

**NUTRITION MONTH
March 2005**

**GO THE HEALTHY WAY, EAT WELL, LIVE WELL
FEEL GREAT!**



Armstrong Foodservice Health Care, School and Child Care Program

In-Service Package

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March is Nutrition Month® across Canada. Since the early 1980's, Dietitians of Canada has successfully brought Canadians this annual campaign.

Everyone today is talking about weight.

The keys to healthy weight are eating well, being active and feeling good about yourself. The 2005 National Nutrition Month® Campaign is taking a positive, solution-based approach to healthy weight. While dieting is a popular remedy for weight loss decades of research have shown that diets are not effective for long term health and weight control. Dietitians of Canada is taking a more positive, solution-based approach to healthy weight for the March 2005 National Nutrition Month® Campaign. Go the Healthy Way!

KEY MESSAGES:

- Maintaining a body size in the 'normal weight' range is one element of good health. However, unhealthy eating habits, low levels of physical activity and tobacco use will increase the risk of health problems even for those within the 'normal weight' range.

- **Achieving and maintaining healthy body weights has a positive impact on overall health and wellness:**

Achieving and maintaining a healthy body weight is associated with decreased risk for a number of chronic diseases including: heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and certain types of cancer¹.

Body weight is also correlated with psychological well-being. Healthy weight individuals are at decreased risk for concerns such as poor self-esteem, depression, anxiety disorders and disordered eating, as compared to those who are overweight or obese¹.

Canadian adults are struggling to maintain a healthy weight:

Close to half of adult Canadians are overweight and one in six are obese²

The prevalence of overweight and obesity amongst Canadian adults is continuing to rise and there is no indication that this trend has reached its peak^{3,4,5}.

The costs associated with overweight, obesity and their co-morbid conditions are staggering. The direct medical costs attributable to adult obesity in Canada are estimated to have been \$1.8 billion (CN) in 1997, or 2.4 % of the total health care expenditures for all diseases in Canada in that year⁷.

At the same time, disordered eating remains a concern. Recent multi-national data suggest a trend towards increasing prevalence of eating disorders in Western industrialized nations⁶.

Even a small weight loss has health benefits:

Studies indicate that, for obese patients with Type II Diabetes, hypertension or hyperlipidemia, modest weight reduction improves glycemic control, reduces blood pressure, and reduces cholesterol levels, respectively⁸.

Losses of as little as 4.5 kg have been shown to increase longevity in obese individuals⁸.

Healthy eating based on Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/food_guide_rainbow_e.htm) helps Canadians achieve and maintain healthy weights and reduces risk for chronic disease:

Healthy eating is recognized as a significant contributor to chronic disease risk reduction. Healthy eating has been shown to be a successful approach to reducing the risk for Type II diabetes, heart disease, stroke, certain types of cancer, and osteoporosis.

Lower fat, healthy eating and portion control have been shown to be key elements of weight loss and long term maintenance of healthy weights⁹.

So-called "non-dieting" approaches to weight management, which emphasize sustained lifestyle change (e.g. healthy eating and active living) without emphasis on dieting, can produce modest benefits to health and psychological well-being while at the same time effectively minimizing the attrition or 'drop out' rate commonly observed in traditional weight loss diet programs¹⁰.

Dietitians are viewed as a reliable and trusted source of information on nutrition and related issues, such as weight management²⁰.

Dietitians are the most trusted source of nutrition information for Canadians⁷¹.

Dietitians' advice is accurate, reliable and trustworthy because it is based on current evidence.

To find a Registered Dietitian, visit Find a Nutrition Professional at www.dietitians.ca, ask your doctor for a referral to a dietitian, call your local public health department, hospital or community health centre, call the Dietitians of Canada Consulting Dietitians Network toll free at 1-888-901-7776, or look in the Yellow Pages under "Dietitians".

Regular physical activity as outlined in Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living (www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/index.html), helps Canadians achieve and maintain healthy body weights and reduces risk for chronic disease.

Epidemiological studies suggest that physical activity can reduce the risk of non-insulin-dependent diabetes by up to 50 percent.

The effects of physical activity and healthy eating on body weight are synergistic. Data from the Diabetes Prevention Program (U.S.) indicate that partnering regular physical activity and healthy eating can reduce the risk for diabetes by 58%, due in part to the impact of these lifestyle factors on body weight. Healthy eating and an active lifestyle have also been linked to a reduced risk for other chronic diseases including certain types of cancer, heart disease, stroke and osteoporosis.

Fitness, independent of weight loss, may help to decrease the health risks linked to overweight and obesity. Evidence suggests that cardiorespiratory fitness can offer a measure of protection against the health risks of obesity even if BMI remains elevated.

Strategies to achieve and maintain healthy body weights should support self-esteem and a positive body image:

There are incredible pressures on people, especially women, to accept the idealized body image promoted by the media and fashion, diet and tobacco industries.

Slimness in western cultures is associated not only with success and sophistication, but with positive character virtues.

Weight loss (even at modest levels) improves health related quality of life measures, body image and self-esteem.

The potential benefits of weight loss in relation to self-esteem and body image must be balanced by the recognition that healthy bodies come in a range of weights, shapes and sizes.

*Additional information on body image, self-esteem and weight can be found at:
http://www.beststart.org/resources/bdy_img/BIreport/httoc.html.*

Reliable and consistent information on approaches for achieving healthy body weights is lacking and consumers are confused:

Consumers are becoming increasingly frustrated by mixed messages related to nutrition and physical activity that they receive from a wide-variety of sources. Contradictory information has led to high levels of consumer skepticism. The end result of these contradictions is that some consumers report having reached a point where they feel they've heard enough and are just going to eat what they want to eat, without considering nutrition.

A fixation on weight reduction and an ideal body shape makes people vulnerable to yo-yo dieting, weight cycling, and restrictive eating plans and weight loss programs.

A societal fascination with thinness has led to a large diet industry in North America with estimated annual revenues of \$35 to \$50 billion.

A 2002 review of weight loss diet product advertising by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) found that nearly 40% of ads contained claims that were almost certainly false, while an additional 55% of ads contained claims that very likely to be false or, at the very least, lacked adequate substantiation.

Nutrition misinformation has effects that go beyond consumer frustration. With broad exposure to unrealistic body images and poor quality and misleading dieting-related information, through magazines, books and media, many people are desperate to achieve an idealized body shape and undertake unhealthy dieting practices to the detriment of their physical and mental wellbeing.

WHAT CAN YOU DO DURING NUTRITION MONTH AND HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- **Participate in the On-line DC healthy way challenge...visit www.dietitians.ca**
- **Take the Extreme Makeover Nutrition Month Challenge In NS...Actions to Improve Meals TAKE AIM! We are challenging groups (Health care facilities, communities, schools, child cares to make a change in their meals/menus by using our checklist and evaluating what they did during nutrition month. See application form and checklist attached for your chance to win prizes.**
- **Post nutrition month crosswords and offer prizes in your workplace.**

Armstrong FoodService and Nutrition Month:

- **During the month, Andrea and Angela will be tag teaming to visit some Health care facilities and schools and child care centres to evaluate their menus using our checklist. We are looking for the facility who initiates the most EXTREME MAKEOVER in their cafeteria menus by using the tips in our checklist. Participating facilities will be chosen for their involvement, creativity and sustainability of their healthy menu changes. Please send in your nutrition month Extreme Makeover stories to the address/fax below and the MOST EXTREME MAKEOVER will win a "Feel Great" prize everyone can enjoy!**
- **Bonus points are given to those facilities who incorporate daily physical activity into their "Healthy Way" plans.**
- **The Challenge is ON! Take A.I.M. Actions to improve**