



Healthy Habits

The newsletter for busy Cal employees who want to improve their health!

March 2, 2009

WEEK 2

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

The new 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans were developed by the Department of Health and Human Services and are actually the first activity guidelines ever. Previous recommendations were taken from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and were only suggestions on how to live healthfully overall. The 2008 guidelines are the result of a major review of the science on the benefits of activity, the first one in over a decade! Their findings?

- **Most health benefits occur with at least 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking.**
- Regular physical activity reduces the risk of many adverse health outcomes.
- Some physical activity is better than none.
- For most health outcomes, additional benefits occur as the amount of physical activity increases through higher intensity, greater frequency, and/or longer duration.
- Episodes of activity that are at least 10 minutes long count toward meeting the Guidelines.
- Both aerobic (endurance) and muscle-strengthening (resistance) physical activity are beneficial.
- Health benefits of physical activity occur for children and adolescents, young and middle-aged adults, older adults, and those in every studied racial and ethnic group.
- Health benefits of physical activity are attainable for people with disabilities.
- The benefits of physical activity outweigh the risks of injury and heart attack

Take the "Talk Test" to know how intensive your activity is. At moderate-intensity you should be breathing faster, but still able to have a conversation. At vigorous-intensity you should be breathing more heavily and carrying on a conversation should be more difficult.

The bottom line is, **exercise at least 2 hours and 30 minutes a week.** Preferably spread this activity throughout the week, such as 30 minutes a day for 5 days a week. Two days a week include muscle strengthening activity as well.

High-Fructose Corn Syrup

There has been a lot of talk in the news about high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) and its adverse effects on health. Claims have been made that HFCS is worse for us than other sugars and plays a larger role in promoting obesity and other diseases.

So what is HFCS? Let's start with the basics. There are many different kinds of sugar based on their chemical make up. The most basic are glucose and fructose. These sugars combined in various patterns make sucrose (table sugar) and lactose (milk sugar), among others. HFCS is made by a process that changes some of the glucose in corn syrup to fructose.

Some research has shown that fructose doesn't stimulate insulin secretion as much as other sugars. Insulin is a hormone that helps to turn sugar into energy that our cells can use. This prevents a series of events from occurring that not only prevents us from feeling full, it causes us to feel hungrier. This is what has led some scientists to believe that HFCS is worse than other sugars and actually leads to obesity.

More research has to be conducted and there aren't any steadfast answers yet. It isn't clear if HFCS is actually worse or if we just consume too much of it. Americans consume much more HFCS now than in the past, as it has become a popular sugar to use in beverages and foods because it is cheap and has characteristics useful in manufacturing.

In general, all sugars are high in calories and low in nutritional value. No matter what kind of sugar you're eating, it's always a good idea to limit your intake.

Announcements

• **Healthy & Quick Meals:**

• *Wednesday, March 11 or Thursday, June 4, 12:10-1*
• *Tang Education Center*

• Get tools for meal planning and fresh ideas for delicious meals that are healthy and quick to prepare for a busy lifestyle. Enroll online at the UCB Learning Center.