



Nutrition for Family Living

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August, 2008 Topics

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Population-wide approaches for preventing obesity

By Gayle Coleman

The American Heart Association Council on Epidemiology and Prevention, Interdisciplinary Committee for Prevention released a statement stating that population-based strategies are key for preventing obesity. They recommend improvements in social and physical environments that make it easier, more socially acceptable and personally rewarding for people to make healthful food choices and be physically active. They also emphasize the need for a broad range of policies and environmental changes to target the wide array of influences on food access and intake, and physical activity. This American Heart Association scientific statement aims:

- 1) to raise awareness of the importance of undertaking population-based initiatives specifically geared to the prevention of excess weight gain in adults and children;
- 2) to describe considerations for undertaking obesity prevention overall and in key risk subgroups such as the low income population or various age groups;
- 3) to differentiate environmental and policy approaches to obesity prevention from those used in clinical prevention and obesity treatment;
- 4) to identify potential targets of environmental and policy change using an ecological model that includes multiple layers of influences on eating and physical activity across multiple societal sectors; and
- 5) to highlight the spectrum of potentially relevant interventions and the nature of evidence needed to inform population-based approaches. The evidence-based experience for population-wide approaches to obesity prevention is highlighted.

Implications for Extension Educators: The importance of population-wide approaches for preventing obesity complements education that we do with individuals, families and communities. This approach fits within the Social Ecological Theory of behavior change where the importance of reaching people at multiple levels – individual, family, community, population. This approach reinforces the importance of work many Extension Educators do with healthy weight coalitions in their communities.



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Web site: The journal article is at

<http://circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/reprint/CIRCULATIONAHA.108.189702>

A news release from AHA is at <http://americanheart.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=43&item=455>



Who's Using the Internet and How are They Using it?

By Gayle Coleman

According to the PEW Internet & American Life Project 2007 telephone survey of over 2,000 American adults, internet use continues to grow. Between October and December 2007, 75% of adults responding to this survey reported using the Internet. This figure is an increase from 73% of American adults responding in 2006 and from approximately 15% of American adults responding in 1995.

Use of the internet varies by age, race/ethnicity, geography, household income and educational attainment. The following chart summarizes the percentage of each group who report using the internet according to the 2007 survey.

Gender	
Women	74%
Men	76%
Age	
18-29	92%
30-49	85%
50-64	72%
65+	37%
Race/ethnicity	
White, Non-Hispanic	76%
Black, Non-Hispanic	56%
English-speaking Hispanic	79%
Geography	
Urban	77%
Suburban	77%
Rural	64%
Annual household income	
Less than \$30,000	61%
\$30,000-\$49,999	78%
\$50,000-\$74,999	90%
\$75,000+	93%
Educational attainment	
Less than High School	38%
High School	67%
Some College	84%
College+	93%

Retrieved 6/27/2008 from http://www.pewinternet.org/trends/User_Demo_2.15.08.htm

Other interesting findings from these surveys are the increases in how adults are using the internet. Between the March 2001 and April 2006 surveys, the share of online adults who say the internet has greatly improved their ability to shop doubled from 16% to 32%. During the same



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time period, the share of online adults who say the internet has greatly improved the way they get information about health care grew from 17% to 20%.

The PEW Internet & American Life Project is a non-profit initiative that explores the impact of the Internet on children, families, communities, health care, schools, the work place and civic/political life. Information on this initiative and the methodology used for the telephone surveys is available at their website, <http://www.pewinternet.org/index.asp>.

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Demographics of Internet Users, accessed June 27, 2008, http://www.pewinternet.org/trends/User_Demo_2.15.08.htm.

Pew Internet & American Life Project, Internet penetration and impact April 2006, accessed July 12, 2008, http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/182/report_display.asp.

Implications for Extension Educators: The PEW Internet & American Life Project has a number of reports on their web site (<http://www.pewinternet.org/reports.asp>) that we can use to advance our understanding of how our clients use the internet, and generate thought and discussion about implications to our educational efforts.



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Partnership between America on the Move® and the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES)

By Gayle Coleman

America on the Move®, a national initiative dedicated to helping individuals and communities make positive changes to improve health, and the CSREES are joining forces. The goal of this partnership is to provide Extension Educators an effective way to engage communities, families and individuals in making small, positive changes in eating and physical activity behaviors to improve health and quality of life. Thirteen states have joined the partnership. This partnership provides Educators with access to nutrition and physical activity resources, a walking program curriculum that can be adapted to fit existing nutrition and health-related programs, and an on-line data storage and retrieval system to generate reports and program impacts. A brochure on this partnership can be downloaded at http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/food/part/health_part_aom.html. The **A Partnership Guide for Walking and Healthy Living** curriculum can be downloaded at http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/food/pdfs/aom_csrees.pdf.

America on the Move® is a research-based initiative that began in Colorado. It encourages people to make small changes in eating and physical activity, such as eating 100 fewer calories a day and burning 100 more calories through physical activity a day, that can be maintained to achieve better health and quality of life. The program offers tools and information for individuals, families, groups and health professionals at their website, <http://aom.americaonthemove.org/site/c.krLXJ3PJKuG/b.1524889/k.BFFA/Home.htm>.

Implications for Extension Educators: The tools and information provided through this partnership are a nice addition to our resources for promoting healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. It also should stimulate discussion within FLP and among our county colleagues around questions such as:

- How could the American on the Move/CSREES partnership be utilized within our county or program area offices to promote healthy lifestyles within our organization and demonstrate that we practice what we preach?
- To what extent could we incorporate walking or other physical activities into programs we provide through FLP?
- To what extent could we incorporate physical activities into WNEP?
- How could we partner with others in our communities to provide physical activities that might be out-of-scope for FLP or WNEP?
- How could the American on the Move/CSREES partnership be utilized by healthy weight coalitions in our communities?