Healthy Eating for an Active Life

It’s summer time! The days are long and there is plenty of sunshine. It’s a great time of year to get outside and get moving with activities you enjoy, especially with your family!

“For youth and adults participating in physical activity like hiking, swimming, or various sports, healthy eating is essential for optimizing performance. Combining good nutrition and physical activity can lead to a healthier lifestyle,” says Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agent ____________. Use these tips from the United States Department of Agriculture’s MyPlate website (www.choosemyplate.gov) to combine good nutrition and physical activity to make the most of your summer!

First, maximize with nutrient-packed foods. Give your body the nutrients it needs by eating a variety of nutrient-packed food, including whole grains, lean protein, fruits and vegetables, and low-fat or fat-free dairy. Eat fewer foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and sodium (salt).

Next, energize with grains! Your body’s quickest energy source comes from grain foods such as bread, pasta, oatmeal, cereals, and tortillas. Be sure to make at least half of your grain food choices whole-grain foods like whole-wheat bread, tortillas, pasta and brown rice.

Power up with protein. Protein is essential for building and repairing muscle. Choose lean or low-fat cuts of beef and pork, and skinless chicken or turkey. Choose seafood protein sources twice a week. Quality protein choices come from plant based foods, too! Choose beans and peas (kidney, pinto, black or white, beans, chickpeas, hummus), soy products (tofu, veggie burgers, tempeh), and unsalted nuts and seeds.

Don’t forget the fruits and vegetables! Get the nutrients your body needs by eating a variety of colors. Try blue, red, or black berries; red, green, or yellow peppers; and dark greens like spinach and kale. Choose fresh, frozen, low-sodium canned, dried, and 100% juice options.

Be sure to also include dairy foods such as fat-free and low-fat milk, cheese, yogurt, and fortified soy beverages (soymilk) to build and maintain strong bones needed for everyday activities.

Hydration is critical in the warm summer months! Stay hydrated by drinking water instead of sugary drinks. Keep a filled reusable water bottle with you to always have water on hand.

Want to learn more? For personalized nutrition information based on your age, gender, height, weight, and current physical activity level visit www.SuperTracker.usda.gov

Remember, physical activity is essential for good health. Aim for at least 2 ½ hours of physical activity each week that requires moderate effort. A few examples include brisk walking, biking, swimming, and skating. Spread activities over the week, but do that at least 10 minutes at a time.

For information about nutrition education program in your local area, contact your local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county office at ________________.

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