

Wellness Works Coordinator's Bulletin

Providing your wellness committee with updates and relevant health information!

March 2017

Highlights from this Month's Bulletin:



Diabetes Risk

6 simple changes to reduce your risk. Consider the Prevent T2 Program, also!

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Workplace Food

Healthier options for a positive impact on employees' health.

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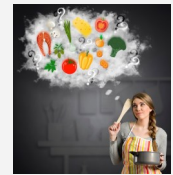
Toaster Sweet Potato

Hipster toast!

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Meal Preparation...

or the process of getting foods ready to eat or cook offers busy people extraordinary benefits such as time savings, lower costs and faster home-cooked meals.



In restaurants, the practice of prepping food is called "mise en place" and explains how restaurants can cook lots of different orders so quickly. Beginners can start slowly by prepping their favorite recipes for meals for one or two days before tackling meals for a week or attempting challenging new recipes.

More benefits of meal preparation include better nutrition and easier food preparation during the work week when hectic couples usually don't bother to cook. People who are dieting or trying special diets for their health can spend a little free time prepping food and have healthy food choices available all week. Other benefits of meal preparation include:

- Cost savings by buying foods in bulk
- Easier planning of healthy, nutritious or special-diet meals
- Natural way to lose weight by eating unprocessed foods
- Food available to take along on outings or to work for lunch and snacks

Contact Danielle at dyale@memun.org to schedule "The Game Changer – Meal Planning and Preparation" Learn more about saving yourselves time in the long run and making healthier food choices.

SIX SIMPLE CHANGES THAT CAN CUT YOUR RISK OF DIABETES

One out of three U.S. adults have prediabetes, which puts them on the road to type 2 diabetes. Nine out of ten of them don't know it, but there is some good news: A healthy diet and moderate exercise can cut the risk of diabetes in half, even for people whose risk is already high. Even better news: You can cut your risk of diabetes quickly!

Here are six changes you can make in your diet that lower your risk of developing diabetes:

1. **Unhealthy carbs.** Cutting back on unhealthy carbohydrates—basically white flour and other refined starch, sugar, and potatoes—is helpful.
2. **Sugary drinks.** There's about a 25% increase in the risk of diabetes for each 12 oz. serving of sugar-sweetened beverages per day!
3. **Meat.** Both processed and unprocessed red meat are related to a higher risk of type 2 diabetes. If you want to keep diabetes risk low, replace red meat with some beans, nuts or other plant sources of protein, or some dairy, poultry, or fish.
4. **Yogurt.** We need more studies, but so far it looks like yogurt—but not overall dairy—seems to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes.
5. **Coffee.** Each daily cup of coffee was linked to a 4 to 8 percent lower risk of diabetes, this is probably due to the flavonoids and antioxidants in coffee.
6. **Magnesium.** People who consume more magnesium-rich foods—like leafy greens, beans, nuts, and whole grains—have a lower risk of progressing from prediabetes to diabetes.

Don't forget the exercise component too! With diet changes like these and regular, moderate exercise to keep everyone at low risk, we could prevent about 90% of type 2 diabetes in the United States!

Source: Nutrition Action, 2017

Is Your Workplace a Food Desert?

Food deserts are areas that lack access to affordable fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk, and other foods that make up the full range of a healthy diet. If you struggle to find healthy foods at your workplace, the important thing to remember is that you can still take steps to make changes to the food options in your break rooms and improve your diet at the same time!

What's the big deal with having sweets available on the break room counters and in employee vending machines you ask? A LOT! Many studies show that food deserts can influence the types of foods people purchase and eat—which can have a negative impact on people's health. Without access to fresh, healthy, whole foods, people are forced to choose healthier, prepared options that typically have higher amounts of fat, sugar, and calories. This increases employees' risk for chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease and obesity!

So what can you do?

- Take stock of your employee break rooms and kitchens. Do a quick assessment of the food options and tally how many whole, unprocessed foods are available versus packaged, processed options.
- Out with the old and in with the new! Go to the grocery stores or talk to your vendors about what healthier options you can offer employees. Stock the freezer with frozen fruits that can be made into smoothies. Add a blender to the counter top and include chia seeds or ground flax in the cupboards that people can add to smoothies or fruit parfaits.

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Want to give employees a plan on reducing and reversing their risk of type 2 diabetes?



Abby offers a year-long lifestyle change program called 'Prevent T2' that is proven to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes. Prevent T2 is a program that can help participants lose weight, become more physically active, reduce stress—all while reducing their risk for type 2 diabetes. There are weekly meetings for the first 6 months, then once or twice a month for the second 6 months. Participants will be held accountable for their health goals with pre-meeting weigh-ins as well as food/activity journals. **Prevent T2 is a great program for anyone**, especially those diagnosed or at -risk for developing type 2 diabetes and for those who support these individuals. Prevent T2 is a separate program from the TDES program but could certainly compliment TDES! Contact Abby at adipasquale@memun.org to discuss offering this at your worksite!

There is a Sweet Potato in My Toaster

What if we told you that you can turn sweet potatoes into "toast?" Would you think we had lost our minds?! Well, maybe we have, but we have tried this and it's fantastic! We know...you may be thinking "a sweet potato cannot replace my bread," but this is one delicious alternative, especially if you are still working on making the transition to whole-grain bread or looking for ways to boost your veggie intake!

So how do you turn this veggie into "toast?"

1. Wash and pat your sweet potato dry. There is no need to peel! But, if you do decide to peel them, save those peels and roast them...they make delicious crunchy Parmesan Potato Skin Fries.
2. Thinly slice off one side of the sweet potato to get a flat cutting surface. Then, slice the potato lengthwise into 1/4-inch-thick slices. If you cut them too thick, they will take too long to cook. (If you do cut them too thick, don't panic! Simply poke the slices with a fork and microwave them for 20-30 seconds before putting them in the toaster).
3. Turn the toaster to the highest setting.
4. Cooking time may vary depending on your toaster. Toast for 2-3 cycles (some toasters may take 4 to 6 cycles). Cook until brown in spots and tender. If you are wanting to cook several slices for a crowd, it may be easier to roast the sweet potato slices in the oven. Roast them at 450 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes, turning every 5 minutes.
5. Now, the fun part...top with whatever toppings your heart desires! The sweet potato adds a subtle sweetness without overpowering the taste of the toppings. Get creative—both sweet and savory toppings work great!

Try saving some extra slices, ready to grab out of the refrigerator to toast and top for a quick and easy breakfast. Kids can even try this easy breakfast or snack!

Source: *Eat Real America*, 2017

Why sweet potatoes?

- ◆ They are fat-free, low in sodium and contain a ton of beneficial vitamins and nutrients.
- ◆ Sweet potatoes are a Vitamin A powerhouse, providing 400% of your daily requirement!
- ◆ One of the best sources of beta-carotene, which is a powerful antioxidant and helps reduce the risk of disease including certain forms of cancer. To get the full benefit of the beta-carotene, it is best to add a little fat to your sweet potato meal...even just 1 Tbsp of extra virgin olive oil will help your body absorb the antioxidants.
- ◆ They also contain fiber, which helps control hunger, lowers blood cholesterol levels and keeps things regular (if you know what we mean!). Sweet potatoes actually have slightly more fiber than white potatoes.

Topping ideas:

- ◆ Avocado slices and a poached egg
- ◆ Salmon, capers and arugula
- ◆ Pears, bananas, almond butter and walnuts
- ◆ Peanut butter, strawberry slices, blueberries and sliced almonds
- ◆ Hummus and sliced tomatoes



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(Workplace Food Desert continued from page 2)

- Bring them in! Invite the local farmers markets to come set up shop in your parking lots once a week and encourage employees to visit...maybe even offer them a discount or coupon for free produce. If this seems like too much, bring in fresh fruit/veggie baskets at regular intervals for employees to enjoy.
- Make it normal. Cakes, cookies and sweets seem to be included at every gathering or event. Why not change it up and make whole fruits and vegetables the norm. Ask employees for their favorite recipes or hold a cook-off for bragging rights about the best "healthy" recipes.

Want more ideas about updating your workplace to include healthier options?

Contact Anne at Wellness Works at acharles@memun.org.