



Your Health



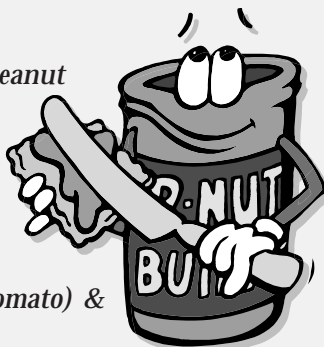
A newsletter dedicated to student health issues
at Minnesota State University, Mankato
Spring 2004

Healthy Snacking!

We've become a nation of snackers. Snack foods contribute a significant number of the daily calories in the typical American diet. It's easy to find that happening when the four-ounce package of honey buns that was just "inhaled" has a whopping 450 calories. The Snack Food Association estimated that in 1997 each American consumed 21.6 pounds of snack foods and that 20 percent of our daily calories came from snacks.

Before you start thinking, "Blah, blah, blah...another article telling me to avoid between-meal snacks", think again. Snacks can be an important part of a healthy diet, especially when snack choices help fill our daily need for necessary nutrients. The key word here is "choice." Some snack choices do a better job than others. When you're looking to satisfying your snacking urges, consider a snack that has a healthy balance of complex carbohydrate, fat and protein. Pauline Genter, a registered dietician working at MSU Student Health Services suggests the following quick and easy snacks:

- fruit-flavored low-fat yogurt and 2 fig bars
- string cheese and a medium apple or pear
- toasted English muffin with 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- assorted cut up veggies with fat-free ranch dressing
- bowl of whole-grain cereal (Cheerios, Wheaties, Mini-Wheats) dry or with low-fat milk and a banana
- cup of soup (Minestrone, chicken noodle, tomato) & 4-5 crackers
- low-fat granola or breakfast bar & a glass of skim milk



For those who don't have a minute to spare and find that most of their snacks come from vending machines, the Minnesota Department of Education's Food and Nutrition Service recommends the following snacks as the best vending machine choices: vegetable juices, animal crackers, whole wheat snack crackers, pretzels, low-fat popcorn, trail mix with raisins, yogurt, non-fat milk, vanilla wafers, baby carrots, almonds, apple sauce, 100% fruit juices.

In addition to choosing snacks that add to a healthy diet, Genter offers the following smart snacking tips:

- Listen to your body cues and don't snack unless you are hungry. Avoid nibbling when you are bored, tired, or stressed.
- Eat snack-sized portions. Snacks are not meant to be extra meals. Small portions of food should be enough to relieve your hunger pangs and hold you until mealtime. If you do eat a large snack, adjust your meal size accordingly.
- Balance your snack calories with your activity levels.
- Avoid snacking when sitting in front of the TV or computer. Portion out your snack on a plate, eat slowly and stop when you are full.
- Be prepared for snack attacks. Keep tasty, nutritious foods on hand at home, in the car, in your backpack.
- Enjoy your food. We are lucky to have a wide variety of delicious foods available day and night. An occasional cookie, soft drink, ice cream, or bag of chips is okay--just make trade-offs to keep your snacks and meals in balance.

For additional information on healthy snacking log on to:

www.eatright.org

"I'm really not a smoker..."

The Minnesota Department of Health, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, Minnesota Partnership for Action Against Tobacco, and the University of Minnesota recently released the results of a study that examined cigarette smoking in young, college-aged adults in Minnesota. Smoking patterns in young adults, especially college students, can make it difficult to accurately determine how many smoke. It's not unusual for young adults to never actually purchase the cigarettes they smoke--they get them from friends or acquaintances. And it's not unusual for young adults to say, "No" when asked if they are a smoker, yet the answer changes when asked if they ever had a cigarette in the last thirty days.

The study released by the Department of Health and its research partners found that approximately 178,000 young adults in Minnesota are smokers and that 32,000 fit the description of occasional smoker--that's 32,000 young adults who don't consider themselves smokers but who smoke at bars, at parties, only on weekends, only when stressed, etc.

The study also showed that most established young adult smokers have not been able to leave smoking behind in college: 42% of young adult smokers between the ages of 18 to 24 have at least 11 cigarettes per day while 53% of those between the ages of 25 to 44 have at least 11 cigarettes per day. Instead of being able to quit when they "graduate from college" or "get a job", the occasional smoker makes the leap to becoming an established smoker. To see the full report log on to www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/tpc/YoungAdult2003Report.pdf



Feeling Pain?



When your head is throbbing with a horrible headache or you're experiencing killer menstrual cramps, it's tempting to take more than the recommended dose of over-the-counter medicine in an effort to "just make the pain go away." After all, if two are good then four should be twice as good, right? Wrong!! Taking too much of any

medication can have very undesirable side effects, side effects that can be worse than the original discomfort.

Never take more acetaminophen (also known as Tylenol) than is directed. The maximum amounts for adults are 1 gram (1000 mg) per dose and 4 grams (4000 mg) per day. Taking more acetaminophen could damage your liver. Alcohol taken with acetaminophen can be very damaging to your liver. If you drink more than three alcoholic beverages per day, talk to your doctor before taking acetaminophen and never take more than 2 grams (2000 mg) per day. Symptoms of an acetaminophen overdose include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, sweating, seizures, confusion, and an irregular heartbeat. Be aware of the acetaminophen content of other over-the-counter and prescription products. Any acetaminophen found in these products counts toward a person's total daily dose.

Ibuprofen (commonly known as Motrin) is another popular over-the-counter medication used for pain relief. The usual ibuprofen dose for adults is 400 mg three or four times a day and is best taken with food or a beverage to avoid stomach upset. Symptoms of an ibuprofen overdose include nausea, vomiting or stomach pain, dizziness, drowsiness, headache, ringing in the ears, blurred vision, seizures, sweating, numbness or tingling, little or no urine production, and slow breathing. Ibuprofen can make the skin more sensitive to sunlight so avoid overexposure and wear sunscreen when outdoors. Drinking alcohol when taking ibuprofen can increase the likelihood of gastrointestinal bleeding

How Flexible are You?

Flexibility is the amount of movement, or range of motion, you have at each joint. Touching your toes with your knees slightly bent or scratching your back are examples of flexibility. In past years, flexibility has been the most overlooked component of health-related fitness. Today, stretching exercises are considered an important part of any physical fitness program.

Being flexible improves the ability to perform daily tasks and makes it possible to enjoy a more active lifestyle. Limited range of motion of a joint can limit your performance in many activities and increase the risk of injury to soft tissues such as muscles, tendons, and ligaments. Increased flexibility should be a healthy goal for most people.

If a joint is already flexible, keeping it flexible means regularly moving the joint through its full range of motion. If you desire to improve flexibility, the muscles that cross the joint and the tendons and ligaments around the joint need to be stretched beyond their normal range.

For most individuals, static stretching is the best type of exercise to improve flexibility. Static stretching is a slow, gradual stretch to your maximum stretch and then the stretch is held for approximately 10-60 seconds. An example of static stretching is bending from the waist and slowly allowing your hands to reach down as far as your range of motion will allow. When you feel discomfort, you hold the stretch.

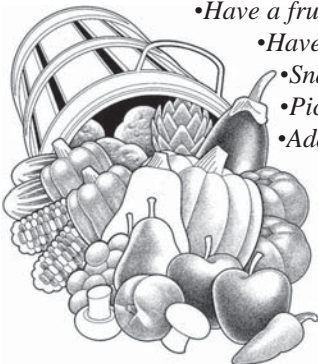
Ballistic stretching, a type of stretching that involves bobbing and bouncing movements, can be useful for some athletes but should be avoided by most people. The momentum of the bobbing and bouncing can overstretch the muscles and soft tissue and cause injuries. For more information about flexibility and stretching log onto: www.acefitness.org/fitfacts



Five a Day the Easy Way!!

Five a Day for Better Health is one of the nation's most widely recognized health promotion programs. Since its inception, the goal of this program has been to increase the amount of fruits and vegetables Americans eat each day to five or more servings. Data from the United States Department of Agriculture shows that about 40% to 50% of U.S. adults know they don't get the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables but want to eat more. Are you one of them? The National Cancer Institute, a Five A Day sponsor suggests easy ways to help all of us increase our fruit and vegetable servings each day:

- Have a fruit or drink juice each morning at breakfast
- Have a fruit or fruit juice as a snack
- Snack on raw veggies like baby carrots, pepper strips, broccoli, or celery
- Pick up ready-made salads from the produce shelf for a quick salad anytime
- Add strawberries, blueberries, or bananas to your pancakes, waffles, or french toast
- Whip up smoothies made from fresh or frozen berries, ice, and yogurt
- Stir fresh or frozen vegetables into your pasta, noodles, or omelet
- Microwave vegetables for dinner
- Make fruits and vegetables visible in your home, room, or apartment



MSU
STUDENT
HEALTH
SERVICES
Carkoski Commons
Lower Level

APPOINTMENTS
&
INFORMATION
389-6276

HEALTH
EDUCATION
389-5689

PHARMACY
389-2483

NURSE LINE
389-6710

www.mnsu.edu/healthsv

