



Updating Agencies, Professionals, and Individuals with Current Life Skills Information

THIS ISSUE PRESENTS QUICK MEAL IDEAS FOR BUSY FAMILIES.

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Food, Fitness, and Fun

Have reports of America's expanding girth and the obesity "epidemic" made food, fitness, and fun a thing of the past? Don't despair—food and being fit CAN be fun. In fact, it should be fun. Encourage kids— young and old—to succeed in a healthy lifestyle. Incorporating fitness into your lifestyle will help build lifelong health plus reduce stress and improve your mood, too.

Aim, Build, and Choose

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2000 highlight the important messages to:

AIM for fitness—that means aim for a healthy weight and be physically active every day.

- A healthy weight is key to a long, healthy life.
- Engage in 30 minutes or more of physical activity each day.

BUILD a healthy base. Let the Food Guide Pyramid show you how. Get the vitamins, minerals, energy, and other healthful substances from foods your body needs.

- There are many healthful eating patterns. Different people like different foods and like to prepare the same

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How America's Eating Has Changed

When the 20th Century was young, America was mostly made up of rural populations. Rural Americans were very active physically, and their main reason for eating was to provide fuel for the human machinery. Opinions concerning nutrition were rooted in the philosophies brought by these immigrants. There was a general belief that a good diet meant good physical and mental health and that protein was important to the maintenance of muscles, but that was the extent of nutrition knowledge. Vitamins had not yet been discovered and some recommendations emphasized protein at the expense of all other nutrients. Early nutritionists saw little value in fresh fruits, and opposed the consumption of greens as not worth the energy expended in eating them. Food choices were very limited, but the food supply was quite abundant. New immigrants wanted to blend in as soon as possible. In fact, dietary assimilation was a mark of pride. So, ethnic cuisine was not popular. Consequently, the American diet in the early part of the century consisted largely of meat and potatoes.

In 1900, only 20.6% of women over the age of 15 were in the paid labor force and only 5.6% of married women worked outside the home. Meals were elaborate, if not in selection, in the time devoted to preparing them. Data from 1920 reveals that 44 hours were spent on preparing meals and cleaning up after them each week. In 1912 vitamins began to be discovered, and in the next few years the country went "vitamin crazy." Fruit, vegetables and milk gained much higher status than they had in the early years of the century.

By 1920, food processing had become the largest manufacturing industry in the United States. In 1941, the federal government established the first Recommended Dietary

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Fast and Flexible Food in the Fast Lane

Today's families seem busier than ever. Rushing between work and school often leaves parents scrambling for time to prepare nutritious, good-tasting meals for their children. In fact, 44 percent of U.S. weekday meals are prepared in 30 minutes or less.

One mealtime solution for people on the go is canned food. While some people will think canned food is old fashioned, using it can actually cut down on both preparation and cooking time. Studies show that recipes using canned ingredients are similar in nutritional value and taste appeal to the same recipes made with

fresh or frozen ingredients. So no thawing, less cooking and usually less cost may add up to positive solution to quick and nutritious meals for 2001.

Canned Foods—Take a Second Look

Fruits and vegetables are harvested at the peak of quality and usually canned within a few hours after they're picked. The foods are packed into cans that are closed with an airtight seal and then cooked at high temperatures. Once the cans are sealed and heat processed, the food maintains its nutrient quality for more than two years and is safe to eat as long as the container is not damaged in any way. And, like the

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Fast and Flexible Food in the Fast Lane (cont.)

home canning process, no preservatives are added or necessary.

Unlike some fresh items, canned products are available year-round at their peak quality. More than 1,000 food items come in cans, including many pre-prepared items like chili, meats, stews, and soups. The surprising variety of canned food ranges from artichoke hearts to zucchini, including many new and exciting ethnic and specialty food items in between!

Safety Tips for Canned Food Products

- Store canned goods wisely. Keep them in a cool, dry place where temperatures are below 85 degrees.
- Before opening the can, wipe the top off with soap and water. Rinse well before opening. Be sure your can opener is clean before and after you use it.
- Once a can is opened the food must be treated as fresh food. For maximum flavor and nutrient value from canned foods, it is best to use the products

immediately after opening. If that is not possible, canned foods should be stored in airtight containers (not in the can with foil over the top) in the refrigerator to retain taste and nutrient quality. They should be used within 3-4 days.

- Do not buy a can if it is badly dented. A dent probably won't cause the food in the can to deteriorate; however, if there is damage to the seams (where the metal is joined at the top, bottom or side) the food could be contaminated by air and bacteria.
- Rotate your canned goods pantry so that the items purchased the earliest are used first.

Some Benefits of Canned Food

- Tomatoes contain an important carotenoid called lycopene, which appears to help prevent certain cancers. Research confirms that the lycopene in tomatoes is converted by the temperature change involved in processing (like

canning) allowing the body to absorb it more easily. As a result, processed tomato products (like canned tomatoes and sauces) are the highest sources of dietary lycopene.

- Not only are legumes (beans) an excellent source of protein and iron, they are also excellent sources of thiamin, dietary fiber and potassium. They're also a good source of folate, which may play a protective role in heart disease. Canned beans contain similar nutrient values of "fresh" or (dried) beans and take less time to prepare.
- Including canned tuna, salmon, and sardines in your diet is an easy and convenient way to add helpful omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 fatty acids are polyunsaturated fatty acids found in seafood that, when combined with a healthful eating pattern, may provide a protection against heart disease.

Source: The American Dietetic Association/National Center for Nutrition & Dietetics, 2001.

Food, Fitness, and Fun (Cont.)

foods in different ways.

- Choose a variety of foods to help you get all the nutrients and fiber you need.

CHOOSE sensibly. Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.

- Choose low-fat dairy products, cooked dried beans and peas, fish, and lean meats and poultry.

What is the right fat?

The Guidelines encourage a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat. Healthy choices for fats are mono- or polyunsaturated fats found in foods like olive oil, peanuts, peanut butter, and fatty fish. Mono- and polyunsaturated fats do not appear to raise blood cholesterol.

Where to start?

If you replace saturated fats in your diet with mono- or poly-unsaturated fats you may lower heart disease risk. Small por-

tions go a long way. Use peanut butter on bagels or toast; snack on peanuts or make a healthful trail mix with dried fruit; and use olive-oil, canola, or peanut-oil based dressings on your salads.

Load Up on Nutrients, Not on Big Portions

The best way to get a variety of nutrients into your diet is to make every calorie count. Choosing foods that are nutrient dense will help protect against disease and keep you healthy. Mother Nature has created many foods that are rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and phytosterols (plant chemicals important to health). Fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, beans, and nuts, including peanuts, contain important nutrients like niacin, folic acid, phosphorus, copper, magnesium, and vitamin E.

Get Moving!

Be active every day, any way you can. Try to make fitness part of your regular routine

by taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or walking to the store instead of driving. Walk with your dog, bike with a family member, garden with a kid, and dance with a friend. Remember, a little physical activity throughout the day can go a long way! Balancing energy intake (calories) with energy output (physical activity) is key. Energy balance is important for kids and adults alike.

Source: The American Dietetic Association/National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics, 2001.

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How America's Eating Has Changed (cont.)

Allowances (RDAs), and the concept of basic food groups was introduced. This period was also the “golden age for food chemicals” with hundreds of additives and preservatives brought to market for the first time. Convenience was most important, and by the 1950s, a large variety of convenience foods made meal preparation easier than ever before. Advancements in technology also led to faster meal preparation.

During the late 50s and 1960s, American's attitudes towards nutrition changed as scientific research and other factors combined to heighten awareness. In 1959 came the discovery that eating polyunsaturated fats might lower serum cholesterol. This was followed in 1961 by further evidence linking cholesterol with arteriosclerosis. By 1962, nearly 25% of American families said they had made dietary changes that included less cholesterol. That same year, Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, provided fodder for the

debate concerning the possibility of synthetic chemicals reaching humans through the food chain. There was controversy about food chemicals in general, and the modern consumer movement was launched in 1965 following publication of Ralph Nader's book *Unsafe At Any Speed*.

By 1975, nearly 50% of American women over the age of 16 were in the labor force and only 10 hours per week were spent on food preparation and cleanup. In 1999, nearly 65% of married women were members of the paid labor force. The trend to spend less and less time on meal preparation continues as each year passes. Much of this decrease in time spent in the kitchen could be attributed to technological advancements; however lack of time to prepare food is the reason most often cited.

By the last decade of the 20th Century, Americans had become much more adventurous eaters. Variety of choice is nearly unbelievable. Ethnic cuisine, once shunned, enjoys increasing popularity and the new

foods introduced via that route add greatly to the variety of food choices. The trend toward eating out of the home continues to grow; in 1998, 47% of the food dollar was spent away from home. However, the concern for nutrition was higher than ever and that fact probably contributed to keeping some meals at home.

Looking back over the last 100 years, it isn't difficult to see how everyone's life has been affected by the numerous technological and social changes concerning nutrition and food preparation that have occurred.

Source: Kathy Lyons, Extension Graduate Assistant Electronic Food Rap Volume 10, Number 15, August 4, 2000, Purdue University School of Consumer and Family Sciences, Department of Foods and Nutrition, West Lafayette, Indiana. This article was adapted from Volume 23, Issue 1 (January - April 2000) of “Food Review,” the magazine published by USDA's Economic Research Service, is entirely dedicated to the theme of “Eating in the 20th Century.” It includes interesting historical information on what Americans eat (now and in the past) and why they eat certain foods. An electronic version of the publication can be accessed at: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/epubs/pdf/foodrevw/jan2000/>

Resource Corner: Cooking Fun for Families

Cooking Fun for Families is a six-lesson curriculum designed to encourage families to cook together. With the busy pace of life, too often, families do not eat meals together. The premise of this curriculum is that families that cook together and eat together share valuable time that increases positive relationships while building skills that encourage healthy eating patterns. The program was developed and evaluated by Lake and Mendocino County Cooperative Extension Nutrition and Youth Development staff. Funding for the project was obtained through the Northcoast Project LEAN.

The curriculum features lesson plans, games, songs and recipes to prepare. In addition many useful handouts are provided that illustrate basic cooking terminology and equipment. For information about

ordering a copy of the publication, contact Evelyn Conklin-Ginop, Human Resources Advisor, University of California Cooperative Extension in Sonoma County at 707-565-2621. elconklinginop@ucdavis.edu

Online Nutrition Resources:

- Food and Nutrition Information Service
<http://www.nalusda.gov/fnic/>
- Food Safety Information
<http://www.foodsafety.gov/>
- Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance>
- Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
<http://www.usda.gov/cnpp>

For an iron-rich, super easy meal made with canned food try...

Three Can Chili (Serves 4)

- 1 15 oz. can beans (pinto, kidney, red, etc.)
- 1 15 oz. can corn
- 1 15 oz. can tomatoes, chopped, diced or broken into pieces
- Chili powder to taste (1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon for most palates)

Place the contents of all three cans—do not drain—into a pan. Sprinkle chili powder. Stir to mix. Heat thoroughly.

Make this recipe your own by adding these ingredients—cooked meat, chopped onions and green peppers. Garlic and additional spices can also be added. Carrots add color and additional nutrients.

Serve with corn bread and a crisp green salad or cole slaw.

Source: Fujii, Mary Lavender and Diane L. Metz, For Goodness Sake: Prevent Anemia—Leader's Guide, 1998, University of California Cooperative Extension.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

California residents should contact their local county Cooperative Extension Nutrition, Family and Consumer Science advisor. Their phone number can be found in the county section of the government pages of your local phone directory.

Out of state subscription requests should be sent to Connie Costello, University of California, Riverside, 135 Highlander Hall, Riverside, CA 92521, or connie.costello@ucr.edu. Electronic subscriptions are free.

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Busy Families and Mealtimes

For some families, mealtimes with the whole family is not always possible. But these family times are important.

Mealtimes is a good time to share daily experiences. Mealtimes should be a happy time. Do not use this time together to complain or criticize.

Preparing meals at home is usually cheaper than eating out or having take-out foods.



Eating at home is more than just saving money

Home meals are generally more nutritious than those bought ready-made.

Family dining helps keep the family budget under control!

But eating at home is spending quality time with the family. Mealtimes can be a special time when the family can talk and listen to each other. It provides a sense of belonging and a feeling of support.

Some helpful hints for enjoyable family meals:

- Establish a family meal hour, at least once or twice a week.
- Keep the T.V. off and do not answer the telephone.
- Alternate who plans the meals and who makes them. This is another possible way for parents to spend time talking with their children.
- Assign roles and rotate responsibilities for each family member. For example, one child can set the table while the other places the food on the table, and everyone helps with the cleanup.

Good food and good times make strong and happy families!



Las Comidas en Familia

En muchos hogares, no siempre es posible tener a toda la familia reunida a la hora de comer. Pero el comer en familia es importante.

Las comidas en familia son una buena oportunidad para compartir con el resto de la familia las experiencias del día. Las comidas en familia debe ser una ocasión feliz; no use estos momentos de unidad familiar para quejarse o criticar a otros miembros de la familia.

El comer en casa es usualmente más económico que comer fuera o comprar alimentos ya preparados.



Comer en casa es algo más que ahorrar dinero

Las comidas hechas en casa son, por lo general, más nutritivas que las que se compran preparadas. Las comidas en familia también ayudan a mantener el presupuesto bajo control.

Pero el comer en casa es pasar un buen rato con la familia. Las comidas en familia son un rato muy especial porque se comparte y se platica. El comer en familia hace que todos se sientan bien y sean parte del núcleo familiar.

Consejos para disfrutar más de las comidas familiares:

- Establezca una rutina, una o dos veces por semana, de comer en familia.
- Apague el televisor.
- Una manera de lograr que padres e hijos pasen más tiempo juntos es compartiendo las responsabilidades de planear y preparar las comidas.
- Haga que todos en la familia colaboren. Por ejemplo, preparando la mesa, pasando la comida a la mesa, o lavando los platos.

¡La buena comida y los buenos ratos fortalecen los lazos familiares!