

Building Healthy Families

Invest in Wellness – It's Cheaper than Healthcare

Health care is expensive! You have probably seen your co-pays, deductibles, and contributions rise again this year. Even more reason to look carefully at your grocery list and choose what will keep you well. You don't need expensive or specialty foods to eat a healthy diet. The foundation foods of your meal plan — beans, rice, and whole-grain breads — are inexpensive.



- For snacks, try popcorn (no fat if you use an air-popper), pretzels, or cereal.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables in season; canned and frozen are similar nutritionally.
- Buy organic only when it makes sense. If you don't eat the peel (like a banana) why pay extra for organic?
- Buy plain yogurt in a large container, add your own fruit or other flavors, and then freeze in small containers to pack for lunch.
- Keep non-fat dry milk on hand for cooking. It's inexpensive and stays fresh for a long time. A spoonful in coffee provides more nutrition at a lower cost than creamer.
- Make meat a side dish rather than a meal; add meatless meals throughout the week.

If you think “fast-food” is a cheap alternative ... or what you eat doesn't impact your health, consider some of these facts (taken from <http://www.supersizeme.com>):

- Each day, 1 in 4 Americans visits a fast food restaurant
- In 1972, we spent 3 billion a year on fast food; today we spend more than 110 billion
- You would have to walk for seven hours straight to burn off a “super-sized” (or equivalent) coke, fry, and hamburger
- French fries are the most frequently eaten vegetable in America
- Only seven items on one leading fast food chain's entire menu contain no sugar
- One leading fast food chain alone distributes more toys per year than Toys-R-Us
- Diabetes will cut 17-27 years off your life
- 40% of American meals are eaten outside the home
- 60% of all Americans are either overweight or obese
- One in every three children born in the year 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime
- Left unabated, obesity will surpass smoking as the leading cause of preventable death in America

Other Interesting Facts:

- High fructose corn syrup (HFCS) – a form of sugar used more commonly in the US than in other countries – has been called into question lately as significantly more damaging to your health than other types of sugar. Check out the Wikipedia article, do some research, and formulate your own opinion! http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_fructose_corn_syrup.
- Check the labels on the next jar of jelly, bottle of juice or even loaf of bread that you buy and you may be surprised how common HFCS stuff is.

While college funds may not be doing well in today's market, guiding your children towards good food and activity choice is an excellent investment in their future. Want to learn more? Come to one of the “Building Healthy Families” sessions and visit the American Dietetic Association website <http://www.eatright.org> during March - **National Nutrition Month**.