

Live Healthy Georgia – Seniors Taking Charge!

March 2008 Newsletter



Nutrition: It's a Matter of Fact

By Mindy Bell, BS

March is National Nutrition Month®, a time to celebrate nutrition and the difference healthy eating and physical activity can make in our lives. It's also a time to be sure we can separate fact from fiction when it comes to nutrition, and know where to find accurate information when we need it. Quiz yourself using the questions below to test your nutrition know-how. The answers are listed under the question, along with helpful pointers to stay healthy with nutrition habits that aren't just a fad.

Q. Consumers receive many nutrition messages from a variety of sources. Not all are reliable and scientifically based messages. Which of the following provide sound nutrition information?

- A) Advertisements for a new food or supplement product that promises to cure certain diseases
- B) A dietitian (nutrition professional)
- C) Testimonials on television from people who have found the “magic bullet” for weight loss

D) Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid (food pyramid)

A. *Dietitians and public health nutritionists, the Dietary Guidelines and food pyramid, and authoritative health organizations provide reliable nutrition information to keep you healthy. Be careful of nutrition messages from people without nutrition credentials, or product claims that sound too good to be true. These messages may not be scientifically based or provide complete information that we should follow.*

Q. True or false. Most older people need about seven to ten servings of fruits and vegetables everyday.

A. *True! Most older people who require about 1,600 to 2,000 calories per day will need seven to ten servings daily. Half a cup counts as a serving for most raw and cooked fruits and vegetables, and a full cup for raw leafy greens. Fresh, frozen,*



Live Healthy Georgia – Seniors Taking Charge!



canned, and dried varieties are all good choices to purchase.

Q. True or false. People with diabetes should avoid all starchy foods and foods containing sugar (carbohydrates).

A. *False. While people with diabetes should plan sensible portions of nutrient-rich starchy foods spaced throughout the day, they should not avoid them altogether. Whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and low-fat milk products all provide important nutrients our bodies need.*

Q. Which of the following is not a good way to reach or maintain a healthy body weight?

- A) Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grain foods, fiber, and water
- B) Be physically active
- C) Cut out certain food groups from your diet, such as grains
- D) Skip meals
- E) Talk with your doctor about your weight

A. *A balanced eating pattern using sensible portions, physical activity, and talking with your doctor are good ways to achieve a healthy body weight. Cutting out whole food groups or nutrients or skipping meals are not and can even be harmful.*

Q. Which type(s) of fat is not considered heart healthy?

- A) Unsaturated fats (mono and poly)

B) Saturated fat

C) Trans fat

A. *Saturated and trans fats are not heart healthy. They can contribute to high blood cholesterol. These fats are listed on nutrition labels. Limit foods high in these fats, such as butter, stick margarine, full-fat milk and cheese, cookies, and pie.*

Q. True or false. You only need to drink water and fluids when you are thirsty or when it is hot outside.

A. *False! You may already be dehydrated by the time you feel thirsty. Drink plenty of fluids (at least 8 cups) throughout the day, even in the winter, to stay hydrated.*

Q. True or false. Eating a high-calorie, high-fat meal or dessert ruins your healthy eating efforts.

A. *False. Foods aren't considered good or bad, and one meal or treat doesn't make or break your healthy eating efforts. Try to make the bulk of your daily choices the nutrient-rich ones found in the food pyramid, and eat treats once in a while.*

How did you do on this nutrition quiz? Hopefully you got an "A+."

For more nutrition information, see: 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/> and MyPyramid, www.mypyramid.gov. American Dietetic Association, www.eatright.org Live Well Age Well, <http://www.livewellagewell.info/>.