

MEDICAL BRIEFS

Women's health

U.S. Representative Lynn Rivers and Congressman John Dingell will host "Women's Health and Life Forum" 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, March 18, at the University of Michigan, Dearborn Campus, School of Management lecture hall, 4901 Evergreen, Dearborn.

Topics include: financial planning, interpersonal violence, consumer protection safety, heart disease and healthy cooking, cancer, stress and depression, and caring for children and aging adults.

Keynote speakers include Florine Mark, president of Weight Watchers, and a news anchor from Fox 2 News. Classes are limited to 50. Participants may register for two classes. To RSVP, please call Rivers' office at (734) 485-3741.

Holistic health fair

The association of Michigan Myomassologists Inc. will present its annual Holistic Health Fair 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, March 18, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, March 19, at the Livonia Holiday Inn, 17123 N. Laurel Park Drive.

The fair features massage therapists performing free 15-minute modified massages and special treatments for the physically challenged. The fair's roster includes aura photographs, chiropractic spinal screenings, allergy elimination techniques and astrophysical profiles. Vendors will sell preventative health care products. Saturday's lectures, scheduled from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., feature reflexology, aromatherapy and natural approaches to menopause.

The health fair cost is \$6 to the general public and free to IMF members. For information, contact Kathy Grogan at (248) 569-4263.

Food for thought

St. Mary Hospital in Livonia is offering a class on emotional eating as part of the "Food for Thought" nutrition education program 7-8 p.m. Wednesday, March 15, at the Bentley Center, 16100 Hubbard, Five Mile Road, Livonia. Participants will learn how to identify emotional eating and how to cope with it.

Cost to attend is \$6, \$5 for those over 55. Registration is requested. Please call (734) 655-8940.

Kidney transplant on Web

In conjunction with National Kidney Month, WebMD will Webcast a kidney transplant at www.WebMD.com at noon Wednesday, March 15, from the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor. Dr. J. Stuart Wolf, Jr., director, Michigan Center for Minimally Invasive Urology in the U-M Health System, will perform the kidney removal, a less invasive, "hand assisted" laparoscopic donor nephrectomy.

Immediately afterwards, Dr. Darrell A. Campbell, Jr., head of U-M's Division of Transplantation, will perform the transplant of the kidney into the patient. Dr. Walter Larimore of The Health Network will provide commentary during the operation. Additionally, Dr. Jeffrey D. Panch of U-M's Division of Transplantation, will host a live chat at www.WebMD.com.

We want your healthy notes

There are several ways you can reach the Observer Health & Fitness staff. The Nursing section provides numerous avenues for you to offer noteworthy information including Medical Database (openings calendar), Medical Newsletters (appointments), News Alerts (medical advances, short news items from hospitals, physicians, researchers) and more. We also welcome news-worthy ideas for health and fitness related stories. To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

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Nutrition

CLIMB THE FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID TO GOOD HEALTH

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Americans suffer from a nutritional paradox: They know the value of nutrition and exercise in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, yet their levels of obesity are at epidemic proportions.

"We have a national epidemic in obesity," said Dr. Diane Hawlin, assistant professor of internal medicine in the U-M Health System. "In fact, within the last decade, the obesity rate has risen roughly 50 percent in the United States. This is a very serious problem, especially in Michigan."

Simply put, Americans don't practice what they preach.

According to a recent nationwide survey by the American Dietetic Association, a whopping 85 percent of Americans believe diet and nutrition are important, and 84 percent say exercise and physical activity are equally important.

So what's the problem?

"The problem is we are sending dual messages. One is eat healthy and exercise, and the other is sit in front of the TV or computer and buy fast food and superize it," said Linda Devore, a registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator for St. Mary Hospital's Community Outreach Program in Livonia.

Forty-four percent of the participants in the ADA survey said they didn't want to give up foods they like, and 38 percent claimed it took too much time to plan and practice a really healthy diet.

The good news is we can have our cake and eat it, too ... but in smaller portions.

"Americans seem to suffer from portion distortion," said Boston-based registered dietitian and ADA spokeswoman Elizabeth Ward. "A portion size isn't a plate full of pasta, 32 ounces of soda, or a 10-ounce steak. People need to realize that when it comes to weight control, they can eat any food they want, as long as they control the portion and get regular physical activity, too."

Another example is muffins. A USDA standard-size muffin weighs one ounce and has approximately 100 calories. "I weighed the muffins at Costco. They were 7 ounces, and I know people who eat the whole muffin," said Beth Thayer, a registered dietitian with the Henry Ford Heart and Vascular Institute.



Diet destruction

Our culture constantly sabotages healthy diets. At supermarkets, the bigger package of cookies is often available for few cents more, and the two-for-one specials are seductive. "It's never two apples for one price; it's two gallons of ice cream for one price. You're paying with your health," said Devore.

And in elementary school — a time when children are most receptive to adopting healthy eating habits — students are often rushed through lunch. "It takes longer to eat an apple than a bag of chips," said Devore. Even toddlers aren't exempt, she added. They're encouraged to collect their favorite TV character figures, which are sold at fast food restaurants.

Americans are their worst enemy when it comes to adopting a healthy diet, said Devore. "They expect to do it perfectly and evenly. You have to have moderation and restraint rather than omission. If you fail, then mentally it takes a toll, and you feel guilty."

In addition to good food and smaller portions sizes, exercise is the third component of healthy nutrition. In an article on the prevention of chronic disease through exercise that appeared in the February issue of *Journal of Applied Physiology*, the authors wrote:

... a strong association exists between the increase in physical inactivity and the emergence

of modern chronic diseases in 20th century industrialized societies. Approximately 250,000 deaths per year in the United States are premature due to physical inactivity. ... Epidemiological data have established that physical inactivity increases the incidence of at least 17 unhealthy conditions, almost all of which are chronic diseases or considered risk factors for chronic diseases."

Common sense

It's time for Americans to start making healthy food selections. The produce section is a treasure trove of vitamins and minerals. "It has everything you need," said Devore.

Good breads are out there, but you must read the labels, said Thayer. "Make sure the first ingredient is a whole grain. Usually the wheat bread is just a colored white bread. Even with something like a 7-grain bread, the first ingredient still might be white flour and the next ingredients may be in small amounts."

Breakfast remains the most important meal, Thayer emphasized. "It gets your metabolism going, especially if you're trying to lose weight. And it provides the brain with glucose for thinking." She suggests "breakfast on the run" — a small muffin, sandwich or yogurt — for people who don't usually eat breakfast.

Dietitians agree that most healthy people do not need food supplements. While research indicates certain vitamins, minerals and herbs may be beneficial, the dietary supplement industry is not regulated. What's more, some supplements, like omega-3 fatty acids, may interact with medications. Omega-3 could compound the effect of blood thinners and raise the risk of a bleeding stroke.

In other words, if you want to take a supplement, absolutely ask your doctor.

Changing bad nutritional habits to good ones is not easy. Both the body and the spirit must be willing. It's a matter of practice and adhering to the golden rule of a healthy lifestyle: Eat less, move more.

For food and nutrition information and a referral to a registered dietitian in your area, call the American Dietetic Association's Consumer Nutrition Hot Line at 800/368-1655. For customized answers to your nutrition questions, call 900/CALL-AN-RD (900/225-5267). The cost of the call will be \$1.95 for the first minute and \$.95 for each additional minute.

Do you need supplements?



Take the following quiz to rate your eating habits. For questions 1-5, give yourself three points for every "yes" answer; for questions 6 and 7, give yourself three points for a "no" answer.

On most days, do you:

1. Eat six to 11 servings of grains (breads, cereal, rice, pasta, and other grain foods)? One serving equals one slice of bread, 1/2 cup of rice or pasta, 1 ounce of cereal or half a bagel.
2. Eat at least two servings of fruit? One serving equals one piece of fruit; 1/2 cup of chopped, cooked or canned fruit; or 3/4 cup of fruit juice.
3. Eat at least three servings of vegetables each day? One serving equals 1/2 cup of cooked or chopped vegetables; 1 cup of raw, leafy vegetables; or 3/4 cup of vegetable juice.
4. Eat two or more servings of dairy foods, such as milk, cheese and yogurt each day? One serving equals 1 cup milk or yogurt, 1 1/2 ounces of natural cheese or 2 ounces of processed cheese.
5. Eat two to three servings of lean meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs or nuts every day? One serving equals 2-3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish. One egg, 1/2 cup of cooked beans, or 2 tablespoons of peanut butter count as 1 ounce of meat.
6. Generally eat the same foods every day?
7. Frequently skip meals or miss out on one or more food groups for the entire day?

Score:

15 points or more: Food Guide Pyramid expert. You know how to make wise food choices and the variety of foods important for a healthy eating plan.

9-13 points: You're on your way. You could be getting more nutrients by fine-tuning your food selections. For example, if you fall short in the grains group, try including at least one more serving.

0-6 points: Keep trying! By making small changes, you can gradually improve your eating pattern. Focus on one food group at a time and aim to eat the minimum number of servings each day.

While nutrition experts agree that following the Food Guide Pyramid is the best way to obtain vitamins, minerals and other nutrients, you may benefit from a multivitamin/mineral supplement — if you're unable to eat from all the food groups.

However, consult your doctor before taking supplements.

Source: National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics

Adult fat phobia bad for kids' diets

Fat-free cheese, fat-free mayonnaise, fat-free cookies. By stocking kitchens with fat-free products, many parents may unknowingly put their children's health at risk.

"Meal time for a child should not mean fat-free spaghetti with fat-free meatless sauce, served with fat-free bread and a tossed salad with fat-free salad dressing," says Heart Smart registered dietitian Beth Thayer of the Henry Ford Heart and Vascular Institute.

"Many moms buy fat-free products, often because they want to limit their own fat intake or because they mistakenly think 'fat-free' means 'healthier' for their family. The problem is that they may deprive their children of necessary fat."

Fat is an important nutrient for growing children. It plays a key role in the development of nerves. Fat also is necessary for the absorption of essential vitamins A, D, E, and K. In the most extreme situation, the absence of fat can retard growth or cause diarrhea, sores on the scalp and extremely dry skin.

Thayer emphasizes that unsaturated fat found naturally in fish, vegetable oil such as canola and olive, and in whole grains, fruits and vegetables provides the essential fatty acids necessary for children's growth and development.

According to the American Dietetic Association, there should not be a fat restriction for children under the age of two. Children 2 to 11 need about 30 percent of their daily calories from fat.

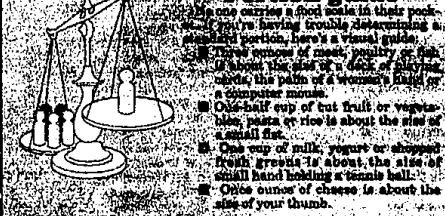
Thayer suggests parents take the focus off fat and follow these steps to ensure their children are eating a healthy diet:

- Buy lean meat.
- Serve low-fat (not fat-free) dairy products.
- Cook with canola oil or olive oil.
- Serve fish several times a week because it provides plenty of essential fatty acids that protect against heart disease.

More importantly, instead of saying "no" to certain foods, allow children to pick and choose what they like so eating is a positive experience. Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables and whole wheat grains such as whole wheat bread, oatmeal and cereal.

Thayer notes, however, children with specific health concerns or a genetic predisposition to high cholesterol or heart disease may need certain fat restrictions.

Portion guide



- One serving of meat, poultry or fish is about the size of a deck of playing cards, the palm of a woman's hand or a computer mouse.
- One-half cup of cut fruit or vegetables, pasta or rice is about the size of a small fist.
- One cup of milk, yogurt or chopped fresh greens is about the size of a small hand holding a tennis ball.
- One ounce of cheese is about the size of your thumb.