



Coos County Extension Family & Community Development NewsTips

March—April 2004

OSU Extension
FCD Faculty

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National Nutrition Month® Celebrates Eating Smart and Staying Healthy

Eat Smart/Stay Healthy is the theme of this year's National Nutrition Month®. Sponsored by the American Dietetic Association, the campaign reinforces the importance of good nutrition for good health.

Eating smart means paying attention to both variety and moderation in your diet. Eating a wide variety of foods will increase the odds of getting the nutrients that you need for good health. Remember to include fruits, vegetables, grain products, dairy products, and meat and/or meat alternates (such as peanut butter and eggs). Be adventurous and include a variety of choices of each type of food. For example, Romaine lettuce, winter squash and carrots are good vitamin A sources, but oranges and other citrus fruits will provide vitamin C.

Moderation means avoiding too much food. Decide how much and how often to eat. When you're full, stop eating. It isn't necessary to clean your plate. Take smaller servings at first to avoid waste.

It may seem easier to eat smart when you're at home, but the same principles apply when you eat away from home. Select a restaurant with healthy choices. Make careful selections. Avoid "all you can eat" if it's too tempting. Choose grilled, broiled or steamed foods instead of fried foods. Order small-sized servings or split your order with someone else. Go easy on butter, sour cream, sauces and salad dressings. Load up salads, sandwiches and pizza with vegetable toppings to add nutrients and reduce calories.

Don't forget that physical activity is also part of staying healthy. Develop a personal fitness plan that fits your lifestyle.

Source: Carolyn Raab, Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist, Oregon State University, March, 2004.



Shining a Little Light on the Importance of Vitamin D

Some people may not be getting an appropriate amount of vitamin D. From infancy to older age, vitamin D plays an important role in building and maintaining bone. It does this by helping with calcium absorption.

When older adults have too little vitamin D, their bones must loan some calcium to their blood to help the heart and nerves. That leads to decreased bone density and an increased risk of hip fractures. In children, a vitamin D deficiency can lead to stunted growth and bowed legs. This condition, called rickets, afflicts many children worldwide. It was a problem in the United States until milk was fortified with vitamin D, beginning in the 1930s. Rickets may be making a comeback among infants as women breastfeed without taking vitamin D supplements.

Vitamin D is a unique nutrient because it can be made with a little help from sunshine. It is formed when ultraviolet (UV) B rays from the sun change a type of cholesterol that is just under the skin. The liver and kidneys then convert this into a usable form of vitamin D.

Most people get the amount of vitamin D they need from sun exposure. You can't always rely on this, however. The amount that forms depends on the time of year, the length of exposure, the pigmentation of your skin, whether you use sunscreen and your age.

In general, more UV-B rays are available closer to noontime and in summer. This is also true at latitudes closer to the equator and at higher altitudes. Cloudy and smoggy skies can block UV rays. Sunscreens with sun protection factors (SPF) greater than 8 can also interfere with making vitamin D. It's hard to say exactly how much sun exposure is needed. Baring the hands, arms and face to June noontime sunshine for 10 to 15 minutes two to three times per week may provide enough vitamin D. More time is needed for darker skinned people and older adults.

Older adults are vulnerable to vitamin D deficiency. This could especially be a concern if they aren't able to venture outdoors much, aren't consuming vitamin D food sources and are taking laxatives that prevent vitamin D absorption. When sun exposure isn't possible due to time of year not being able to go outside, dietary sources of vitamin D become important. Vitamin D is naturally in only a few foods. These include salmon, sardines, herring and eggs. Fortified milk is an excellent source with 100 International Units (IU) per cup. Infant formulas are fortified with the same amount as milk. Some fortified breakfast cereals and margarine are also sources of vitamin D.

The amount of vitamin D that people need isn't exactly known because the contribution of sun exposure can vary. An adequate intake is estimated to be about 5 micrograms of cholecalciferol (the pre-vitamin D form) per day for ages 9 to 50 years. This increases to 10 micrograms for ages 51 to 70 and increases to 15 micrograms for adults over age 70. One microgram is equal to 40 International Units, the way that vitamin D quantities are still expressed on most pill bottles.

It's possible to get too much vitamin D. Sun exposure and food won't lead to excess, but supplements and some fortified foods could provide too much in some cases. Just five times what you need could lead to heart and kidney damage.

Breast-fed infants that don't receive a vitamin D supplement and aren't exposed to the sun are also at risk. Nursing mothers should ask their physicians about vitamin D supplementation. This might especially be a concern for African American women and their infants.

Beverage Calories: Are They Going To Waist?



An 8-ounce glass of orange juice in the morning, a couple of sodas throughout the day, a bottle of Gatorade at the gym, maybe a few bottles of your favorite beer at night — all of these add up to one thing: excess calories.

Could it be that hundreds of extra calories are mindlessly consumed in liquid form? Yes. According to research published in the *International Journal of Obesity*, calories from liquids, such as soft drinks, sports beverages or sweetened tea, don't seem to register as food. This, consuming soft drink with your meal, instead of water or another calorie-free beverage, could really make a difference for your weight over time.

It is best to be aware of how many sweetened drinks you are consuming during the day. If possible, try to make adjustments so you are consuming beverages without calories.

Also, be aware of portion sizes, which can be very large. A king-sized soda at Burger King is 35 ounces—or just over one quart. 7-Eleven features a “Slurp and Gulp” combo drink that is a total of 54 ounces of soda and slurpee. That’s almost 7 cups—a huge serving. Furthermore, many restaurants and movie theaters offer unlimited refills, and these can really add up!

Take a look at how daily liquid calories stack up:

	Calories:
8 oz. orange juice	120
24 oz. soda	292
2 beers	300
Grand total:	712



Tips for Beverages:

- 1) Eat whole fruit instead of drinking fruit juice for better satiety and more fiber.
- 2) Switch to calorie-free versions of soda, such as diet soda or sparkling water with a twist of lime or lemon.
- 3) Drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses (64 ounces) of water every day.
- 4) Flavor coffee and tea with skim milk or fat-free half and half. Use low-calorie sugar substitutes, such as Splenda, Equal or NutraSweet. Keep in mind, just a teaspoon of full-fat creamer and a tablespoon of sugar add an additional 45 calories each; totaling 90 additional calories to an otherwise non-caloric beverage. This could equal 32,850 calories for a whole year!

Source: *Communicating Food for Health*, March, 2004.

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<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/coos>

Calendar of Events

3 April

District Meeting—10 am to noon
Honey Bear Campground—Ophir Road
(7 miles north of Gold Beach, between
Gold Beach & Port Orford)

23 April

Homemaker's Holiday—9 am to 3 pm
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church—Coos Bay

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3rd Tuesday

FCE—Catching Inlet & Roadrunners

2nd Wednesday

FCE—Powers

3rd Wednesday

FCE—Green Acres Grange

3rd Thursday

FCE—Coos River

2nd Friday

FCE—North Fork