



NutritionWise  
NICOLE MEADOW, MPN, RD

# M NUTRITIONWISE MONTHLY

MARCH 2008

## NUTRITION: IT'S A MATTER OF FACT!

That's right, it's March and you know what that means! Every year, since 1973, March has been designated as National Nutritional Month® (NNM). It started as a week long event but due to an overwhelming public interest, it became a month long observance in 1980. The theme for National Nutrition Month® 2008 is Nutrition: It's A Matter Of Fact!

It's tough to decipher the truth about nutrition, health and food these days especially with the influence of the media. The goal of NNM 2008 is to help distinguish between nutrition fact and fiction. Here are some common food myths (provided by the American Dietetic Association website).

## MYTH VS. FACT

**Myth: Body weight is a reliable indicator of a healthful diet.**

**Fact:** No two people have the same body composition. The measure of a person's diet and your overall health is a combination of factors, including weight.

**Myth: Eating carbohydrates causes weight gain.**

**Fact:** Calories cause weight gain. Excess carbohydrates are no more fattening than calories from any other source.

**Myth: Eating just before bedtime is fattening.**

**Fact:** What you eat, not when, makes the difference; calories have the same effect on the body no matter when they are consumed. (Eating

before bedtime is bad for digestion so try not to eat at least 1 ½ hours before lying down.) Evidence does suggest that eating regular meals, especially breakfast, helps promote weight loss by reducing fat intake and minimizing impulsive snacking.

**Myth: Eating sugar causes diabetes.**

**Fact:** Diabetes is caused by a lack of insulin in the body. Since foods that are high in sugar are often high in calories, overeating those foods can lead to weight gain. Research shows people who are overweight and obese are at increased risk for diabetes.

**Myth: Occasionally following a fad diet is a safe way to quickly lose weight.**

**Fact:** Many fad diets are developed by people with no science or health background. Some fad diets can even be considered harmful to people with certain health problems. When trying to lose weight, consult a registered dietitian.

## STEP INTO SHAPE... WITH A PEDOMETER

You know that it is extremely important to be physically active on a daily basis... the next question is how is it possible to fit it in to your family's busy schedule?



Recent statistics compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System data suggests that approximately 35% of adolescents do not participate in regular physical activity; 45% of

(CONTINUED ON BACK)

## TRY THE FOLLOWING IDEAS TO INCREASE YOUR DAILY STEPS

- » Take the stairs, rather than the elevator whenever possible
- » Park at the far end of the parking lot
- » Hide the TV remote and get up to change the channels
- » Return the shopping cart all the way to the market
- » Walk the dog
- » When talking on the phone, walk around instead of sitting or standing
- » Before or after dinner, make a family routine of taking a 15-20 minute walk together

(FYI: 1 mile= 2000 steps; 10 minutes of walking= 1200 steps on average; bicycling or swimming= 150 steps for each minute; rollerblading= 200 steps per minute)

*\*Increasing the steps that you take each day will benefit the physical and mental health of both you and your family. Now let's get moving!*

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT)

children do not play on any sports teams; and only 29% of high school students attend daily PE classes. So... how can you increase your family's activity level and therefore improve their overall health? Try using a pedometer! Pedometers easily measure the steps (called "lifestyle steps") that each of us take throughout the day. Walking



is a great way to stay in shape and can be a fun way to increase your entire family's level of physical activity. Start by purchasing pedometers for all members of the family. The first week, simply record the amount of steps taken by each member. The following week make a goal of how many steps you want to increase your daily total by. (Adults should aim to take 10,000 steps per day to maintain a healthy weight status. A study published in the June 2004 "Prevention Medicine" revealed that children ages 6-12 should aim to take approximately 12,000 (girls) to 15,000 (boys) steps per day to maintain a healthy BMI.)

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nicole Meadow, MPN, RD is a Registered Dietitian in private practice whose specialty is working with infants, children and young adults and their families. For more information or to set up a nutrition consultation appointment, please contact (818) 304-1876 or email [nicole@nicolemeadow.com](mailto:nicole@nicolemeadow.com). Her office is located at 5400 Balboa Boulevard (Suite 301) in Encino. [www.nicolemeadow.com](http://www.nicolemeadow.com)

