Sodium helps our body balance fluid levels and maintain hydration. Each person’s sodium requirement varies but one thing we do know is that Americans are consuming too much sodium and this is harmful to health. The new Dietary Guidelines were recently released and contain more specific recommendations for sodium. The 2010 Dietary Guideline for sodium is:

Reduce daily sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) and further reduce intake to 1,500 mg among persons who are 51 and older and those of any age who are African American or have hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease. The 1,500 mg recommendation applies to about half of the U.S. population, including children, and the majority of adults.

Why reduce sodium?

A reduced sodium intake can have major health benefits. Sodium is a component of salt. Salt is 40% sodium and 60% chloride. Cutting back on salt and sodium can lower the risk of high blood pressure, stroke and heart disease. Most Americans consume more salt than they need. A little less than one teaspoon of table salt contains 1,500 mg of sodium. Examples of foods with added salt include processed and packaged foods like canned soups and vegetables, frozen dinners, canned vegetable juices, most snack foods, onion salt, garlic salt, pickles, cured meats and cheese.

The following table shows an average sodium content of some common foods as listed in Bowes & Church’s Food Values of Portions Commonly Used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Item</th>
<th>Sodium (mg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 cup canned soup</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 large slice of pizza</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hot dog</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hamburger</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 apple</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup fresh greenbeans</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hidden Salt

Most salt doesn’t come from the shaker on the table. Salt has many names. When you are scanning a food label, don’t just look for the word “salt”. Watch for various forms of sodium or other names for the
Does lack of sleep really lead to unhealthy eating and decreased exercise? Will sleepless nights cause weight gain over time? We live in a quick-paced society that can be very tiring on a daily basis. It is hard to find the time to prepare healthy meals and carve out some time for physical activity along with taking care of your job, your family and yourself. Research shows that when we get busy, we tend to spend less time sleeping because we are trying to fit everything in. This may not only be unhealthy, but could also be counterproductive to maintaining or losing weight. How? Sleep deprivation causes an increase in appetite, often for unhealthy food choices, and decreases a person’s metabolism, which means an increase in fat storage and weight gain.

A recent review published in Best Practice & Research found that multiple studies observed an association between only six hours or less of sleep per night with an increase in body-mass index. Also noted was an increase in obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. Another review, published in the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, cited multiple epidemiologic studies that have shown an association between short sleep periods and higher body-mass index (BMI), as well as, having a causative role of increased risk of diabetes. Another study conducted at Columbia University found that well-rested participants consumed an average of 296 calories less than when they were sleep-deprived. And women ate an average of 31g more fat per day when they were sleep-deprived.

The message is clear that all Americans need to start taking the time to eat healthy food, exercise daily, and take small steps to improve their sleep habits. Determine what time you want to go to bed every night, and stick to it! You’ll notice a huge difference in your daily energy level which can lead to consuming healthier food choices like fruits, veggies, whole grains, fat-free dairy, and lean protein. Also, don’t forget to spend at least 30 or more minutes a day engaged in physical activity like walking, dancing or gardening!

References:
Oral diseases and conditions are common among older adults who grew up without the benefit of community water fluoridation and other fluoride products. Many older Americans do not have dental insurance. Often these benefits are lost when they retire. The situation may be worse for older women, who generally have lower incomes and may never have had dental insurance. Medicare, which provides health insurance for people over age 65 and people with certain illnesses and disabilities, was not designed to provide routine dental care.

About 25 percent of adults age 60 years or older no longer have any natural teeth and this leads to the need for dentures. Because dentures are not as efficient for chewing food as natural teeth, wearers often may choose soft foods and avoid fresh fruits and vegetables.

Periodontal (gum) disease or tooth decay (cavities) are the most frequent causes of tooth loss. Older adults continue to experience dental decay on the crowns of teeth (coronal caries) and on tooth roots (because of gum recession). In fact, older adults may have new tooth decay at higher rates than children. The severity of periodontal (gum) disease increases as we age.

Gum disease and oral health problems cause chewing problems. This results in individuals selecting a diet that they can chew in comfort. Such diets are low in fruits, vegetables, and fiber. There is also a trend for a reduced amount of food consumed. One possible strategy to improve dietary intake and oral health is to allow for greater food choice. Older adults with gum and dental problems should seek dietary support and advice as these problems can be long-term.

What are the main oral diseases resulting from dietary factors & poor oral hygiene?

- Dental decay
- Gum disease (Periodontal)

What are the health risks of poor dental care?

- Age-related physical and mental difficulties
- Diets high in sugar that replace nutritious foods that are hard to chew
- Low saliva flow due to reduced food intake or medication
- Chronic medical conditions and poor oral hygiene

What are the health benefits of good oral hygiene?

- Clean and stable teeth
- An even bite
- Secure dentures
- Freedom from pain
- Chewing comfort
- Enhanced enjoyment of food
- Adequate nutrition
- Good appearance
- Improved communication
- Fresh breath

Source: Oral Health for Older Adults – CDC
http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/factsheets/adult_older.htm

What are some common myths about oral health?

- Tooth loss is an inevitable part of the normal aging process.
- Most teeth are lost as people become ‘long in the tooth’ because of advancing gum disease.
- All adults are susceptible to severe gum disease.
- Today’s medications do not reduce saliva flow.
- Dental decay is not a common oral disease in the older person and usually occurs in the young.
- Salivary flow decreases in all older people.

What things should you look out for and report to your dentist?

- Painful teeth
- Ulcers lasting more than two weeks
- Gum abscess
- Bleeding gums
- Loose teeth
- Swelling
- Soreness or cracks in the corner of the mouth

Important points for good oral health:

Ideally, teeth should be cleaned twice daily. The aim is to remove the plaque and food debris from in-between the teeth and around the gum margins.

- Brush all surfaces of the teeth and gums
- Work on two teeth at a time
- Be aware of any loose teeth and brush with care
- Schedule regular dental appointments
Fresh fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends an intake of at least 14 oz. of fruits and vegetables daily. The WHO estimates that up to 2.7 million lives could be saved worldwide if more people consumed enough fruits and vegetables. In an attempt to improve their nutritional habits, US consumers have increased their consumption of vegetables, however, these foods have occasionally been associated with outbreaks of foodborne illness.

Two recent outbreaks may illustrate the potential risks from improperly handled vegetables. In 2006, a multi-state outbreak of Escherichia coli O157:H7 infections from spinach occurred in the USA. The outbreak was traced to 26 states, and resulted in 205 cases of illness and three deaths. In May 2010, an outbreak of E. coli O145 infections was reported and was associated with eating shredded Romaine lettuce.

Although both of these outbreaks were eventually traced to problems on the farm, there are still precautions that you can take to be sure you enjoy nutritious, delicious and safe fresh produce in your home!

To reduce your risk of foodborne illness:

✔ Children, the elderly, pregnant women, and persons with weakened immune systems should avoid eating raw sprouts of any kind (including alfalfa, clover, radish, and mung bean sprouts).

✔ Keep fruits and vegetables that will be eaten raw separate from food that must be cooked like raw meat, poultry or seafood.

✔ Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils and counter tops with hot water and soap between preparation of raw meat, poultry and seafood products and the preparation of food items that will not be cooked. It is a good idea to use separate cutting boards for produce and another for foods like cheese, meat, poultry, seafood and a separate board for bread products.

✔ Kitchen sanitizers can periodically be used on cutting boards and counter tops. A solution of one teaspoon of chlorine bleach to one quart of water makes an effective and inexpensive sanitizer.

✔ If you use plastic or other non-porous cutting boards, run them through the dishwasher after use.

To maintain fresh produce quality:

✔ Delicate fresh fruits and vegetables, such as strawberries, lettuce, herbs, and mushrooms will have the best quality when stored in a clean refrigerator at 40° F or below. If you’re not sure whether an item should be refrigerated to maintain quality, ask your grocer.

✔ All produce that is purchased pre-cut or peeled should be refrigerated to maintain both quality and safety.
Job stress can lead to poor health issues therefore reducing the level of stress is an important component to living a healthy lifestyle. Balancing a healthy diet, a physical activity routine of at least 30-60 minutes a day and controlling stress, are essential ingredients to maintaining a productive life while on and off the job. Workers can improve their health on the job by following a few simple strategies:

• **Take brief stress relief breaks** throughout the day. For example, a quick walk with a few extra steps to the lavatory or through the hallways can help release tense muscles and invigorate the body.

• **Keep the work area clean and organized.** Take a few moments each day to clear the workspace and maintain a sense of control. A cluttered workspace makes it more difficult to find items and creates confusion and wastes time.

• **Try to maintain a comfortable pace of work** and avoid stress related to procrastination. Satisfaction is comforting and can be felt when tasks are completed. Take a moment to enjoy the satisfaction before moving on to the next task.

• **Eat a balanced diet of colorful fresh fruits and vegetables.** Prepare simple healthy lunches at home to avoid over-eating and consuming excess sugar, sodium and fat, as these foods can contribute to chronic health problems like obesity, hypertension, and heart disease. Pack nutritious snacks that satisfy the need to chew and savor the taste of food like carrots, grape tomatoes, cherries, grapes, red or green peppers, zucchini, celery, apples, and oranges. A quick burst of flavor will awaken your senses and provide a boost of energy. Avoid the temptation to satisfy hunger by visiting the nearest vending machine!

• **Excessive amounts of sugar** will do nothing positive to improve a person’s attention to details while on the job! Drink water throughout the day instead of consuming sugar-sweetened beverages. Make water the simple drink of choice to hydrate the body and refresh the energy level.

• **Manage projects** before they become overwhelming and manage you! Take time to divide large projects into small tasks that can be accomplished before moving on to the next step. Congratulate an accomplishment at the end of a time consuming project.

• **Participate in daily physical activity routines.** Increased physical activity enables the body to work efficiently and maintain a high level of energy. A brief exercise routine before starting the workday will boost the energy level. Another brief period of exercise after the workday will help to relieve the stress of the day.

• **Engage the mind** in new endeavors that stretch the imagination, jog the memory, and expand horizons. Consider taking a fun recreational class with a friend at the local community school to increase physical activity and relieve stress.

Whether on or off the job workers should eat a diet rich in colorful fruits and vegetables, whole grain foods, and low-fat calcium foods. Reducing the amount of fat, sugar, and sodium in the diet helps the body optimize health. Water is the best choice for refreshing thirst. Maintaining a sense of organization over the workspace environment will enhance a sense of calm while on the job.

**For More information:**


Rutgers Cooperative Extension’s Small Steps to Health and Wealth™ (SSHW) program encourages participants to make positive behavior changes to simultaneously improve their health and personal finances. SSHW education and research focuses on similarities and relationships between both aspects of life. One of these similarities is the need to keep good records about your health and financial status. After all, nobody has more of a vested interest in recording this data than you do.

Let’s start with health records. Health care is a shared responsibility between a patient and a health care provider. An important part of being a wise health care consumer is maintaining accurate records about yourself and members of your family and compiling a family medical history for use by your doctor. It is estimated that only 30% of Americans have ever compiled a family medical history despite its usefulness in preventing disease and staying healthy.

A Personal Health Care Journal from the U.S. Administration on Aging is a helpful tool and can be found at http://njaes.rutgers.edu/healthfinance/pdfs/SMP-Personal-Health-Care-Journal.pdf. The purpose of this document is to consolidate pieces of your medical history in one place. Keep it current by requesting the results of lab tests and screening tests whenever you visit a doctor. Write down your height, weight, and blood pressure every time they are measured.

Start your medical history by reviewing health records in your possession and those requested from medical providers. Items to include are: results of recent physical exams (e.g., blood pressure and cholesterol), a prescription drug record (medication name and dosage), an allergies list (including allergies to prescriptions), an immunization record, lab and X-ray reports, and a “problems list” (e.g., previous illnesses or surgeries). For additional data about your health, contact the Medical Information Bureau (MIB) at http://www.mib.com/html/request_your_record.html to request your report if they have one.

To consolidate information about your personal finances, complete the A Record of Important Papers at http://njaes.rutgers.edu/money/pdfs/importantpapers.pdf. List the names of your financial advisors, insurance policies, savings and investment accounts, and other data. Keep this document up to date and share it with family members and the executor of your will. In addition, review the status of your finances annually with a “fiscal physical.” This includes checking your credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion) at https://www.annualcreditreport.com.

Preparing annual financial statements is another essential part of financial record-keeping. A net worth statement is a “financial snapshot” that shows the dollar value of what you own (assets) and what you owe (liabilities). This formula for calculating net worth is Assets – Liabilities = Net Worth. For example, if assets and a mortgage/other debts total $408,000 and $188,000, respectively, net worth is $220,000.

A cash flow statement compares income and expenses and indicates whether someone is living above their means or below. If income is greater than expenses (positive cash flow), money is available to save and build wealth. If income is less than expenses (negative cash flow), wealth is being drained by depleting expenses and/or increasing credit use. Follow these steps and you will be better prepared to make decisions about your health and finances.
Sound familiar? It’s 6 PM. Everyone’s stomach is rumbling! You are exhausted, homework papers are everywhere, and parent-teacher conferences start at 7:30. Pizza take-out is tempting! But, consider this: in the time it takes to order and pick up the pizza, you could whip up a delicious, healthy meal—it starts with a little planning and having the right ingredients on hand.

Take Action:
Streamline the Fridge, Freezer, & Pantry
1. Open the fridge—on a scale of 1 to 10, how organized is it?
2. How does your freezer stack up? What about areas where you store dry and canned foods?
3. Pick the area with the worst score and examine the foods stored there.

Q. Are all of the foods fresh and safe to eat?
A. If not, throw it out. The date on food packages can help you decide.

Q. Will you eat the fresh, safe foods you have on hand?
A. If not, donate them to a food drive.

Q. Can you find the foods you need without going on a scavenger hunt?
A. If not, think about making some changes! The key is to arrange foods so that you can see everything—this makes it quick and easy to create a shopping list, put groceries away, and find foods when you need them.

Refrigerators Tips
✓ Use door shelves for bottles and jars—labels facing front.
✓ Put special areas for storing butter to work. Skip special egg storage areas—eggs stay fresh longer in the carton.
✓ Use drawers for fruits, vegetables, and meat to keep them organized (and fresh longer).
✓ Save shelves for beverages, leftovers, and thawing meats.

Freezers
✓ Reserve shelves for larger items and ice trays.

Pantry
✓ Group foods with similar packages: boxes, cans, bottles, and bags
✓ Arrange boxes of foods like books on a shelf.
✓ Install a door or wall rack for bottles.
✓ Use tiered shelf risers for canned foods.
✓ Place flour, and other bagged foods in airtight stackable bins.
✓ Use baskets and bins to organize bags of cookies and chips.
✓ Use sliding drawer units like a mini-file cabinet to keep hot chocolate packets and tea bags organized.
✓ Store foods used most often on eye level shelves. Use lower shelves for heavy containers (bins of flour, large boxes), paper plates, napkins, and snacks kids can serve themselves. On higher shelves, store snacks that require parent approval (candy, cookies) and foods that are used less often, like specialty vinegars.

Q. Are all the foods on hand healthy choices?
A. Food package labels that tell you something you don’t like (too many calories or ingredients you want to limit) indicate that the food should go. Keeping it will only derail efforts to create a nourishing kitchen. If tossing the food will strain your food budget, resolve not to buy it again. If your family will revolt, buy less and gradually switch to healthier options.

Set Some Goals
What are the top 3 changes that would do the most to tame your fridge, freezer, and pantry? What supplies do you need to make the changes? What strategies will you use to overcome barriers to shaping up your kitchen? Resolve to spend 10 minutes a day to reach your goals. Then, enjoy the benefits of the improvements!

Buying in bulk? Be sure extra storage space is cool, dry, and pest-free.

Storing foods in clear containers? Preserve their quality by keeping the storage area dark.

If you are what you eat, your pantry is your mirror.
New Dietary Guidelines Say Cut Back on Salt
continued from page 1

same thing. When reading labels, look for anything that has the word “sodium” in it like sodium chloride (table salt), monosodium glutamate (MSG), and sodium bicarbonate (baking soda). It’s important to read food labels for the total sodium in the package. Even fat-free or baked snacks can contain the same amount of sodium or more, so it’s important to read the label.

Small Changes Add Up
Start to reduce your sodium intake one step at a time. Decrease your salt intake gradually. Your taste will slowly adjust. Here are some suggestions to get you started.

1. Choose fresh poultry, fish or lean meat instead of processed or cured meats like hot dogs, bacon and deli meats.
2. Cook grains like pasta, rice and hot cereals without adding salt. Avoid packaged or instant cereals and flavored rice mixes since most contain added salt.
3. Look for low-sodium canned or frozen foods. Avoid canned soups, broths, salad dressings, frozen dinners, and condiments like catsup and soy sauce.
4. Limit fast foods. They are high in sodium and excess fat.
5. Many sports drinks and other beverages are high in sodium. Check the label. Drink water instead.
6. Season foods with herbs while cooking rather than salt.
7. Read Nutrition Facts labels. Foods that are low in sodium contain 140mg or less per serving, or 5% or less of the Daily Value.
8. Eat fresh vegetables raw or steamed without adding salt.
9. Restaurant foods are often high in sodium. Ask for your food to be prepared with less salt or choose foods without salt-laden sauces and gravies.
10. Take the salt shaker off the table.

Salt is important to our health but it should be used moderately. Eating too much salt is harmful. Eat more fresh foods and less processed foods. For more information about the new 2010 Dietary Guidelines check out http://www.mypyramid.gov/guidelines/index.html