

Health, Wellness and Cooking for Youth Programs

Meredith Hale-Griffin, M.S.



Overview

- Childhood obesity and leading causes
- Common nutrient deficiencies
- Consequences
- Our role
- Teaching the art of cooking while encouraging healthy eating
- Questions



+ Childhood Obesity

- 1 in 7 children and adolescents 6-17 years are considered obese
- Nearly tripled in the last 30 years
- Greater disparity in these numbers in low-income communities where access to supermarkets, healthy foods and safe neighborhoods for physical activity is limited

+ Why?

- Increase energy intake
 - Reliance on fast food meals
 - Oversized portions
 - Increase consumption of snack foods like pretzels, chips and French fries
 - Increase in calorie consumption from beverages (contributes to 20-24% daily calories (ADA, 2008))
- Decrease in foods prepared at home, and consumption of vegetables, milk, breads, grains and eggs
- Lack of parental involvement
- Limited resources and access to healthy foods or ways to prepare healthy foods
- Lack of physical activity

(ADA, 2008)



+ Childhood Nutrition: Common Deficiencies

- Lack of adequate vitamins and minerals
- ADA sites specific concerns related to high intakes of saturated fat and insufficient consumption of calcium, fiber, Vitamin E, folate, iron, magnesium and potassium (2008)
- 80-90% of children 4-13 years were not consuming the USDA's recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables
- Only 13% consumed 2 or more servings of whole-grains, thus fiber intake is well below the recommendations

(ADA, 2008)



+ Consequences and Risks

- Increase in number of children overweight and obese is causing greater diagnosis of type II diabetes, increase blood pressure, and increase risk of cardiovascular disease
- If trend continues, it is estimated that of children born since 2000, 35% will be at risk for developing diabetes and will be the first generation since the Civil War to have a life expectancy shorter than their parent
- Children who are overweight or obese are more likely to become adults who are overweight or obese



What Can We Do?



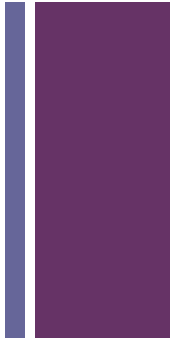
Encouraging Healthy Behaviors and Creating Positive Environment



- Take focus off of weight but rather on making healthy decisions
- Avoid labeling foods as “good” or “bad”
- Choosing nutritious foods and appropriate servings
- Educating children about nutrients and the relationship between what we eat and how we feel
- Encouraging activity through games and each child finding something they find enjoyable
- Making children a part of the process
- Introducing a variety of foods
 - Often it takes children being exposed to a food 8-10 times before they may be willing to eat it and prefer it
- Being role models...children will mimic the attitudes and behaviors of those around them



Role of After School Programs in Nutrition Education

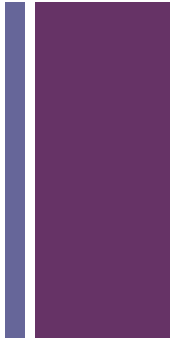


- After school programs are in a position to influence and create positive, healthy lifestyles
- Opportunities to integrate nutrition education with teaching children how to prepare and cook foods





Integrating Nutrition Education into Cooking



- Classroom lessons may not be enough to produce effective lifelong changes but including the following can help increase a child's nutritional knowledge:
 - Teaching MyPyramid Food Guide principles
 - Opportunities for students to taste a variety of foods
 - Affording students the opportunity to prepare foods
 - Identifying nutritious snacks and foods
 - Explaining role of diet and physical activity in their health
 - Instilling confidence in children to be able to make nutritious choices and their ability to cook and prepare foods

- Often after school programs are the only place a child may be able to experience a meal or snack until they arrive at school the next morning

+ Affording Our Youth Opportunities by...

- ...expanding their senses with new tastes, smells and sights
- ...expanding their knowledge to cooking methods, food preparation and food safety
- ...teaching them about the nutrients foods contain
- ...encouraging creativity by thinking of cooking as an “art”





**+ Preparing Kid Friendly Recipes
using the Mobile Kitchen**





wellness

train

EMPOWERING YOU TO LIVE WELL