**CHALLENGE CHATTER**
**MY HEALTH TO BETTER LIVING**

4/6/2020: Challenge Chatter

Challenge Chatter … My Health to Better Living

Sign up soon!

Gather your family or team and pledge to participate in the My Health to Better Living Challenge … find information at: [http://www.sunflower.k-state.edu/facs](http://www.sunflower.k-state.edu/facs).

Sign up for the My Health to Better Living Challenge by April 6, 2002 … but start tracking your Challenge Activities NOW! Tracker available at: [http://www.sunflower.k-state.edu/facs](http://www.sunflower.k-state.edu/facs)

**Tips for Staying Healthy, Happy and Safe every day!**

Stay healthy with a few simple tips to keep you, your family and your friends, healthy this time of year and all year round!

- **Wash your hands.** By washing your hands often will help limit the spread of germs that can make you and others sick. Wash your hands with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds.

- **Eat healthy and get plenty of exercise!** Balance and moderation. Skip the tempting sweets and heavy side dishes by mixing in fresh fruits and seasonal vegetables. With the kids off of school, be active as a family everyday.

- **Changing Weather.** Stay warm and dry by wearing appropriate clothing for being outdoors.

- **Handle and prepare food safely.** Follow these four simple steps to decrease your chance of getting sick. Wash your hands and food preparation surfaces often, avoid cross contamination between raw and cooked foods, cook foods, especially meats, to proper internal temperatures and refrigerate leftovers promptly.

- **Stress management!** Amongst all of the hustle and bustle, remember to take time for yourself. Take a moment to do some deep breathing exercises or meditation. Get plenty of sleep and don’t over-commit yourself to prevent anxiety and pressure.

For more ideas to keep the whole family healthy, happy and safe during this holiday season, visit [healthpoweredkids.org](http://healthpoweredkids.org).

Are you on Facebook? So are we! LIKE Health Powered Kids on Facebook for more healthy tips, recipes and inspiration to empower children, teens and families in your life to be healthy. We would love to have your support and look forward to seeing your input and comments!
Warm Black Bean and Corn Quinoa Salad

Serves: 8

Ingredients
• 1½ cups uncooked quinoa
• 3 cups vegetable broth
• 3 TBSP olive oil
• 1 red pepper, finely chopped
• 1 jalapeño, finely chopped, seeds and ribs removed for a milder flavor
• 1 small shallot, finely chopped
• 2 garlic cloves, minced
• 12 oz frozen sweet corn
• 15 oz Low Sodium Black Beans, rinsed and drained
• kosher salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste
• 1 tsp chili powder
• ½ tsp cumin
• 3 TBPS chopped fresh cilantro
• 2 TBPS fresh lime juice
• diced avocados and lime wedges for serving

Instructions
1. First, cook quinoa according to the directions. I cook 1½ cups of quinoa in 3 cups of vegetable broth instead of water to increase flavor.
2. Heat 3 TBS of olive oil in a large sauté pan. Add red pepper, jalapeno, shallot, and garlic. Sauté over medium heat for about 5-7 minutes.
3. Then add frozen corn, black beans, salt and pepper, and all seasonings. Mix well and cook over medium heat until corn and black beans are heated thoroughly.
4. In a large serving bowl add quinoa, black bean and corn salsa, chopped cilantro, and lime juice. Gently combine until all flavors are distributed evenly.

Notes
Diced avocados are wonderful with this salad.

Recipe by Cherished Bliss at http://cherishedbliss.com/warm-black-bean-corn-quinoa-salad/
**4/20/2020: Challenge Chatter**

**Wanted: My Health to Better Living Challenge Stories**

… Maybe you signed up for the Challenge – maybe you didn’t!

Regardless – we’d like to hear your story.

- Have you completed any of the challenges published in the Weekly Update?
- Has your family challenged themselves to ‘better living’ in some way?
- We’d like to hear about it. Send your story to mdaily@ksu.edu

**PHOTOS NEEDED: My Health to Better Living**

We would like to put a display together for the County Fair about My Health to Better Living Program …

Do you have photos of family members participating in healthy living activities, giving demonstrations, etc.?

Please forward them to Melinda at mdaily@ksu.edu or text through messages to Melinda Daily at 785-821-0654.

**Managing Stress and Pursuing Wellness** In Times of Tight Margins

Strategies to help you cope.

Take time to look at the 6 categories

Choose some of these strategies

This week or even through the whole program try to do as many strategies that would help you and your family.

**The next two pages are the 6 categories for you to choose from.**
## Strategies to help you cope

### Physical
- Get a medical checkup
- Eat a healthful breakfast
- Drink four to eight glasses of water daily
- Eat more fruits, vegetables and healthful snacks
- Exercise at least 20 minutes daily (walk, swim, ride a bike, etc.)
- Get at least seven to eight hours of restful sleep
- Receive a neck or back massage
- Take a relaxing bath or shower
- Hug a loved one or friend
- Practice restful, deep or slow breathing
- Abstain from alcohol, tobacco or other drugs
- Do gentle stretching during a break or to warm up or cool down

### Mental
- Take 10 minutes and reflect on your blessings
- Write your thoughts in a journal or notebook
- Listen to relaxing music
- Spend 30 minutes doing something with your hands (draw, carve, etc.)
- Read a book you enjoy
- Watch TV or videos that make you laugh
- Do a hobby
- Attend a class or seminar to learn something new or of interest to you
- Visit with a counselor or spiritual leader
- Reach out to someone for support or help
- Spend 10 minutes to plan your day and priorities
- Take regular five- to 10-minute breaks in your day to relax and recharge

### Emotional / Spiritual
- Tell a loved one what you appreciate about him/her
- Play with a child or grandchild
- Volunteer to help with a cause important to you
- Go out for a meal with a friend or loved one
- Reflect on and forgive yourself for mistakes
- Share concerns with a counselor or other professional
- Explore your spiritual life and activities
- Pray or meditate
- Do random acts of kindness
- Express “thank you” to someone daily (send a note, etc.)
- Write down three things you are grateful for daily
- Go for a walk or drive in nature
# Strategies to help you cope

## Personal / Relational
- Clean or organize your personal space(s)
- Reflect on and write down your goals
- Spend time with a pet
- Take 15 minutes each day to have uninterrupted conversation with a spouse or family member
- Spend time playing games with family members
- Learn more about your family history
- Begin or renew a friendship
- Get involved or stay connected with a group of friends
- Plan a getaway with a family member
- Go on a vacation
- Eat or make your favorite meal
- Do an activity you personally enjoy (fishing, see a movie, etc.)

## Work / Professional
- Focus on factors you can control in your work
- Take time for lunch and a "work break" daily
- Plan your next day at the end of the work day and set priorities ahead of time
- Be flexible with time and tasks as things come up
- Set boundaries and do not overcommit yourself
- Say "no" more often
- Do not let the farm operation intrude on all other aspects of life
- Talk to other farmers about their strategies
- Take a seminar and learn new ways to handle issues
- Seek feedback on your farm operation and ways to grow or improve
- Schedule time away from work to relax and then take the time
- Minimize and resolve conflicts with others

## Financial / Practical
- Assess your family finances and needs
- Create a family budget and live within your means
- Learn new strategies to stretch your family finances
- Schedule time to organize your records monthly
- Take a seminar to learn more about financial management
- Spend 15 minutes a day reviewing your tasks and setting priorities
- Select three healthy habits you will try to practice daily
- Ask for positive feedback from others and build on it
- Ask for constructive feedback from others and learn from it
- Investigate new ways for doing things in your work
- Read something new every day
- Let go of what you cannot control
**4/27/2020: Challenge Chatter**

**My Health to Better Living Challenge Activities**

**Health Powered Kids fruit smoothie**

Fruit is good for your body! This smoothie blends fruits of all colors to give your body what it needs to be healthy and strong.

**Ingredients**

- 1 banana, peeled
- 1/2 cup strawberries, fresh or frozen (You can also use blueberries, blackberries or raspberries.* )
- 1 cup low-fat milk (You can also use orange juice.*)
- 1/2 cup plain low-fat yogurt (You can also use flavored low-fat yogurt.*)
- 1 cup ice cubes

**Directions**

Kids, have an adult help you follow the steps below to create your fruit smoothie.

1. Put all ingredients in a blender.
2. Make sure the blender is covered, then blend on high for 15 to 30 seconds.
3. Pour into a tall glass and enjoy.

**Recipe contains**: milk  
**Makes 1 serving**

**Vegetable spaghetti**

This family-sized pasta dish is good hot or cold, with no added fat.

**Ingredients**

- 2 cups small yellow onions, cut in eighths
- 2 cups chopped, peeled, fresh ripe tomatoes (about 1 pound)
- 2 cups thinly sliced yellow and green squash (about 1 pound)
- 1 1/2 cups cut fresh green beans (about 1/2 pound)
- 2/3 cup water
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- black pepper to taste
- 1 6-ounce can salt-free tomato paste
- 1 pound uncooked whole wheat spaghetti
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese

**Directions**

1. Combine first 10 ingredients in large saucepan. Cook for 10 minutes, then stir in tomato paste. Cover and cook gently, 15 minutes, stirring occasionally until vegetables are tender.
2. Cook spaghetti in unsalted water according to package directions.
For one serving, spoon 3/4 cup sauce over 1 cup drained hot spaghetti and sprinkle 2 teaspoons of parmesan cheese on top.

5/4/2020: Challenge Chatter

My Health to Better Living Challenge – Move More!
Fun with Paper Plates

Paper plates aren’t just for eating! Try the following fun activities for a brain-break at a meeting or just to get kids up and moving.

1. Use paper plates as roller skates and skate around an indoor obstacle course or path.
2. Play “paper plate Frisbee” by flying the plates back and forth to a partner or in a circle in a large group.
3. Try “paper plate tag” with a designated number of children being “It” and others running free. If a paper plate Frisbee tags you at or below the waist, you become “It” and the person who tagged you now joins the group. No tagging allowed above the waist for safety reasons. Use music for added fun.
4. Have fun with target practice stations. Toss paper plates into a basket, over or under a table, through a doorway, between two marked lines, and so forth. Let children design and set up the course. Children can keep track of personal times on the course and try to improve their personal best.

Tag

Tag is an excellent way to get kids moving and there are tons of variations. If youth get tired, let them rest until they are ready to get back in the game.

1. Basic tag
2. No Touch tag: To avoid being tagged, child has to sit down and name a TV show.
3. Freeze tag: To get unfrozen, someone must crawl through the frozen child’s legs.
4. Elbow tag: In this version pairs who are joined are “home” or “safe.” Players pair up and lock elbows. One person remains free as “It,” and then choose several pairs to become unattached. “It” can only chase those who are unattached. To be safe, those who are unattached must lock elbows with one side of a pair. The person on the other side of the pair must break off and find another pair to join.
5. Be creative and make your own versions!

Activities

Obstacle Course

1. Use cones, basketballs, jump ropes, and other equipment to set up an obstacle course with physical activity stations (e.g., dribbling, shuffling, jumping rope, etc.).
2. Have youth try to improve personal times and challenge themselves by making the course more difficult.

Things to Do Instead of Watching TV

• Go outside to play with friends.
• Ride your bike, roller blade, or skate board.
• Take your dog or the neighbor’s dog for a walk.
• Jump rope, hula hoop, or play hopscotch.
• Have a dance contest with family and friends.
• Go for a walk or run.
• Play in the snow!
• If you insist on playing video games, play games that require lots of body movement (bowling, tennis, dancing, etc.).
**Resources**

- Fifteen percent of children age 12 to 19 are overweight.
- Being overweight as a child or adolescent increases the risk for being overweight or obese as an adult.
- Obesity increases the risk for developing heart disease, diabetes, some types of cancers, and other serious health conditions.
- Studies have shown watching too much television may be directly related to being overweight.
- Physical activity may improve your ability to learn, give you more energy, and prevent you from getting sick.

**Surgeon General’s recommendations:**

- Children and adolescents should be physically active 60 minutes on most, preferably all, days of the week.
- Moderate activity includes playing basketball, soccer, swimming, or running.
- Activities part of everyday life are such things as household chores, walking to and from school, or taking the stairs instead of the elevator.
- In 2005, 9.6 percent of students in grades 9 to 12 did not engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity.

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**Worksheet**

1. Do you think you get enough physical activity in your day? If not, how can you increase your physical activity?

2. If you play basketball during recess for 15 minutes and ride your bike for 20 minutes after school, how many more minutes do you need to exercise to reach the surgeon general’s recommendations?

3. What is self-esteem?

4. What are some benefits of physical activity?

5. What are some reasons physical activity has decreased among children and adolescents in recent years?

6. What are some risks associated with obesity?
## Kansas School Wellness Policy Model Guideline — Physical Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements achieved in this lesson:</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic, Advanced, and Exemplary</td>
<td>Classroom health reinforces the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television.</td>
<td>When circumstances call for students to remain indoors and inactive for two or more hours, the students are given periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.</td>
<td>Classroom teachers provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate. Opportunities for physical activity are regularly incorporated into other subject areas. (e.g., science, health).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## References

*Empowering Youth with Nutrition and Physical Activity*, USDA’s Team Nutrition website at teamnutrition.usda.gov.

## Answer Key

1. Playing outdoors with friends, biking, swimming, playing soccer, playing basketball
2. 25 minutes, 60-15-20 = 25
3. Self-esteem means feeling good about yourself!
4. Improve aerobic capacity and flexibility; lower lipid and cholesterol levels, etc.
5. Cordless phones, remote controls, video games, Internet, and TV
6. Developing heart disease, diabetes, some types of cancers, and other serious health conditions.

The author gratefully acknowledges the contributions of Catherine Metagar (senior in dietetics, graduated May 2010); Kyleen Krehbiel (senior in dietetics, graduated May 2011); reviewed by Lisa Friesen, R.D., Virginia Barnard, MPH; additional review and editing by Erika Bono, MPH, R.D., and Ying Li, M.S.

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In each case, credit Tandalay Kidd, Ph.D., R.D., LPN, associate professor, human nutrition, *Move More*, Kansas State University, November 2013.
Safety First with Chicken
• Sanitize knives, cutting boards and countertops after preparing chicken.
• Wash hands before and after handling raw meat.
• Cook chicken to 165° F.
• Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Serve homemade Crunchy Chicken Nuggets with veggie sticks and low-fat dip!
Crunchy Chicken Nuggets Recipe

Ingredients

Barbeque Sauce
1/4 cup ketchup
1/4 teaspoon each black pepper, salt, oregano, basil, and thyme
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon parsley
2 tablespoons finely chopped yellow onion
1 1/2 tablespoons light brown sugar
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
1 teaspoon dijon mustard
1 1/2 teaspoons worcestershire sauce
1/2 teaspoon minced garlic

Chicken
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
3 cups whole wheat fortified cereal flakes

Directions
1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Mix barbecue sauce ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Add chicken to bowl and coat in barbecue sauce.
4. Pour cereal flakes into a large plastic bag and crush into small pieces.
5. Place chicken pieces in the bag, reseal, and toss to coat.
7. Arrange coated chicken pieces on the baking sheet.
8. Bake until crispy and golden brown and chicken is no longer pink inside, about 18-20 minutes.
9. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Notes
• May substitute 1/2 cup store-bought barbecue sauce for the sauce ingredients.
• For a dipping sauce, mix 1/4 cup mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon honey, and 1 tablespoon whole-grain mustard.
Honey is not recommended for children under 1 year old.

5/18/2020: Challenge Chatter

Challenge Chatter – My Health to Better Living – Family Challenge

May Family Challenge --- Add some whole grains to your meals! It's fun, tasty, and healthy! [https://www.foodhero.org/monthly-magazine]

- Make Apple Spice Baked Oatmeal as a family this month (found in the My Hero newsletter). (OR)
- Try barley (a whole grain) this month.
- Send a picture or write an article … send it to the office to be in the drawing for a great prize!

Apple Spice Baked Oatmeal

INGREDIENTS
1 egg, beaten
1/2 cup applesauce
1 1/2 cups non-fat or 1% milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 tablespoons oil
1 apple, chopped (about 1 1/2 cups)
2 cups rolled oats
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon

TOPPING
2 tablespoons brown sugar
2 tablespoons chopped nuts

DIRECTIONS
Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly oil or spray an 8" x 8" baking pan.
Combine the egg, applesauce, milk, vanilla and oil in a bowl. Add the apple.
In a separate bowl, mix the rolled oats, baking powder, salt and cinnamon. Add to the liquid ingredients
and mix well.
Pour mixture into baking dish, and bake for 25 minutes.
Remove from oven and sprinkle with brown sugar and nuts.
Return to oven and broil for 3 to 4 minutes until top is browned and the sugar bubbles.
Serve warm. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.
Notes
Substitute other fruit for the apple. Try bananas, pears, blueberries or a mixture.

Smart Snacking Ideas!

Obesity by the numbers

Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in America have tripled, and today, nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese. The numbers are even higher in African American and Hispanic communities, where nearly 40% of the children are overweight or obese. If we don’t solve this problem, one third of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives. Many others will face chronic obesity-related health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma.

How Did We Get Here?

Thirty years ago, most people led lives that kept them at a healthy weight. Kids walked to and from school every day, ran around at recess, participated in gym class, and played for hours after school before dinner. Meals were home-cooked with reasonable portion sizes and there was always a vegetable on the plate. Eating fast food was rare and snacking between meals was an occasional treat.

Today, children experience a very different lifestyle. Walks to and from school have been replaced by car and bus rides. Gym class and after-school sports have been cut; afternoons are now spent with TV, video games, and the internet. Parents are busier than ever and families eat fewer home-cooked meals. Snacking between meals is now commonplace.

Thirty years ago, kids ate just one snack a day, whereas now they are trending toward three snacks, resulting in an additional 200 calories a day. And one in five school-age children has up to six snacks a day.

Portion sizes have also exploded- they are now two to five times bigger than they were in years past. Beverage portions have grown as well- in the mid-1970s, the average sugar-sweetened beverage was 13.6 ounces compared to today, kids think nothing of drinking 20 ounces of sugar-sweetened beverages at a time.

In total, we are now eating 31 percent more calories than we were forty years ago— including 56 percent more fats and oils and 14 percent more sugars and sweeteners. The average American now eats fifteen more pounds of sugar a year than in 1970.

Eight to 18-year old adolescents spend an average of 7.5 hours a day using entertainment media, including, TV, computers, video games, cell phones and movies, and only one-third of high school students get the recommended levels of physical activity.
Now that’s the bad news. The good news is that by making just a few lifestyle changes, we can help our children lead healthier lives—and we already have the tools we need to do it. We just need the will.

5/25/2020: Challenge Chatter
My Health to Better Living Challenge Information

Healthy Families - Although adults usually decide what kids eat, we all know that kids eat what is available. Therefore, surrounding them with healthier options leaves them no choice but to eat better food.

Set Your Family Up for Success

Small changes in five key areas can make a huge difference and add up to real results: eat more fruits and vegetables, consume less sugar and fat, eat healthier snacks, watch portion size, and eat together as a family.

Fruits & Vegetables

Kids should eat five fruits and vegetables a day
Serve fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables; they all count
Provide fruit or carrot sticks as great snacks
Offer 100% juice, with no added sugar
Mix vegetables into dishes, like adding peas to rice, or cucumbers to a sandwich

Healthy Choices to Reduce Fat and Sugar

Switch to low or non-fat milk, yogurt and cheese
Choose lean cuts of meat like skinless chicken or extra lean ground beef for hamburgers or pasta sauces
Bake or grill instead of fry
Substitute olive or vegetable oil for butter
Substitute water or low-fat milk for sodas or sweetened beverages
Drink less soda or sugar-sweetened drinks
Switch to lower sugar breakfast cereals
Switch desserts like ice cream and cake for fruit based desserts

Snacks
Reduce the number of snacks served each day
Leave a bowl of fruit or carrot sticks on the kitchen table
Differentiate between snacks that require permission (cookies), versus snacks that kids can take freely (fresh or dried fruit)
Have kids drink water at snack time
Save "treats" for special occasions

**Portion Size**  
Kids are smaller than adults and should eat smaller portions  
Use smaller plates for kids  
Don't force kids to clean their plates if they are full  
Portions should be about the size of the back of a fist—a child's fist for a child's portion  
Start with a small portion. Children can have seconds if they are still hungry

**Eat Together**  
Family meals focus on eating and enjoying food and each other  
Eating together is a chance to model good behavior  
Regularly scheduled meal and snack times help kids learn structure for eating

6/1/2020: Challenge Chatter

Challenge Chatter – My Health to Better Living – June Family Challenge
All-American Cheeseburger Bake

This casserole tops the charts!

Level: Medium
Makes: 10 servings - 1 biscuit each

Ingredients:
1 pound lean ground beef
1/4 cup chopped onion
1 can (10.75 ounces) tomato soup, undiluted
2 tablespoons ketchup
1 tablespoon mustard
2 tablespoons pickle relish
1/2 teaspoon ground pepper
4 slices American cheese
2 refrigerated biscuits (7.5 ounces - 10 biscuits)

Directions:
Remember to wash your hands!
1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. In large skillet, brown ground beef and onion on medium-high heat; drain well.
3. Add tomato soup, ketchup, mustard, relish, and pepper. Let mixture simmer on low heat for about 10 minutes.
4. Lightly coat 9-inch baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.
5. Spread meat mixture evenly in baking dish.
6. Place slices of American cheese on top of the meat.
7. Place biscuits on top of the cheese (may need to gently stretch biscuits to cover beef and cheese layers).
8. Bake casserole for about 11 to 12 minutes. If biscuits brown too quickly, cover with foil midway through baking.

Helpful Hints: Substitute favorite ingredients in this recipe. Try a 16-ounce can of sloppy joe sauce instead of the tomato soup, ketchup, mustard and pickle relish. Use your favorite kind of cheese to create the cheeseburger taste you love. Shredded cheese is okay to use if you don’t have cheese slices.

After browning hamburger, drain the meat well. To reduce fat even more, put the meat in a colander or strainer and rinse it with running water. A paper towel can also be used to pat the beef and remove excess fat.

Safety Tips in the Kitchen: An adult should be present when a child is using the stove. Remember to keep skillet and pan handles pointed away from the edge of the stove where they could be bumped and spilled.

Be sure to clean the tomato soup can lid before opening. The lid will have sharp edges after opening, so handle with care.

Always use dry hot pads when removing food from the oven. Know where you’re going to set the casserole before you take it out of the oven. Have a cooling rack or other safe place ready! Let the casserole cool a couple minutes before eating so you don’t burn your tongue.

Refrigerate leftovers within two hours of baking and re-heat to 165 degrees F. for another meal.

Visit www.kidsacookin.ksu.edu to get more great recipes and activities for families to make or do together.

6/8/2020: Challenge Chatter
Everyday Mindfulness

The term, “mindfulness” seems to be everywhere — it’s touted as the new yoga, the answer to stress, or the alternative to prescription drugs. But beyond the buzz, do you understand the concepts of “mindfulness”? With this fact sheet, the authors aim to provide a definition of mindfulness, share some of the benefits of practicing mindfulness, provide samples of simple exercises, and provide resources to explore.

Mindfulness Has Many Definitions

- Living in the present moment/awareness of the present moment — paying close attention to thoughts, physical sensations, and our surroundings.
- Observing personal experiences of mindfulness, being completely focused on a project — reading a book, doing a hobby, or playing a sport. This heightened awareness is mindfulness.
- Taking a few deep breaths — becoming fully aware of the present moment.
- Having nonjudgmental awareness in which each thought, feeling, and sensation is acknowledged and accepted in their present state. This steady and non-reactive attention usually differs from the way people normally operate in the world.
- Paying attention, precisely, to the present moment without judgment.

A common concern of people relates to a misperception that “mindfulness” ties to particular religions. Remember, meditation has its origins dating back thousands of years and may be included in religious practice. At the same time, “mindfulness” sits comfortably in secular circles. Does mindfulness have to be a spiritual practice? Certainly not. The fact that many traditions — religious and secular, spiritual and philosophical — come back to these fundamental practices of compassion and awareness suggests that mindfulness remains part of the human experience.

Today, hospitals, clinics, schools, military bases, and corporations use Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), developed in the late 1970s by Jon Kabat-Zinn, a physician at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Kabat-Zinn developed MBSR based on his knowledge of meditation and yoga, but he stripped the metaphysical and spiritual components away from it, making MBSR a non-religious practice.

Thousands of MBSR courses across the United States teach basic meditation practices such as body scans and breath awareness, as well as gentle yoga and movement exercises. Completely secular, these courses teach life skills for coping with stress, pain, and the human experience.

Seven Principles of Mindfulness

Seven principles serve as the basis for mindfulness. Each can help you act skillfully and not emotionally in stress situations:

- Non-judging: Be a neutral observer to each experience.
- Patience: Allow each experience to emerge at its own pace.
- Beginner’s mind: Avoid bringing in what you know to the current moment and try experiencing it as if it is the first time.
- Trust: Believe in your intuition and your ability to see things in a new way.
- Non-striving: Avoid the need for winning or losing or striving for a purpose — it is about “being” and “non-doing.”
Acceptance: See things as they are in the present moment.
Letting go: Take the time to detach from your usual feelings and thoughts.

Benefits of Mindfulness

Mindfulness should not be considered a “cure-all.” However, science suggests that practicing mindfulness creates changes in brain function as well as changes in the body’s response to stress. The practice of mindfulness may have an important impact on physical and emotional health.

Mindfulness helps to improve work-life balance. When we look at the dominant cultural patterns of the United States, we find that we value dominating nature, being goal-bound, controlling the future, being involved in constant activity and action with no time to “sit and talk,” being autonomous, and being individualists. With that as a dominant cultural pattern, when do we have time to be mindful?

Many people look for relief from their worries. Sometimes this stress presents physically, such as a stiff neck or headache. A review published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found evidence of the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions for pain in varying degrees. Another group of researchers compared the positive effect of mindfulness on depression to that of anti-depression medications—without the side effects.

The practice of mindful meditation proved effective in reducing stress and improving overall well-being. One study from Loyola University of Maryland showed that people who meditate tended to recover more quickly from stressful events. Other benefits that come from a regular meditation practice include:

➢ Increased ability to relax.
➢ Improve concentration.
➢ Increased energy and enthusiasm for life.
➢ Increased creativity.
➢ Increased self-awareness.
➢ Improved self-esteem.
➢ Improved work/school performance.

Beginning Mindfulness Exercises

Practice mindful relaxation: Mindful relaxation combats stress effectively. With practice, one soon learns how to shift into a relaxation mode. The brain responds to relaxation by increasing alpha brain wave activity, lowering blood pressure, pulse rate, respiration rate, and metabolic rate.

Try these steps to help achieve mindful relaxation:
1. Commit to an uninterrupted time each day to practice a mindful meditation. Begin with as little as 5 minutes. Many benefits from increasing meditation time to 20 minutes or more.
2. Choose a quiet place away from any technology.
3. Find a comfortable body position—in a chair or sitting comfortably on the floor.
4. Focus on your breath flowing in and out.
5. Let any negative thoughts float away like clouds.

Try breathing techniques: When people feel stress they tend to take short, shallow gasps of air. The resulting lack of oxygen restricts blood flow and causes muscles to strain. As deep breaths increase, the heart rate slows and blood pressure lowers, which breaks the stress cycle. You may choose any time or any place to think about your breathing—even stopped at traffic signals waiting for the green light or standing in line to buy groceries.

Use imagery: Imagery exercises work with or without a facilitator. A common imagery practice invites you mentally to picture yourself in a quiet, calm setting. Take note of how this setting encourages your body and mind feel calm and relaxed.

Add body exercises: Sit in a chair or lie on the floor. Put your arms above your head and stretch as high as your arms and shoulders allows. At the same time, stretch your legs and feet as your body allows. Then focus on one side of your body and repeat the stretching on the other side. Now stretch the right arm and left leg followed by stretching the left arm and right leg. Finish the exercise by starting at the top of your head and consciously relaxing your scalp and facial muscles. Move on down your body, consciously relaxing each part of your body until you reach your toes. Continue to sit or lie in this relaxed state for a few moments.

When it comes to everyday mindfulness, remember to practice, practice, practice.
6/15/2020: Challenge Chatter

Challenge Chatter ... My Health to Better Living—Planning food on a Budget
Cooking on a Budget –
Advice from the 2003 to 2010 issues of the newsletter
_Dining on a Dime: Eating Better for Less_,
by Erin Henry and Mary Meck Higgins,

Preparing and Eating More Meals at Home
- Just by eating one or two fewer meals at restaurants each week, you could save a whole day’s worth of calories — and save time and money too. Each adult in the U.S. buys a meal or a snack from a restaurant 5.8 times per week, on average, according to the National Restaurant Association. The costs for those can add up fast!
- Instead of eating out often, enjoy more meals at home. Feature fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and low-fat dairy foods.
- If you have a hectic schedule, look for inexpensive foods when shopping at the grocery store that you can easily use to pack your own “meals-to-go,” and for foods to make quick meals to serve at home. Buy few packaged beverages and processed foods.

Do-It-Yourself Frozen Dinners
- Frozen dinners can be a convenient alternative to a homemade meal on busy days when there isn’t time to cook from scratch. But processed frozen dinners from the grocery store can be expensive and are usually high in fat and sodium.
- A better alternative is to prepare homemade frozen dinners. All you need is a freezer.
- When you are preparing a main dish, it takes only a little more effort and time to make enough for several meals. You can either freeze all of the prepared food in meal size packages, or you can serve part of the food immediately and freeze the rest for later use.
Freeze these extra servings and eat them on days when your time is short or your energy is low. This will decrease the temptation to eat out or to buy expensive convenience foods.

For tips on foods that do not freeze well, download the brochure at the website: http://muextension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/hesguide/foodnut/gh1501.pdf

**Frugal Foods: Spending Less, Getting More!**

Our “top 10” list of frugal foods combines great taste while packing a nutritious punch. All of these foods are versatile — try them for breakfast, lunch, supper and snacks.

- **Apples and Bananas.** A perfect on-the-go snack, both apples and bananas are naturally portable. Eat these satisfying and sweet nutritional powerhouse raw or baked, or add them to salads, desserts and baked goods.

- **Beans.** Full of antioxidants, dietary fiber and protein, canned beans cost about 23 cents per serving. Dry varieties that you cook yourself cost even less. Keep them on hand to pack into brownbag lunches and to make quick suppers.

- **Brown Rice.** With a slightly nutty taste, brown rice is a whole grain. It is more nutritious than white rice. Serve as a side dish, at breakfast or as a snack with cinnamon and milk, or add to casseroles and soups.

- **Canned Tomatoes.** Canned tomatoes make a great base for countless main dishes, dips, sauces, soups, stews and chili. Tomatoes are rich in vitamin C and lycopene. Buy them without added salt if possible.

- **Canned Tuna.** A versatile addition to sandwiches, salads and casseroles, tuna is high in protein and vitamin D, and low in calories and fat.

- **Eggs.** Costing usually less than $2 for a dozen, eggs are high in protein. Boiled, fried or scrambled — eggs cook quickly, so they’re perfect for breakfast, lunch or supper. For variety, try French toast, huevos rancheros or egg salad.

- **Fat-free Milk.** A natural convenience food, skim milk offers a healthy dose of vitamin D, calcium, protein and potassium. Serve skim milk with meals and snacks, and use in soups, smoothies and desserts.

- **Kale.** At about a dollar a bunch, kale is one of the least costly green vegetables you’ll find. Three ways to quickly serve kale are to: Serve it hot after pan-frying with garlic and a small amount of vegetable oil; Steam and add to pasta salads or as a topping on homemade pizza.

- **Potatoes.** White and sweet potatoes are satisfying and are high in dietary fiber, vitamin C and potassium. Bake, boil, roast, pan-fry or oven-fry them, or add to casseroles or soups.

- **Rolled Oats.** At just 14 cents, one cup of cooked oats is a heart-healthy whole grain with 4 grams of dietary fiber. Cook oats with fruit for a breakfast or snack, or add them to baked goods.
Planning to Save by Planning Menus

- Plan seven days of menus every week. Check your schedule, and write down what you plan to serve for each meal and snack. Plan to cook on the days when you’ll have more time. Plan to pack “meals-to-go” or to serve quick meals at home, such as an item you can reheat from your stash in the freezer, or cold sandwiches, on busy days. Remember to plan to use left-overs, too.

- Focus on items you already have on hand, especially the perishable foods in your refrigerator. Then add meals that are based on specials, sales and coupons in newspaper, radio and TV ads, especially the meat and produce sales.

- Buy enough of each sale item to prepare several meals. For example, if the grocery store is selling tuna at a lower-than-usual price, you might decide to serve tuna casserole and tuna salad sandwiches that week. Or, if ground hamburger is on sale, perhaps you could buy enough to make spaghetti with meat sauce, tacos and a meatloaf.

- Keep your menus for future use.

Making Less-Meat Meals

$ Add plenty of vegetables, fruits and whole grains (such as whole wheat bread or pasta, oats or another whole grain cereal, or brown rice) to the meal.

$ Vary your protein food choices. Choose from cooked dried beans and peas, nuts, seeds, low-fat dairy products, eggs and modest portions of seafood, skinless poultry (chicken, turkey) and lean red meats (beef, pork, lamb). Most Americans eat more animal protein than they need, but not as many cooked dried beans and peas as are recommended. Since meats are usually the most expensive portion of a meal, using smaller portions of seafood, red meats and poultry also helps stretch your food dollars.

$ Preparing meatless main dishes, such as those using beans or lentils, can save a family of four about $3.00 per meal.

$ For less-meat and meat-less recipe ideas, visit the websites:
  * http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/
  * Vegetarian Resource Group — www.vrg.org/index.htm
  * Vegetarian Kitchen — www.vegkitchen.com/recipes.htm

Wasting Less Food – Why and How:

We throw away 14 percent of the food bought in the U.S. That adds up to about $1,000 to $2,000 a year for an average family of four! (The range depends on whether the family uses a thrifty food plan or a more liberal one, and is based on Sep. 2008 food prices).
Plan:
- Plan meals focusing on using foods you already have in your refrigerator.
- Plan to buy a little less of refrigerated perishable foods than you think your family will eat before it spoils. Instead, buy a few extra non-perishable foods. For example, buy the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables that you can eat within a day or two. Buy dried, canned or frozen fruits and vegetables to use until you shop again.
- Plan portion sizes based on nutrition guidelines, especially for the more expensive food items in your meals.
- Plan for “planned-overs.” Make your menu do double duty. You will sometimes have more product than a recipe calls for. Have a plan for using these foods, such as the extra half can of some food. For instance, you could add them to a soup, or possibly freeze them for later use. Be creative in using leftovers.

Do the “food patrol”:
- Avoid buying perishable foods that aren’t in your menu plan. Or, adjust your meal plan if you do buy perishables that you didn’t originally plan to get.
- Forgotten food is more likely to spoil. Check your refrigerator and pantry daily for perishable foods that need to be used soon.
- Serve foods before they spoil. Or, if possible, preserve perishable items by freezing them.
- Serve foods such as fresh bread, fruits and vegetables that are just a little past their best quality in creative ways. Examples are: Make stale bread into croutons to top a salad. Cut up mushy bananas and spongy apples and add them to muffin recipes. Chop rubbery carrots and boil with spaghetti sauce. You can boil most vegetables and add them to soup.
- Throw away spoiled food.

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office. The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call toll-free 1-888-369-4777.

Contents of this publication may be reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. In each case, credit Erin Henry, R.D., L.D., and Mary Meck Higgins, Ph.D., R.D., L.D., CDE, Associate Professor, Department of Human Nutrition; Kansas State University; “Dining on a Dime.” Compiled October 2010.

K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county Extension offices, experiment fields, area Extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus, Manhattan.

This material was funded in part by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program through a contract with Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, Manhattan, Kansas.
Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.
6/22/2020: Challenge Chatter

Challenge Chatter ... My Health to Better Living

▶ June Challenge should you choose to accept it:

Send a healthy recipe (food item should be low in fat, sugar and salt) and picture of the item you made by June 29, 30 by mail at Sunflower Extension District, PO Box 189, Sharon Springs, KS 67758 or e-mail to: mdaily@ksu.edu. A drawing will be held of all submissions. Someone will win and AWESOME prize! Recipes and photos will be shared in the newsletter or on-line.

▶ Check out https://www.kidsacookin.ksu.edu to get more great recipes and activities for families to make or do together.

▶ Check out the Food Hero website for nutrition recipes and fun information.
https://www.foodhero.org/

▶ Find Monthly newsletters with simple recipes and tips from Food Hero at https://www.foodhero.org/monthly-magazines-past

▶ Budget friendly ideas for healthy eating.

Add brown rice instead of French fries: Guess what? Pound for pound, brown rice is cheaper than the fries. You can probably even get a pound of dry rice for under $2.

A cheap, yummy and healthy snack: Mix nonfat Greek yogurt with granola and berries. The big splurge here is the fresh fruit, so during the off-season, consider buying frozen and blending it into a puree. Each serving of Greek yogurt may set you back $1, but it has a ton of protein to fuel those nutrition-loving minds.

Use frozen vegetables: Frozen veggies are usually very affordable, and you'll often find them on sale. There isn't really a time limit on when you have to use them, either, so it's a good investment when money is tight. They work great in stir-fries, stews and casseroles.

Make pita pizzas. Buy some whole-wheat pitas and top them with healthy pizza toppings. The pita and marinara sauce totals about $0.80 per serving, but of course, your total cost will depend on your choice of toppings. Here are some inexpensive ideas: canned pineapple (drained), black olives, mushrooms, baby spinach, garlic and leftover chicken (but not necessarily on the same pizza).
Find Ways to Boost Your Mood

Do temperatures or weather have you or your kids feeling ‘blah’? Don’t let your mood or happiness dampen because of the weather changes. There are lots of things you can do individually or with your family to improve your mood and feel more happy and energized!

Get moving. Physical activity is one of the easiest and quickest ways to make you feel good. Make it easy by doing something you enjoyed as a kid or enjoy doing now as a family. Once the snow flies, it might be cross country skiing or snowshoeing.

Socialize. Do things with your family. Make a healthy dinner together or have a game night for all to gather. Being surrounded by those who can make you laugh and feel good will brighten your mood any day.

Get plenty of ZZZ’s. Eight hours of sleep each night will have you feeling well-rested and less groggy during the day. It will also help improve your mood and allow you to concentrate better on tasks at work or school.

For more ideas to keep the whole family energized, happy and healthy, visit healthpoweredkids.org.

LIKE Health Powered Kids on Facebook for more healthy tips, recipes and inspiration to empower children, teens and families in your life to be healthy!

Remember to Make mealtime a family time

Family meals help kids learn to make healthy choices, try new foods and make strong family connections. Here are some tips:

• Eat together often.
• Let everyone help.
• Let kids make healthy choices.
• Turn off the television, phone and other distractions.
• Talk to each other.
7/6/2020: Challenge Chatter

My Health to Better Living – Ends today, July 6, 2020

Please turn in your TRACKING Sheets by mail to: Sunflower Extension District, PO Box 189, Sharon Springs, KS 67758 or email me at: mdaily@ksu.edu or if we are open, at the office.

Don’t forget we will be having a fall celebration activity for everyone who pledged their health to better living and turned in their challenge activity tracking sheets with their individual or family photo.

I hope that your family and you have enjoyed this program to help you through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Take these tools that you have received and continue challenging you and your family to stay involved and spending quality time together.

Hope the rest of the summer turns out well, and we can all see each other again. Keep your head up and be enjoy life.

Thanks for your participation in this program!!! As an educator it has been hard for me to not be in the public giving programs in person.

Thanks for your patience!!

Melinda Daily
Sunflower Extension District