

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 7

July 2010

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.

To order or unsubscribe contact: Christa Albice, WSU Puyallup, 253-445-4541. Fax 253-445-4569, e-mail albice@wsu.edu.

Energize is a publication of the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington*. Content of newsletter is up to the discretion of *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* staff.

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**

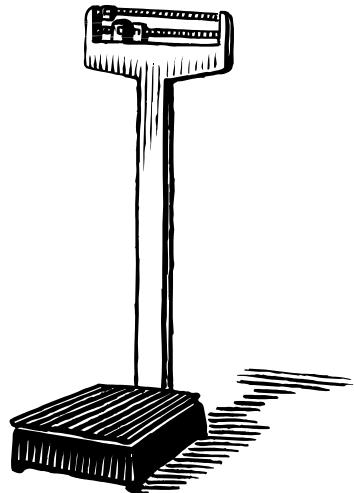
Information provided by Washington State University Extension's NEN of WA. This material was funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more,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

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800)795-3272 (voice) or (202)720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

This Month's Focus:

Health at Every Size and Weight

It seems that not a day goes by without a news story about the alarming rate of obesity in the United States, particularly among children. First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign has gained traction with its many supporters, including government agencies, NGO's, and business partners. Most nutrition educators can visualize with their eyes closed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's maps of the US showing the yearly increases in obesity (www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/trends.html). We have done our best with community programs, adult classes, school-based endeavors, and individual counseling to help reduce calories in the diet and increase physical activity. But the obesity program keeps growing.



Meanwhile, another school of thought has also been growing, generally called either "Health at Every Weight" (HAEW) or "Health at Every Size" (HAES). The aim is to encourage people to do physical activities that they enjoy, eat nutritious foods when they are hungry, and adopt a healthful lifestyle. Instead of measuring results using Body Mass Index (BMI), metabolic markers are used, such as blood pressure, glucose levels, fitness measurements, as well as non-numbers evaluations such as improved awareness of one's body's internal cues.

Scientific literature and nutrition education materials are somewhat scarce in this area. And, the concept remains controversial among health professionals, some of whom have a negative attitude not just toward their clients but also their peers who may be overweight. A recent example is the harsh criticism voiced by health professionals about the body size of the newly appointed Surgeon General, Dr. Regina Benjamin. In their view, as an overweight physician she could not serve as a credible role model, despite her credentials.

In this issue of *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators*, we explore HAEW/HAES and provide sources for further reading as we continue to help the people we serve to achieve better health.

What about Weight? – A variety of studies challenge the notion that we can predict someone's health based on their BMI. Although the *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* generally does not review research studies – our focus is more on educational programs and materials – we are doing so in this issue. The reason is that the HAEW approach can be controversial among nutrition educators, and it's helpful to know the research behind the claims.

A common perception is that a person can't be both physically fit and fat. A long-term study explored this using 2600 people of varying weights who were timed to see how long they could run on a treadmill before becoming exhausted (that's one way to measure fitness). Among mildly obese subjects, two-thirds were considered fit. The researchers, which included Steven Blair who has focused on this area for decades, noted that measures of aerobic fitness – the body's ability to deliver oxygen to the muscles – have nothing to do with the amount of fat tissue in the body. The study followed people for 12 years and found that the risk of dying was more closely linked to fitness than fatness. The researchers concluded that health professionals should recommend regular physical activity for normal-weight and overweight adults alike. (Source: X Sui et al, "Cardiorespiratory fitness and adiposity as mortality predictors in older adults," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 298(21):2507-2516, December 5, 2007.)

In another study, researchers looked at NHANES data to see if there was a connection between obesity and risk for heart disease. They found that about half of overweight adults and about one-third of obese adults were metabolically healthy. They analyzed data for blood pressure, triglycerides, plasma glucose, and a number of other blood values to determine "cardiometabolic abnormalities" which might lead to increased risk of cardiovascular disease. They also found that there are many normal-weight individuals who do have cardiometabolic abnormalities. Another study found that it may not be that obesity and risk for diabetes go hand-in-hand. The researchers in Germany found that there may be a metabolically benign form of obesity that is not accompanied by insulin resistance and early atherosclerosis. (Sources: N Stefan et al, "Identification and characterization of metabolically benign obesity in humans," *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 168(15), August 11/25, 2008. RP Wildman et al, "The obese without cardiometabolic risk factor clustering and the normal weight with cardiometabolic risk factor clustering," *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 168(15):1617-1624, August 11/25, 2008.)

In yet another study, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Cancer Institute took a look at BMI and cause of death, something that hadn't been done before. They studied people in NHANES who were underweight (BMI <18.5, overweight (BMI 25-<30) and obese (BMI >30). They found that overweight was associated with significantly decreased mortality from non-cancer, non-cardiovascular diseases. The upshot is that someone with a high BMI is not at greater risk for dying from all causes, and that BMI-mortality association varies by cause of death. (KM Flegal, "Cause-specific excess deaths associated with underweight, overweight and obesity," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 298(17):2028-2037, November 7, 2007)

Effectiveness of Health at Every Size – Although research is limited so far in programs using this approach, two are notable:

Linda Bacon at the University of California Davis conducted a research study among obese women comparing results of a program using the HAES approach with a program focusing on dieting and weight loss. A year later, the HAES group maintained their weight and improved in all the metabolic fitness measures, and sustained their improvements. The diet group initially lost weight and improved metabolically but a year later had regained their weight and had not sustained their improvements. The authors concluded that the HAES approach helped maintain long-term behavior change but the diet approach did not. (Source: L Bacon et al "Size acceptance and intuitive eating improve health for obese, female chronic dieters." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 105(6):929-936, June 2005.

In a study published November 2009, researchers analyzed the effectiveness of a program for women using the HAES approach as well as a social support group. After one year, both groups had improved in their eating behaviors and could better tune into the body's cues for appetite and hunger. The HAES group, but not the social support group, had maintained a lower body weight during the follow-up period. (Source: V Provencher et al, "Health-at-every-size and eating behaviors: 1-year follow-up results of a size acceptance intervention." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 109(11):1854-1861, November 2009.)

Resources Recommended by a Resourceful Local Nutritionist – Lizann Hammond-Powers has been giving presentations and following the literature on HAES for many years in her work for Washington State University Extension – Benton County. She explains that it is difficult to define HAES because it means something different for each individual. It begins with developing a relationship with your own body, learning to recognize what your body needs, including food, movement, rest, and more, and providing that for yourself. HAES is actually a holistic wellness-based program, including physical, social, emotional and psychological elements. It's after the same destination – a health-promoting lifestyle – but takes a different route to get there. Here are some resources suggested by Lizann:

- Francie Berg is one of the “founding” individuals for HAES, www.healthyweight.net
- Karin Kratina focuses on an “attuned” approach rather than dieting, and is one of the first dietitians to champion the HAES philosophy, www.nourishingconnections.com/index.html
- Ellyn Satter includes some useful information in her Adult Eating and Weight section, www.ellynsatter.com/how-to-eat-i-55.html
- Evelyn Tribole has been a champion for intuitive eating which is consistent with HAES, www.intuitiveeating.com
(Contact: Lizann Powers-Hammond, WSU Extension Faculty – Benton County, 509-735-3551, powers@wsu.edu)

Activities for Mindful Eating – To introduce people to mindful eating, the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension created a new activity, “The Last Orange on Earth.” The four-page guide for teachers and leaders tells how to guide participants to slowly taste an orange, savoring its appearance, smell, and flavor. The activity includes learning objectives, follow-up questions, and a recipe for orange peel bread. The activity reflects the premise of WINWyoming, “Focus on health, not weight.” Free download at www.uwyo.edu/winwyoming/Last%20Orange-final low res.pdf For a version of the activity targeting children in grades 3, 4, and 5, see http://www.uwyo.edu/winwyoming/Last%20Orange/1AOrangeLessonPlan_2.pdf WINWyoming offers other useful resources about body size diversity, body acceptance, pleasurable and healthful eating, and positive body image at www.uwyo.edu/winwyoming

Wise at Every Size – Using the HAES principles, Marci Getz created a six-session program for tribal women in Alaska that was designed to be culturally and geographically appropriate. Now with the Washington State Department of Health, Marci says the program continues to be taught. It uses a mindful/intuitive eating approach that appreciates foodways of both native and non-native Alaskans, such as salmon, berries, seaweed, and dark chocolate. For physical activity, the program recognizes that if a person does not enjoy the activity or does the activity only to lose weight, they won’t stick with it. Participants are encouraged to try yoga, native dance, belly dance, anything that for them is a joyful activity. Participants in the classes have benefited from increased self-esteem as well as improved blood pressure, cholesterol, and fitness levels. The non-dieting approach to wellness developed for the Southeast Alaska Health Consortium. (Contact: Marci Getz, MPH, Washington State Department of Health, 360-236-3856, marci.getz@doh.wa.gov and/or Litia Garrison, SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, Sitka, AK, litia.garrison@searhc.org)

Body Image Poster for Teens – Showing that healthy teens come in a variety of shapes and sizes, the poster *So What Is Normal* includes photos of seven teens between ages 13 and 17 along with descriptions of the types of activities they do for fun and the foods they enjoy. On the reverse side of the poster are reproducible masters for classroom activities that guide students to discuss physical activities that they like, eating mindfully, and using the 2005 Dietary Guidelines. The poster was developed by Oregon Dairy Council. Available from: Oregon Dairy Council, www.oregondairycouncil.org, 503-229-5033 and from Washington State Dairy Council, www.eatsmart.org, 425-744-1616.



Pretty in Pink – We tend to think of nutrition education as a way to help people achieve better health, but what about art? Dawn Forbes, the art gallery director at Whitman College, did artwork on body image called “Power of Positive Pinking.” She used soft sculpture – pink T-shirts stuffed to a larger body size – and took them as temporary installations to various locations. The “pinks” went to the gym, swimming pools, parks, ice cream shop, and even rode Harleys. Dawn used volunteers ranging from size 4 to 44 to bring the “pinks”

to playful events, and many of the volunteers identified with them and talked about their own negative body image. Dawn mentioned that many larger people don’t exercise because they feel embarrassed doing so in public. Not only was it a novel artistic approach to body-size diversity, it allowed participants to celebrate the variety of various body sizes enjoying physical activity out in the community, and to feel better about themselves. (Contact: Dawn Forbes, MFA, Whitman College Gallery Director/Faculty, 509-527-5249, forbesdm@whitman.edu). Photos courtesy of Dawn Forbes, Whitman College



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

FRAC's New Face – The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) updated its website in late July with a new look and easy-to-use links, <http://frac.org>. Nutrition educators may be interested in a new section that quantifies the extent of hunger and food insecurity in the nation and individually state-by-state, and year-by-year: <http://frac.org/reports-and-resources/reports-2/> By clicking on the most recent data for Washington State, users can see participation levels in federally funded programs such as School Breakfast Program, SNAP/Food Stamp Program, and WIC, as well as other useful information such as minimum wage, poverty rate, and percentage of households that are food insecure. Another new section, Fighting Obesity and Hunger, looks at the intersection of poverty, obesity and hunger: <http://frac.org/initiatives/hunger-and-obesity> FRAC is a leading national nonprofit organization working to improve public policies and public-private partnerships to eradicate hunger and under-nutrition in the United States.

WASHINGTON GROWN

Fresh This Month – This is a peachy-keen time to try stone fruit! Farmers' markets showcase many varieties of peaches, nectarines, apricots, and plums. Try a squatly donut peach, either orange or white, most are drippingly sweet. The Red Haven peach variety is probably best known, but there are many others for eating, canning, and pie-making. A pluot is a cross between a plum and an apricot, but because the hybrids vary, one pluot may look and taste completely different from another variety. Nectarines come in orange or white, and they are a good alternative for the rare person who doesn't care for peach fuzz on their fruit. Not sure whether you'll like it? Most vendors at farm markets are happy to give you a taste.

