

# High-pressure lifestyle often causes poor diet

UNIVERSITY PARK — Disruptive pressures often keep people from eating vegetables needed for well-balanced nutrition, according to a study within the College of Agriculture at The Pennsylvania State University.

The study featured a random sampling of women ages 20 to 59 in the Northeastern U.S. Economist Robert O. Herrman of Penn State reported that 75 percent of the women surveyed believed their health would suffer if they didn't eat vegetables. But only 15 percent knew that nutritionists recommend eating four or more servings of vegetables and fruit daily. Most women thought the recommendation was less.

The findings were reported during the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association held recently in Hershey. Cooperating on the project was Rex H. Warland, Penn State rural sociologist.

The Penn State study looked particularly at women in one subgroup who felt they needed to eat more vegetables but were low users. A majority of women in this subgroup felt time pressures were affecting the quality of their diets. Many of the women were young and probably felt under pressure to get their careers off to a good start, Dr. Herrmann noted.

About 40 percent of the women

who felt they needed more vegetables, but were low consumers, also were under financial pressure. These women typically were part of small households. They were less frequently married and less frequently had children than other women.

Overall, women lacking vegetables in their meals and who felt they needed more were in situations where irregular and erratic meal patterns were likely to occur. And their somewhat disorganized lifestyle was coupled with a dislike for cooking.

"We need ways to make it easy and less costly for such people to eat more vegetables," Dr. Herrmann declared.

Along this line, he recommended certain marketing strategies based on food costs and time pressures:

1. When produce is pre-packaged, offer some small packages to hold down cost and to

provide amounts suitable for small households.

2. Offer partly prepared and pre-trimmed vegetables to make preparation more convenient.

3. Encourage use of ready-to-eat raw vegetables, thus cutting preparation time and reducing the time of cooking tasks often disliked

by women.

"In appealing to low users of vegetable, I don't feel it's useful to put the chief emphasis on nutrition," he commented. "Women who were aware of the amount of vegetables and fruit recommended by nutritionists ate only slightly more than those who

were unaware of nutritional needs."

The Penn State economist claimed appeals for women lacking vegetables in their meals should work equally well for other groups. Being rushed affects the quality of diets among many people, he stated.

## Evaluate values, then delegate time

DELAWARE COUNTY — Many of us jump from crisis to crisis and never take time to relax. When both parents work, or when one parent is also the only parent, managing time becomes even tougher, partly because there is less time available to manage.

If you are a working parent, remember that your spouse, your children and your job all need part of your time, says Greta C. Vairo, extension home economist with the Penn State Extension Service. To meet these often conflicting demands start by declining what is

most important to you and your family.

Set short term daily goals and then longer term goals. These goals should reflect your values. Your daily time use should then be directed toward reaching your goals. The trouble most working parents have is resolving the conflict between goals, values and time use. Taking time to identify your values before setting goals can be time well invested.

Once you've decided on your most important goals, the relative

importance of tasks related to those goals becomes clearer. You can decide what must be done first, what can wait and what can be eliminated. Time spent helping a child with homework may be more important than baking a cake. Time to talk with your spouse may be more important than vacuuming the carpets. What's the best use of your time? You must decide, based on what is important to you and your family. Penn State is an affirmative action, equal opportunity university.

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