutrition choices. What many don't realize is that physical activity includes things such as shoveling snow. As tired as many of us are of the white stuff this winter, it does provide an opportunity for physical activity.

You can go to the gym, fitness center or attend an aerobics or step class to increase physical activity.

You can also look for activity that doesn't involve a structured place or time.

Here is a list of

### opportunities to increase daily physical activity

(based on a 150- to 170-pound person):

- Shoveling snow (typically December-March) - 5-10 calories per minute.
- Parking at the end of the parking lot at work/shopping

- 6-7 calories per minute of walking

- Using the stairs rather than the elevator - 7-9 calories per minute
- Light housework/cleaning - 4-5 calories per minute
- Gardening (typically May-September) - 8-10 calories per minute

Making **better nutrition choices** also is a daily opportunity - even if you're eating at a fast food restaurant. A number of fast food restaurants have introduced healthier options. In addition, nutrition information is available at many of them.

Ruth Litchfield, Food Science/Human Nutrition, Iowa State University Extension, points out that "finding nutrition information at a fast food restaurant is just a text-message away." Diet.com has launched 'Nutrition on the Go,' a text-messaging service that lets consumers check out the calories, carbohydrates and fat of common items at 1,700 establishments. Just send a text message to 34381 with the name of the restaurant and the item you plan to order. For more information visit <http://diet.com/mobile>.

## Nutrition: It's a Matter of Fact

New information about food and diet appears every day. An e-mail about "secret" calories in soft drinks, a friend's personal endorsement of a trendy diet, news reports about conflicting research on red wine... What is true? How do you separate truth from fiction when it comes to nutrition information?

- Focus on information that is based on scientific research.

- Look at the big picture: No single food or meal makes or breaks a healthful diet. Your total diet is the most important focus for healthful eating.
- Don't fall prey to food myths and misinformation that may harm rather than benefit your health. "If it sounds too good to be true" - it probably is.
- Read food labels to get nutrition facts that help you make smart food choices quickly and easily.

Source: American Dietetic Association

## Go Lean and Green at Lunch

Lean corned beef and green cabbage: sounds like March ... sounds like a tasty spring meal.

A balanced lunch means healthful choices from all the food groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, meat/poultry/fish/beans, and oils. *Getting inside MyPyramid* ([www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)) is a great way to learn about smart choices, appropriate serving sizes, and health benefits. Going lean with protein and green with plenty of vegetables are just two of the many ways to build a balanced meal that will keep you energized and alert all afternoon long.

Here are a few delicious ways to enjoy balanced midday meals - by going lean and green.

- **Soup:** With split peas and lentils, you can actually go green and lean at the same time. Dried beans and peas (legumes) are the only foods that appear in two food groups - vegetable and protein.
- **Salad:** The green side of salad is easy - lettuce, raw spinach, and other leafy greens, as well as broccoli florets, celery, cucumbers,

and sliced peppers. Remember to add lean protein with kidney beans, sliced turkey, or low-fat cottage cheese.

- **Sandwich:** Try an apple tuna sandwich, or lean roast beef or lean roast turkey - on whole grain bread, topped with Romaine lettuce and tomato slices.
- **Leftovers:** Creating "planned overs" is a smart strategy at every evening meal. If you make a chicken or lean pork stir-fry with green beans or asparagus, make enough to have for lunch the next day.
- **Fast food:** Green and lean is possible in the fast food lane, too. Choose a low-fat 6-inch sub (on whole wheat) and pile on the vegetables. Order a grilled chicken sandwich, skip the fries, and go with a side salad (garden or Caesar).

## 10 Minutes at a Time

You really can get fit 10 minutes at a time. No matter how busy your daily schedule, you can find 10 minutes here and there for activity.

One easy way to get 10 minutes of heart-smart **aerobic activity** is to always have a comfortable pair of shoes on or nearby, like under your desk or in the car. This way you are ready to walk around the office, the mall, or the neighborhood whenever you have a few extra minutes. Not interested in walking? How about dancing to a few of your favorite tunes? Take 10 to rock around your house while vacuuming or to twirl around with a child.

Source: Eat Right Montana - healthy eating, active lifestyle coalition

For more information, see ISU Extension publication - **Quick Fit Program - MOVE IT!** - EDC 0247