

This newsletter is produced by the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington*, to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

Tell Us What's New...

What's new with your organization? To submit news to *Energize*, call Martha Marino 206-817-1466, e-mail martha_marino@yahoo.com.

Deadline for submission is the last day of each month.

Subscription Information

Energize can be sent to you electronically each month. There is no charge.

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For more information about the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* or to access past issues of this newsletter, see <http://nutrition.wsu.edu>.



**ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!
EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE**

Information provided by Washington State University Extension's NEN of WA. This material was funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local DSHS Community Service Office.

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This Month's Focus: Weighing In

Hopefully, those New Year's resolutions to achieve a healthy weight aren't a distant memory now that January is coming to a close. Now is a prime time for nutrition educators to capture this annual season of motivation and turn it into action. This issue of *Energize for Nutrition Educators* focuses on healthy weight, including recent research about overweight and obesity, a program in Washington State, and tools you can use to guide the people you serve to embrace positive nutrition and physical activity behaviors. In particular, we focus on children and teens, and the importance of role modeling by their parents.

Targeting Parents to Target Kids – It's true: research shows that children copy the behavior modeled by their parents, and that includes healthy eating and physical activity. With this in mind, Karen Barale, Extension Educator at WSU Pierce County Extension developed a leader's guide to accompany *A Parent's Guide to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity*.

The manual uses the facilitated dialogue approach, a learner-focused method that involves the active participation of participants along with the educator. Designed for use by paraprofessionals, the program targets parents with limited



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income who participate in the Basic Food/food stamps (or are income eligible) and Title 1 schools enrolled in *Food \$ense*. Each of the 11 stand-alone lessons includes a script for teaching about a variety of nutrition and activity topics, along with handouts and recipes. Although it's not focused on weight management per se, it promotes healthy food and activity patterns that in turn lead to a healthy weight. Karen developed the guide several years ago, and updated it June 2009. The guide has been field-tested and includes materials in English, Spanish, and Russian. (Contact: Karen Barale, MS, RD, CD, FADA, WSU Pierce County Extension, 253-798-3262, kbarale@wsu.edu)

Is Early Childhood Obesity Stabilizing? The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported this month that the prevalence of obesity among low-income, preschool-aged children increased steadily from 12.4% in 1998 to 14.5% in 2003, but after that remained about the same, with a prevalence of 14.6% in 2008. Prevalence was highest among American Indian/Alaska Native children (21.2%) and Hispanic children (18.5%). The CDC's Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System is the only source of nationally compiled obesity data for low-income children from birth through 4 years, and most of the data is collected through the WIC Program. Why the stabilization in weight? CDC writes that the reasons are complex, but could be a result of state and local WIC programs focusing on initiatives related to obesity in children, such as supporting breastfeeding, increasing the percentage of low-fat or fat-free milk vouchers, and reducing television viewing. (Source: Sharma, AJ, et al "Obesity prevalence among low-income, preschool-aged children – United States, 1998-2008" *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 303(1):28-30, January 6, 2010)

More Data Shows Plateau in Youth Obesity – Yet another study appears to show a plateau in obesity among children and teens. The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 2007-2008 found no significant increase in obesity from 1999-2000 and 2007-2008. The most recent NHANES found that 16.9% of children ages 2 to 19 were at or above the 95th percentile for BMI for age (obese) and 31.7% were at or above the 85th percentile (overweight). The only exception to the apparent plateau was that the very heaviest of 6- to 19-year-old boys appeared to be getting heavier. (Source: Ogden, CL, MD Carroll, LR Curtin, MM Lamb and KM Flegal, "Prevalence of high body mass index in US children and adolescents, 2007-2008." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, January 20, 2010, 303(3):242-249, January 20, 2010)

Adult Obesity Rates Slow – Since the family's food environment and parental role modeling can affect the diets of young people, the prevalence of adult obesity matters. Another data set from the same NHANES study mentioned above found that in 2007-2008, the prevalence of obesity among American men was 32.2% and among women it was 35.5%. This represents little change over the past 10 years. Even so, it's a huge problem that one in three Americans is obese, which is associated with a host of medical problems. (Source: Flegal, KM, MD Carroll, CL Ogden, LR Curtin, "Prevalence and trends in obesity among US adults, 1999-2008." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 303(3): 235-241, January 20, 2010.)



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Food-Insecure Teens' Attitudes Toward Food – Eating patterns and perceptions among teenagers who are food-insecure are different from those who are food-secure, according to researchers in Minnesota who surveyed nearly 5000 youth. These differences may be important considerations when designing nutrition education programs. Compared with food-secure youths, food-insecure youths were more likely to perceive that eating healthfully was inconvenient and that healthy food did not taste good. They also reported eating more fast-food meals and fewer family meals and breakfasts than youths who were food-secure. Food-insecure youths had higher fat intakes and were more likely to be obese. (Source: R Widome, D Neumark-Sztainer, PJ Hannan, J Haines, M Story, "Eating when there is not enough to eat: Eating behaviors and perceptions of food among food-insecure youths." *American Journal of Public Health*, 99(5): 822-828, May 2009.)

Obesity and Sleep – When helping kids and teens achieve a healthy weight, we generally focus on nutrition and physical activity. Sleep is important, too. Kids who don't get enough sleep are more likely to be obese, and researchers have pinpointed that the lack of time spent in rapid eye movement (REM) sleep increased the odds of obesity. REM sleep is associated with dreaming, and an hour less of this type of sleep tripled the odds of being overweight. Poor quality sleep or not enough of it can negatively affect glucose metabolism. Also, people who regularly don't get enough sleep have high levels of ghrelin (a hormone that triggers hunger) and lower levels of leptin (a hormone that helps curb hunger). Suggestions are for parents, schools, and physicians to encourage regular bedtimes and wake times, improve the sleep environment, and address related health issues such as sleep apnea. (Sources: 1) Xianchen, L, EE Forbes, ND Ryan, D Rofey, TS Hannon, and RE Dahl, "Rapid eye movement sleep in relation to overweight in children and adolescents." *Archives of General Psychiatry* 65(8):924-932, August 2008. 2) National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/obe/obe_causes.html. 3) Spiegel K, E Tasali, R Leproult, D Van Cauter, "Effects of poor and short sleep on glucose metabolism and obesity risk." *Nature Reviews Endocrinology* 5(5):253-261, May 2009).

OUR MISSION: The Nutrition Education Network coordinates nutrition education efforts to communicate consistent, positive and relevant messages to increase awareness of healthful and enjoyable eating among low-income families. Energize is one way that the Network shares information and resources to accomplish this mission.

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Sugary Beverages and Teen Obesity – It has seemed like a no-brainer that if adolescents consume sugar-sweetened beverages they may be at greater risk for overweight and obesity. That link may not be as straightforward as it seems. Recently published research following 2,294 ethnically diverse teens found no association between sugary drinks and weight gain over a five-year period, after controlling for other variables. They did find that drinking little or no white milk was linked to a higher BMI, and daily milk-drinking was linked to a lower BMI. A surprising finding was that youth who drank diet soft drinks were more likely to have gained weight during the 5 years, but researchers think that might be because teens were dieting to lose weight. (Source: Vanselow, MS, MA Pereira, D Neumark-Sztainer and SK Raatz, "Adolescent beverage habits and changes in weight over time: findings from Project EAT. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 90(6):1489-1495, December 2009)

Praise for Pear Shape – British researchers say that carrying extra weight on the hips, thighs, and "bum" (as they say in England) is good for one's health, protecting against heart disease and metabolic problems. The reason is complex: 1) fat on thighs and buttocks is more difficult to lose than fat around the waist, 2) when fat is broken down quickly, inflammation-triggering cytokines are released, and 3) cytokinones are linked to cardiovascular disease, insulin resistance and diabetes. The slower-burning hip fat also releases more of the hormone adiponectin which protects arteries and promotes blood sugar control. The "bottom" line is to maintain a healthy weight and not to worry about gluteofemoral body fat. (Source: Manolopoulos, KN, F Karpe and KN Frayn, "Gluteofemoral body fat as a determinant of metabolic health." *International Journal of Obesity*, January 12, 2010, accessed at <http://www.nature.com/ijo/journal/vaop/ncurrent/pdf/ijo2009286a.pdf>)

IN THE MEDIA

Hunger Stats for Congressional Districts and Big Cities – For the first time, data is now available showing the extent of food hardship in every Congressional district and 100 of the country's largest metropolitan areas. The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) used data collected by the Gallup organization and given to FRAC, which asked more than 530,000 people a question to measure food hardship, "Have there been times in the past 12 months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?" Responses showed that, for the nation as a whole, 16.3% in early 2008, 19.5% at the end of 2008, and 18.5% at the end of 2009. Why the drop? Authors of the report credit increases in SNAP/Food Stamp benefits, particularly through the Recovery Act. This allowed for the number of people receiving those benefits to grow more rapidly than earlier in the recession. From November 2008 to October 2009, the number served increased by 6.8 million people. Food hardship hit more homes with children: 24.1% compared to 14.9% for homes without kids. (Source: "Food Hardship: A Closer Look at Hunger – Data for the Nation, States, 100 MSAs, and Every Congressional District," available at www.frac.org/pdf/food_hardship_report_2010.pdf)

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

MyPyramid's Online Weight Loss Tools – For interactive tools to help the people you serve achieve a healthy weight, go to MyPyramid's site on Steps to a Healthier Weight. From that site, adults can assess their own diets and physical activity levels, get individualized recommendations, track their weight, and learn about the benefits of a healthy weight. Go to www.mypyramid.gov/STEPS/stepstohealthierweight.html



National Nutrition Month – Every March, the American Dietetic Association's member conduct a nutrition education and information campaign. This year's theme is "Nutrition from the ground up," and ADA offers games, interactive tools, and event ideas to use with families, schools and communities to promote the theme at www.eatright.org/nhm

WASHINGTON GROWN

Fresh This Month – Although January isn't a growing season, it is a great time to pore over seed catalogs and websites, look at seed displays in home and garden stores, check out books from the library about growing vegetables and herbs, locate a nearby pea patch or community garden, or consider building raised vegetable beds. And dream of springtime!

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