Welcome to Warren County Visions!

Welcome to the Summer 2009 edition of County Visions, Warren County’s quarterly newsletter from the Family & Community Health Sciences department of Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Contact us at FCHS@co.warren.nj.us for questions or suggestions and be sure to visit us at our website for up-to-date class offerings at http://warren.njaes.rutgers.edu.

Wishing you and yours a restful summer!

Sherri Cirignano, MS, RD, LDN
FCHS Educator/Assistant Professor

Focus on Fungi:
Mushrooms and Their Health Benefits

***BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND***
Featuring: A unique fungi food demonstration by Warren Hospital Executive Chef Mike DiCenso

Thursday, October 1, 2009 @ 3:00 PM
Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building
Route 519 ~ Belvidere, NJ
Fee: $5.00
Registration is limited ~ Call 908/475-6504 to reserve your space!

Navigating the Maze of Organic Foods

What makes a food organic?
Why do organic foods cost so much?
Are organic foods better for us?

COMING – Fall 2009

For more information call 908/475-6504

What’s Inside?

► Understanding USDA Organic Foods

Have you ever wondered which foods can use the USDA organic seal? Read about The Mechanics of Organics and join us this fall for a unique organic foods educational program to learn more about it.

► We Owe A Lot to Mushrooms!

Did you know that mushrooms play a very important role in our lives and provide nutritional value and health benefits? Learn more at Focus on Fungi, a Functional Foods for Life Educational Program to be held October 1st, 2009.

► Summer Plans?

Looking for things to do this summer that don’t cost a lot of money or take too much time but are fun? Why not work on becoming more physically fit? Learn some inexpensive, fun Activities to Enjoy throughout the Summer.

► 22 Ways to Eat More Fruits and Vegetables

Check out this award winning fact sheet that is chock full of ways to increase you and your family’s fruit and vegetable intake.

► Get Moving~Get Healthy New Jersey at the Fair!

The 72nd Annual WC Farmers’ Fair is July 26th ~ August 1st. Visit our booth in the Freeholders’ Building to learn how to eat healthy on a budget and keep your family active.

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.
Although organic foods have been around for quite some time, there are many misconceptions about what they do and do not represent and what they are and are not. Organic foods in recent history in the United States started with the introduction of the Organic Foods Protection Act by the US Dept of Agriculture as part of the Farm Bill in 1990. This act was passed by Congress, but prior to that time, there were many organic certification programs, each with its own production standards and labeling. This led to confusion for the consumer. The Organic Foods Protection Act sought to regulate the growing organic food industry to decrease confusion and protect the consumer by establishing standards for our domestic products.

This act called for the establishment of the National Organic Standards Board to make recommendations to the National Organic Program about whether a substance should be allowed in organic production. It also would assist in the development of standards for substances to be used in organic production and to advise the Secretary of Agriculture regarding the Organic Foods Protection Act.

It took 12 years for full implementation of the National Organic Program Standards. These standards are those which dictate the organic food program as we see it in the stores today.

Products that are produced under the authority of the Organic Foods Production Act are those that are minimally processed without the following:

- Most synthetic and petroleum-based pesticides & fertilizers
- Growth hormones
- Antibiotics
- Genetic engineering
- Ionizing radiation
- Sewage sludge.

In addition to this, no prohibited substances can be on the land for three years before the harvest of an organic crop. Animals must also be fed 100% organic feed and have access to the outside.

When on a label, the term ‘USDA Organic’ or use of its seal is considered a legal label definition and cannot be used unless it has been produced according to the specific standards. This allows consumers to know what they are buying. Individuals or companies who sell or label a product as organic when they know it does not meet USDA standards, can be fined up to $11,000 for each violation.
Organic Labeling

There are several different levels of USDA Organic that you can find on the products that you buy:

100% Organic: Must contain only organically produced ingredients, except for water and salt. The USDA Organic seal may be used.

Organic: Must contain at least 95% organically produced ingredients, except for water and salt, which must be listed in the ingredients and the other 5% are ingredients that are not available as organic or are on the USDA National List of Allowed Synthetic and Prohibited Non-Synthetic Substances. The USDA Organic seal may be used.

Made With Organic Ingredients: Must contain at least 70% and up to 95% organic ingredients. The amount of organic content may be used on the label but the USDA Organic seal may not be used, and the word organic cannot be placed anywhere on the front display panel.

Products with less than 70% organic ingredients can list them individually on the ingredient panel, but cannot use the seal or use the word organic anywhere on the front display panel.

For more information about the National Organic Program, visit: www.ams.usda.gov/nop
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Edward Bellamy, a nineteenth century American author once said, “If bread is the first necessity of life, recreation is a close second.”

We all know that we must eat food to sustain life. However, when we are choosing our food we need to make sure that we are making healthy choices. It is important that we eat the appropriate amount of grains, fruits and vegetables, dairy products and meats that are recommended for daily consumption by the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture). Eating a well balanced diet will give one the energy and strength needed to go about their daily activities without any problems.

As Mr. Bellamy suggests recreation or the things that we do in our spare time go hand in hand with our diet. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that adults do moderately intense aerobic exercise for 30 minutes a day / 5 days a week. Moderately intense aerobic exercises are ones where a person is working hard enough to raise their heart rate and break a sweat. A good way to figure out if the activity a person is doing is considered “moderately intensive” would be to see if they can talk while doing it but are not able to sing.

Physical activities that are done while a person is not able to talk or sing would be considered vigorous activities or exercises. The CDC suggests that if a person is doing these types of activities that you do them 25 minutes a day 3 days a week. Before starting any type of physical fitness program it is important to talk to your doctor.

Many people do not feel as though they are able to participate in a lot of physical activities because they do not have the time or resources to do so. Some may feel that their lives are too busy and that they are unable to fit in 30 minutes of exercise a day. The CDC says that it is OK to just do 10 minutes of exercise at a time. For example, one could take 10 minutes out of their 30 minute lunch break and go for a brisk walk with a coworker.

A lot of moderately intensive activities can be done at ones home or in ones neighborhood for free. Some examples include:

- General gardening (raking, trimming, shrubs)
- Biking on level ground
- Ballroom or line dancing
- Playing catch(softball or baseball) with your spouse, child or grandchild
- Throwing a Frisbee with family and friends
- Shooting Baskets (basketball)
- Playing Volleyball with family and friends
- Walking briskly
- Using your manual wheelchair

Other activities they may require going to parks or recreation centers in ones community are:

- Tennis (doubles)
- Canoeing
- Water aerobics
- Ballroom or line dancing

Vigorous activities that can be done at home or in the community for a minimal fee include:

- Aerobic dance
- Biking faster than 10 miles per hour
- Fast dancing
• Heavy gardening (digging, hoeing)
• Hiking uphill
• Jump roping
• Martial arts (such as karate)
• Race walking, jogging, or running
• Sports with a lot of running (basketball, hockey, soccer)
• Swimming laps
• Tennis (singles)

Not only is it important to do activities that raise one's heart rate but it is also important to do strength training 2 days a week. Again these types of activities can be done in one's home. The point of strength training is to gain and maintain muscle mass. Some good examples of strength training include:

• Lifting weights
• Working with resistance bands
• Doing exercises that use your body weight for resistance (push-ups, sit-ups, calf raises)
• Heavy gardening
• Yoga

Everyone can benefit from physical activity. If you have a physical disability that limits you from doing some of the activities that have been mentioned talk to your doctor and ask them to help you come up with exercises that would be most beneficial to you.

Remaining physically active throughout one's life can help in controlling and maintaining a healthy weight. Physical activity has also been known to help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. It can also help strengthen bones and muscles. Studies have shown that one's mental health is often improved with physical activity.

Summer time is a perfect time to get outside and enjoy the warm, sunny weather. Take a walk through your neighborhood, plant a garden, or go for a bike ride. Promote physical activity between your family and friends by starting a neighborhood kickball or whiffle ball game. Start a walking club or have weekly volleyball games. All of these activities will help you enjoy the season, build relationships and increase your physical health.

Sources:
www.cdc.gov
http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html
www.mypyramid.gov
http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/show/114213
From 1991 to 2007, the “5 A Day for Better Health” campaign encouraged Americans to eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day to improve health and reduce risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, stroke, hypertension, overweight, heart disease and certain cancers. In March 2007, the “5 A Day” program became the National Fruit and Vegetable Program and launched an updated version of the popular fruit and vegetable initiative. Called “Fruits and Veggies...More Matters,” this public health initiative replaces the familiar “5 A Day” tag.

The updated campaign recommends that consumers eat between 4 to 13 servings (2 to 6½ cups) of fruits and vegetables every day, depending on individual calorie needs. This updated message is consistent with the newest Dietary Guidelines for Americans, released in 2005, which also increased fruit and vegetable recommendations.

Although we need to eat more fruits and veggies, a recent study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine reports that, like similar studies during the last 20 years, we actually eat far fewer. In this latest study, researchers report that 89% of us failed to meet USDA recommendations for fruit and vegetables in 1999-2002. But...why?

While there is no one single answer, health professionals suggest that many of us simply don’t know how to put these health recommendations into practice. We’re cooking less, eating out more and are frequently eating on the run. What we need are the tools to make eating more fruits and vegetables quick, convenient and easy. Try these ideas to help you add more fruits and vegetables into your daily routine...quickly and easily.

**Shopping & Storage Strategies**

- Choose fresh fruits and vegetables that keep well for a week or more: apples, grapefruit, oranges, artichokes, beets, cabbage, carrots, celery, kale, onions, parsnips, potatoes, squash and sweet potatoes.
- Look for produce that is locally grown. (In New Jersey, that’s “Jersey Fresh.”) Fruits and vegetables that are grown locally do not travel as long and are typically fresher and tastier than foods transported long distances.
- Shop with a friend in mind. Share a bunch of celery or a melon. Split a bag of peppers or apples. Sharing gives you variety without the waste.
- Buy frozen fruits and vegetables in bags, rather than boxes. You can use as much or as little as you want. Then, tie up the bag to preserve flavor and store what is left for another time.
- Store unused portions of fresh veggies (like peppers, onions, celery and mushrooms) in plastic freezer bags or small containers to use later in pastas or stir-fries.
- Mix leftover pasta with chopped vegetables and low-fat salad dressing for a tasty pasta salad.

**Mealtime Tips**

- Stop by the salad bar at your local grocery store and make a nice salad with a variety of different fresh fruits and vegetables. You get variety without buying large amounts of many vegetables and fruits. And, you don’t spend time cutting and chopping.
- Buy extra salad and roll it in a whole wheat tortilla for lunch or...
the following day’s dinner. For extra flavor, add beans, chicken or shredded cheese.

- Make a meal out of a spud. Top a baked potato with canned chili, beans and steamed broccoli, carrots or cauliflower. Serve with a fat-free sour cream or shredded cheese.
- Add some greens to your burger. Thaw a box of frozen chopped spinach; squeeze out the water. Add to ground beef or ground turkey and make your burgers more nutritious.

Give Prepared Foods a Boost

- Lightly sauté fresh vegetables such as broccoli, onions, mushrooms, peppers, carrots and eggplant, and add to jarred pasta sauce. Serve over whole wheat pasta.
- Add vegetables and a single-serving can of tuna or leftover meat to pasta salad from your local market or deli.
- Perk up take-out or frozen pizza with pineapple, chopped tomatoes, mushrooms, peppers, broccoli, onions or other favorite vegetable.
- Pair pizza with a salad or steamed vegetables for a wholesome, healthy meal.
- Dress up quick-cooking brown rice or couscous with diced tomatoes, shredded carrots, raisins and pine nuts. Season with a splash of balsamic vinegar.
- Top frozen whole-grain waffles with peanut butter and fresh or frozen fruit.
- Add fresh, frozen or dried fruit to instant hot cereals like oatmeal and Cream of Wheat®.
- Like Mexican food? Warm canned fat-free or reduced fat refried beans in the micro wave. Add low-fat or non-fat cheese, vegetables and salsa, and roll mixture in a whole wheat tortilla.
- Add raisins or other dried fruit (dried cranberries or cherries work well), chopped walnuts and celery to prepackaged romaine salad. Top with reduced fat dressing.
- Create your own special soup. Add chopped vegetables to tomato, lentil, bean or chicken noodle soup.
- Pick up a fresh fruit cup at the local grocery store or convenience store. Pair it with low-fat or non-fat cheese and crackers, yogurt or cottage cheese for an on-the-go snack or meal.
- In a blender, combine yogurt, ice, milk and your favorite fruit (strawberries, bananas, pineapples, mangoes, blueberries or peaches) to create a tasty smoothie.

Apple Chicken Stir-Fry

This is a Fruits & Veggies – More Matters™ recipe. It meets the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s strict nutrition guidelines as a healthy recipe.

Prep time: 15 Minutes, Serves: 4

Cups of Fruits & Vegetables per Serving: 1

Ingredients:
1 pound cubed boneless, skinless, chicken breast
½ cup onion, vertically sliced
1 ¾ cups (3-4 medium) carrots, thinly sliced
1 ½ teaspoon vegetable oil
1 teaspoon dried basil, crushed
1 cup fresh or frozen Chinese pea pods
1 tablespoon water
1 medium baking apple, cored and thinly sliced
1 tablespoon oil
2 cups cooked brown rice

Stir-fry cubed chicken breast in 1 tablespoon vegetable oil in non-stick skillet until lightly browned and cooked.

- Remove from skillet
- Stir-fry onion, carrots, and basil in oil in same skillet until carrots are tender
- Stir in pea pods and water; stir-fry 2 minutes
- Removed from heat; stir in apple
- Add chicken, serve hot over cooked rice.

Nutritional Information per Serving

Calories: 330 Carbohydrates: 30g
Total Fat: 7.7 g Cholesterol: 66mg
Saturated Fat: 1.1g Dietary Fiber: 5g
Sodium: 1117mg Protein: 29g

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