Part 2: Make Physical Activity a Part of Your Day!

How can we build enough physical activity into our busy lives, and maintain it on a regular basis in order to reap the maximum health benefits? The following tips can help ramp up your physical activity program:

Set Yourself Up for Success!

• Choose types of physical activity which you enjoy doing, to increase the likelihood of sticking with them. Hate the gym but love to dance? Join a dance class, or turn on a CD at home to your favorite music and get moving. Love the great outdoors? Try biking, gardening, or a daily brisk walk with the dog or the rest of the family.

• Choose a gym or fitness center within a strategic location of your work or home, so that it easily fits into your daily schedule.

• At home, place the exercise bike or treadmill in a convenient place where you are likely to use it. Use a TV, iPod, or book to help combat equipment boredom.

• Keep a spare pair of sneakers in your car, or under your desk at work, so that there is no excuse to not take that a walk during the day.

Small Changes Can Add Up to Big Benefits:

Can’t spare a full hour to take a fitness class? The good news is that physical activity can be broken up into small units of at least 10 minutes at a time and still count towards the total. If time is an issue, consider the ‘mini-workout’ approach:

• Set the alarm to wake up 15 minutes earlier and do some stretching, yoga, or a short exercise video.

• Set aside 15 minutes of your lunchtime for a walk.

• Finish up with a short walk after dinner or small intervals of physical activity during the commercials to your favorite TV show. At the end of your day, you’ve logged in the equivalent of a longer workout, but hardly missed the time!

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Internet security is an important component for today’s healthy families. As more families are using the Internet to search for healthy recipes, health/fitness tips and exercise routines, they also need strategies to protect themselves from online Internet predators. The following eight simple steps can protect you and your family while maintaining a healthy environment online while at home.

1. Download security updates as soon as they become available. Delaying security software updates can put your family and computer at risk. To maintain maximum security don’t ignore update messages that appear on your computer.

2. Be cautious when downloading free software like games or wallpapers onto your computer. It is best to monitor the games that children are interested in downloading. Do not allow children to download games without parental permission. For your best protection, avoid gaming and porn websites.

3. Put a lock on your home’s wireless Internet system. Do not share the password with people outside of the immediate family.

4. To avoid loss of personal documents back-up your documents on a regular basis. Invest in an inexpensive data back-up system that allows you to preserve information, photos, music, and precious data.

5. When shopping online, shop at reputable retailers. Avoid unknown retailers that offer an unbelievable discount because the price offered may be too good to be true. When in doubt check the retailer’s ratings with the Better Business Bureau.

6. Use one credit card when shopping online. Keep the card maximum low, and carefully monitor expenses on a regular basis.

7. Look for important web site safety features when shopping online. A lock icon on the top or bottom of the web page is helpful, however it ensures a safe connection to the website and not a secure purchase transaction. Most reputable retailers will have a secure web address that includes https: (the ‘s’ denotes a secure connection) as part of the web address. Be vigilant about online safety when planning on using your credit card!

8. Teach children to practice online safety procedures. They should never share personal family information, address, phone number, passwords, schedules, school information, or vacation plans when online.
The first ever *State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables* shows that adults in the Garden State—like those in every other state—fall short of Healthy People 2010 goals.¹ In 2009, about one-third of Americans ate 2 or more fruit servings daily. Slightly more than one-fourth ate 3 or more vegetable servings everyday. And, just 1 in 7 adults met the daily fruit and vegetable guidelines.

Fruits and vegetables are national health priorities because they offer substantial health benefits. They support optimal growth and development in children and help prevent chronic diseases like heart disease and cancer. Because most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories, they also help us maintain a healthy weight. In fact, fruits and vegetables are so important; the total daily goal is now 9 servings.

Fruits and vegetables are packed with fiber and vitamins A and C. They also are storehouses of phytochemicals—natural substances in plants that provide health benefits beyond those of traditional nutrients. Some phytochemicals include resveretrol found in grapes, ellagic acid from raspberries, and flavonoids provided by cranberries.

Fruits and vegetables also are a feast for the senses! Their colors, flavors, scents, and textures tempt the appetite and add zest to meals and snacks. Just picture the vibrant rainbow of possibilities—red peppers, tangerines, bananas, snow peas, blueberries, and grapes. Imagine the sound of biting into crunchy carrots, the slick feel of eggplant, sweetness of corn, and fragrance of strawberries.

**Think you don’t have time to add more fruits and vegetables?** Which is faster? Pouring a glass of juice or soda? Serving a bag of chips or baby carrots? Fit fruits and vegetables in busy schedules by using:

- Washed and precut salad greens and salad bar ingredients.
- Canned and frozen mixed vegetables in stir-fries, omelets, and pizza toppings.
- Pureed canned beans to thicken broths.
- Veggie-rich one-dish meals like casseroles, stews, and pizza. Make one-dish meals complete by adding a healthy beverage like non-fat milk, and maybe a simple side dish (salad, vegetables) or easy, nutrient packed dessert (canned peaches with ice cold evaporated fat-free milk or pureed frozen fruit).

**There are so many choices, which should I choose?** Aim for a variety of colors each day—different colors are rich in different phytochemicals. The best bets for the most nutrition are:

- Fruit—fresh, unsweetened dried and frozen, canned in water or 100% juice
- Vegetables—fresh, dried, frozen (plain, raw or baked), canned (plain, no sauce), 100% juice

**Afraid produce will wilt before it gets eaten?** Put fragile fresh fruits and vegetables (berries, salad greens) on the menu for days right after food shopping. Buy sturdy fresh produce (apples, citrus, celery, carrots), or canned, frozen, or dried versions for later in the week.

**Concerned that canned or frozen fruits and vegetables short-change your family?** Actually, fresh is not always best! Research shows the nutrient levels of fresh, frozen, and canned foods are highly comparable.²

**Worried that it is too hard to reach the goal of 9 servings?** With a little planning, it’s easy to reach. Strawberries on cereal and tomato juice for breakfast are 2 servings. Add 2 more servings by having an orange at snacktime and topping yogurt with banana slices. Serve romaine salad with sweet pepper rings for dinner and you’ve got 6 servings. To reach 9 servings, make the salad larger and have frozen blueberries for dessert.

**Want to kick up your health a notch?** Grab a fruit or veggie right now and enjoy!

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It is often a challenge to get children to eat healthfully. They want to eat what their friends eat or the foods advertised on television by their favorite super-hero. The influence of television and print media on food choices is well documented. This is frustrating to parents as they work to plan and prepare a nutritious meal. Don’t despair. Here are a dozen tips to aid parents serve healthy foods for their children.

1. Check out MyPyramid.gov! Each color means a different food group. When planning meals, include a variety of colors from the Pyramid; eat every color every day!

2. Cut down on fast food because fast foods typically are high in fat, sugar and sodium. Cook at home instead, and invite your child’s friend for a family meal.

3. Kids eat with their eyes – get creative and make foods look appealing and fun; for example, rather than cutting a sandwich in half, cut it into four triangles or “sail boats”, or “paint” your toast with milk and food coloring for a change. Make a breakfast sandwich with scrambled eggs wrapped in a tortilla.

4. Get your children involved. Let them help with planning the meal for the family, selecting the foods at the grocery store and preparing them. You may try to give each child a chance to choose their favorite vegetable of the week. Even little ones can help with setting the napkins at each place. Kids are more apt to eat foods when they have shared some of the decision making and preparation.

5. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day; eating a nutritious breakfast is key to an energy packed day. Start the day the “three color” way! Choose breakfast from three sections of the Pyramid for a balanced nutritious meal.

6. Turn off the television at mealtime and agree to turn off cell phones, head sets, and handheld video games, too. They are a distraction, and take away from enjoying your meal and talking with family members.

7. Skip the “Clean your plate” club and do not force children to eat everything on their plate. “Effective feeding,” according to Ellyn Satter, an expert in children’s eating behaviors, depends on a “division of responsibility”. Instead, you choose what they will eat and let them choose how much.

8. Provide regularly scheduled healthy snacks. It’s important to plan the snacks rather than letting your child graze freely. Keep foods like carrots, cucumbers and celery sticks with low-fat ranch dressing on hand, rather than cookies and candies. Let older children help select and plan the snacks.

9. Avoid sugar sweetened beverages. Soda, sports drinks, fruitades, juice drinks, fruit punch and juices contain a great deal of sugar. Don’t be fooled if you see the words “vitamin drink”, “natural” or “fruit” on the label. Look carefully at the ingredient list to see if sugar is at the top of the list. Some of the names for added sugars are fructose, brown sugar, maltose, honey, molasses, and high fructose corn syrup.

10. Serve whole grains. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits are examples of grain products. Whole grains like oatmeal, brown rice and whole wheat bread contain the entire grain kernel and are a better choice. Make half your grains whole. Substitute brown rice for white rice or whole wheat bread for white bread. Read the ingredient list on cereal and snack food labels and choose those with whole grains at the top of the list. Let the kids help search the list.

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You Have The Power
5 Steps to Guide Your Child’s TV Time

Time spent watching TV takes time away from reading, playing and being active.

Watching a lot of TV can be bad for children’s health and can affect children’s weight. Children who watch more TV tend to weigh more.

1. Be a good role model
   Eat healthy food, be active, and limit how much TV you watch.

2. Choose when the television is on
   Limit TV time and stick to it!

3. Keep TV’s out of kids’ bedrooms
   It’s too hard to know what they’re watching and when it’s on.

4. Turn off the TV during meals
   Focus meal time on talking with each other.

5. Get active!
   Get your kids moving! Go for a walk, turn on the music and dance, give them chores… the activities are endless!

How much TV should kids watch?
• 2 years and younger: none
• Older than 2 years: no more than 2 hours a day

Improving Kids’ Diets: A Dozen Tips for Parents
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11. Choose low-fat or non-fat milk and milk products like yogurt and cheese. They are calcium-rich foods and help to build strong bones and teeth. If you are used to serving whole milk start slowly to introduce low-fat milk. Try 2% milk for a few weeks and gradually switch to 1% milk and eventually offer fat-free milk.

12. Set a good example. Children may not always listen, but they are watching and learning from us. Strive for more family meals. Make healthy food choices and be physically active. Children follow their parents, so be a good role model.

Making changes is difficult. Don’t try to tackle all of these tips at once. Instead, take one at a time. Practice for a few weeks until you and your family have mastered the new idea. Then it’s time to try a second tip for a few weeks and so on. Before you know it, these tips will become second nature and you and your children will be eating more healthfully. Make these tips the “daily dozen” in your family.

Life Expectancy: Health and Wealth Connections
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Rutgers Cooperative Extension’s national award-winning program, Small Steps to Health and Wealth™ (see http://njaes.rutgers.edu/sshw), helps people make positive behavior changes to simultaneously improve their health and personal finances. One important connection between health and personal finances is life expectancy.

Life expectancy is the remaining number of years that someone is expected to live. The longer people live, the higher their projected life expectancy. People who practice healthy behaviors, such as not smoking, exercising regularly, and eating healthy foods, increase their chances of living a long life.

The life expectancy of Americans has increased remarkably during the last century. Average life expectancy for a baby born in the U.S. in 2004 was 77.8 years. In 1900, average life expectancy at birth was 47.3! At age 65, average life expectancy is 18.7 years and many people will live a lot longer. With increased longevity come the twin financial challenges of saving adequately for retirement and carefully planning withdrawals from savings so as not to outlive assets.

Life expectancy depends upon a number of factors including personal and family health history, occupational health risks, health behaviors, and safety practices (e.g., wearing seat belts). Hundreds of online life expectancy calculators incorporate these factors and can provide an estimated life expectancy. Simply type the words “life expectancy calculator” into an Internet search engine and compare the results of at least three different calculators. Be sure to take note of the assumptions used for each calculator as results will likely vary.

Below are three key financial planning decisions where life expectancy estimates are important:

How Much to Save For Retirement- Whether calculations are done online or with a “paper and pencil” worksheet, life expectancy is a key variable. A higher assumed life expectancy increases the savings requirement. A simple non-commercial retirement savings calculator is the American Savings Education Council’s Ballpark Estimate at www.choosetosave.org/ballpark.

When to Begin Social Security Benefits- From a purely mathematical standpoint, a key consideration is the “break-even point.” This is the age (generally late 70s) where someone receives more from Social Security by delaying benefits to full retirement age (FRA) than they would by taking an early reduced benefit at age 62. Thus, one’s personal and family health history is a key variable.

How to Make Retirement Asset Withdrawals- Studies have found that a “safe” withdrawal method (i.e., one that will not exhaust assets in less than 30 years) is a first year withdrawal rate of 4% of invested assets followed by inflation-adjusted withdrawals in subsequent years. For example, if someone has saved $500,000 and they want it to last, they would withdraw $20,000 ($500,000 .04) during their first year of retirement, $20,600 in year two ($20,000 + $20,000 .03), $21,218 in year three ($20,600 + $20,600 .03), and so on, assuming a 3% average inflation rate.

Want to know more about life expectancy and, more importantly, get a realistic estimate of your own? The Purdue University Extension Planning for a Secure Retirement Web site, Module 1b, available at http://www.ces.purdue.edu/retirement/, has links to several online life expectancy calculators. The calculators ask questions about your personal and family health history, occupational health risks, health behaviors, safety practices, and other lifestyle habits.

Another interesting life expectancy calculator, with a twist, is Real Age (www.realage.com) which converts your current age into a “real age,” based on the same factors noted above. With the real age calculator, people with health “issues” often have a “real age” that is older than they really are. This can be very sobering. Having real age information may provide the motivation needed to improve your personal health practices.
Salmonella has long been recognized as a foodborne pathogen. Salmonellosis is the sickness that results when someone becomes infected with Salmonella bacteria. The most common symptoms are diarrhea, abdominal cramps and fever. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that there are approximately 1.4 million cases of salmonellosis in the US each year, resulting in more than 500 deaths.

Raw food of animal origin, such as meat, poultry, unpasteurized dairy products, seafood, pet foods and treats, as well as fruits and vegetables, can carry Salmonella. If these foods are not properly produced and/or cooked to a safe temperature, any Salmonella that they carry can survive and cause disease.

In November 2008 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) noticed 13 cases of Salmonella Typhimurium with the same genetic fingerprint in 12 geographically distant states. It wasn’t until January 2008 that peanut butter was first identified as the possible source of contamination. Following the announcement that ingredients implicated in the recall were linked to a processing plant in Georgia, many food companies initiated recalls of their products. In the end, almost 4000 different food products were recalled. More than 700 people infected with the outbreak strain were reported in 46 states and in Canada, as well as nine deaths.

This is the second outbreak caused by contaminated peanut butter in the United States. The first outbreak was caused by a commercially distributed brand of peanut butter in 2006-2007. Only one other outbreak associated with Salmonella in peanut butter is known, occurring in Australia in 1996.

The exact cause of current outbreak has not yet been determined, but the repeated problem of Salmonella associated with peanut butter points out the importance of including a “kill step” for harmful pathogens during manufacture. In peanut butter this can be accomplished by proper roasting. It should also be noted that preventing re-contamination of peanut butter after roasting process is also critical.

Salmonella organisms can survive for months in high-fat, low moisture foods such as peanut butter. In such high-fat, low moisture foods, Salmonella may also be hundreds of time more heat resistant than in more moist foods such as meats or poultry.

In this recent outbreak, the only way to prevent illness was to avoid consuming products implicated in the recall; however, Salmonella can also be spread in other ways. To avoid salmonellosis:

- Do not eat raw or undercooked eggs, poultry, or meat
- Do not consume raw or unpasteurized milk or other dairy products
- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before consumption
- Avoid cross-contamination; wash hands, cutting boards, counters, knives, and other utensils after touching raw meat
- Wash hands after contact with animal feces; note that pets, reptiles, chicks and ducklings may harbor Salmonella
Physical Activity: Do it your way, but do it!

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Build More ‘Physical’ into Your Daily Activities:

Physical activity is not limited to only those activities conducted in gyms and formal settings. Strive to increase activities which burn more calories as a part of normal daily living:

• Take the stairs instead of the elevator/escalator;
• Aim for a parking space farthest away from your destination, or even better, leave the car behind and consider running some errands on foot;
• Multi-task by taking your cell phone ‘on a walk’ at lunchtime, and catch up on your calls and steps!
• Wash the car by hand, and do your own yard work. You’ll save money too!

Stay Motivated:

• Set reasonable and achievable goals. Keep an exercise journal to track your daily progress.
• Wear a pedometer to measure daily steps taken, and challenge yourself to increase them every day.
• Tell family and friends about your fitness goals so they can encourage you. Exercising with a ‘buddy’ is also a great way to be accountable.

With a bit of planning and perseverance, physical activity can soon become a healthy habit that you actually enjoy. Remember to start slowly and increase gradually. Always check with your physician before beginning any physical activity program.

For more information about the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines, please visit www.health.gov/paguidelines.