AHW Weeks 3 & 4
Nutrition Basics & F.I.T.T.S

Maintaining a healthy weight and achieving optimum well-being isn't necessarily easy, but it is doable and certainly worth the effort. Instead of falling into the trap of the "quick fix" diet and the newest exercise gadget, focus on the basic fundamentals that work -nutrition and physical activity.

Let's start with **nutrition**. Nutrition can be confusing. The plethora of books and media stories, the latest diet trends, new studies, food fads, etc. complicate the basics. Here are a few fundamentals you can rely on.

Nutrients can be divided into two categories: macronutrients and micronutrients. Macronutrients are nutrients our body needs in large amounts and those that provide energy (calories). Micronutrients are needed in much smaller amounts but are vital for development, disease prevention and well-being.

Macronutrients include carbohydrates, protein and fat. **Carbohydrates** provide fuel for our brain and our bodies so our muscles can be preserved. The main food sources are from grains, dairy and fruit. **Protein** provides tissue structure for organ tissues, muscle, hair, skin, nails, bones, tendons, ligaments and blood plasma. It is part of cell membranes; involved in our metabolism, transport, and hormone systems; makes up enzyme; and helps maintain our body's acid base balance. Main sources come from various types of meat, eggs, nuts and legumes. **Fat** is necessary for transporting fat soluble vitamins, protects vital organs, insulates the body and is an energy reserve. The majority of fat in food is found in oils, nuts, seeds, meat, fish and dairy.

Micronutrients - **Vitamin A, C, D, E, K, the B vitamins, and folic acid** along with minerals **calcium, potassium, sodium, iron, and zinc, and water** are categorized as micronutrients. Their wide range of duties include building and maintaining tissues, nervous system, bones and teeth to being involved in the production of blood, enzymes, and hormones to helping cells release energy from food.

Phytochemicals are another important category. These non-nutritive plant chemicals have disease prevention properties. Research shows phytochemicals help the body protect against diseases. Most foods contain phytochemicals, however, some foods such as berries, whole grains, vegetables, beans, fruits and herbs, contain many phytochemicals. The more well-known phytochemicals include lycopene in tomatoes, isoflavones in soy and flavanoids in fruits.

Ensure you are getting the adequate amount and variety of nutrients by focusing on the following:

♥ **Eat for Health:** The five food groups of fruits and vegetables (especially the bright colored ones), whole grains, lean sources of protein and low-fat dairy products are the building blocks of a healthy diet. Each group provides unique ingredients needed for optimal health, so it is important to include them all in our daily diet.

MyPlate is a great visual of how these food groups fit on our plate. It is based on a 9 inch plate so it also helps us focus on portion size. Half your plate is vegetables and fruit, a quarter is grain, another quarter is protein with a serving of dairy on the side.

♥ **Get the most for your calories**: Choose nutrient dense foods and beverages. Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean protein foods all provide a lot of "bang for your buck" in terms of nutrients compared to calories. For example, choosing 1 cup of skim milk over 1 cup of soda pop gives you over 150 times the amount of potassium, almost 44 times the amount of calcium, 8 times the protein, half the carbohydrates, and saves about 20 calories.

Take note of how foods are prepared too. A French fry starts out as a healthy potato but quickly becomes a much less optimal choice once it is fried and heavily salted.

♥ **Be aware of portion distortion:** We are often served enough food for two or three people or purchase items packaged or bottled individually, but actually contain multiple servings. Growing portion sizes are changing what we think of as a "normal" portion. Read the Nutrition Facts Label on food packages. This shows the serving size and number of servings in container. Learn recommended serving sizes and measure it out a few times to get a good visual. Split an entrée, beverage, or movie popcorn with others; ask for a "to go" container when your food is served and take half of it home for later; focus on what and how much you are eating instead of being distracted by TV, driving, etc.

♥ **Focus on fruits and vegetables:** Fruits and vegetables have an abundance of nutrients important for our health – fiber, vitamin A & C, potassium, and folate to name a few. Not only are they packed with nutrients, but they are also low calorie, linked to decreasing the risk of cancer, heart disease and stroke and lowering blood pressure. Plus they are convenient to eat and come in a variety of forms – raw, cooked, dried – so you can choose what you like best.

Think of creative ways to incorporate more fruits and vegetables. Add shredded carrots and finely chopped peppers to your meatloaf, add vegetables to soup or stir-fry, blend up a smoothie with an assortment of fruit and fresh spinach, or toss together a trail mix with dried fruit and nuts.

♥ **Eat breakfast:** Starting out the day with a healthy breakfast keeps us from getting overly hungry and from overeating or splurging on things like candy bars, soda and unhealthy snacks. Breakfast can help with weight control, jump starts our metabolism, improves concentration and performance at school or work, gives us more strength and endurance for physical activity, and can improve our mood. Breakfast doesn't have to be complicated, but should include at least three different food groups. Examples: small whole wheat bagel with peanut butter and a banana; high fiber cereal with dried fruit and skim milk; cheese stick, slice of lean ham and 100% orange juice.

Exercise. For some, that word congers up visions of sweating profusely, bulking up, running marathons or other images that may not be appealing. But, exercise should be something you like, not dread. It's about moving our bodies and building strength; so we can continue to do the things we enjoy, and maintain our health and quality of life.

The **FITTS Principle** defines the foundation of exercise. It provides a set of guidelines to help you get the most out of whatever exercise routine you choose to do.

F = Frequency – How often you exercise. The general recommendation is 150 minutes of moderate activity per week, or about 30 minutes most days.

- Cardio: moderate exercise suggested five or more days a week, or intense exercise three days a week. For weight loss, you may need to exercise up to six or more days a week.
- Strength: recommendation of 2-3 sessions per week in non-consecutive days.

I = Intensity – How hard you work during exercise

- Cardio: work in your target heart rate zone and focus on incorporating different levels of difficulty to increase fitness.
- Strength: The number of exercises (at least 8-10), the amount of weight lifted and the number of repetitions determine the intensity. Lift enough weight so only the desired number of reps can be completed (around 1-3 sets of 8-16 reps of each exercise).

T = Time – How long you exercise. Even small bouts of physical activity throughout the day can add up to a sufficient amount. For example, doing 3 ten minute sessions instead of one 30 minute session can be just as effective.

T = Type – What kind of physical activity. Including cardio/aerobic as well as strength training is very beneficial.

- Cardio: refers to any activity that gets heart rate up (walking, running, cycling, dancing, etc.)
- Strength: refers to any exercise using some type of resistance (such as bands, dumbbells, machines, your own body weight) to work and strengthen muscles.

S = Stretching – important for maintaining mobility and preventing injury. It increases flexibility, boosts circulation and decreases stress.

The F.I.T.T.S Principle helps you figure out how to change your exercise routine in order to get the best results. For example, you may start out walking three times a week for 30 minutes. After a few weeks, however, your body adapts. It becomes more efficient at exercise, which makes it easier to do the exercise and burns fewer calories than when you started. You may lose weight so it takes fewer calories to move your smaller body. Doing the same workout over and over for weeks on end can get boring and cause motivation to dwindle. Changing one or more of the FITTS Principles can help. Add another day of walking (change Frequency), walk faster or add some running (change Intensity), walk longer (change Time), try something different like swimming or biking (change Type).

To Learn More:

www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

www.choosemyplate.gov

www.mynutrition.wsu.edu/nutrition-basics

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/eat-right/portion-distortion.htm

http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/Getting-Heart-Healthy-One-Simple-Step-at-a-Time_UCM_447728_Article.jsp#.WG0xjlwtEbM

http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/PhysicalActivity/GettingActive/Getting-Active_UCM_460868_SubHomePage.jsp

2017 A Healthier Weigh

Putting It into Action

Weeks 3 and 4

Choose one of the following activities to apply what you learned about your health and your healthy goal setting. Write a short paragraph (3 to 5 sentences) to describe what you did and learned from the activity selected. Report your Putting It Into Action results by email, fax or hard copy to your county Extension Office. Each team member who completes this by the deadline will earn 25 bonus points for the team.

Option 1: Practice using the MyPlate visual. Get a 9inch plate and divide the foods you are having for your meal in the appropriate food group section. Do they fit? Are you missing any food groups? Are the portions the size you normally eat? What could you do differently to make your meal better fit the MyPlate model?

Option 2:
Plan your exercise routine for this week. Report on ways you could adapt at least 2 of the FITTS principles to change your routine for the following week.

Option 3:
Report what you normally eat for breakfast. Does it include at least three of the food groups? What could you add to make it more nutritious? Report what you plan to have for breakfast over the next 5 days.