Inside this Issue

Flavored Milk Just as Good as Plain Milk ..........2
Green Tea: Is it Really Tonic in a Teapot? ..........2
Planning for Healthcare in Retirement ............4
Health and Wealth Tips for Extreme Commuters .............................................5
10 Tips to Easily Add Fruits and Vegetables to Your Daily Food Routine .........................6
Why Do People Eat Like They Do? .............7
Attack Asthma at Home .................................8

Sherri Cirignano, M.S., RD, LDN
Family & Community Health Sciences Educator,
Warren County

In November, 2007, a group of the world's leading scientists and cancer prevention experts released a comprehensive report, the second of its kind in ten years, which outlined specific recommendations for cancer prevention. This report, Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective, comes to us from the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research. The six year process to develop this report required a thorough collection and review of the enormous amount of research by an expert panel that has been done on these topics, and the compilation of recommendations based on the findings of this review. In a two part series, we will take a look at first the background of this important report and then the recommendations.

Who is the World Cancer Research Fund?
Founded in 1982, the World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) was the first cancer charity and its mission is dedicated to the prevention of cancer. As a pioneer in the research and education of nutrition, physical activity and the prevention of cancer, the WCRF has been an international leader in cancer prevention and is committed to providing science-based cancer prevention recommendations for professionals, communities, families and individuals.

The WCRF is a global network that includes the WCRF International and its five national member organizations including the UK, the Netherlands, France, Hong Kong and the USA. These are all charitable organizations that are independent of government. The American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) is the national WCRF organization for the USA. Visit www.wcrf.org or www.aicr.org for more information about these organizations.

Findings by the Expert Panel
The first Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective, published in 1997, provided not only a means towards the gathering of and reporting on the evidence to date, but also acted as a springboard towards a flurry of research activity on more specifically how these environmental factors can affect cancer risk. At the time of the release of the first report, it was "immediately...recognized as the most authoritative and influential report in its field," and was the basis for decisions in government policy, as well as in healthcare, educational and research institutions.

As a result of the increase in research over the past ten years, there became a need to again review and update the more current evidence. This in turn resulted in the second expert report which includes the WCRF International and its five national member organizations including the UK, the Netherlands, France, Hong Kong and the USA. These are all charitable organizations that are independent of government. The American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) is the national WCRF organization for the USA. Visit www.wcrf.org or www.aicr.org for more information about these organizations.

Findings by the Expert Panel
The first Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective, published in 1997, provided not only a means towards the gathering of and reporting on the evidence to date, but also acted as a springboard towards a flurry of research activity on more specifically how these environmental factors can affect cancer risk. At the time of the release of the first report, it was “immediately...recognized as the most authoritative and influential report in its field,” and was the basis for decisions in government policy, as well as in healthcare, educational and research institutions.

Continued, page 2, see Preventing...
Flavored Milk
Just as Good as Plain Milk
Richard I. Lozano, Dietetic Intern, Montclair State University
Karen Ensle EdD, RD, FADA, CFCS, Preceptor, Family and Community Health Sciences Educator, Union County

Should I let my child drink chocolate milk? Is this really part of a healthy diet? Many parents ask these questions. Nutrition professionals all agree that calcium is extremely necessary for youth and adults of all ages according to a detailed study published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 2008. Researchers examined the dietary intakes of 7,557 children and adolescents aged 2 to 18 and compared body mass index (BMI) scores (measurement of weight for height) of those who drank either flavored or plain milk to those who did not consume milk at all. Interestingly, children who drank any type of white or flavored milk had comparable or lower BMI scores as compared to those that drank no milk at all. Interestingly, children who drank flavored or plain milk had significantly higher intakes of crucial vitamins and minerals needed for growth such as Vitamin A, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, and potassium.

Parents need to be concerned with calcium intake, not so much about the sugar in flavored milk. This study indicates that children and adolescents are at no increased risk of unhealthy weight gain if they consume flavored or plain milk on a daily basis as part of a well-balanced diet. Adding flavor to milk is safe and does not lead to a higher intake of added sugars, as compared to those who drank plain milk, according to this study.

Many youth are consuming high amounts of regular soda and sweet beverages each day. Some of those include: fruit punch, diet cola, regular cola, sports drinks, and orange juice. It is essential that children, teens and adults consume enough food and beverages that are excellent sources of calcium. Milk and dairy products provide the calcium along with other needed nutrients which help children grow strong bones and teeth. If sufficient calcium is consumed daily, the body can “bank” or store calcium. For youth, this “banking” of calcium is important to prevent osteoporosis.

Most soy milk products contain added calcium and some orange juice does as well.

Getting enough calcium each day is possible by following the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Children, adolescents and adults need at least 3 servings of low-fat/fat free milk or milk products (yogurts and cheese) every day to meet their calcium needs, which many of our children are not getting. Whether the milk is plain or flavored, it is an excellent source of calcium, vitamins and minerals. Encourage your family...
Milk...
continued from page 2
to consume three-1 cup or equivalent servings a day. For more information, see Smart Food Choices - Consuming Milk is Good. Rutgers Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet, FS. 1053, http:/\n/\n/njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS1053.

Green Tea: Is it Really Tonic in a Teapot?
Joanne Kinsey, M.S.
Family and Community Health Sciences Educator,
Atlantic/Ocean Counties

Green Tea, the Powerful Antioxidant
Tea is the second most consumed beverage, next to water, in the world. Although the practice of drinking tea to improve health is centuries old, research to prove the health benefits of tea is still in its early stages. For the past three decades, researchers have been studying the relationship between tea consumption and the risks of cardiovascular disease and cancer. The number of studies performed may be limited so far, but the results are promising: In laboratory studies (in vivo and in vitro) green tea has been shown to effectively slow or completely prevent cancer development in prostate cells, the breast, colon and liver (“AICR - Foods that Fight Cancer” 2008). While a definitive relationship has not yet been made between tea consumption and cancer risk, the results to date warrant further investigation.

Green Tea and Heart Disease
Green tea provides the most antioxidant polyphenols, notably a catechin called epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG), which is believed to be responsible for most of the health benefits linked to green tea. Scientists doing research on flavonoids in green tea continue to find additional health benefits associated with these compounds and evidence that they work through a variety of mechanisms to improve markers for heart disease. Through in vitro and animal studies, polyphenol research in green tea has shown it to be effective in lowering LDL cholesterol levels, and inhibiting the formation of plaque in the arteries. While these studies are promising, human studies on the effect of green tea and heart health is inconclusive, ongoing research is being done in this area.

Green Tea and Cancer
According to research at Harvard Medical School, green tea is the best food source of catechins, which are effective in keeping the body healthy because they take on the 'free radicals' in the body and prevent them from harming the healthy cells. Catechins should be considered right alongside of the better-known antioxidants like vitamins E and C as potent free radical scavengers and health-supportive for this reason. The Harvard studies also note an association between the consumption of green tea and a lowered risk for several cancers, including: bladder, breast, lung, colon, and esophageal (“Benefit of Drinking Green Tea” 2008).

Green Tea
All tea comes from the same bush (Camilla Sinensis). The color and antioxidant content of the tea is dependent upon how the tea is processed after it is picked. The difference is that green tea is steamed before it can oxidize, while other tea types, like oolong and black tea, are allowed to oxidize partially or fully. While all tea contains EGCG, green tea contains far more than other teas. The American Institute for Cancer Research further points out that black and oolong tea leaves are made from fermented leaves and the EGCG compounds may not be as effective in preventing and fighting disease.

The United States Department of Agriculture, as well as medical researchers around the world, are currently studying green tea and its effect on cancers, metabolism, blood glucose and cholesterol levels. While this research is still in its early stages, we can look forward to new tea research as it becomes available. In the mean time why not sit back, enjoy a cup of green tea and ponder your own personal thoughts on the health value of green tea!

Green Tea-Drinking Tips:
• Allow green tea to steep for three to five minutes to fully release the catechins.
• Drink green tea several times a day to benefit from antioxidants and other healthful plant compounds.
• Drink green tea that is freshly brewed to get the most benefit from catechins. Instant tea, decaffeinated, and bottled tea contains less of the beneficial compounds (USDA 2008).
Planning for Health Care in Retirement

Patricia Q. Brennan, CFP
Senior Extension Trainer, Morris County

Health insurance and health care costs present a significant risk to financial security in retirement. It's a fact that health costs are rising each and every year due to inflationary pressure and the advancements made in medical technology and pharmaceutical research. That is why it is essential to plan ahead. One of your goals should include setting aside sufficient money to provide adequate insurance and covering out-of-pocket medical costs.

The Employee Benefits Research Institute reports that only about 25% of all retirees receive employer-sponsored health insurance after retirement. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, this number was 66% in 1988. The Center for Retirement Research reported that in the year 2000, the average couple 65 and older spent 16% of their net income on health care. By 2010, it is estimated to rise to 24%, and by 2020 to 29% of annual income. An individual who retires at age 65 and lives to age 80 can expect to shell out $137,000 for his/her health care costs over that span assuming 7% annual increases. The cost of long-term health insurance is not included in this number and could easily cost $80-100K a year in New Jersey.

The financial resources you as a retiree will need to accumulate will depend on several factors:

- What kind of insurance you have
- How old you are
- How healthy you are
- The yearly rise in premiums
- Your longevity

If you are fortunate enough to have health insurance through your former employer, your costs will be lower than someone who does not have coverage. Do everything you can to stay healthy - eat well, exercise, have regular check ups, medical and dental. You'll be able to reduce you health costs. Be sure to factor in that costs will rise above the inflation rate. This is a challenge when your income doesn't but remains static.

Three actions to consider if you retire before 65 - whether it's by choice or your employer's doing:

- Don't let your coverage under your former employer's plan lapse. Under federal law, if your company has 20 or more employees, you and your dependents may extend benefits for 18 months after leaving employment. This coverage is called COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act). It is costly and you will pay the whole premium for the policy (employer's and employee's share) plus a 2% administrative fee.
- If your spouse has coverage through an employer, switch to his/her plan if possible. This will be your least expensive option. It may also be possible to find a more affordable plan through professional or social organizations you belong to.
- Buy private health insurance. It too is expensive. However, it's a lot cheaper than the potential cost of not carrying it. The most popular plan for the under 65 retiree is a high-deductible policy paired with a tax-advantaged health savings account known as an HSA. This will save you money on premiums and is generally best for people with low health care costs.
Health and Wealth Tips for Extreme Commuters

Barbara O’Neill, Ph.D., CFP®
Rutgers Cooperative Extension Specialist in Financial Resource Management

Millions of Americans, especially those living near big cities on the east and west coast, can be classified as “extreme commuters.” According to the U.S. Census Bureau, this term applies to anyone whose commute to and from work takes 90 minutes a day or longer. It is an unfortunate fact of life, especially in major metropolitan areas, that many people can't afford to live in or near the communities where they work. As a result, some elect to commute two, three, or even more hours a day back and forth to work.

As a consequence of their extra long workdays, extreme commuters lose a big chunk of time sitting in their cars or carpools or on trains and busses. They, therefore, have less time for food preparation and exercise and for “maintenance” tasks such as financial management (e.g., balancing their checkbook). Not surprisingly, a 2004 study found a strong relationship between commuting time and weight gain. Researchers studied commuters in the Atlanta, Georgia area and found a 3% increased chance of becoming overweight or obese for every 30 minutes of commuting time. Studies have also found that many people perform only the most essential financial management tasks (e.g., paying bills on time) and ignore experts' recommendations to regularly review their credit report, prepare a written spending plan (budget), and calculate their net worth.

So is it possible to maintain good health and manage your finances wisely when you're spending so much time on the road? The answer is yes, but it takes some advance planning and motivation. Below are some small steps to health and wealth for extreme commuters:

- Build exercise into your day…any way that you can. One way is to leave for work earlier than you currently do. Not only will you beat some of the commuting traffic but, upon arrival at your worksite earlier than you actually need to be there, you have a valuable chunk of time to exercise. Wear a pedometer and try to log 2,500 to 3,000 steps (of the recommended 10,000 steps per day) before you start working.
- Walk during your lunch hour, preferably with co-workers for companionship and motivation. Aim for another 3,000 to 4,000 steps. Especially during the winter months, when extreme commuters leave for work in the dark and come home in the dark, lunch hours provide a great opportunity for walking, either indoors or outdoors. Another possibility is to walk from one end of a pedestrian shopping mall to the other and back, on the way home from work, if you don't have time to get home to walk before dark. Walk or use indoor exercise equipment after you get home from work to try to log the rest of your 10,000 daily steps.
- Keep bottled water and healthy snacks in your car for those inevitable days when traffic is snarled and you get home later than planned. Since time for food preparation is limited, buy healthy lunch and snack foods such as soup, ready-to-eat carrots, fresh fruit, and portion-controlled convenience foods (buy them on sale).
- Automate your finances any way you can including direct deposit of your paycheck, deposits to mutual funds or stocks with a dividend reinvestment plan (DRIP), deposits to purchase U.S. savings bonds, and savings in tax-deferred employer savings plans (e.g. 401(k), 403(b), or 457, depending where you work).
- Arrange to have as many routine periodic expenses (e.g., car loan payments and insurance premiums) as possible paid automatically by debiting your bank account. This will save both time and postage. Another potentially time-saving strategy, for the computer savvy, is online banking and bill-paying.
- Create customized financial templates to keep track of your finances in Microsoft Excel or similar software or use the templates available for net worth, asset allocation, and spending plan (budget) calculations found in the “Resources” section of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Money and Investing Web site at www.rce.rutgers.edu/money2000. Simply insert your own personal data in these generic template files.
10 Tips to Easily Add Fruits and Vegetables to Your Daily Food Routine

Luanne J. Hughes, MS, RD: Family & Community Health Sciences Educator, Gloucester County

From 1991 to 2007, the “5 A Day for Better Health” campaign encouraged Americans to eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day to improve health and reduce risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, stroke, hypertension, overweight, heart disease and certain cancers. In March 2007, the “5 A Day” program became the National Fruit and Vegetable Program and launched an updated version of the popular fruit and vegetable initiative. Called “Fruits and Veggies…More Matters,” this public health initiative replaces the familiar “5 A Day” tag.

The updated campaign recommends that consumers eat between 4 to 13 servings (2 to 6 cups) of fruits and vegetables every day, depending on individual calorie needs. This updated message is consistent with the newest Dietary Guidelines for Americans, released in 2005, which also increased fruit and vegetable recommendations.

Although we need to eat more fruits and veggies, a recent study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine reports that, like similar studies during the last 20 years, we actually eat far fewer. In this latest study, researchers report that 89% of us failed to meet United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommendations for fruit and vegetables in 1999-2002. But...why?

While there is no one single answer, health professionals suggest that many of us simply don't know how to put these health recommendations into practice. We're cooking less, eating out more and are frequently eating on the run. What we need are the tools to make eating more fruits and vegetables quick, convenient and easy. Try these ideas to help add more fruits and vegetables into your daily routine...quickly and easily.

Shopping & Storage Strategies
- Choose fresh fruits and vegetables that keep well for a week or more: apples, grapefruit, oranges, artichokes, beets, cabbage, carrots, celery, kale, onions, parsnips, potatoes, squash and sweet potatoes.
- Look for produce that is locally grown. (In New Jersey, that's “Jersey Fresh.”) Fruits and vegetables that are grown locally do not travel as long and are typically fresher and tastier than foods transported long distances.
- Shop with a friend in mind. Share a bunch of celery or a melon. Split a bag of peppers or apples. Sharing gives you variety without the waste.
- Buy frozen fruits and vegetables in bags, rather than boxes. You can use as much or as little as you want. Then, tie up the bag to preserve flavor and store what is left for another time.
- Store unused portions of fresh veggies (like peppers, onions, celery and mushrooms) in plastic freezer bags or small containers to use later in pastas or stir-fries.
- Mix leftover pasta with chopped vegetables and low-fat salad dressing for a tasty pasta salad.

Mealtime Tips
- Stop by the salad bar at your local grocery store and make a nice salad with a variety of different fresh fruits and vegetables. You get variety without buying large amounts of many vegetables and fruits. And, you don't spend time cutting and chopping.
- Buy extra salad and roll it in a whole wheat tortilla for lunch or the following day's dinner. For extra flavor, add beans, chicken or shredded cheese.
- Make a meal out of a spud. Top a baked potato with canned chili, beans and steamed broccoli, carrots or cauliflower. Serve with a fat-free sour cream or shredded cheese.
- Add some greens to your burger. Thaw a box of frozen chopped spinach; squeeze out the water. Add to ground beef or ground turkey and make your burgers more nutritious.
Why Do People Eat Like They Do?

Sharon P. Blase, M.Ed., CFCS
Family and Community Health Sciences Educator,
Cumberland County

Cookies as big as saucers, extra large bagels, and sub sandwiches a mile long, are typical portions that Americans frequently eat. One reason that waistlines have grown over the past few decades is because food portions have increased as well. As Americans get heavier, 66% of adults are considered overweight. The obesity epidemic is a major issue facing our nation. Consumers often ask the question, why are Americans so overweight and how did this happen? Eating large portions of high calorie food, and the lack of regular physical activity is frequently the answer to this question. Additionally, behavioral researchers are looking for answers to this problem, by studying internal and external eating cues.

Studies indicate that eating slowly for at least twenty minutes is necessary before a person recognizes that they are satisfied or full after eating a meal. Being aware of internal eating cues is important to identify, so a person can recognize the signals to stop eating when they feel full. Out of habit, many people eat when they are bored, lonely or under stress and continue to eat long after they are full. Paying attention to levels of fullness and the twenty minute “rule” allows the brain to recognize how much food is in the stomach so they know they have had enough to eat. It does not take a lot of food in the stomach to feel full. Learning to eat a variety of foods including high fiber foods such as fruit, vegetables, whole grains and legumes helps to make a person feel “full”. Get in the habit of eating small portions on a regular basis and try to resist second helpings. Instead of eating extra portions, take a walk around the block or take a trip to the gym and just “get moving”. Setting goals for healthy eating and including activity each day is a good way to reinforce and maintain healthful habits. Many people find that it is helpful to keep a diary of all foods eaten and physical activities engaged in each day. Reviewing the diary helps a person identify the emotions that trigger overeating and other unhealthy habits. Besides “internal cues”, “external cues” often disturb eating patterns and encourage overeating or unhealthy food choices.

External cues like fast paced music often, encourages faster eating. Living a fast-paced lifestyle causes many to be rushing around with their family, adding extra activities like stopping at fast food places for lunch or dinner. Families, especially children are influenced by television advertisements for food and beverages. Fast food restaurants encourage overeating by serving ‘supersize’ food portions and beverages. Overeating large portion sizes encourages us to eat more and causes the body to disregard our internal cues for fullness or satisfaction from a meal.

The family meal can be the ideal place for adults and children to identify their internal cues. At a family dinner you can serve adequate food servings, consume normal portions and learn to identify internal cues. A young child knows when and how much to eat based on their own sense of satiety or fullness. Nutritionists and doctors stress that parents should allow children to eat based on their internal cues for fullness. Children, who frequently over eat may do so because they are offered adult size portions and are expected to eat everything on their plate before they may have dessert. These large portions cause overeating which can cause overweight and obesity. It also develops a pattern of overeating that will continue into the teen and adult years. Many adults struggle with overweight issues which began during childhood. Being aware of internal cues and practicing “intuitive eating” helps youth and adults to monitor their food intake and portion sizes.

Early awareness of internal cues can assist youth and adults to maintain a normal body weight and can play a role in promoting health and help our future generation of youth to be less overweight and obese.

References:

Attack Asthma at Home: A Practical Approach to Asthma 'Triggers'

Scientific studies have shown that the quality of indoor air, where we typically spend 90% of our time, is commonly worse than outdoor air. Although biological pollutants, like mold, seem to dominate Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) problems, carbon monoxide, chemicals off-gassing from building products, and inadequate fresh outdoor air ventilation are also sources of problems.

The Northwest Clean Air Agency (NWCAA) has a nationally recognized Indoor Air Quality Program that helps citizens, schools and agencies find solutions to indoor air problems. They provide free presentations on a variety of topics related to Indoor Air Quality. A new video: Attack Asthma at Home: A Practical Approach to Asthma 'Triggers' can be downloaded from the Northwest Clean Air Agency website at http://www.nwcleanair.org/ Also available is a video, Mold in Your Home: Causes, Prevention, Cleanup. Both videos have been peer reviewed and single copies are free.