



## Parents are most important role models

A new survey by the American Dietetic Association Foundation shows parents have more potential to influence their children's behavior, including their eating habits, than anyone else.

For younger children -- ages 8 to 12 -- and older kids -- 13 to 17 -- parents outranked sports celebrities as the person the child "would like to be most," according to the ADA Foundation's first Family Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey. The survey asked a nationally representative sample of 1,230 parents and children about their attitudes and behavior regarding weight, eating habits and physical activity.

Children ages 8 to 12 said their top role models were:

- mother (23%)
- father (17%)
- unsure or no role model (13%)
- sports celebrity (8%).

For 13-to-17-year-olds, the top responses were:

- mother (14%)
- unsure/no one (13%)
- sports celebrity (12%)
- father (11%).

Music celebrities and actors and actresses also were named



as role models. Boys were more likely to identify their father as a role model, while girls more often selected their mother.

"These findings underscore the importance of a parent's involvement in helping their children make good choices in life, including dietary choices," said ADA spokesperson Sheah Rarback. Research has found strong links between the food mothers eat and the choices made by their children. Children's eating behaviors are influenced by family-related factors such as the number of meals eaten together. By eating healthy foods themselves and making

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### Wisconsin Nutrition Education Network

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## Walking trends among US adults

A recent study by researchers with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) looked at trends in walking as a leisure time physical activity among adults in 31 states.

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a telephone survey conducted by state health departments. Questions about leisure-time physical activity were included from 1987 through 2000.

Among all age groups for men and women, the most common physical activity was walking. More women than men reported walking, for all age, race and weight groups.

Walking was most common among middle-aged and older adults and increased with education level.

Walking for leisure time physical activity increased modestly from 1987-2000. The greatest increases happened among older adults and

minorities, groups with the highest levels of inactivity. However, the number of people meeting physical activity recommendations is still around 20%.

Since walking is popular among all population subgroups and research shows physical activity need not be vigorous to be effective, public health efforts should promote walking as a way to increase physical activity.

*Am J Prev Med 2003;25(2):95-100.*

# The paradox of hunger and obesity in America

Obesity and hunger are serious public health problems, sometimes co-existing in the same families and the same individuals. Their existence sounds contradictory, but people with insufficient resources to purchase adequate food can still be overweight, for reasons that researchers now are beginning to understand.

A lack of adequate resources for food could contribute to weight gain in several ways:

*The need to maximize caloric intake.* Low-income families may purchase lower cost foods with higher levels of calories per dollar to stave off hunger when they lack the money or other resources like food stamps to purchase a healthier balance of more nutritious foods. The greater the economic constraints, the harder it will be for families to achieve the nutritional quality of foods they desire.

*The trade-off between food quantity and quality.* Food quality is usually affected before quantity. Families reduce food spending by changing the quality or variety of food consumed, before they reduce the quantity of food eaten. While families may get enough food to avoid feeling hungry, they also may be poorly nourished because they cannot afford a consistently adequate diet that promotes health and averts obesity.

*Overeating when food is available.* Chronic ups and downs in food availability



can cause people to eat more than they normally would if food were readily available. Low income mothers first sacrifice their own nutrition by restricting their food intake during periods of food insufficiency in order to protect their children from hunger. This may result in mothers eating more when food is available, contributing to obesity among poor women.

*Physiological changes.* The body can compensate for periodic food shortages by becoming more efficient at storing more calories as fat.

## Costly consequences

Both hunger/food security and obesity have costly direct and indirect consequences. Obesity contributes to heart disease, diabetes, some types of cancer, and other chronic health problems. Hunger and food insecurity contribute to impaired health status as well, making people less likely to resist illness. In children, hunger can impair cognitive function and behavior in school, contributing to greater need for special services. With fewer resources to obtain health care or other preventive or remedial services, the poor are especially susceptible to the negative consequences of obesity and hunger/food insecurity.

## Solutions

Both obesity and hunger/food insecurity require solutions that ensure regular access to nutritionally adequate food. Federal nutrition programs, such as food stamps, WIC, and child nutrition programs, have protected vulnerable individuals from severe hunger and malnutrition. Greater availability of these programs can address both hunger and obesity among low-income populations.

With fewer resources, the poor are especially susceptible to the negative consequences of obesity and hunger/food insecurity.

Summarized from *The Paradox of Hunger and Obesity in America*, a joint analysis released by the Center on Hunger and Poverty at Brandeis University and the Food Research and Action Center. <http://www.frac.org/pdf/hungerandobesity.pdf>

## Resource: Michigan Team Nutrition Booklist

Michigan State University Extension has a publication that lists over 300 books for children with positive food and physical activity messages. There is a greater emphasis on books about nutrition, but the list includes quite a few books about physical activity. Most of the books are intended for primary grades. The booklist can be downloaded or ordered at <http://www.msue.msu.edu/fnh/tn/Booklist.pdf>

# DHFS Receives Nutrition and Physical Activity Grant

Kimberly Swanson, RD CD

Nutrition and Physical Activity Program Coordinator, DHFS

In July 2003, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention awarded \$443,000 to the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Division of Public Health, to plan a comprehensive nutrition and physical activity program for Wisconsin. This capacity building grant, Cooperative Agreement #U58/CCU522833-01, will focus on the following objectives for the first year:

- Develop a Statewide Nutrition and Physical Activity Program infrastructure at the State level.
- Collaborate and coordinate with State and local government and private partners, including members of the population, throughout the planning process for the development of the Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan.
- Develop a planning process that leads to a State Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan to prevent and control obesity and other chronic diseases.
- Identify, assess and utilize

Wisconsin data sources and research to define and monitor the burden of obesity and to assure the development of an evidence-based State Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan.

- Implement and evaluate an intervention to prevent obesity and other chronic diseases.
- Evaluate progress and impact of the State plan and intervention projects

"Healthiest Wisconsin 2010: A Partnership Plan to Improve the Health of the Public" will be a guiding document in planning the comprehensive nutrition and physical activity program in Wisconsin. Utilizing a scientifically driven method to determine the most important health conditions for Wisconsin's population and the underlying causes of the conditions,

"Healthiest Wisconsin 2010..." identified eleven health priorities which will have the greatest impact on the overall health of the people in Wisconsin. Two of the eleven health priorities, and their associated implementation plans are extremely relevant to the Nutrition and

The Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity Program will use the social-ecological model for intervention strategies

Physical Activity Program--"Adequate and Appropriate Nutrition"; and "Overweight, Obesity, and Lack of Physical Activity."

The Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity Program will use the social-ecological model for intervention strategies as recommended by the CDC. This model addresses the individual, interpersonal, institutional or organizational, community, and public policy spheres of influence which impact behavioral change. Furthermore the CDC recommends using the following evidence-based strategies to address overweight, obesity and lack of physical activity:

- 5 A Day, increased fruit and vegetable consumption
- Breastfeeding
- Limited television viewing time
- Increased physical activity

Key partners in successfully planning a comprehensive nutrition and physical activity program in Wisconsin include local, tribal, and statewide partners from government, the public, private, nonprofit, and voluntary sectors. For further information, contact Kimberly Swanson, Nutrition and Physical Activity Program Coordinator, at [swanskk@dhfs.state.wi.us](mailto:swanskk@dhfs.state.wi.us) or 608-267-9186.

## Parents are most important role models (cont. from page 1)

sure to offer them to their children, parents can give their kids opportunities to learn to like a variety of nutritious foods.

Rarback noted that the number of children in the survey who cited any role model decreased as the children got older.

"This is more evidence that, as parents, we need to positively affect our children's development and behaviors at an early age, when our influence is the greatest," Rarback said.

The ADAF Family Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey results are based on telephone interviews and online questionnaires with a nationally representative sample of 1,230 parents and children (615 pairs) conducted in January 2003 in partnership with Knowledge Networks. The survey has a confidence interval of plus-or-minus 4 percent in 95 out of 100 cases.



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## Our Mission

The Wisconsin Nutrition Education Network facilitates collaborative planning of nutrition education programs at the state and local levels. We promote healthful and enjoyable eating so that Wisconsin's low income individuals and families receive consistent, positive, relevant, accurate, and effective nutrition messages.

Nutri-Net News is published quarterly. It is available on the web or by mail.

## Campaign 2003 recap and 2004 planning

*Walk, Dance, Play...Be Active Every Day!* was promoted in 46 Wisconsin counties, Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council and the Menominee Reservation during the months of March, April, and May 2003. The multi-agency nutrition education campaign educated food stamp eligible parents, grandparents, and guardians about the need to serve as good role models by engaging in regular physical activity and healthy eating habits in order to encourage healthy habits in their children and grandchildren. Nutrition educators from WNEP, WIC, Elderly Nutrition, schools and Head Start promoted the *Walk, Dance, Play* message with interactive displays, tip sheets, posters, magnets, press releases, newsletter articles, school lunch menu backs, and other nutrition education activities.

Combining awareness-raising activities and community-based education was successful in promoting more healthful eating behaviors. The campaign reached over 333,000 people (direct and indirect contacts). Interactive, educational programming through local agencies directly reached over 18,000 adults. Ninety-four percent of program participants intended to "be more active" and 96% intended to "choose healthier snacks."

Feedback from participating agencies/programs about the campaign was very positive. As part of the campaign evalua-

tion, partners rated the effectiveness of campaign materials. The most widely used materials were tip sheets, posters and magnets, while parent handouts/menu backs, tip sheets, and interactive displays were rated "effective" most often by the partners who used them. The full report of the campaign evaluation will be available on the Network website soon.

As in the Network's *JUMP 'N JIVE ... Come Alive With Fruit* campaign, *Walk, Dance, Play...Be Active Every Day!*

strengthened the level of partnering between participating agencies that provide nutrition education to limited-income audiences. Sixty-nine percent of respondents indicated that the partnering component of the campaign either started something or strengthened/expanded a prior relationship; 30% stated that their partnering remained the same.



## Network Update

The Network will once again solicit applications for the statewide promotion of the next *Walk, Dance, Play...Be Active Every Day!* campaign near the end of August. Campaign 2004 will again be targeted to food stamp eligible caregivers of children. The materials committee is planning to include some additional activities for preschoolers and their parents.

As in previous campaigns, local applicants will need to meet the following requirements:

1. Participate as a collaboration of at least 3 local partners who reach food stamp eligible individuals and families with young children. Potential partners may include but are not limited to: WIC, UW-Extension, Elderly Nutrition, Head Start, schools and food pantries.
2. Participate in the Network Campaign Teleconference on October 29, 2003. Note: Partners will need to gather at a local agency/program office equipped with both a speakerphone and a computer with internet access.
3. Conduct the campaign in one or more of the following months: March, April, and May 2004.
4. Participate in the evaluation activities of the campaign.

This Network Update will be the final update written by Kate Pederson. I will be retiring from the Nutrition Education Network Coordinator position on September 9, 2003. As I wrote in my letter of resignation, "sometimes our greatest gifts come in unexpected packages." All the challenges that I met along the way in the past six plus years impelled me to dig deep within and find an inner strength and a confidence to move forward on a dream. Thank you for the privilege of working with and getting to know many of you. Your dedication and hard work in food stamp nutrition education do make a positive and valuable difference in the lives of many.