

Summer 2009

FitWell Newsletter

New Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

"Being physically active is one of the most important steps that Americans of all ages can take to improve their health. The *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* provides science-based guidance to help Americans aged 6 and older improve their health through appropriate physical activity.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issues the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*. The content of the *Physical Activity Guidelines* complements the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, a joint effort of HHS and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Together, the two documents provide guidance on the importance of being physically active and eating a healthy diet to promote good health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases."

2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

These new guidelines now set a standard that all health and fitness organizations must adhere to. It is a huge step in getting everyone on the same page and making the current scientific findings available to the public.

Key Guidelines for Adults

- All adults should avoid inactivity. Some physical activity is better than none, and adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits.
- For substantial health benefits, adults should do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous intensity aerobic activity. Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, and preferably, it should be spread throughout the week.
- For additional and more extensive health benefits, adults should increase their aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes (5 hours) a week of moderate intensity, or 150 minutes a week of vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity. Additional health benefits are gained by engaging in physical activity beyond this amount.
- Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities that are moderate or high intensity and involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week, as these activities provide additional health benefits.

Key Guidelines for Older Adults

The Key Guidelines for Adults also apply to older adults. In addition, the following Guidelines are just for older adults:

- When older adults cannot do 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week because of chronic conditions, they should be as physically active as their abilities and conditions allow.
- Older adults should do exercises that maintain or improve balance if they are at risk of falling.
- Older adults should determine their level of effort for physical activity relative to their level of fitness.
- Older adults with chronic conditions should understand whether and how their conditions affect their ability to do regular physical activity safely.

Fitness and Nutrition Myths Revealed!

- > **Fitness Myth: Lifting heavy weight will make girls get bulky:**
The truth: Females do not have the same muscle building hormone levels as males which makes it more difficult for them to put on muscles. However, there muscle do work the same way which means that to train effectively they need to push them selves and overload their muscles.
- > **Nutrition Myth: The less I eat, the more weight I will lose:**
The truth: Your body needs food to survive, and if you are not eating much, then your body will begin to store fat. If you eat throughout the day (5-6 small meals) your body will be more comfortable giving up fat stores because it knows it will get fed!

Upcoming Events and News

New Registration Options for UGA Rec Sports Fitness & Wellness Program
For more info visit www.recsports.uga.edu/aerobics.php

Summer Class registration and Personal Training Sign-ups are now underway at the cashiers window

The Fitness and Wellness Department at the Ramsey Center offers a wide variety of opportunities to meet the new guidelines and more. You can meet with a Nationally Certified Personal Trainer who will design an exercise program to meet all of your need, teach you the proper techniques for exercises, and encourage you and hold you accountable to meet your goals. We also offer a large selection of group fitness classes such as dance classes, step classes, Body Pump, boxing and kickboxing, and many more. The classes are taught by certified professionals who can answer all of your questions. You will also get to work in a group atmosphere and have a lot of fun while you stay healthy. You can sign up for personal trainers and group fitness class at the cashiers window.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are found in many foods such as bread, beans, milk, popcorn, potatoes, cookies, spaghetti, soft drinks, corn, and cherry pie. The most common forms of carbohydrates are sugars, fibers, and starches. The basic building block of every carbohydrate is a sugar molecule. Starches and fibers are long chains of sugar molecules. You may have heard that carbohydrates are grouped into two main categories: The carbohydrates that are referred to as simple are sugars such as fruit sugar (fructose), corn sugar (dextrose or glucose), and table sugar (sucrose). The complex carbohydrates include everything made of chains of three or more sugars. It was once thought that complex carbohydrates were the healthiest to eat, while sugars were bad. It is actually a little more complicated than that. The digestive system tries to break all carbohydrates down into single sugar molecules because they are small enough to cross into the bloodstream. It also converts most digestible carbohydrates into blood sugar, or glucose, because that is the universal unit of energy for all cells. In other words, the energy needed for your body to function comes from sugar. Because of this carbohydrates are the staple of a balanced diet.

Are Carbohydrates Bad?

It is now known that carbohydrates are not all good or all bad. Some kinds promote health while others, when eaten often and in large quantities, actually increase the risk for diabetes and coronary heart disease.

The popularity of fad diets such as Atkins, South Beach, and other low-carbohydrate diets led many Americans to believe that carbohydrates are bad and cause you to gain fat. This is a dangerous oversimplification. Easily digested carbohydrates from white bread, white rice, pastries, sodas, and other highly processed foods may, indeed, contribute to weight gain and interfere with weight loss, while whole grains, beans, fruits, vegetables, and other sources of intact carbohydrates promote good health by delivering essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and important phytonutrients.



How Your Body Uses Glucose

As discussed earlier, when you eat a food containing carbohydrates, the digestive system breaks down the digestible ones into sugar, which then enters the blood. As blood sugar levels rise, there are special cells in the pancreas that release a hormone that signals cells to absorb blood sugar for energy or storage. The more sugar that is released in the blood the more insulin that is released. As cells use blood sugar, its levels in the bloodstream begin to fall. Then the pancreas releases a hormone called glucagon that tells the liver to start releasing stored sugar. This cycle of insulin and glucagon ensure that cells throughout the body, and especially in the brain, have a steady supply of blood sugar.

When Things Go Bad!

Sometimes, this cycle doesn't work properly. People with type 1 diabetes (sometimes referred to as insulin-dependent or juvenile diabetes) don't make enough insulin, so their cells can't absorb sugar. People with type 2 diabetes (sometimes referred to as non-insulin dependent or adult onset diabetes) generally start out with a different problem-their cells don't respond well to insulin's signal. This insulin resistance causes blood sugar and insulin levels to stay high long after eating. Over time, the heavy demands made on the insulin-making cells wears them out, and insulin production slows, and eventually stops.

Fiber: Nature's Broom

Fiber is put together in such a way that it cannot be broken down into sugar molecules, and so it passes through the body undigested. There are two types of fiber: soluble fiber dissolves in water, while insoluble fiber does not. Although neither type nourishes the body, they promote health in many ways. Soluble fiber binds to fatty substances in the intestines and carries them out as a waste, this will lower your low-density lipoprotein (LDL, or bad cholesterol). It also helps regulate the body's use of sugars, helping to keep hunger and blood sugar in check. Insoluble fiber helps push food through the intestinal tract, promoting regularity and helping prevent constipation.

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