

Nutrition Fair Makes Learning Fun

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)

— You won't eat a nutritious diet unless you understand the Food Guide Pyramid and the need to follow a healthy lifestyle. But learning about nutrition is often boring and a bit confusing.

As a nutrition aide with Penn State's Extension Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), Brenda Stallman's job is to help low-income families improve their diets by teaching nutrition and stretching food dollars.

The acronym EFNEP may sound a bit intimidating to some, but Stallman puts the most timid at ease when she's touting sound eating practices.

And she's always on the lookout to make learning about nutrition fun, understandable, and memorable. Last year, Stallman came up with the idea for a Nutrition Fair in the heart of Lancaster City. The Fair was such a hit, that this year another one was held to coincide with March Nutrition Month.

Stallman coordinated the efforts of many agencies who work with inner city clientele. Each agency set up separate stations in the large community room of the Boys and Girls Club.

Everyone knows water is necessary for health, yet many people do not drink enough water, according to nurses representing the Well-

ness Program of St. Joseph Hospital.

Next to air, water is the element most necessary for survival. Water carries nutrients and oxygen to the cells through the blood and helps cool the body through perspiration. Water also helps lubricate joints.

Attendees at the fair could participate in body demographic screening. By stepping on an instrument that looks similar to a scale, the instrument was able to read the amount of water in the body in relation to fat and bones. Most people participating found out they were not drinking enough water.

By not drinking enough water, many people incur excess body fat, poor muscle tone and size, decreased digestive efficiency and organ function, increased toxicity in the body, joint and muscle soreness, and water retention.

The minimum water for a healthy person is 8-10 glasses a day. More is needed if you're exercising or if the weather is hot.

"If you are doing any physical activity, drink an additional 16-ounces water prior to exercise and 8- to 16-ounces water after physical activity to recover," the instructor told participants.

Calcium intake is important to the health of everyone regardless of age. One of the best sources of calcium is milk, yet many people do not drink milk because they believe it is fattening. Although



From left, Connie Rutt, volunteer, and Brenda Stallman, EFNEP adviser, talk with teacher Mary Lou Cook, who brought students dressed as clowns to entertain children at the Nutrition Fair.

skim milk includes all the nutrients of whole milk without the fat calories, many people do not drink skim milk because they formed the misconception that skim milk doesn't taste good.

To show how difficult it is to differentiate among the different milk available, people could participate in the Milk Challenge. Unmarked paper cups were filled with milk in whole, 2%, 1%, and skim milk denominations. Participants were supposed to identify the milk by its taste.

"No one has got them all right," said an EFNEP adviser of the results of the Milk Challenge. "This proves that people can substitute skim or lower-fat milk without sacrificing flavor."

Another health concern related to diet is blood pressure. High intakes of sodium are known to raise blood pressure in some



Participants were taught to choose nutritious snacks instead of those high in calories, fat, and sodium.



This mother and her children take a break to enjoy some of the food served at the Nutrition Fair.

Homestead Notes



Clowns from the Washington Elementary School provide entertainment and participate in some of the activities such as the hopscotch nutrition game.

sodium-sensitive individuals. Almost all foods have some sodium, which is an essential nutrient in the functioning of muscles, nerves, blood pressure, and blood volume. The problem is that the average person consumes much more sodium than what is considered an adequate level.

Participants were encouraged to take a quiz to assess their sodium intake. While high sodium sources include cured and processed meats, canned vegetables, processed cheeses, salted nuts, and pretzels, many are surprised to find that a pickle contains 1,400 milligrams of sodium compared to 252 milligrams in a serving of chips.

Ideas for eating healthy snacks included a table where children could concoct a snack by forming a butterfly from celery filled with peanut butter or cream cheese, pretzel twists, pretzel sticks, and raisins.

There were activities for those of all ages.

"You are never too young to learn to choose healthy food that builds strong bones and healthy bodies," Stallman said.

Here are some of the recipes distributed to Nutrition Fair visitors.

Orange or Pineapple Julius
1 cup frozen orange juice concentrate

1 1/2 cups milk
1 1/2 cups water
1/4 cup sugar

1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla
20 ice cubes, crushed if possible
Make sure the lid is tightly closed and then the fun begins.

Shake, shake, shake until all ingredients are well mixed. Pour into eight glasses and enjoy!

You can use a blender to make it extra creamy. Substitute pineapple juice for the orange juice for a refreshing change.

Peter Pumpkin Squares

16-ounce can pumpkin
1 1/2 cups brown sugar
4 eggs
1/4 cup cooking oil
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 cups rolled oats
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt

In mixing bowl, stir together pumpkin, brown sugar, eggs, and oil until well mixed. Combine flour, oats, cinnamon, baking powder, and baking soda.

Add flour mixture to pumpkin mixture and mix well.

Pour into greased 13x9x2-inch baking pan.

Bake in 350 degree oven for 30 minutes.