

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

MyHealthTALK

October 2013

Courtesy of Asset Health



Diet and Exercise Habits Improving Among KIDS

Researchers at the University of Massachusetts Boston have found that young people are eating more fruits and vegetables, consuming less sugar and getting more physical activity.

The study, published in *Pediatrics*, also measured body mass index and hours spent watching television, playing video games and using a computer. The study's authors surveyed school-aged children from grades 6 to 10 from 2001 to 2010. The study included tens of thousands of children. Surveys were collected roughly every four years.

According to LetsMove.gov, children should get at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous activity. This is a guideline that most children in the study are not meeting, despite improvements. Those surveyed got 60 minutes of physical activity an average of less than five days per week. Girls were found to exercise more than boys. Girls also ate more fruits and vegetables.



While the results are encouraging, study authors Ronald J. Iannotti and Jing Wang said that there is room for improvement. The results showed a racial disparity; African American and Hispanic children were behind white children in progress. The likelihood of getting adequate exercise and more fruits and vegetables also tapered off as children got older.

Resources such as LetsMove.gov and ChooseMyPlate.gov can help parents figure out the best ways to get kids up and active and loading up their plates with healthy foods.

"Exercise, diet habits improving among youth, study shows," Reuters, foxnews.com, Sept. 16, 2013.

"Teenagers Are Getting More Exercise and Vegetables," Anahad O'Connor, well.blogs.nytimes.com, Sept. 16, 2013.



FIGHT THE FLU *Before it Strikes*

Is it flu season already? Well, not quite, which means it is the perfect time to prepare.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older. The vaccine takes a few weeks to become fully active, so getting it as soon as possible is advised. Flu season can begin in the United States as early as October and last until May, according to the CDC. Peak months are January and February.

New for 2013 is the quadrivalent vaccine, which protects against four strains of the flu. Typically the vaccine protects against three strains.

Traditionally, flu vaccines are cultured in chicken eggs. This season there are two egg-free options—cell-culture

vaccines and recombinant protein vaccine. Those with egg allergies may want to seek out these options.

High-dose vaccines and intradermal shots are also available. High-dose vaccines are administered to the elderly. They contain four times the typical level of antigens. Intradermal shots are optimal for those afraid of needles. The needle is much smaller than a traditional shot and is injected into the skin rather than muscle.

Visit vaccine.healthmap.org to find flu and other vaccines offered near you.

"More types of flu shots available this year than ever," Liz Szabo, usatoday.com, Sept. 10, 2013.

"New Vaccines Aim to Help Fall Flu Fight," Sumathi Reddy, online.wsj.com, Sept. 9, 2013.

Less Meat Could Mean Better Health

For most people, the idea of giving up meat seems impossible. But you don't have to become a full-time herbivore to benefit from a plant-based diet.

Numerous studies have been conducted that show the benefits of a plant-based diet. Vegetarians, those who do not eat meat but can still eat dairy or eggs, in general have a lower BMI, a decreased chance of developing heart disease and certain types of cancer, and live longer than meat eaters.

You can try replacing meat in your meals with beans and legumes, tofu or edamame. If you are concerned about getting enough protein, remember that there are protein sources other than meat. Eggs, nuts and soy all contain protein. Even vegetables like peas, corn, broccoli and many others have protein.

October is Vegetarian Awareness Month

October is the North American Vegetarian Society's Vegetarian Awareness Month, so it's the perfect time to try cutting out meat from your diet, if only a little. Try going meatless one day a week. Participate in Meatless Monday, an initiative from nonprofit organization The Monday Campaigns, in association with the Johns Hopkins' Bloomberg School of Public Health. At the website (www.meatlessmonday.com) you can find recipes and ideas to go vegetarian once per week. Not only will you benefit from cutting down on meat, which can be high in fat and cholesterol, but you will also benefit from adding more vegetables into your meals.



If you plan to go vegetarian, remember to keep a watch on your calorie intake. It can be easy to turn to high-carbohydrate, high-calorie foods as a quick solution. Start gradual and try new food options. You might just find that a vegetarian lifestyle is right for you!

"Vegetarian diet provides good nutrition, health benefits, study finds," NewsCore, foxnews.com, June 4, 2012.

"Six Reasons to Eat Less Meat," Amy Van Deusen, womenshealthmag.com, accessed Sept. 18, 2013.

"Meatless meals: The benefits of eating less meat," Mayo Clinic staff, mayoclinic.com, accessed Sept. 18, 2013.

Vegetarian Three-Bean Chili (from CookingLight.com)

Makes 6 servings

(180 calories, 4.9 g fat, 8.4 g protein)

Ingredients:

- 2 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- ½ cup chopped green bell pepper
- 2 teaspoon bottled minced garlic
- ¾ cup water
- 2 teaspoons each tomato paste and ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 15 ½ can each of garbanzo beans, red kidney beans and black beans, all rinsed and drained
- 1 14 ½ can each of vegetable broth and diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 tablespoon yellow cornmeal
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 6 tablespoon reduced-fat sour cream

Directions:

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the onion, bell pepper and garlic and sauté three minutes. Stir in water, tomato paste, chili powder, cumin, black pepper, beans, broth and tomatoes, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer for eight minutes. Stir in cornmeal. Cook two minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in cilantro. Serve with a tablespoon of sour cream.

