

MARCH  
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BYU WELLNESS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Y'S CHOICES



## MARCH IS NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH!

By Ana Mitchell, Nutrition, Dietetics, & Food Science Department

What an ideal time to pass on some information about the new food guide pyramid called MyPyramid ([www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)). No longer is the pyramid a simple graphic. It is now a system, complete with interactive web sites and activities. There is a wealth of personalized information you can now easily access.

### ***Have you wondered how much you personally should eat from each food group?***

Once you are at the web site, go to "MyPyramid Plan." After you enter your age, gender, and physical activity level you will get food group recommendations tailored to your needs as well as other helpful tips.

### ***Would you like to find the balance between the food you eat and the amount of physical activity recommended?***

Choose the "My Pyramid Tracker." Here you can compare the foods you have eaten for the day with current nutrition recommendations. You can also track your physical activity status and find the right balance for weight maintenance or weight loss. The information can be saved for your own reference purposes. This is a remarkable personalized assessment tool!

### ***Is tracking your personal eating or physical fitness habits over time of interest?***

In "My Pyramid Tracker" you have the ability to chart and analyze your diet and activity history for up to one year.

### ***Could you use practical tips for adding more whole grains or fruits and vegetables to your diet?***

In "MyPyramid Plan," after you enter your age, gender, and activity level, click on "tips" beside any food group to view a wealth of suggestions for incorporating foods into meals, snacks, and more.

### ***Do you have questions about the potential health benefits of different foods?***

Choose "Inside the Pyramid," click on the food group you are interested in, and then click on "Health benefits and nutrients" to learn more.

### ***Finally, would you like nutrition and physical activity recommendations for children?***

Click on "For Kids" to see recommendations for ages 6-11, tips for families, and for a MyPyramid worksheet. Kids can use the worksheet to compare their food choices with the ideal, and also to set nutrition goals. There is even an interactive "MyPyramid Blast Off Game" that teaches kids about food and exercise in a fun way.

This is only a small sampling of the information available at your fingertips. Take the time to visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) and take a step toward improving your health!

## DON'T FORGET THE BASICS

In today's world of fast food, convenience foods, fad diets, diet drinks, and diet bars, simple nutrition seems a thing of the past. However, this month – National Nutrition Month – try to get back to the basics and step to a healthier you.

The key principles of good nutrition are:

- Eat regular meals and snacks.
- Include at least five servings of fruit and vegetables per day.
- Include two servings of milk per day.
- Eat high fiber foods, including whole grains.
- Include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and/or nuts.
- Limit fats and sweets; eat foods low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt, and added sugars.

Follow these basics during March and see if you don't feel better, enjoy food more, and maybe even lose a little weight!



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## UNIVERSITY PERSONNEL WELLNESS PROGRAM

### REDUCED PRICE SUNDANCE SKI DAYS

*March 9th to March 11th*

Sundance is giving a \$9 discount to BYU employees and their immediate families on their all-day ski passes. To go along with this offer BYU Outdoors Unlimited will give a \$2 discount on their ski equipment rental packages. You must register on the Wellness Program website to be eligible for these reduced prices.

### FRUIT PUNCH CHALLENGE

*March 20th - April 16th*

Eating five fruits and vegetables a day can even help you lower your risk for cancer. Join the Wellness Program's "Fruit Punch Challenge" and enjoy the many benefits of eating fruits and vegetables.

### INTUITIVE EATING WELL & WISE SEMINAR

*March 22, 12:00 pm, room 3380 WSC*

Bag the diets and learn how to improve your health by following your internal cues and recognizing what your body wants. Sue Smith an evening instructor from the Health Science department will discuss ways that we can eat intuitively and be healthy.

ALL EVENTS ARE **FREE** UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

### "NUTRITION MONTH" 3K FUN WALK

*March 31, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm*

To celebrate Nutrition Month, we will be having a Fun Walk. This Fun Walk will be sponsored by both the Wellness Program and the Student Dietetic Association, so it will be for both faculty/staff and students. Look for more information, coming soon, on our website.

### USEFUL WAYS TO GET OUT OF DEBT WELL & WISE SEMINAR

*April 5, 12:00 pm, Varsity Theater WSC*

Have you dug yourself in a hole with your debt? Are you afraid you may never be able to get out? At this Well & Wise, Paul Conrad, of the Financial Aid Department, will be speaking about ways to help manage your debt. \*Lunch will be available to purchase.



TO REGISTER, OR FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [WELLNESS.BYU.EDU](http://WELLNESS.BYU.EDU) OR CALL 2-5884

## DO WE REALLY WANT OUR CHILDREN TO BE "WELL ROUNDED"?

**By Dr. Merrill Christensen, Ph.D.**

Childhood obesity has reached epidemic levels in developed countries. Twenty five percent of children in the US are overweight and 11% are obese. Being overweight or obese in childhood is known to have significant impact on both physical and psychological health. It is difficult to reduce excessive weight once it becomes established. Children should therefore be considered the priority population for efforts aimed at prevention.

However, parents, health, and education professionals who work in the treatment and prevention of child obesity also need to be aware of the fact that their best intentions may have the potential to do more harm than good. The unintentional creation of poor body image and weight concerns, dieting, disordered eating and eating disorders are just a few of the problems that may result from well-intended but overzealous efforts on the part of parents to keep their children slim.

Most approaches to prevent or treat childhood obesity include (a) reduce energy intake while maintaining optimal nutrient intake to protect growth and development, (b) increase energy expenditure by promoting more physical movement and less sedentary activity, (c) actively engage parents and primary caretakers as agents of change, and (d) facilitate a supportive family environment. As in all things, parents should model the behavior they hope their children will follow. Emphasis should be on healthy lifestyles, of which healthy eating is just one part. One of the more successful interventions in recent years has been the "health at any size" initiative, which focuses on healthy food choices, pleasurable activity, and realistic body image. While no single food need be absolutely forbidden in the diets of children, various studies show that excessive sugar intake from soft drinks, increased portion size, and high intake of high fat/low nutrient foods are correlated with increasing rates of obesity.

Encouraging children to respond to internal cues - eat when you're hungry, stop when you're not - is also a healthy approach. However, human beings do not have an instinct to eat what's good for them. (When was the last time you had a craving for vitamin B6?) Our bodies tell us when we are hungry (when we need food) but we still have to use our brains to decide what to eat. Children observing parents making healthy choices will be more likely to do so themselves. Make healthy eating and pleasurable activity family traditions and the benefits to children will be lifelong.