

School Wellness News

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Distribute copies to interested staff:

- Superintendent
- Principal
- Business Manager
- School Food Service
- School Counselor
- FACS, PE, Health,
- Elementary Teachers
- Wellness Committee
- Members
- Teacher Break Rooms
- Parent Committees

With One Year of School Wellness Policy Implementation Done, It's Time to Celebrate a Healthier School Environment!

A year after School Wellness Policies were written, Minnesota schools are actively making changes to improve the nutrition and physical activity of kids. It is impressive to hear the success stories of schools around the state. Here are some outstanding examples of schools implementing wellness programs:

- ◆ Schools are implementing walking programs, such as a morning walk program where all students walk in the building before classes start.
- ◆ Schools are offering a fresh fruit for breakfast or lunch every day.
- ◆ Schools have limited beverages sold to 100% juice and non-sweetened beverages.
- ◆ Schools are serving skim and 1% milk only.
- ◆ Schools are requiring healthy foods for snacks and celebrations.
- ◆ Teachers are adding physical activity in regular classrooms on a daily basis.

In year two of implementing school wellness policies, plan to keep your policy fresh and current.

1. Convene your wellness policy committee.
2. Identify the changes implemented in your school district.
3. Identify the changes that are still in progress.
4. Develop an action plan to work on priority goals.
5. Hold a **dynamic** teacher and staff training on wellness policy initiatives.
6. Emphasize your school wellness policy successes and celebrate with your wellness committee, school and community! Invite your local paper to feature a wellness event to highlight your school successes.

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Go Wild with Fruits and Veggies Piloted in Northwest Minnesota

The University of Minnesota Extension—Nutrition Education Programs in Becker, Clay, Hubbard, Mahnomen, Norman, Otter Tail and Wilkin Counties are “going wild” piloting a new curriculum to teach elementary youth about eating more fruits and veggies and being physically active.

A bear, moose, deer, raccoon, turkey and rabbit are joining Extension Nutrition Education Assistants in classrooms this year. Each character represents a food color. For example, Becky Bluebear teaches about the blue/purple fruits and veggies like blackberries, blueberries, plums, and eggplant. Not only are animal characters showing up in classrooms, they are visible in school cafeterias, music programs, and local papers.

One of the activities students are doing is a “Walk to the Head Waters.” Teachers mark 5—10 minutes of physical activity daily to move the animal characters on the “Go Wild” map to the Head Waters. Classes that make it to the Head Waters will celebrate with a spring party.

The *Go Wild with Fruits and Veggies* program will be available for Minnesota schools to use in 2008/2009.

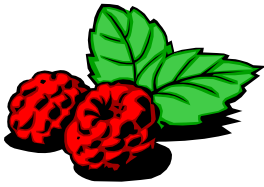


What To Do with Two Snacks a Day for Kindergarten?

Kindergarteners are small and do benefit from more frequent small meals and snacks. When two snacks are offered daily in school, more guidelines for parents are needed to meet USDA dietary guidelines for balanced meals. It is nearly impossible to meet requirements for limiting “discretionary calorie” foods and providing adequate food groups without planning snacks. Consider the following:

- ◆ Milk is provided daily for kindergarteners through USDA. Make sure this milk is as cold as possible; otherwise, kindergarteners probably won't drink it. This is a common issue when transporting milk from the cafeteria to the classroom and it sits before serving.
- ◆ When two snacks are offered daily, request parents send a fruit or vegetable for one of the snacks.
- ◆ Healthy snack lists should include fresh, canned and dried fruits, cut-up vegetables, whole grains such as cereals and crackers (must list whole grain as the first grain ingredient,) low-fat/low-sugar cheeses and yogurts, nuts and seeds. Dairy products need to be refrigerated in a small cooler with ice pack. List food allergies for parents to avoid sending to the classroom. Some schools avoid peanuts and peanut butter because of allergy concerns.
- ◆ Take advantage of teaching the alphabet with fruits and veggies. *The ABC's of Fruits and Vegetables and Beyond: Delicious Alphabet Poems plus Food, Facts and Fun for Everyone* by Charney & Goldbeck is a wonderful book to use as a teaching resource.
- ◆ Taste test different fruits and vegetables for the letter of the week.

The Benefits of Eating Berries



Berries are among the super foods touted today. The most exciting news about berries is their abundant anti-cancer and anti-aging benefits!

1. Berries contain anthocyanins that give the vibrant blue, purple and red colors to foods. Anthocyanins are powerful antioxidants that help keep brains healthy, improve memory, fight certain cancers, and lower cholesterol.
2. Berries contain nice amounts of insoluble fiber that keep the digestive system moving.
3. Most berries are a good source of Vitamin C. Vitamin C helps heal cuts and wounds, helps our immune system function and keeps our skin glowing.

Eat Berries . . .

- ◆ Eat frozen and canned berries as a more economical choice when fresh berries aren't in season.
- ◆ Local and wild berries that are picked when fully ripened contain more phytochemicals and nutrients than commercially grown, shipped berries.
- ◆ Load up with low-sugar jam made from berries.

Colorful Fruit Salad from "Go Wild with Fruits & Veggies"

Ingredients for 100— 1/2 cup servings

10 cups red fruit (strawberries, watermelon, or apple)

10 cups green fruit (green grapes or kiwi)

10 cups purple fruit (frozen blueberries or blackberries)

10 cups yellow/orange fruit (canned pineapple or mandarin oranges)

10 cups white fruit (bananas or pears)

10 cups orange juice

Directions

1. Wash fruit. Chop fruit into bite size chunks.
2. Toss salad with orange juice. Refrigerate salad.



One cup of blueberries pack a whopping 5486 ORAC value. ORAC has become a standard method for measuring antioxidant capacity. Blueberries shine with the highest ORAC value of any fruit.

Cranberry and Blueberry Facts

Blueberries and cranberries are two of three major fruits native to North America.

The Blueberry Muffin is the Minnesota state muffin.

The blueberry is the second most popular berry in the U.S.; the strawberry is number one.

Because of their health benefits, Americans eat 4 times more processed cranberries than in the 70's.



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University of Minnesota Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

University of Minnesota Extension connects research-based resources to communities. This newsletter provides information to help implement your local school wellness policy and teach kids and families about nutrition and active living.

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Plan Ahead for February Staff Wellness Events

February is Heart Month. Heart Disease remains the number one killer for both men and women. Therefore, February is a logical month to plan staff wellness events. To plan staff wellness events, check out the American Heart Association website for the many programs offered at www.americanheart.org.

Red For Women

Participate in National Wear Red Day, Friday, Feb. 1, 2008. AHA's Go Red For Women offers a program toolkit that provides employees, members and associates all the information they need to educate themselves and their loved ones about heart disease, and gives them tools on how to take action and live a healthy lifestyle. To learn more about holding a Wear Red Day promotion:

1. [Contact your local American Heart Association](#)
2. Call 1-888-MY HEART

Choose To Move

AHA's free, popular 12-week program for women helps you eat better, get moving and juggle life's demands.

Heart Of Diabetes

Tools, recipes and even a 12-week online exercise and nutrition program specifically designed for people with Type 2 diabetes and insulin resistance.

Raising a Healthier Generation

Join the American Heart Association and the Clinton Foundation to raise public awareness about the serious threat posed by childhood obesity.

Check with your Regional Extension Office or County Extension Office for availability to borrow AHA's toolkit "The Heart Truth for Women." Ask about Extension Educator - Health & Nutrition speaker availability.

