September, 2011 Topics

Food choices have important associations with weight gain

Highlights from the 2011 Society for Nutrition Education annual conferences,
Empowering the Nutrition Gatekeepers: From Parents to Products to Policy

Food choices have important associations with weight gain

By Susan Nitzke

A new study from Harvard researchers about dietary and other lifestyle patterns associated with weight gain in middle-age adults gives us important new information about the value of making healthy food choices. Mozaffarian and colleagues combined data from three major studies that collected data every four years from more than 120,000 women and men over a period of several years (1986-2006, 1991-2003, and 1983-2006). The men and women in these studies were mostly white and relatively well educated. They gained an average of almost a pound a year during these studies.

The people in this aggregate of three large studies were found to have gained more weight as they ate more potato chips, potatoes (especially French fries), sugar-sweetened beverages, unprocessed red meats, and processed meats. Conversely, the foods associated with lower weight gains were vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and yogurt. Other than yogurt, most dairy foods were relatively neutral. Weight change tended to be greater for alcohol users, people who had previously smoked or quit smoking, people with less than 6 or more than 8 hours of sleep per day, and people who spent more time watching TV. People who were more physically active tended to gain less weight.

According to the researchers, “Higher fiber content and slower digestion of [vegetables, nuts, fruits and whole grains] would augment satiety, and their increased consumption would also displace other, more highly processed foods in the diet, providing plausible biologic mechanisms whereby persons who eat more fruits, nuts, vegetables, and whole grains would gain less weight over time” and “overall, our analysis showed divergent relationships between specific foods or beverages and long-term weight gain, suggesting that dietary quality (the types of foods and beverages consumed) influences dietary quantity (total calories).”

Implications for Extension Educators. The findings of this study provide strong evidence that food choices, along with proper exercise and sleep, play an important role in determining how much weight adults tend to gain over time. In addition, the foods associated with less tendency to gain weight are consistent with the basic messages of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate, especially “make half your plate fruits and vegetables,” “make at least half your grains whole grains,” and “drink water instead of sugary drinks.”

References/Resources:


Highlights from the 2011 Society for Nutrition Education annual conferences, Empowering the Nutrition Gatekeepers: From Parents to Products to Policy

By Gayle Coleman, Teresa Curtis, Betsy Kelley and Shelley King-Curry

Several of us had the opportunity to attend the Society for Nutrition Education (SNE) annual conference this year. In this edition of Nutrition for Family Living, we share highlights from the conference. Many of the presentations are posted (or will be posted) on the SNE website at http://www.sne.org/events/2011_schedule.html.

Reviving the Message with Unconventional Methods

This Food and Nutrition Extension Educators Division preconference focused on providing nutrition education using a variety of non-traditional approaches. Ellen Schuster, University of Missouri-Extension, emphasized the need to embrace technology such as social media, games and Smart boards. One of the challenges that we discussed is the rapid turnover in technology – by the time we develop a research-based application, advances in technology may have made this application obsolete. Other states are finding a growing interest in Smart boards in schools but, like Wisconsin, availability of this technology varies across school districts and Extension Educators have not found nutrition education resources that meet their needs with this technology. Social media such as Facebook was suggested as a way to encourage social support among learners after these learners have participated in face-to-face lessons. However, no one shared an example of actually using social media in this way.

Links to resources mentioned in Ellen’s presentation (check out the Today Show clip for a chuckle):

► URL for New Mexico State Learning Games lab http://learninggames.nmsu.edu/

► Today Show clip – What is the Internet anyway? (about 2 minutes) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUs7iG1mNjI

► Shift 4.0 (4 ½ minutes)
A great video that summarizes the changes in the broader culture regarding technology and social media. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ILQrUrEWe8


► Submit an app or widget
We’ve updated the submission form on the Collaborate Wiki page (URL above) to allow you to submit an app or widget

► Your National Program Leaders for nutrition and health link is found under National Extension Resources on the above URL

► To keep updated on materials as they are added to the Collaborate Wiki website: There’s no RSS button on the wikipage but if you use a feed reader (Google, etc.) or the feed subscription service built in to most browsers (Internet Explorer, Firefox, etc.), you can subscribe using this link: http://collaborate.extension.org/wiki/Special:Feeds/3987

Mary McFerrren, Virginia Tech, and Susan Baker, Colorado State University, shared results of focus groups with low-income adults to find out what would motivate them to attend food and nutrition lessons. Their results indicate that marketing materials should include emotion-based messages, emphasize that learners will connect with similar adults (i.e., peers), and build on learners’ achievements. They gave examples of lesson title improvements to attract learners. For example, using “Snacks that make lips smile – and mom’s hearts sing” in place of “Healthy snacks.” Samples of two marketing brochures for EFNEP were shared. A scanned (black and white) copy of these full-color, folded brochures is included with this summary.
One breakout session at this preconference focused on development and implementation of a Master Wellness Volunteer Program in a region of Texas. The Family Living agent in the region recruits and manages these volunteers using an approach that was based on recruiting and training 4-H volunteers. She works with the food and nutrition specialists in Texas to provide approximately 3 days of training in content and education techniques. Like the Master Gardener Program, there is a fee ($50) to participate in the program and the volunteers are expected to do 40 hours a service within a year of completing the training and 10 hours in subsequent years to maintain their volunteer status. The Master Wellness Volunteers cover events such as health fairs, do food demonstrations at farmers’ markets and assist the Family Living agent with other education events. Work done by these Master Wellness Volunteers enables the Family Living educator to reach more people in her communities and frees up her time to focus on other responsibilities.

Opening Keynote – “From Parents”
This session focused on parents control and loss of control over what their children eat. One speaker stated that parents control 73% of what the family eats (for better or worse). Jean Ronnei, food service director for the St. Paul (Minnesota) Public Schools where over 75% of the student population receives free- or reduced-price meals, shared what they are doing to improve the food environment in their schools. She stated it’s difficult to get parents engaged in school food service. The principal is the gatekeeper at schools and she/he needs to support the school wellness policy in order to get it implemented. The St. Paul School District has been successful in building ‘healthy hits’ (i.e., healthy choices) into their meal plans and getting kids to make healthier food choices in their cafeteria. One effort that has been particularly successful is getting cafeteria staff into the classrooms to get to know the students.

Karen Miller-Kovach, a dietitian working with Weight Watchers (WW), shared their experience with addressing children and weight with their program. Weight Watchers has traditionally been a weight-loss program for adults. Until recently, there was little interest in getting children involved with WW and they did not have policies regarding children in their program. In response to increased interest in a program for children and lack of research literature on effective programs for children, WW did a pilot study in Sweden to see whether their program might work with children. They found that the traditional WW program was not a good fit for children but a total family approach was successful in helping children lose weight. Today WW has implemented policies that do not allow children in their program (unless a physician specifically prescribes the program) and has a WW Family Program. The Family Program is designed for parents (no kids allowed to classes), includes a coach to provide support for the families, and requires everyone in the household to be involved. Their 5 rules for the program are similar to Dietary Guideline recommendations but with a twist: (1) focus on wholesome, nutritious foods; (2) include treats but control portions/moderation; (3) limit screen time; (4) be active at least 1 hour a day; (5) everyone in the household must follow the first 4 rules.

Tapping into the Power of Influence: Getting People to Yes!
This session focused on how the Chickasaw Nation WIC Program improved their effectiveness by implementing ‘Principles of Persuasion.’ These 6 principles and examples of these principles follow.

- ‘Reciprocation’ is based on the fact that many people feel indebted to those who do something for them or give them a gift. This could be as simple as a WIC employee going into the waiting area to greet a WIC mom and offering to help her carry her diaper bag into the office rather than just standing at the door and calling her name.
- ‘Social proof’ is based on the influence people around you have on your actions. For example, testimonials from other WIC moms influence other mom’s choices.
- ‘Commitment and Consistency’ is based on the fact that people are more likely to follow through on something if they commit to it either verbally or in writing. For example, WIC participants might write an action step for something they plan to do.
- ‘Liking’ is based on people being more likely to say ‘yes’ to someone they know and like. In a WIC office, changing a seating arrangement so the WIC employee faces the WIC participant and communicates directly to her rather than facing the computer screen while talking is a simple way to demonstrate ‘liking.’
- ‘Authority’ is based on people’s respect for authority. When a group of WIC participants was asked to identify which way they preferred the WIC nurses to dress – wearing a white lab coat, wearing scrubs or wearing regular, casual clothing – they chose the scrubs.
• ‘Scarcity’ is based on the fact that people find things more valuable when there is less of it. For example, the sale of Disney films peaks when they are promoted with the phrase “only X weeks/days left until this film returns to the Disney vault.”

FRIDGE – Food, Family and Fellowship
The FRIDGE curriculum, developed by Penn State University, is designed to help individuals from multi-generations (youth 10-14 and a parent, grandparent and/or other adult family member) work as partners to achieve healthy eating goals. It incorporates lessons and activities that promote family connections, increased knowledge about food and nutrition, and strategies from participants to establish family plans to adopt healthier food selection, preparation and eating practices. The curriculum does not include food preparation but at least one PSU Extension Educator added a food preparation component to it.

The Food Bank Network: Opening the gate to Nutrition
This session kicked off by showing a relationship between obesity and food insecurity by comparing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) obesity trends maps, http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/trends.html, to the Economic Research Service (ERS) of U.S. Department of Agriculture’s food insecurity map, http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodsecurity/stats_graphs.htm#geographic. Based on the need to strengthen collaboration between obesity prevention efforts and food security efforts, food banks such as Feeding America have expanded outreach to enroll clients in SNAP and provide nutrition education. In New York City, the food bank partners with SNAP Ed to provide CookShop, a food preparation curriculum for adults and school-age youth. Unfortunately, their materials are not available for others to use. The San Antonio Food Bank does nutrition education in schools, started a new food pantry at a school, and conducts cooking programs for adults. They recommend working with the faith community as a way to reach audiences that traditionally have been hard to reach such as African-American adults.

Empowering Nutrition Educators and Participants by Improving Quality of Life
Research at Colorado State University finds that EFNEP participants report and EFNEP educators report improved quality of life as a result of program participation. This session began with sharing results of research and literature that have been done in the realm of psychology and the social sciences on quality of life (QOL). It included indicators that have been used to measure QOL. Quality of life is the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with personal, social, economic and environmental expectations beyond basic human needs. The focus of this session was to consider the relationship between QOL and nutrition education of limited resource audiences. In brief, it is determining the relationship between the body and mind. “Quality of Life” is seen as how well you might live not simply how long you might live. QOL correlates with three domains: “Being”, “Belonging” and “Becoming.” All of these domains may be viewed as part of positive change beyond what is gained from the nutrition content that is taught. With this background in mind, investigators asked, “What is the final aim of nutrition intervention?” Responses can vary based on who is responding. Nutrition experts, decision makers, business, society and individuals have different views regarding the aim of nutrition education. It is believed that nutrition interventions do impact QOL, and the aims of all intersect and are related when QOL is considered. Thousands of quotes from EFNEP learners across the U.S. were captured and evaluated to determine the measurable impact nutrition education has had on their QOL. These quotes were clustered into themes to correlate with the QOL domains:

1. Increased knowledge
2. Improved overall health
3. Enjoyment and desire to learn
4. Support and confidence
5. Impact on family
6. New perspective on health
7. Positive change

Using QOL as a way to describe qualitative data received from participants and educators shows how both are empowered through nutrition education. Measuring QOL could enhance program impact reporting.

Miscellaneous highlights
• USDA has established the Nutrition Evidence Library to conduct evidence-based reviews to inform nutrition policy and programs.
• As of January 1, 2012, nutrition labeling for meat will be required either on the meat package or in the meat case.
• Look for an advertising campaign from the Food Marketing Institute (FMI), which represents wholesale and retail food marketers, to roll out ‘Nutrition Keys’ in the near future. Nutrition Keys is a front-of-package label that shows calories, saturated fat, sodium, sugar, potassium and fiber. Grams/milligrams and % Daily Value will be included for saturated fat, sodium, potassium and fiber. This information is designed to make it easier for consumers to make healthier food choices since the Nutrition Facts label is confusing to some consumers.
• SNE has a new ‘associate member’ category for individuals interested in nutrition education but who do not qualify as traditional members. For more information see, http://www.sne.org/join.html.
• The final symposium of the conference was about sodium and the controversy around the new Dietary Guidelines recommendation that the American population significantly reduce their sodium intake. This may prove to be a hot topic among nutrition experts in years to come and should be interesting to follow.

Implications for Extension Educators: These highlights provide a variety of ideas for FLP educational resources and methods. We encourage any FLP colleague who attends a conference that includes information that might be useful for other FLP colleagues to share this information in future editions of NFL. Contact the NFL editor for more information.
We can help!

How? Come Find out –
TASTE new foods,
TRY healthy recipes,
MOVE more,
FEEL better,
MAKE new friends,
and it’s FUN!

The best way to prevent and treat chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease...
Is not to get them in the first place - let us show you how eating right can make a difference in your life - now and in the future.

Give us a call and we'll help you get started.
Contact our family nutrition program assistant listed below to find out how we can help.

or call, toll free, 1-888-814-7627

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Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) provides hands-on nutrition education through a series of lessons. Each group meets once a week, for eight to ten weeks.

Who are eligible?

Best of all, EFNEP is free for those once a week, for eight to ten weeks.

Who can attend?

You are eligible for EFNEP Program (SNAP), WIC, or Head Start, as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Food Stamps.

What is EFNEP?

You are eligible for EFNEP Program (SNAP), WIC, or Head Start, as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Food Stamps.
What participants had to say:

Meeting new people!

You can't ask for a better way to learn about

"I've learned important skills in the kitchen.

EFNEP also offers four optional lessons:

- Feeding young children
- Feeding your baby solid foods
- Feeding your New Baby
- Active During Pregnancy

Lessons:
You can attend one or all of these.

Each lesson:

And, you'll prepare and taste new recipes at

Planning meals
Cooking
Being active
Keeping food safe
Saving money at the grocery store
Healthy eating and cooking for less

You'll learn about:

One-on-one or in groups:
About 60 to 90 minutes. Lessons are taught
Eating and being active. Each lesson lasts

EFNEP participants learn about healthy

Information, recipes, and:

With EFNEP Lessons,

Certificate
Graduation booklet
Recipe booklet
Thermometer
Food booklet
Stretch band and physical activity
Measuring cups and spoons
 Produce brush
Grocery shopping list
Water bottle

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Resources added to the WNEP/FLP resource database

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) school meals brochure in English and Spanish, https://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/apps/flrc/tch_res2/resourceDetails.cfm?rid=8466


You may also be interested in this resource