

- Building Strong Communities
- Helping Youth Succeed
- Building Healthy Families

*MSU Extension's Children, Youth and Family Programs help families succeed by improving life in homes, schools and communities. Educational opportunities are designed to meet the needs of people at all stages of the life cycle.*

## Working to Promote Healthy Weight Through Nutrition Education

### \* Prevention of Obesity is Key \*

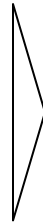
#### Issues

#### **Obesity rates continue to climb increasing health care costs.**

The poor health outcomes of being overweight costs \$117 billion each year in medical costs and lost work in the U.S. Being overweight increases the risk for many chronic diseases. A well balanced diet including a variety of foods is key to better health and the prevention of obesity.

#### **Obesity treatment is far more costly than obesity prevention.**

- ♦ Breastfeeding is recognized as the optimal source of nutrition for infants. Studies are demonstrating a protective effect of breastfeeding against childhood and later obesity. Research shows a 30% reduction in obesity rates among children who were breastfed.
- ♦ Intervention with parents of young children has the potential to decrease obesity later in life. Promoting healthy eating through education and increasing access to healthy foods are key to the prevention of obesity.



#### MSU Extension's Response

#### **Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) & Family Nutrition Program (FNP)**

EFNEP and FNP help families with low incomes acquire the knowledge and skills needed to improve their diets and health. These programs help participants stretch their food dollars and enhance their nutrition. MSU Extension instructors provide education on nutrition, food preparation, food resource management and food safety. Cost benefit studies have been done on EFNEP in several states and have consistently shown that for every \$1 invested in EFNEP approximately \$10 is saved in healthcare costs. FNP is a partnership with the Family Independence Agency.

#### **Breastfeeding Initiative, Mother-to-Mother Program**

MSU Extension and the Michigan Department of Community Health Women, Infants and Children division (WIC) have collaborated to develop a breastfeeding peer counseling program. Peer counselors provide encouragement and education to low-income pregnant and breastfeeding women in 18 Michigan counties. The Program increases breastfeeding initiation and duration rates among the nutritionally at-risk population.

#### **Nutrition Education Aimed at Toddlers (NEAT)**

The MSU College of Nursing is partnering with MSUE to provide education to parents of toddlers in 28 Michigan counties. NEAT is designed to encourage toddlers' self-regulated feeding behavior and toddler-parent feeding interaction. The program involves parents of toddlers enrolled in Early Head Start.



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## Bringing Knowledge to Life!

MSU Extension helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities. This organization provides access to research, knowledge and programming in all 83 Michigan counties. It is funded jointly by county boards of commissioners, the state of Michigan through Michigan State University, and federally through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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### \* Healthy Eating for Children and Teens \*

#### Issues

#### **The number of children who are overweight is rising at an alarming rate.**

The number of children aged 6 to 11 who are overweight has more than doubled over the past 20 years. The number of overweight adolescents has tripled. These children are at risk for developing life-long health problems, including high blood pressure, heart disease and an increased risk for Type 2 diabetes, which could massively increase future health care costs.

#### **As children grow into teens, the likelihood of eating breakfast declines sharply.**

People who eat breakfast regularly tend to have other healthy diet and activity patterns and weigh less than those that do not. Kids begin to skip breakfast in their early-to mid-teens because they think it takes too much time away from what they prefer or need to do in the morning. Kids who eat breakfast are more attentive in the classroom, show greater improvements on test scores and have fewer behavioral problems in the classroom.

#### **Our youth lack reliable information to make healthy lifestyle decisions**

At a time when "fast food" and "microwave" are everyday household words, kids need all the information they can get about their food and fitness options. Health involves the physical, social, intellectual, mental and environmental well-being of young people.

#### MSU Extension's Response

#### **Team Nutrition**

Team Nutrition is a national USDA initiative to motivate, encourage and empower schools, families and communities to work together to improve school meals and help students make food and physical activity choices for a healthy lifestyle. Over 800 Michigan schools participate in this collaborative effort of the Michigan Department of Education and MSUE. Schools report improvements in their school nutrition and physical activity environments.

#### **Michigan Nutrition Network (MNN)**

MNN fosters public-private collaborations focused on nutrition and health to achieve behavior change. Over 200 partners recently collaborated to reach more than 200,000 people with messages about the importance of eating breakfast during the "Eat Healthy. Eat Breakfast." campaign. Breakfast eating behavior increased by 12% among 11 to 15 year olds. Awareness of the importance of breakfast among families with children under age 18 increased by 74%.

#### **4-H Youth Programs**

Michigan 4-H Youth Development supports and empowers individuals, families and volunteers to help young people make proactive decisions about healthy lifestyles. 4-H programs are located in all 83 counties in Michigan with nearly 250,000 youth participants annually. 4-H links decision making skill building to current health issues to teach youth the ability to make healthy lifestyle choices.



Family &  
Consumer  
Sciences

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