

No Fads... Just Facts!

This article is published from the personal advice of the 2006-2007 Oakwood College Dietetic Interns.

BY MARTA SOVYANHADI

The American Dietetic Association recognizes March as National Nutrition Month, and the Oakwood College Dietetic Internship Program in Huntsville, Alabama, supports this effort. The mission of the National Nutrition Month is to promote healthful living through wise nutritional choices, as well as developing good habits in exercising.

Incorporating whole-grains and legumes (beans, peas, and lentils) in the diet is a healthier choice that is lower in fat and cholesterol and high in fiber. Both whole-grain products and legumes are rich in vitamins and

minerals such as iron, folate, riboflavin, niacin, thiamin, calcium, and zinc. The fiber in whole grains and legumes takes longer to digest, resulting in a more lasting feeling of fullness. This feeling of fullness is due to fiber. Fiber provides several benefits: it decreases blood cholesterol levels, constipation, improves weight control by satiety with fewer calories, and improves diabetes control.

Substituting soymilk for cow's milk is a way to cut fat, cholesterol, and calories without losing nutrition. Soymilk is a good calcium source, and it has several beneficial roles in the diet as an

alternative to cow's milk. Soymilk is lactose-free and can be a good solution for lactose intolerant individuals. The protein in soymilk is nutritionally equivalent to animal protein. Unlike cow's milk, soymilk is cholesterol-free, low in saturated fat, and adequately provides iron. The American Heart



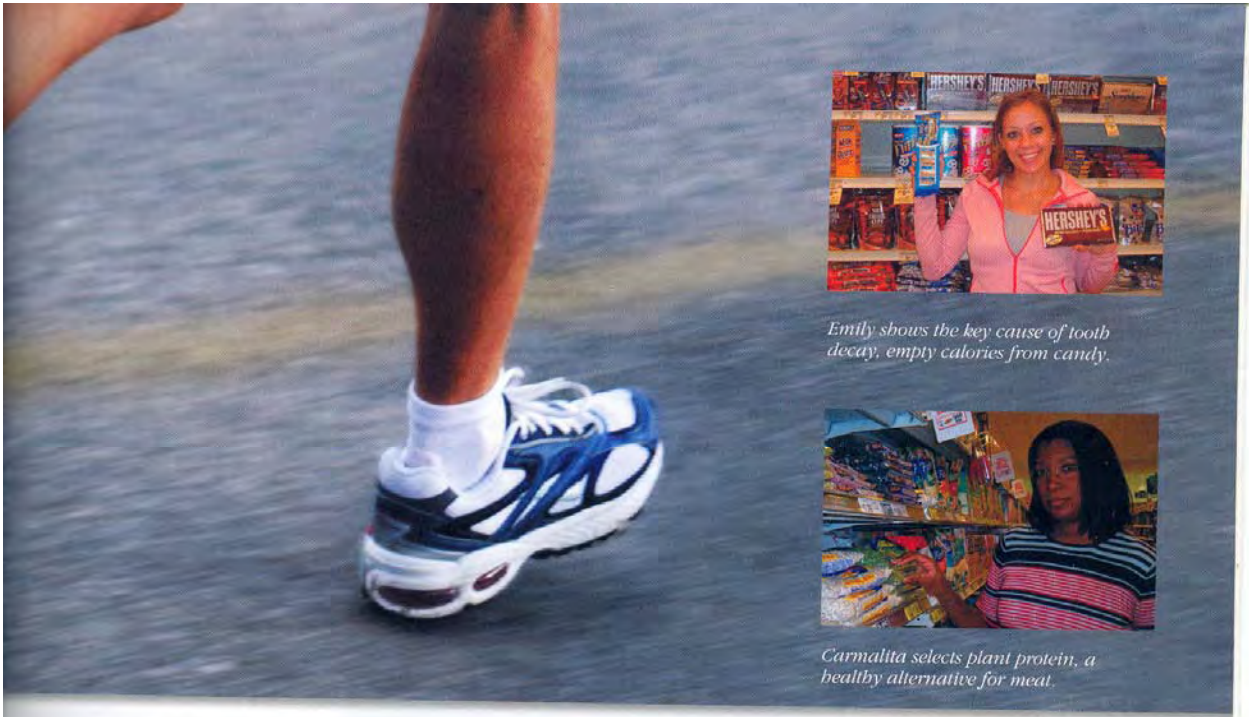
Jeegna educates grocery patrons about healthy snacks.

Association considers soy products a healthy replacement for meat.

Fruits and vegetables are perhaps the most important part of a well-balanced diet, especially green, leafy vegetables. The animal kingdom (cows, rabbits, horses, etc.) has lived off this principle for years. It is important that we try to go back to the basics and follow the same diet. By eating colorful fruits and vegetables, you are adding a wide range of vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and phytochemicals your body uses to help fight off cancers and infections and maintain good health. Always remember, as the American Dietetic Association puts it best, "Vary your veggies." As a rule, try to include more orange and dark green leafy vegetables in your diet daily.



Marta Sovyanhadi (back row, right), dietetic internship program director, with the 2006-07 Oakwood College dietetic interns



Emily shows the key cause of tooth decay, empty calories from candy.



Carmalita selects plant protein, a healthy alternative for meat.

Though all foods fit into the pyramid, candies and sweets should be used as a "luxury." Candies contain mostly added sugars; they fit into the food guide pyramid as "fats and oils," which should be used in moderation. Calories from candy do not offer much nutrition and are the key cause in tooth decay.

A healthy snack alternative to candy is nuts. A small daily serving consisting of various types of nuts can contribute to a wide variety of vitamins, minerals, dietary fibers, and phytochemicals. In particular, eating nuts greatly lowers the risk of heart disease, stroke, and Type-2 diabetes. The recommended amount is about one to two ounces of nuts daily to



Alaina (left) and Stephanie recommend fresh produce.

gain the maximum health benefit. Thus, for optimal health, consider GOING NUTS!

Are you stressed out? According to the American Institute of Stress, disorders that may be linked to stress include heart attack, stroke, hypertension, anxiety, and depression. Be careful. Over-eating and under-eating can be triggered by stress. It is important to learn how to manage stress through exercise, nutrition, and relaxation. Taking the weekend off and enjoying nature is a great way to relax. During your weekend off, it is very important to remember to get outside, use your senses, and enjoy all that nature has to offer.

Exercise is fundamental in maintaining a healthy body and an active lifestyle. Exercise also helps you mentally as well as physically. Psychological benefits such as a greater sense of well-being, increased self-esteem, and decreased anxiety or depression have been linked to exercise. Regular exercise helps to prevent heart disease, normalize blood pressure, regulate blood sugar, prevent bone mineral loss, promote weight loss and flexibility, and boost metabolism.



Valerie teaches children the benefits of soy milk.

The human body, which is 55 to 75 percent water, is in need of constant water replenishment. If one gets hungry, a cold glass of water or sucking on ice can also calm hunger pains. Drinking about six to eight glasses of water per day is known to reduce migraine, arthritis, angina, heartburn, hypertension, cholesterol, and blood pressure, among other common ailments.

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