

MY RENAISSANCE JOURNEY

Facet: National Trends and Services

Principle: A Renaissance of the BODY

Topic: *Making Health a Habit*

Goals:

- To provide educational information about healthy food choices using African based meals as the foundation.
- To teach young people how to prepare healthy meals and snacks.

WHAT IS THE BIG DEAL ABOUT HEALTH?

Everyday you may see stories and information about maintain good health. There is a lot of information and it may seem overwhelming and confusing at times. We understand how you may feel but you can be assured this information is important if you plan to live a long, healthy, and happy life.

Good health may be different for each person however the essentials of good health can be maintained through what you eat, your level of physical activity, your environment, and how you feel about yourself.

The mind and body work together as a single system. This means that what you think about yourself, your internal feelings and the outward expression of your emotions impact your physical health. Emotional well-being and mental health can create major health issues as they greatly affect physical health. Stress, depression, and anxiety can contribute to a host of physical ailments including stomach disorders, headaches, sleep disturbances, lack of energy, over eating, and eating disorders.

It all begins with "***what you think about yourself***". Ask yourself the question: "*How do I feel about my physical appearance?*" We often allow what people say to us and images that we see in the media to create certain feelings about whether or not we see ourselves as pretty or fine, too dark or too light, too skinny or too fat, good hair or kinky and the list goes on and on. Our goal is to be able to love ourselves-as we are while working on what we might want to improve. This can sometimes be a challenge, yet it is so critical to being mentally healthy. You are truly perfect just as you are and you should begin each morning affirming it.

What is an Affirmation?

Affirmations can be positive or negative statements we quietly repeat to ourselves each day. If you repeat negative messages to yourself, you will produce negative thoughts and experiences in your life. If you affirm positive messages and thoughts, you will produce positive results. **REMEMBER: There is power in every thought you think and you are the only person who controls your thoughts.**

Here are a few affirmations you can try or you can make up your own. Each morning when you awake and right before going to bed, make it a habit to say your favorite affirmation 10-times aloud and in front of a mirror. As a reminder, you can write your affirmation(s) down, post it in your room or in your school notebook. This will help you throughout the day. These affirmations were written by Louise Hay.

POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS
1. I love my body.
2. I accept my uniqueness.
3. I love and approve of myself.
4. My future is glorious.
5. I now go beyond other people's thoughts and feelings about me. I love myself.
6. Every thought I think is creating my future.
7. I am in the process of positive change.
8. I release all fears and doubts about myself.
9. I am beautiful / handsome.
10. I deserve the best in life and I accept it now!
11. I release all criticism.

If you make the commitment to positively affirming yourself each day, you will begin to see miraculous results! You will have greater confidence, feel better about yourself and look good too. You might ask what does this have to do with leadership. It is difficult to be a good leader if you are not healthy physically and mentally. What you model to your friends impacts what they do as well. Leadership is demonstrating and guiding the way for others and helping them work to find a positive direction. It's getting your friends, classmates, and peers to work in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration. Leadership is the ability to be looked upon as a role model. Being a leader is being able to stand up for what you believe in. It means you help to create new ideas-you don't just follow old ones. Leadership is the ability to lead people or represent them. It all starts with defining who you are.



What are the Benefits of Eating Healthy?



Healthful eating contributes to overall healthy growth and development. There are a lot of benefits and some are very easy to notice. A healthy diet can help you maintain a body weight that is appropriate for you. Nutritional food is essential to brain development, promotes better learning, and it is a tremendous support to your body's physical growth. A well-balanced diet leads to increased energy levels which will enable you to actively participate in physical activities such as sports, gymnastics, dance, cheerleading, swimming, and riding a bike. When you are healthy, you can reach your full potential.

There are also many long term benefits to good nutrition. As we age, our body ages and the habits we develop now will dictate how efficient our bodies will function. If we love and take good care of our body by feeding it nutritional foods, in addition to getting plenty of exercise, and avoiding toxic substances (ex. smoking, alcohol, drugs, etc.), we have a better chance of

avoiding diet-related diseases such as heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, and some cancers – a few of the more common causes of death.

LEARN MORE

It's My Life

http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/body/index.html

What Is Youth Obesity?

Young people are eating more, exercising less, getting heavier and becoming unhealthier. Obesity rates have risen to an all time high. Obesity is defined as an excessive accumulation of body fat. Obesity is present when total body weight is more than 25% fat in boys and more than 32% fat in girls (Lohman, 1987).

According to the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health, approximately ten million or 31% of U.S. children and youth ages 10 to 17 are overweight or obese¹.

KNOW THE FACTS?

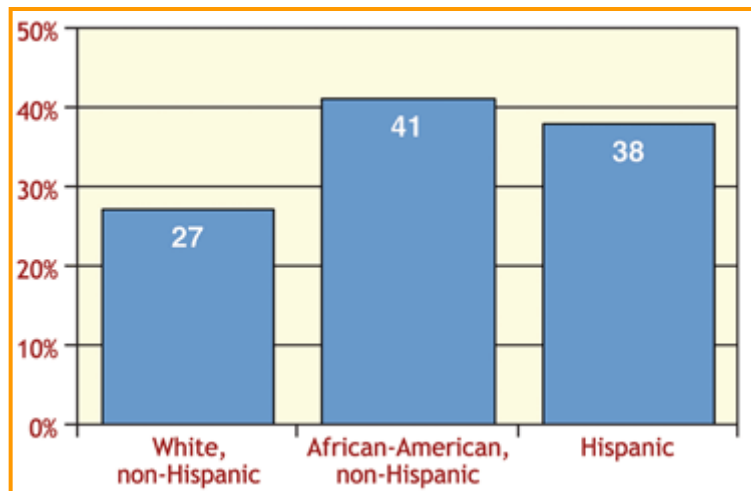
Obese Boys v. Obese Girls

Males are more likely to be overweight or obese than females (35 % compared to 26 %, respectively) ² .

KNOW THE FACTS?

Obese African American Youth

African-American and Hispanic children and youth are more likely than white children to be overweight or obese (41% for African-American, 38% for Hispanic children; and 27% for white children) ³ .



Source: KIDS COUNT analysis of the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health.

Diseases are linked to being overweight and obesity

Childhood obesity is associated with various illnesses. If you are overweight as a child, there is a chance you will be overweight as an adult. Childhood obesity is the leading cause of heart disease in young people; it is associated with Type II diabetes mellitus (*Noninsulin-dependent diabetes*); and the excessive weight places unnecessary and harmful stress on the joints. For young people, social acceptance is an important factor in their lives. Students who are overweight or obese tend to have lower self-esteem and relationships with their peers can be negatively affected.

The terms "overweight" and "obesity" represent ranges of weight that are greater than what is generally considered healthy for a given height. It also represents weight ranges that are shown to increase the probability of health problems and diseases. Overweight and obesity ranges are determined by using weight and height to calculate a number called the "**body mass index**" (BMI). BMI is used because, for most people, it correlates with their amount of body fat.

Calculating body fat

BMI is a reliable indicator of body fatness for most children and teens. For youth, BMI is age specific and gender-specific because the amount of body fat in children changes with age and it differs between boys and girls. Adults assess their body mass index through categories that do not consider sex or age. The Center for Disease Controls has developed BMI-for-age growth charts that take into account these differences and allow translation of a BMI

number into a percentile for a child's sex and age. For more information on body mass index (BMI) and your body's range, you and your parents should talk with your health care provider and then visit the Center for Disease Control's website below.

Understanding BMI	http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/childrens_BMI/about_childrens_BMI.htm
BMI Calculator for Teens	http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dnpabmi/Calculator.aspx

WHAT ARE THE EATING BEHAVIORS OF YOUNG PEOPLE?

A recipe for disaster

Adolescents today face many challenges when it comes to making food and activity choices. Many young people have very little knowledge about “what is” or “how to prepare” a nutritious meal and do not understand the negative effects of poor nutrition. In today's society, students are bombarded by persuasive advertisement encouraging them to consume unhealthy foods. There is immediate and easy access to low-cost, high fat, high sugar foods through fast foods and snacks. When you combine this with limited access to safe physical activity options and increased sedentary activities (i.e. cell phones, video games, internet, television, cars v. walking, jogging, or physical play), you increase your risks for disease and being overweight.

Breakfast: The Most Important Meal of the Day?

Breakfast is often said to be the most important meal of the day for good reason. Studies have shown that eating breakfast can increase attention span and concentration, decrease irritability, and improve physical and mental performance. Yet, the percentage of young people who eat breakfast decreases with age; while 92% of children ages 6–11 eat breakfast, only 77% of adolescents ages 12–19 eat breakfast⁴.

Breakfast can be as simple as a glass of juice or milk, a piece of fruit, and a low-fat granola bar, or more elaborate with wheat toast, grits, and eggs. Taking time in the morning to fuel up on “good” carbohydrates (found in whole grain breads, cereals, fruits), proteins (found in meat, peanut butter, nuts, beans), and a small amount of fat (found in low-fat milk and dairy products, eggs,) is the key to help ensure a sustained release of energy throughout the morning⁵.

Eat Your Fruits and Vegetables!

Based on the Food Guide Pyramid, adolescents should get on average - at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day. In 2007, only 21.4% of high school students reported eating fruits and vegetables five or more times daily (when fried potatoes and potato chips are excluded) during the past 7 days⁶. Only 39% of children ages 2-17 meet the USDA’s dietary recommendation for fiber (found primarily in dried beans and peas, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains⁷).

A healthy option would be to eat 100% fruit or vegetables juices, seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables, dried fruits or canned fruits in their natural juices. Consider whole grains, such as whole wheat, whole cornmeal, oatmeal, and rye which are higher in fiber than products made with refined grains (e.g., white bread, croissants, bagels, saltines).

Got milk?

Eighty-five percent (85%) of adolescent females do not consume enough calcium⁸. During the last 25 years, consumption of milk, the largest source of calcium, has decreased 36% among adolescent females⁹. Milk and milk products help build and maintain bone mass throughout the lifecycle. This may reduce the risk of osteoporosis (disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to break). This is most important during childhood and adolescence, when bone mass is being built. A healthy choice would be 1% or fat-free milk.

Beverage Options

From 1978 to 1998, the average daily soft drink consumption almost doubled among adolescent females, increasing from 6 ounces to 11 ounces, and almost tripled among adolescent males, from 7 ounces to 19 ounces^{10 11}. Sodas and fruit drinks are loaded with sugar and calories.

Healthier options include 100% fruit juices such as orange, grape, pineapple, and apple OR consider drinking water. Adolescents need at least eight glasses of water a day. Before consuming any beverage, make sure you check for added sugar (e.g., corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, honey, and fructose). Foods that have added sugar as one of the first two ingredients are high in sugar content. Reduce-fat or fat-free foods often

contain more sugar than their regular versions since manufacturers add sugar and other substances to improve the flavor of low-fat products.

If you like soda pop and still want the fizz, dilute fruit juice with a little club soda, or drink inexpensive, thirst-quenching water.

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION? MAKE HEALTH AND HABIT!

Making intelligent and informed dietary choices is the sign of a Leader. To ***Make Health a Habit*** is a conscious decision and a good one. There are many steps you can take toward adopting a healthy life style. When you make the decision to adopt a well-balanced diet, you will become a role model for your friends and family members including your parents. Think about it, this decision will help you and your loved ones develop habits that can last a life time. Healthy living begins with you and it can begin today...here's how.

1. Know what to eat (Dietary Guidelines)
2. Begin planning for success (Plan Meals)
3. Learn how to shop (Read Labels)
4. Make mealtime an experience (Cooking with family)
5. Realize that you can eat healthy and treat yourself to "smart" snacks
6. Discover how to eat out (Dining at restaurants)
7. Get moving! (Exercise)

WHAT SHOULD I EAT?

A healthy lifestyle involves many choices; among them, choosing a well-balanced diet. Let's begin by defining what a healthy eating plan is.

All foods contain different nutrients and other healthful substances. There is no way to get all the nutrients your body needs from one source. For example: oranges are a great source of vitamin C but they have no B12 or calcium. On the other hand, you can get the calcium and B12 from cheese but it does not have vitamin C.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has researched and developed a set of nutritional guidelines that make it easy for us to know how many daily servings we need from each of the food groups.

According to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, a healthy eating plan:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- Is low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars
- Stays within your daily calorie needs

More specific information may be found in the **Food Guide Pyramid** now called **My Pyramid**. Let's explore.

The **My Pyramid** shows food groups as a series of differently sized colored stripes:

- **orange** for grains
- **green** for vegetables
- **red** for fruit
- **yellow** for fats and oils
- **blue** for dairy
- **purple** for meats, beans, and fish



When you look at the pyramid, you will find that each section is a different size. The width of the section represents how much you should take in daily from that food group. It is very important to maintain a well-balanced diet which means eating representatives from each food group every day. For example....

Grains

My Pyramid recommends eating 3-ounces of whole grain bread, crackers, cereals, tortillas, grits, oatmeal, rice, or pasta each day. Examples include wheat, oat, spelt, bulgar (cracked wheat), whole cornmeal, and brown rice. Be sure to look for the word "whole" in the product's name. Avoid white rice and white flour products (bread, crackers, bagels).

LEARN MORE

Grains

http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/grains.html

Vegetables

My Pyramid advises that you eat more of dark green, orange, dried beans, and peas. They encourage you to find different ways to prepare and eat vegetables (raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, dried/dehydrated; cut-up or mashed). You can even use a juicer and prepare fresh squeezed vegetable juice – yummy!

LEARN MORE

Vegetables

http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/vegetables.html

Fruits

My Pyramid suggests you eat a variety of seasonal fruits – fresh, dried, or canned in their natural juices with no sugar added. You can also drink 100% fruit juice in addition to eating fruit whole, sliced, juiced, or pureed.

LEARN MORE

Fruits

http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/fruits.html

Oils

Your body needs some fat. *My Pyramid* advises that you get most of your oil from the consumption of fish and nuts; and the use of vegetable oils instead of butter, margarine, shortening, or lard. Research the nutritional benefits of some of the more common oils such as olive, canola, cottonseed, corn, soybean, sunflower, and safflower.

LEARN MORE

Oils

http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/oils.html

Dairy

My Pyramid recommends you eat low fat or fat-free, calcium-rich foods. All liquid milk products and many foods made from milk are considered part of

this food group. These include milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream and some puddings.

LEARN MORE
Dairy
http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/milk.html

Protein

The protein food group consists of meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts. *My Pyramid* urges you to “go lean on protein”. After selecting a low fat or lean cut of meat or poultry, you can opt for one of the healthier cooking methods - bake, broil, or grill but avoid frying as much as possible. Alternate sources of protein that are also rich in healthy oils are fish, nuts, and seeds. You can choose these foods in place of meat or poultry during meal time.

You can also be a “Bean Counter”. Dried beans and peas can be counted in the protein group OR the vegetable group. Individuals who seldom eat meat, fish, or poultry such as vegetarians can count dried beans and peas as a great source of protein.

LEARN MORE
Protein
http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/meat.html#

HOW CAN I PLAN HEALTHY MEALS?



How much of each food

group should I eat?

The amount of recommended grains, vegetables, fruits, oils, and proteins you need to eat depends on your age, gender, and level of physical activity. To understand exactly what you need, you will have to refer to a **Healthy Eating Plan**. This tool will not only tell you how many calories you need per day but it will teach you how to make healthy choices and help you better understand how much food equals a portion.

For example, perhaps you have heard people say you need to eat 5 servings of fruit and vegetables a day — which works out to a total of about 2½ cups for girls and 3 cups for boys (ages 14-18). But some experts encourage us to consume even *more* than that amount. They believe there are no limits on the quantities of delicious fruits and veggies you can enjoy — unless, of course, you load them up with butter or dressing, or fry them! (Nemours Foundation 2008).

READ & REVIEW
My Pyramid's Food Intake Chart
Learn about calories and portions.
CLICK THE LINK TO ACCESS THE CHART

READ & REVIEW
My Pyramid's Mini Poster
Learn about My Pyramid and the food groups. Hang the poster in your kitchen as a reminder.
CLICK THE LINK TO ACCESS THE POSTER

READ & REVIEW
My Pyramid's Food Intake Chart
Learn about calories and portions.
CLICK THE LINK TO ACCESS THE CHART

Where can I find a healthy eating plan?

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005* has a **Healthy Eating Plan** you can access through the link below. This tool was developed to help you create an individualized eating plan with tips for following them, and tools for tracking your progress. You can even add 6 additional family members; and create up to 7 days of menus for each person; and select and print daily, weekly, or family reports that summarize how your food choices compare to your goals.

Access My Pyramid Eating Planner

http://www.mypyramidtracker.gov/planner/launchPage.aspx

MyPyramid Tracker is an online dietary and physical activity assessment tool that provides information on your diet quality, physical activity status, related nutrition messages, and links to nutrient and physical activity information¹².

Access My Pyramid Tracker

http://www.mypyramid.gov/tracker/trackertutorial.html

WRITING ACTIVITY

Expository Writing (RECIPE)

JOURNAL WRITING: Create a recipe outlining how to prepare traditional African American dish. Be sure to spell out all ingredients, measurements, preparation and cooking techniques, as well as a recommendation of how to serve the dish. Try to forecast how many people your dish will serve.

WHAT SHOULD I GET FROM THE GROCERY STORE?

Once you have planned your meal for the week using the **Healthy Eating Plan**, next you will need to go to the store to pick up your groceries. Learning to read food labels is one of the most important skills you can have to help you make informed and nutritious choices.

Here are a few simple steps to follow:

Step 1: Check Serving Size. Always check the top of the label to see how much is in one serving.

Step 2: Be sure to limit the intake of foods that are high in fat, cholesterol, and sodium. When you eat too much of these foods you increase your risks for high blood pressure, heart disease, and some types of cancers.

Step 3: Choose foods with plenty of fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, Calcium, and Iron. These nutrients help to keep you healthy and protect you from disease. Fiber is extremely important because it supports proper digestion and regular bowel movement that keeps your colon and intestine healthier. The general rule is that if you eat three meals daily you should have at least two bowel movements daily. Vitamin A is useful for maintaining beautiful skin and healthy eyes. Vitamin C may help prevent colds. Calcium develops strong bones, and iron helps your muscles and brain work more efficiently.

Step 4: Use the % daily Value (DV) column. To understand how a serving of a food compares to what you eat in a whole day, examine the percentage of daily value (% DV). Just for example, if a food has 4% of the daily value (DV) for a nutrient that means it has a low amount. If it has 25% of the DV for a nutrient, it has a high amount. (Nutrition and Physical Activity the 100 Way)

Chicken Noodle Soup	
Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 cup (120 ml) condensed soup	
Servings Per Container about 2.5	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	60
	Calories from Fat 15
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat	1.5g 2%
Saturated Fat	0.5g 3%
Trans Fat	0g
Cholesterol	15mg
Sodium	890gm 37%
Total Carbohydrate	8g 3%
Dietary Fiber	1g 4%
Sugars	1g
Protein	3g
Vitamin A	4%
Calcium	0%
Vitamin C	0%
Iron	2%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
	Calories 2000 2500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400m 2400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

WRITING ACTIVITY
Reflective Writing (GROCERY SHOPPING)
<p>ACTION: Go to the grocery store with your parents</p> <p>READ: Read the labels. What are the serving sizes for each product? Are these products low or high in fat content, sodium, cholesterol, and sugar? Are the products a good source of fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, and calcium? Review the Percentage of Daily Value (%DV). How does it compare to what you should eat daily?</p> <p>COMPARE: Compare and contrast all three products and make a recommendation on whether your family should continue buying each product.</p> <p>JOURNAL WRITING: Write a reflective paper on your experience analyzing three commonly used products.</p>

HOW CAN I GET MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO MAKE HEALTH A HABIT?

In the previous section of this guide, we discussed what it means to be a leader. This is a great time to put your skills to work. Now that you understand how important it is to maintain a healthy life style, you will want to share this information with the people you love the most – family and friends.

“Making Health a Habit” requires great leadership. It takes strength and courage to not only change your own eating habits but to serve as a role model for your family and friends by encouraging them to do the same. What a great way to build a strong family and lasting friendships.

How to get started

You might ask yourself *“How do I get started?”* Begin by sharing a meal together. This is an ideal time to have discussions about ***Making Health a Habit***. When you take time out to prepare and share meals, you create opportunities to improve communication and strengthen relationships. You also create treasured memories that will last a lifetime. There are several quick and easy things you can do today to help set the stage. Here are a few...

Step 1. Plan a meal together. Get everyone to make the commitment to a specific day and time. Preparing a meal has several steps - shopping, food prep, cooking, serving, and clean-up. Get everyone involved.

WRITING ACTIVITY

Research Report (MEAL PLANNING)

JOURNAL WRITING: Write a report on the elements of a traditional, well-balanced dinner in African American culture. Plan to include all food groups.

RESEARCH: Research the origination of the dishes and give a little history about each. Remember, you can modify recipes to fit your dietary needs (e.g. reduce use of butters/margarines, salt, fat, sugar, oils, etc.)

Soul Food Cook Books	Web Link
Soul Food Cookbook	http://www.soulfoodcookbook.com/
Big Mamas Soul Food Recipes	http://www.bigmamasrecipes.com/soulfood/africanamericanindex
Soul Food and Southern Cooking	http://www.soulfoodandsoutherncooking.com/
Soul Food Online	http://www.soulfoodonline.net/

Step 2. Work with your family to select a menu and make a grocery list. Go with your parents to the grocery store to shop for the food you will need to prepare the meal. While shopping share with your parents what you have learned about reading food labels, portions, and well-balanced meals.

Step 3. While helping your parents cook, jump start the conversation by asking what types of foods they like the most? How do those foods fall within My Pyramid food groups? Test their knowledge of how many servings they should have per day? Make a game out of it.

Step 4. Get fancy! Set the table using a table cloth, candles, music, or thematic accessories. Serve each family member but be aware of portion sizes.

Step 5. Take your time and savor each bite. Enjoy the time you have with your family. Keep the conversation fun and enjoyable.

Step 6. At the end of the meal, make it a joint effort to clean-up. This makes the time past quickly and you can continue to enjoy your time together.

Make Mealtime Family Time is a national organization that encourages families to spend mealtime together. They have identified **Six Steps to a Successful Mealtime**. Share these with your parents and discuss how you can begin incorporating them into your family's mealtime.

**SIX STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY
MEALTIME EXPERIMENT**

Step #1	Commit to eating five meals together (breakfast, lunch or dinner) each week for five weeks. It's not easy but well worth the effort! Your meal together will be the best meal of the day!
Step #2	Prepare your meals with a family moment as your goal. Everyone in the family can get involved in the preparation.
Step #3	Before beginning your meal, say a word of thanks, a prayer, or allow for a moment of silence. Gratitude is good for the soul.
Step #4	Turn off the television. It's important to tune in to each other rather than the TV, video games, or Internet.
Step #5	Eat your meal together along with positive family conversation and other family-building activities that make your mealtime family time. You can find all kinds of activities on this Web site.
Step #6	Clean up together!

LEARN MORE

Learn more about *Make Mealtime Family Time*

<http://www.makemealtimefamilytime.com>

READ & REVIEW

My Pyramid's Brochure

Use the My Pyramid brochure to discuss healthy eating habits with your family and friends.

READ & REVIEW

Mealtime Calendar

Use the Mealtime calendar to create fun activities the whole family can do during dinner.

ARE THERE HEALTHY SNACKS?

In today's high paced environment, we are all living busy lives. As a teenager, you will have to manage school, homework, after-school activities, part-time work, and still leave time to hang out with friends. As an adolescent, it is normal to feel hungry a lot because your body is growing and demands more nutrients. Snacks are a great way to fill the hunger and get the nutrients your body needs.

Make the choice

From time to time, you may find it easier to just grab something quick from a fast food restaurant, vending machine, or corner store but this is NOT what's best for your body. It is possible to treat yourself to a quick, healthy and filling snack. It just requires advanced planning and a little discipline – but those are the characteristics of a good leader – right?

Besides, it's even more important to select a nutritional snack when you have a hectic schedule because you need the energy to think clearly and the fuel to keep moving.

Good Snacks v. Bad Snacks

At all times, you must pay close attention to what you eat. When you stuff your face with chips and soda or an energy drink and candy, you may have noticed a sudden boost in energy. This feeling is only temporary. Perhaps you have noticed that later you feel tired, sleepy, or run down? This is because of the amount of sugar, fat, and calories contained in "junk food". In the long run, this type of food will only slow you down.

To keep energy levels up — and avoid weight gain — steer clear of foods with lots of **simple carbohydrates** (sugars) like candy bars or soda. Look for foods that contain **complex carbohydrates** like whole-grain breads and cereals and combine them with protein-rich snacks such as peanut butter or low-fat yogurt or cheese.¹³

Judging whether snacks are healthy

Choosing healthy snacks means making informed decisions when grocery shopping. Be careful of the health claims on food packages. They can be misleading. Here are some things to watch out for;

- Just because something is "all natural" or "pure" doesn't necessarily mean that it's nutritious. For example, "all natural" juice drinks or sodas can be filled with sugar (which is, after all, a natural ingredient) but all that sugar means they'll be high in calories and give you little nutrition¹⁴.
- Be skeptical of low-fat food claims, too. If the fat has been eliminated or cut back, the amount of sugar in the food may have increased to keep that food tasting good. Many low-fat foods have nearly as many calories as their full-fat versions¹⁵.

BLOG
<i>"How can I get myself to stop eating the foods with sugar and salt that I crave every day?"</i>
Click here to blog about how you feel.

Junk foods

The foods that are more likely to lead to health problems are often called "junk foods". If the food you love contains lots of fat, salt, and sugar it's probably something you should avoid. Let's explore why:

- Diets high in **fat** (especially saturated fat) have been linked to increased risk of heart disease - like heart attacks.
- **Salt** plays a very important and complex role in the body. But diets that are high in salt can put you at risk of high blood pressure, which in turn can affect your brain... your eyes... your heart...

- If you are consuming foods that contain a lot of **fat and sugar** they provide the body with EXTRA energy. If that energy is not burned off, then you are likely to put on weight.
- Added **sugars** are sugars and syrups added to foods in processing, not the naturally occurring sugar in foods like fruit or milk. Eating foods high in added sugar is a concern because consuming excess calories from these foods can cause weight gain or lower consumption of more nutritious foods. In the United States, the number one source of added sugar is non-diet soft drinks (soda or pop)¹⁶. Also, tooth decay can be attributed to eating too much sugar, especially when you don't brush regularly or properly!
- When you don't have enough **fiber**, you are more likely to suffer from constipation, which means your body is not properly release waste. Remember, bowel movements are the body's way of eliminating the stuff it does not need. If you eat three healthy meals daily –you should have at least two bowel movements daily.

The reality is that everyone enjoys junk food and fast food. The fat, salt, and sugar make it taste good. It's OK to treat yourself once in a while but **Junk food is not something you should be consuming every day**. When you do make the decision to eat junk food, do it in moderation by only eating a small portion and leaving the rest. If you find it difficult to control how much you consume of these foods, then **STAY AWAY** altogether! The best way to do that is to avoid buying them and ask your parents to keep them out of the pantry. If you feel you can control your eating of junk food, simply monitor what you are eating, how much, and how often.

Planning To Snack Healthy

Now that we understand that snacking is not only normal but important to your grow. What is important is for you to monitor what you are eating and how much. The best way to accomplish this goal is to plan ahead. If you know you get hungry after-school or before practice, prepare snacks in advance and carry them with you. Here are a few healthy snack options for you to try.

- A healthy alternative to foods high in sugar is fresh fruit, which is naturally sweet and low in calories.

- When you get the craving for salty foods, opt for baked tortilla chips with salsa, whole-wheat pretzels with spicy mustard, air popped popcorn with a small amount salt; nuts, trail mix, or whole grain crackers.
- Looking for a healthy drink alternative to sugary juices, soda pop, fruitades, and energy drinks; try drinking water, milk, or 100% juice with no sugar added. If you still want the fizz of a soda pop, dilute the fruit juice with club soda.
- Have a sweet tooth that won't quit? Substitute sweets and candies, cakes and cookies with raisins; dried fruits with no added sulfites or sugar; blend frozen fruit with water or milk to make fruit smoothies; freeze juice in an ice tray to make popsicles; fruit yogurt; nonfat frozen yogurt or sorbet instead of ice cream.
- Other healthy snacks include sliced fresh vegetables like carrots, celery, cucumbers, and tomatoes; peanut butter with apples, celery, or crackers; cheese crackers or sandwich; whole grain pita bread with hummus and tabouli; bowl of whole grain cereal and no refined sugars; create a mini pizza out of a slice of whole grain pita bread, bagel, or English muffin. Add fresh veggies, tomato sauce, and cheese and bake on low until the cheese melts.

READ & REVIEW
Talk Snack Handout
Use the Talk Snack Handout to strike up a discussion during mealtime or with friends during lunch.

Can I Eat Healthy and Dine Out?

Dining out can be fun and a real treat. As American citizens make the commitment to living a healthier life style, service providers like grocery stores and restaurants are becoming more conscious of the types of food they offer their customers. It is still your responsibility to control what you put in your body so here are a few tips to help you ensure you have a dining out experience that is both tasty and good for you.

Research. Look for restaurants that offer a menu that meets your dietary guidelines. Use the Healthy Dining Finder as a tool. Simply click the link below to begin your search.

LEARN MORE
The Healthy Dining Finder
http://www.healthydiningfinder.com/site/

To help make your decision, ask yourself....

- Will the restaurant offer margarine rather than butter with the meal?
- Will the restaurant serve low fat milk rather than whole milk or cream?
- Will the restaurant be willing to trim visible fat from poultry or meat?
- Will the restaurant leave all butter, gravy or sauces off a food?
- Will the restaurant serve salad dressing on the side?
- Will the restaurant accommodate special requests?
- Will the restaurant use less cooking oil when cooking?

Decide early. Review the menu and make a decision on what you will order in advance. This will minimize temptation while you are at the restaurant.

Monitor your portion size. To ensure you are eating the appropriate portion size, consider ordering a small plate or half size; have part of your meal boxed to take home; downsize your order by selecting an appetizer and side salad instead of an entrée; split and share an entree with someone

Make healthy choices. Look for healthful sides. They are usually prepared using a healthier cooking processes (e.g. grilled, steamed, sautéed, baked, roasted, or boiled) with minimally sauces and dressing. Look for broccoli, greens, carrots, green beans, asparagus, spinach, butternut squash, zucchini, and salads.

Ask questions. When ordering, inquire about what is in the meal and how it was prepared. Select restaurants where the people serving the food know the ingredients in each dish.

Enjoy yourself. Savor the flavors, and select dishes you can't or wouldn't make in your own kitchen.

HOW IMPORTANT IS EXERCISE?

Regular physical activity is very important! It improves and reduces the risk of developing many diseases, including obesity, heart disease, some types of cancers, Type II diabetes. It also builds muscle strength, controls weight, increases self-esteem, lowers stress and anxiety and builds bone mass.

Facts from the Center for Disease Control

- Nearly half of American youths aged 12-21 years are not vigorously active on a regular basis.
- About 14 percent of young people report no recent physical activity. Inactivity is more common among females (14%) than males (7%) and among black females (21%) than white females (12%).
- Participation in all types of physical activity declines strikingly as age or grade in school increases.
- Only 19% of all high school students are physically active for 20 minutes or more, five days a week, in physical education classes.
- Daily enrollment in physical education classes dropped from 42 percent to 25 percent among high school students between 1991 and 1995.

The American Heart Association says that programs designed to improve physical fitness should take into account **The FIT Formula**.

F	frequency (days per week)
I	intensity (how hard, e.g., easy, moderate, vigorous) or % of heart rate
T	time (amount for each session or day)

Children and adolescents are typically more active than adults but even then they may not meet the recommended guidelines for physical activity. You might ask "How much exercise is enough?" For teenagers, you should do some kind of aerobic exercise two or three times a week, for 20 to 30 minutes at a time. Many teens who play team sports will be required to do much more than that. The heart gets stronger and they will be able to do more and more exercise without getting tired. Team sports that make the

heart strong include swimming, basketball, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, ice and roller hockey, and rowing. Exercise, like most things in life, is best done in moderation. Too much, too soon, can lead to injuries or cross the line to compulsive exercise.¹⁷

Most research suggest that it is wise to talk with a healthcare professional before beginning an exercise program, especially if there are health problems that might affect the types of exercise chosen. Then, you can plan to meet with a coach or fitness expert to select a program that is right for you.

When you are creating your exercise plan with your fitness expert, consider a well-rounded program that combines **aerobic activity** (which works the heart and lungs), with **weight training** (to help strengthen and condition the muscles), and **stretching** (to reduce muscle injuries, increase flexibility, correct posture, and relax muscles).

The American Heart Association has found these aerobic activities are especially beneficial when done regularly:

- brisk walking, hiking, stair-climbing, aerobic exercise
- jogging, running, bicycling, rowing and swimming
- activities such as soccer and basketball that include continuous running

WRITING ACTIVITY
Persuasive Writing
JOURNAL WRITING: Write an essay persuading readers to choose healthy life style. Briefly discuss the benefits of adopting a well-balanced diet versus the consequences. Be sure to talk about the impact regular exercise has on your health.

Note: All information contained in this document is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor

¹ ©2008 The Annie E. Casey Foundation

² KIDS COUNT analysis of the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health.

³ KIDS COUNT analysis of the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health.

⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals 1994-96, 1998.*

⁵ Nutrition and Physical Activity the 100 Way – Providing Healthy Snack and Meals

⁶ CDC. [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2008](#). *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report* 2006; 55(SS-5): 1–108.

⁷ Lin BH, Guthrie J, Frazao E. American children’s diets not making the grade. *Food Review* 2001; 24(2): 8-17.

⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: Department of Health and Humans Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2004.

⁹ Cavadini C, Siega-Riz AM, Popkin BM. US adolescent food intake trends from 1965 to 1996. *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 2000; 83(1): 18-24.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals 1994-96, 1998*.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, 1987-88, Appendix A*.

¹² MyPyramid.gov

¹³ 2008 The Nemours Foundation

¹⁴ 2008 The Nemours Foundation

¹⁵ 2008 The Nemours Foundation

¹⁶ 2008 Discovery Communications

¹⁷ 2008 Discovery Communications