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# Here's To Your Family's Health

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Your family's health is very important. Lifestyle choices greatly affect your family's health. It is up to you to make wise nutrition and health choices for yourself and your family. Healthy eating can help decrease your risk of developing such diseases as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, or high blood pressure.

Heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are the three leading causes of death in African Americans. This publication will provide information on ways to decrease your family's risk of developing chronic diseases by improving eating habits.

## Obesity

Obesity is a growing problem among people of all ages and ethnic groups. In general, African Americans are more likely to be overweight individuals than White Americans. The traditional African American diet, which is high in fat and calories, may influence this health problem. Also, African Americans tend to have a low-to-moderate activity level.

## Tips to help you lose weight:

- Eat less fried and greasy foods.
- Cut back on added fats and oils.
- Read food labels to find out the amount of calories, fat, and sugar in the foods you eat.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole-grains.
- Control your portion sizes or amount of food that you eat.
- Eat healthy snacks, such as pretzels, raisins, raw fruits or vegetables.
- Walk your way to a healthier you! Exercise!
- Drink lots of water. You should drink at least 8 (eight-ounce) cups of water every day!

## High Blood Pressure

Hypertension or high blood pressure is a common health problem for many African Americans. Choosing and cooking too many fatty and salty foods may contribute to the incidence of heart disease and high blood pressure. Research has shown that consuming enough calcium may control or reduce hypertension. If you are lactose intolerant and cannot eat dairy foods, it is important that you get your calcium from non-dairy calcium rich foods, such as almonds, broccoli, canned salmon/sardines with bones, fortified-cereals, dark green leafy vegetables, and fortified-juices.

## Tips to lower your blood pressure:

- Learn to enjoy the unsalted flavors of food.
- Use low fat and low sodium broths to flavor vegetables.
- Avoid adding extra salt to foods.
- Eat less smoked, salted, and cured meats or foods.
- Use herbs and spices to add flavor to foods.



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# The Food Guide Pyramid

The Food Guide Pyramid is a guide to help your family eat a variety of foods and plan healthy meals and snacks. Eat at least the minimum number of servings from each group of the pyramid to get a variety of vitamins and minerals. Limit the amount of fatty (•), salty, and sugary (▼) foods. Examples of serving sizes are shown below.

## Limit Fats, Oils, & Sweets

butter, fatback, French fries, deep fried foods, gravy, batter-dipped fried foods, potato chips, sweets (cookies, doughnuts, pudding, pies, pound cake, etc.)

## Milk, Yogurt, & Cheese Group

### Eat More Low Fat Dairy Foods:

2 oz. mozzarella cheese  
1 cup low-fat milk or buttermilk  
1 cup yogurt

### Eat Less High Fat Dairy Foods:

2 oz. cheddar cheese or American cheese  
1/2 cup ice cream

## Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, & Nuts Group

About 2-3 ounces of cooked lean meat (chicken, fish, beef, pork, etc.)

1/2 cup dried beans (black eyed peas, red beans, etc.), or

1 egg, or

2 tablespoons of peanut butter count as 1 ounce of lean meat (about 1/3 serving)

### Eat Less High Fat Meats:

3 oz. bologna or cold cuts

3 oz. fried chicken

3 oz. ham, bacon, or sausage

## Vegetables

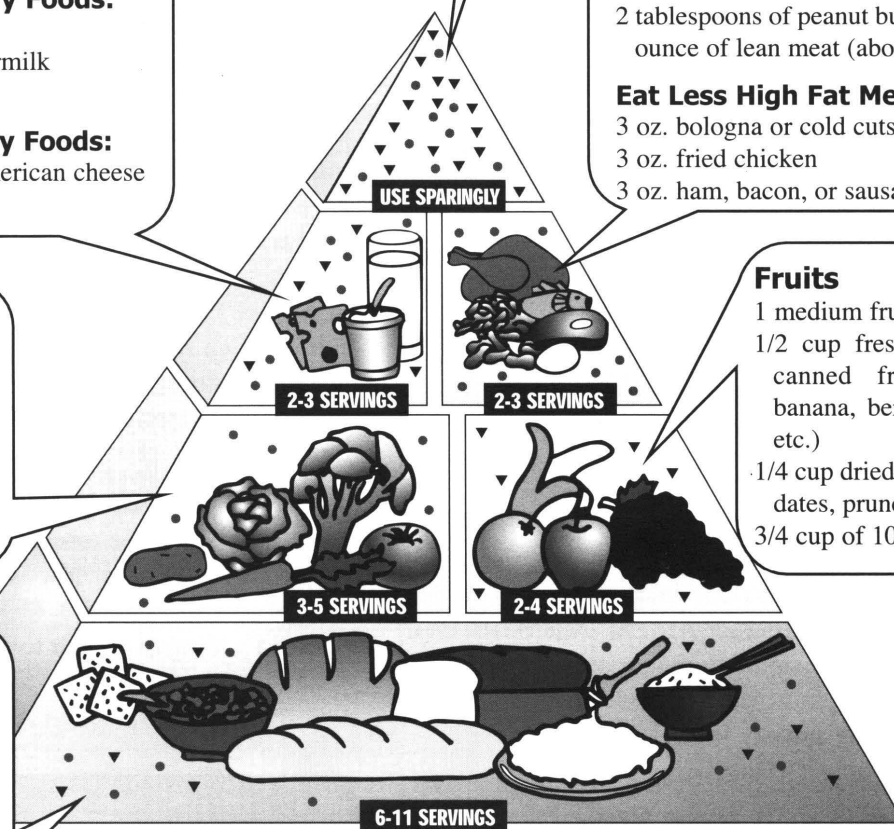
1/2 cup corn  
1/2 cup cooked greens  
1/2 cup green beans  
1 cup leafy raw vegetables  
1/2 cup potato salad  
1/2 cup squash  
1 medium sweet potato

## Fruits

1 medium fruit  
1/2 cup fresh, cooked, or canned fruits (apples, banana, berries, peaches, etc.)  
1/4 cup dried fruits (raisins, dates, prunes, etc.)  
3/4 cup of 100% fruit juice

## Grains

1 slice bread  
1/2 cup dry cereal  
1/2 cup grits (cooked)  
1/2 cup rice (cooked)  
1/2 cup macaroni noodles (cooked)  
1 small piece corn bread



## The ABC's of Changing Your Family's Health

You can have a healthier lifestyle by changing what is on your plate. It is important to include physical activity in your life to stay healthy. Improve your family's health by following the 2000 Dietary Guidelines for Americans:

### Aim For Fitness...

- Aim for a healthy weight.
- Be physically active each day.

### Build A Healthy Base...

- Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.
- Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains.
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Keep food safe to eat.

### Choose Sensibly...

- Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.
- Choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

## Diabetes

The Center for Disease Control estimates that 3 million or 10.8% of all African Americans have diabetes. African Americans are 1.7 times as likely to develop diabetes as non-Hispanic Whites.\*

Diabetes (Type I or Type II) is a disease that affects the way the body uses energy in food. People with diabetes have trouble controlling their blood sugar levels. Diabetes can have serious, even life threatening effects on health, if not managed properly. How do you know if you have diabetes?

### Symptoms of diabetes include:

- Tiredness
- Increased thirst
- Increased urination
- Infections and cuts that don't heal
- Blurred vision
- Hunger
- Diabetes is often detected by a urine test.

### Tips if you have diabetes:

- Follow a low fat, diabetic eating plan and an exercise plan. Being overweight is a significant risk factor for developing diabetes.
- Lose excess weight and be physically active to control your blood sugar levels and maintain good health.
- If necessary, take pills or shots to keep your blood sugar levels under control.

### Having diabetes increases your risk of developing other health problems:

- Adults with diabetes are 2-4 times more likely to have heart disease or stroke.
- Of adults with diabetes, about 60-65% have high blood pressure.
- Diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of blindness in adults.

## Cancer

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Virginia.\* The exact causes of cancer are still not completely known. Lifestyle, family history, and the environment may contribute to the development of cancer. One third of all cancer deaths in the U.S. may be prevented by the types of foods that you eat. Research has shown that a diet high in fiber, vitamins, minerals, cancer fighting agents (phytonutrients), and low in fat and calories may reduce the risk of cancer.

White women have or develop breast cancer at a higher rate than African American women. However, African American women are 2.2 times more likely to die from breast cancer than White women.\*

### Tips to reduce your family's risk of cancer:

- Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits - at least 5 A Day. Fruits and vegetables contain cancer-fighting nutrients (phytonutrients) and supply fiber. Fiber may protect you from colon and rectal cancer.
- Eat a diet with lots of dried beans and whole grains. They are low in fat and full of fiber. Fiber helps move waste through your digestive system to keep you healthy.
- Eat colorful meals. A variety of two to three colorful fruits, vegetables, and whole grains on your plate give you many cancer-fighting nutrients.
- Limit your fat and eat less smoked, salted, and cured foods.

## Heart Disease

Heart disease is the number one killer in the United States.\* Heart disease includes heart attacks, stroke, high blood pressure, chest pain, poor circulation, and abnormal heartbeats. Heart disease is closely linked to high total blood cholesterol levels. Lowering blood cholesterol and blood pressure levels reduces the risk of developing heart disease.

### Tips to reduce your family's risk of heart disease:

- Eat a diet low in fat, especially saturated fat or animal fats.
- Follow an eating plan that is low in cholesterol. Watch consumption of egg yolks, whole milk, high fat cheeses, and organ meats.
- Eat more fiber.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Exercise.
- Manage stress.

## Physical Activity for Good Health

Like healthy eating, physical activity plays an important role in a healthy lifestyle.

There are several reasons why regular physical activity improves health:

- Reduces the risk of premature death

\*Information obtained from the Center for Disease Control's Chronic Diseases and their Risk Factors: The Nation's Leading Causes of Death, 1999

- Reduces the risk of developing diseases
- Helps maintain strong bones, muscles and joints
- Promotes psychological well-being
- Improves physical appearance

Walking is an easy and convenient form of physical activity for people of all ages and in almost any physical condition. Thirty minutes per day is all it takes! And you can break up your workout into 10 or 15-minute sessions. Try these suggestions:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevators.
- Park as far from the door as you can when shopping and walk.
- Walk or march in place as you talk on the phone or watch TV.
- Build up your walking activities slowly, especially if

you have been inactive for a long period of time.

- If you are currently physically in-active, begin your program by walking for 10 minutes three times a day. Slowly build up to a total of 30 minutes, most days of the week.
- If you are a man over 40 or woman over 50 or if you have a chronic disease, such as high blood pressure, heart disease or diabetes, you should talk to your doctor before beginning a walking program

## Preventive Care Check-ups Timeline for Adults

Regular medical checkups with your doctor or other health care provider are important for your health. You should talk with your provider to determine the proper check-up schedule for you.

| Age Screening                 | 18              | 20                          | 30 | 35                                | 40       | 45 | 50              | 55                      | 60 | 65     | 65+ |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|----------|----|-----------------|-------------------------|----|--------|-----|
| Blood pressure                |                 |                             |    | At least every 2 years            |          |    |                 |                         |    |        |     |
| Height and Weight             |                 |                             |    | Periodically                      |          |    |                 |                         |    |        |     |
| Breast Exam (women)           | Every 1-3 Years |                             |    |                                   | Yearly   |    |                 |                         |    |        |     |
| Dental                        |                 |                             |    | Periodically                      |          |    |                 |                         |    |        |     |
| Hearing                       |                 |                             |    |                                   |          |    |                 | Periodically            |    |        |     |
| Fecal Occult Blood            |                 |                             |    |                                   |          |    |                 | Yearly                  |    |        |     |
| Prostrate Cancer (men)        |                 |                             |    |                                   |          |    |                 | Periodically            |    |        |     |
| <b>Test</b>                   |                 |                             |    |                                   |          |    |                 |                         |    |        |     |
| Mammography (women)           |                 |                             |    |                                   | Baseline |    | Every 1-2 years |                         |    |        |     |
| Pap Smears                    |                 |                             |    | Every 1 – 3 years                 |          |    |                 |                         |    |        |     |
| Sigmoidoscopy                 |                 |                             |    |                                   |          |    |                 | Every 3 – 5 years (>50) |    |        |     |
| Cholesterol(lipid) profile    |                 |                             |    | Every 5 years after baseline test |          |    |                 |                         |    |        |     |
| <b>Immunizations</b>          |                 |                             |    |                                   |          |    |                 |                         |    |        |     |
| Tetanus-diphtheria (Td)       |                 |                             |    | Every 10 years                    |          |    |                 |                         |    |        |     |
| Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) |                 | Women of childbearing years |    |                                   |          |    |                 |                         |    |        |     |
| Pneumococcal                  |                 |                             |    |                                   |          |    |                 |                         |    | once   |     |
| Influenza                     |                 |                             |    |                                   |          |    |                 |                         |    | yearly |     |

**Note:** Major screening authorities include: American College of Physicians, American Medical Association, National Institutes of Health, and Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

### Reference:

*Clinicians Handbook of Preventive Services*, second edition. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, MD 1999.

National Institutes of Health. (2001). Detecting, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Cholesterol in Adults (Adult Treatment Panel III) Executive Summary. NIH Publication No. 01-3670). Washington, DC.

If you would like more information on nutrition, you may contact your local Virginia Cooperative Extension Office. The phone number for your local Extension Office can be found under the county or city listing for Virginia Cooperative Extension or at the following website: [www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu). This information is provided by Virginia Cooperative Extension in partnership with the following organization in your community: