

## How to include vegetables and fruits in meals

You've heard it time and time again: Munch on fruits and vegetables. We know it's important, but how can we make it easy with our busy schedules?

Health experts agree that eating a variety of fruits and vegetables - at least five a day - is essential for good health. Fruits and vegetables are low in fat, high in fiber, and represent a great source of nutrients like vitamins A and C. And because of these nutrients, eating fruits and vegetables may help lower your risk of cancer and heart disease. Plus, they're a great way to fill up without adding a lot of calories.

Here are some quick and easy ways to include fruits and vegetables in your everyday meals:

**BREAKFAST**  
■ Make a fruit shake. In a blender combine fruit (banana, orange, strawberries, etc.) with skim milk or frozen yogurt; add ice cubes and process until smooth. It's delicious!  
■ Add raisins or a banana to hot or cold cereal.

**LUNCH**  
■ Brown bag carrot sticks or pepper strips. Cut up veggies the night before so they're easily available.  
■ Eat a piece of fruit, like an apple, pear or plum, for dessert.

**DINNER**  
■ Add broccoli to pasta or zucchini and mushrooms to pasta sauce.  
■ Have a tossed salad, but make sure it's pre-packaged and save on prep time.  
■ Garnish fish or poultry dishes with fruit. Add sliced kiwi, mango, strawberries, a bunch of grapes, or vegetables for a tasty alternative.

**SNACK**  
■ Top frozen yogurt with unsweetened fruit cocktail or mandarin orange sections.  
■ Munch on raisins or mixed dried fruit.

Fruits and vegetables are important foods for people of all ages, but getting kids to eat them can be a real challenge. Here are some ideas:  
**DUNK AND DIP**  
Let children dunk vegetables in a dip of their choice, whether it's ranch salad dressing, yogurt, barbecue sauce or ketchup. It may be all that's needed to help the vegetables go down!

**THINK BITE-SIZE**  
Offer bite-size pieces for easy eating, such as baby carrots or carrot coins, cherry tomatoes, pineapple tidbits or melon balls.

**THINK COLOR**  
Live on fruit with plenty of color. Mix red and green seedless grapes, golden and dark raisins, honeydew and cantaloupe chunks, blueberries and strawberries.

**MAKE FACES**  
Hold your child's interest by helping them create faces or scenes with pieces of fruits or vegetables.

For instance, in a bowl of hot cereal, use raisins to make eyes and a nose and an apple slice to form a mouth. On a mound of mashed potatoes, plant broccoli like little trees.

**MAKE NAMES**  
In our house, we always referred to broccoli as trees and cauliflower as clouds. My children couldn't wait to eat the clouds as they floated over the trees.

**ASK FOR ASSISTANCE**  
Children who help with preparation may be more inclined to eat the finished product. Have them pick the peas from their pods or choose the fruits and vegetables to go into a salad.

**PLANT A GARDEN**  
Children love to eat fruits and vegetables if they have watched them grow. Give each child a small plot of land and let the farming begin.

**SET A GOOD EXAMPLE**  
Be a good role model for your children. Eat your fruits and vegetables with them.

I read every one of your letters and I love your column. Please keep writing me with any questions, inspirational stories or suggestions for upcoming articles to "Talk To The Mirror." Weight Watchers Corporate Communications, P.O. Box 9072, Farmington Hills, MI 48334-2974 or fax: (248) 553-7106.

(Florine Mark is an appointee to the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and the Michigan Fitness Foundation.)

## Here's the real scoop about sugar

The average American consumes 220 teaspoons of sugar a day! Sugar is found in most foods - candy bars, bread, potatoes, fruits and vegetables - and according to recent studies, health problems increase in conjunction with increased sugar consumption.

Traditional wisdom says that "empty calories" and minor dental problems, sugar is what our bodies need. Television commercials are quick to suggest that a candy bar is perfect when there's no time for a meal. As the typical American consumes 42 pounds of sugar a year, sweet toothers are becoming sweeter and unfortunately our bodies are deteriorating.

New studies are uncovering a dark side to sugar. Heart disease, high cholesterol levels, obesity and other health problems to obesity to sugar. For



DR. KEITH LEVICK

those of us trained nutritionally in the 1980s to low-fat, low-protein and high-complex carbohydrate diet, it's been a recipe for disaster. Although fat consumption is low, we scarf down those satisfying carbohydrates. Allow me to shed light on the link between sugar and health.

There are two types of carbohydrates: simple sugars (found in table sugars, candy bars, etc.) and complex sugars (starch, fruits, vegetables, etc.). Carbohydrates are found in plant and animal food sources. The body absorbs carbohydrates and converts them into glucose. It's glucose that raises the body's blood sugar. Insulin is then secreted by the pancreas to properly adjust blood sugar. Too much (hyperglycemia) or too little (hypoglycemia) sugar means serious health problems.

The more carbohydrates consumed, the more insulin the body produces, and it's the increase of insulin that's creating problems. High insulin levels affect the body in three significant ways:

1. Insulin causes the body to store excess sugar as fat.

2. Insulin inhibits the body to mobilize the stored fat.

3. Insulin increases the production of cholesterol.

Are you beginning to understand why many of us are having a problem becoming un-fat? Why are cholesterol levels increasing even when eating a low-fat diet? These are some of the common, unexplained issues facing those of us who have been following guidelines established 10 to 15 years ago. Many now believe that weight problems are the result of high-level sugar consumption, not the amount of fat ingested.

Unfortunately, people are then led to believe that a diet high in protein (high-saturated fat diet) and low in carbohydrates is healthy. Based on good science, there appears to be a solid link between the sugar-insulin-body connection. This is not to be confused with diets advocating high-saturated foods.

Does this mean we should abandon eating fruits and vegetables? Of course not. Old wisdom mandated limiting simple sugars and loading up on complex sugars. We now understand that there are insulin-stimulating carbohy-

drates that need to be modified. A partial list includes potatoes, white bread, refined sugar, white rice, carrots, corn and raisins. Low-insulin producing foods include beans, green vegetables, peas, peanuts, peaches and plums.

These are not happy times for all "carbohydrate junkies." We were doing so well on our low-fat diets, yet many have become insulin resistant and/or suffer from hyperinsulinemia.

Before you throw in the towel, think about how you conquered your enormous fat consumption. You were able to successfully modify, limit and substitute your fat intake. Certainly, we can also learn to modify some of those insulin-producing carbs.

I can only hope we are smarter today than we were yesterday and will continue to improve our knowledge base. Only continuous research will provide relevant information to enhance health and well-being.

(Dr. Keith Levick is a health psychologist and the director of The Center for Childhood Weight Management in Farmington Hills. You can reach him at 248-661-6625 or send him an e-mail at [levick@aol.com](mailto:levick@aol.com).)

## Pulling weeds, not muscles, is helped by proper garden fitness

Many homeowners trade in their treadmills this time of year for exercise of the garden variety. Bending, reaching and digging in the garden can provide a great workout, but can cause muscle injury if precautions are not taken.

"A warm-up and cool-down period is just as important for gardening or doing yard work as it is for any other athletic activity," says Michael Pedigo, D.C., president of the American Chiropractic Association. "Stretching during those periods is essential to preventing injuries, pain and stiffness," Dr. Pedigo added.

**Stress-free Stretches**  
Before stretching for any activity, there are a few tips to keep in mind. Breathe in and out slowly throughout stretching exercises; stretch gently and smoothly, do not bounce or jerk your body in any way, and do not grab the thigh or the hamstring. You should not feel pain. Following are a few easy stretches Dr. Pedigo recommends for getting the most out of your workout:

■ Stand up and prop your heel on a back door step or stool with your knee straight. Bend forward until you feel a slight pull at the back of the thigh, called the hamstring. You may need to stabilize yourself by holding onto a garage door handle or sturdy tree branch. Hold the position for 20 seconds, then relax. Do it once more, then repeat with the other leg.

■ Stand up straight, stabilize yourself and grab the front of your ankle from behind. Pull your heel toward your buttocks to stretch the quadriceps muscle at the front of your thigh. Hold that position for 20 seconds, relax and do it again. Repeat with the other leg.

For more information about chiropractic care and a list of member doctors in your area, contact the American Chiropractic Association, 1701 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington, VA 22209, or call 1-800-986-4636.

other leg.  
■ Weave your fingers together above your head with your palms up. Lean to one side for 10 seconds to stretch the upper body, then reverse. Repeat two or three times.

■ "Hug your best friend": Wrap your arms around yourself and rotate to one side, as far as you can go. Hold it for 10 seconds, then reverse. Repeat two or three times.

There are many more stretching techniques that can enhance all of your physical activities. Look for stretching guides in your local bookstore. Finally, be aware of your body's form while working in the yard. Kneel instead of bending. Alternate your stance and motion as often as possible to balance the muscles used.

**When the Damage is Done**  
If you are already feeling the symptoms of gardening without warm-up or cool-down, there are ways to alleviate the pain. Apply a cold pack during the first 48 hours of symptoms or a heat pack after 48 hours, but if pain persists, consider spinal adjustment.

Recent studies show that this procedure is more effective than many traditional medical treatments for low back pain in particular.

"Doctors of chiropractic are trained to identify the problem and manipulate your spine to encourage the body's natural healing process," Dr. Pedigo said. "More than 20 million Americans used chiropractic last year for these kinds of problems."

For more information about chiropractic care and a list of member doctors in your area, contact the American Chiropractic Association, 1701 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington, VA 22209, or call 1-800-986-4636.

### HEALTHY LIVING

#### Advanced Facial Pain Clinic

The Southfield-based Advanced Facial Pain Clinic at Comfort Dental is currently looking for 60 candidates to become part of a three-week research group.

Each person must have either a history of jaw-joint pain, facial pain, neck pain, upper back pain, insomnia, nighttime tooth grinding, or headaches. Candidates, who must be available five times per week for three weeks at the same each day for approximately 30 minutes, will undergo a complete stress and pain-reduction program using the latest computerized biotechnology.

Through the use of this latest technology, the clinic is helping people recover from pain and dysfunction without resorting to medications and other aggressive methods.

The clinic is introducing a new generation of intelligent neural and muscle rehabilitation computers that naturally help the body's own healing process to function more effectively.

This latest treatment is helping people recover from stress-related problems such as insomnia and irritability.

All participants will be free of charge and the research will be published. A copy of your most recent medical physical evaluation must be submitted before consideration.

Please submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your name, address, phone number and a separate letter describing your problems and history of treatments, including

all treating physicians and dentists, to Advanced Facial Pain Clinic at Comfort Dental, 3003 Southfield Road, Southfield, MI 48076. For additional information, call 1-800-JAW PAIN (529-7246).

#### Searching for a cure

"Is a Cure Near?" is an AIDS forum that African Americans will want to attend. The event, scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Monday, June 15 at the Museum of African American History, will explore new AIDS drug therapies, recent strides in HIV research, and address misconceptions about new approaches to treatment.

Dr. Eric Ayers, an internist at the Detroit Medical Center, is the featured speaker at the forum, which is sponsored by the DMC and Wayne State University.

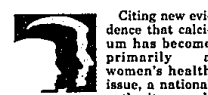
For more information or to RSVP, call (313) 745-8175.

#### Fibromyalgia

Dr. Martin Tamler, a specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation, will present an overview of fibromyalgia syndrome and chronic fatigue syndrome at an upcoming forum. A research update and treatment protocol will be discussed followed by a question-and-answer period.

The event is scheduled for Tuesday, June 30 from 7 a.m.-8 p.m. at the St. Mary Hospital auditorium in Livonia. The hospital is located at 36475 Five Mile Road. For more information, call (248) 344-4063.

## Campaign stresses the importance of calcium to a child



Citing new evidence that calcium has become primarily a women's health issue, a national authority on calcium has joined forces with a leading food marketer to elevate the importance of the mineral as a children's health priority.

In light of disturbing statistics finding that only half of young children are getting 100 percent of the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for calcium, the Calcium Information Center - part of The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center - has teamed up with Kellogg's Nutri-Grain Cereal Bars to conduct a nationwide campaign on the importance of calcium during the rapid growth of childhood, when added calcium gives children a better chance of maximizing peak bone mass and building stronger teeth.

The campaign, which involves national television, print and in-store advertising, begins with a new observance - "Children's Bone Health Week" - June 8-14, 1998.

It is hoped that during this week, millions of American parents will "bone up" on calcium, learning the newest facts about calcium's connection to optimal growth and development in children.

The campaign is the outgrowth of new opinion research which finds that many Americans are clearly not getting the message about the importance of calcium for improved children's health.

Specifically, Yankelovich Partners, Inc. polled 1,092 mothers with children under age 12, concluding that a knowledge gap exists about calcium as a children's health priority.

According to the survey, which was fielded in March 1998, because of the extensive news coverage about the mineral's ability to reduce the risk of osteoporosis after menopause, many women now see calcium as primarily a women's health issue.

In fact, the survey finds that by almost a two-thirds majority, women, including mothers of young children, agree that "calcium is more of an issue for women than any other group."

And because of the calcium-skeletal system connection, women put the most emphasis on their own calcium consumption: more than half of the mothers surveyed (57 percent) say that women of all ages and postmenopausal women in particular need calcium the most.

But what is especially disturbing, according to the Yankelovich research, is that mothers are operating under a false sense of security that their

children are getting the recommended levels of calcium every day, even though many are not. Although 76 percent of the mothers surveyed said their children are getting enough daily calcium, in truth, government surveys find that half of all American children are not getting 100 percent of the RDA for calcium.

Specifically, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 1995 National Food Consumption Survey reveals that only 50.3 percent of children ages 5 and younger are getting 100 percent of the RDA for calcium.

At the same time, 57.8 percent of boys and only 37.6 percent of girls ages 6-11 now meet the recommended levels for the mineral.

Even more troubling, almost no one surveyed could name more than a few foods as good sources of calcium besides milk and cheese.

When asked to identify calcium-rich foods, the respondents listed in order: milk (90 percent), cheese (69 percent), yogurt (32 percent), broccoli (15 percent), and ice cream (14 percent). Other calcium-rich foods, such as calcium-fortified orange juice, tofu, canned salmon or sardines hardly elicited any mentions.

Because of this knowledge gap, the Calcium Information Center has teamed up with Kellogg's Nutri-Grain Cereal Bars to launch "Kids and Calcium," a public education campaign to help moms get more calcium into their children's diets.

At the same time, Kellogg's Nutri-Grain - which launched the cereal bar category in 1991 - has changed its entire product line so that now all Kellogg's Nutri-Grain Cereal Bars contain 200 milligrams of calcium, or 20 percent of the daily value of the mineral.

Through this innovation, Kellogg's Nutri-Grain Cereal Bars now compare favorably with other foods high in calcium. More importantly, these cereal bars are readily accepted by young children and teens, eliminating the struggle that often goes with trying to get children to eat calcium-rich foods.

To inform American parents of these important facts, the Calcium Information Center is working with Kellogg's Nutri-Grain Cereal Bars to get the free brochure - "Boning Up On Calcium: What Every Mom Should Know" - into consumers' hands.

The brochure, which provides the latest facts about children's calcium needs and how to get more of the mineral through a variety of food sources, is available at no cost to anyone by calling 1-877-NG4-KIDS (1-877-644-5437) and asking for "Boning Up On Calcium."