



Nutrition for Family Living

Susan Nitzke, Nutrition Specialist; susan.nitzke@ces.uwex.edu
Sherry Tanumihardjo, Nutrition Specialist; sherry.tan@ces.uwex.edu
Amy Rettammel, Outreach Specialist; arettamm@facstaff.wisc.edu
Betsy Kelley, Outreach Specialist; kelley@nutrisci.wisc.edu

January, 2002 Topics

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Some changes for 2002

We took a brief reader poll a few weeks ago to see if our Nutrition for Family Living electronic newsletter is meeting your needs. Thanks for your positive feedback and constructive suggestions!

As you suggested, we will continue to include a research summary, an answer to a commonly asked question, and one or more links to web resources each month. These pieces are targeted at coordinators, educators, and family living staff. In addition, we will occasionally include newsletter articles you can use for general audiences. Press releases on a variety of topics, including nutrition, can be found on the Cooperative Extension website at <http://www1.uwex.edu/ces/news/>.

Please continue to give us your feedback and questions that might be of interest to Family Living colleagues statewide.



Nutrition for Family Living January, 2002

Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Overweight and Obesity

The Surgeon General has released a report based on research and advice of policy makers and community members recommending ways that communities can help prevent overweight and obesity.

Policymakers caution that health problems caused by overweight and obesity could reverse some of the positive health trends that have occurred over the past few decades, such as declining rates of cancer and heart disease. Overweight and obesity may soon cause as much preventable disease and death as cigarette smoking, according to the Surgeon General. Approximately 300,000 deaths per year are associated with overweight and obesity, while 400,000 deaths per year are associated with cigarette smoking.

In preparing the report, the Surgeon General's office gathered ideas from clinicians, researchers, consumers and advocates. A number of strategies were generated and tested for their scientific effectiveness. They were organized under the headings of Families and Communities, Schools, Health Care, Media and Communications, and Worksites in the categories of Communication, Action, Research and Evaluation (CARE).

Some of the strategies include:

- Ensure daily, quality physical education for all school grades, K-12.
- Ensure that low-fat foods including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or non-fat dairy products are available at schools and at school events.
- Make community facilities available for physical activity for all people, including on weekends.
- Create more opportunities for physical activity at work sites.
- Reduce time spent watching television and in other sedentary behaviors.
- Educate all expectant parents about the benefits of breastfeeding. Studies have shown breastfed infants may be less likely to become overweight as they grow older.
- Increase research on causes, prevention and treatment of obesity.

People may think of obesity and overweight as a personal matter, but communities have a role in health promotion and disease prevention. Communities are responsible for providing safe places for children to play and for adults to walk or bike. Communities can encourage employers and school cafeterias to provide healthy and appealing food choices. Communities can also encourage daily physical activity in schools.

Extension is working with partners at the local and state levels to encourage community action to prevent overweight and obesity, and to educate community members about ways to make healthier food choices and be more physically active. The Wisconsin Nutrition Education Network's 2002 physical activity campaign, and WINPAW (Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity Workgroup) are examples of projects that are already underway.

The full text of this report, entitled *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Overweight and Obesity*, can be found at www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/default.htm. At the same website, there are also fact sheets available on various topics related to obesity prevention.



Food Trade-Offs: Choosing how to eat healthfully

USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion publishes *Nutrition Insights*, brief summaries of research that is useful to nutrition professionals. Recently *Nutrition Insights* looked at the food trade-offs people make as a way to eat more healthfully.

Consumers were surveyed and asked whether they ever made any of five trade-offs for fourteen commonly eaten foods that are high in fat, cholesterol, sodium and/or calories. People could report none, one, or more than one trade-off for each food.

According to this survey, most people make food trade-offs:

- 82% limit how often a food is eaten
- 53% limit portion size
- 18% substitute a healthier version of a food (ex – grilled chicken breast instead of breaded chicken nuggets)
- 10% substitute with another food at another time (ex – eat chips today, eat an apple tomorrow)
- 8% give up another food (ex – eat ice cream but not cake)

Some population groups are more likely than others to make food trade-offs:

<i>More likely:</i>	<i>Less likely:</i>
Females	Males
Older adults	Younger adults
Non-whites	Whites
More education	Less education

The Healthy Eating Index (HEI) was used to determine whether adults who made food trade-offs ate a healthier diet overall. People who made any tradeoffs had better HEI scores for grains, fruit, vegetables, fat and cholesterol than people who didn't make any trade-offs. People who made at least 11 trade-offs for the 14 foods had significantly higher scores overall, indicating that they had healthier diets overall. Both groups – adults who made trade-offs and adults who did not – had average scores in the “needs improvement” range.

Implications for educators: this research helps us to know what people are doing to make healthier choices. We can work with the behaviors they are already willing to practice – limiting how often they eat certain foods, and limiting portion size – and we can encourage the behaviors they could practice more often, such as substituting foods. We can also understand that some groups are more likely than others to make trade-offs. Some groups, such as women, may need less encouragement to make trade-offs but more education about which trade-offs to make. Other groups, such as younger males, may need more education and encouragement to begin making trade-offs as a way to eat a healthier diet.

Nutrition Insights are available on the CNPP website at www.usda.gov/cnpp. Scroll down and click on *Nutrition Insights* for the complete list, or go directly to <http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/Insights/Insight24.PDF> for this issue.



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For your use: Trading-Off for Healthier Choices

This article is written for consumers. Feel free to include it in newsletters or other written materials intended for the public.

Trading-Off for Healthier Choices

The holidays are over and many people are making New Year's resolutions to eat healthier. Research has shown that many people make food trade-offs when they decide to watch what they eat. This is a great strategy, because research also shows that people who make food trade-offs have healthier diets.

What's a food trade-off? The most common trade-off is eating high-fat, high-calorie foods -- like donuts or ice cream -- less often. If you already do this, keep it up! Another common trade-off is to eat less of those foods when you do eat them -- a small handful of chips instead of a whole bag. These two trade-offs seem to be the easiest for people to make and stick to, so give them a try.

Another trade-off you can make is to eat a healthier version of a food -- grill your chicken rather than frying it, or buy a leaner type of ground beef. Trade-off a cookie today for an apple tomorrow. Or, have a slice of cake -- but skip the ice cream.

If your New Year's resolution is to improve the way you eat, be more active and feel better, then making some trade-offs is a good place to start. Think of one new trade-off you can make, try it for a while, then add another. When people make a habit of making trade-offs, they find they're eating healthier overall.



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To answer your question... soybeans

Q: I just had a call from a consumer wanting to know if the field soybeans grown in our area are nutritionally equivalent to the commercial edible soybeans? - Diane Brion

A: In general, the nutritional content varies from variety to variety, but field soybeans grown locally are essentially equal to the commercial edible soybeans. The "food grade" soybeans grown sometimes have a clear hilum which does not discolor tofu when made from these beans, but the nutritional content is the same as any other soybeans for the most part. Some processors like certain varieties because of milling and oil characteristics they need for their end product. All labeled herbicides on soybeans are approved for human consumption, so that is not an issue. Organically grown soybeans don't have any pesticides used on them and can fetch a good price on the right market.

Hope this helps,

John M. Gaska

Soybean and Small Grain Outreach Specialist

University of Wisconsin - Agronomy