Living Well

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES NEWSLETTER FOR NORTHEAST COLORADO

January-February, 2024

Financial Health in the New Year



The beginning of the year is a great time to examine your financial health and develop a plan for the rest of the year. If you are unsure what financial goals could be, here are some common ones people often set at the beginning of a new year.

• Save more – This does not have to mean increasing your savings accounts. You could increase your 401(k) contributions, cut back on unnecessary spending, or look at interest rates on different types of accounts that you could open or move your money to.

• Improve your credit score – You can improve your score in several ways including paying bills on time and in full, paying off debt, limiting how many new accounts you open, and cutting back on spending.

• Create a personal budget – A clear budget can help you set guidelines for what you can afford to spend and areas you could cut back. Start by writing down fixed expenses such as rent or mortgage, cell phone bill, and savings. Then, add in any flexible expenses such as eating out, clothing costs, and entertainment costs. If you already have a budget, see if it will still work for you. You may have had a raise at work, the cost of utilities may have increased, or you may have realized you want to allocate your money differently.

• Pay off a credit card entirely – If you are struggling with credit card debt, you are not alone. Make it your goal to pay off as much each month as you can and limit your spending on credit until it is paid off.

• Check your credit score more often – There are many resources that will allow you to check your credit score for free. Some applications can even send you a monthly update and help you evaluate your score.

Source: https://www.cnbc.com/select/financial-new-years-resolutions/ https://extension.usu.edu/finance/research/what-is-financial-health

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February - Heart Health Month



Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. Luckily heart disease can be prevented! Diet and exercise play a huge role in preventing heart disease and other chronic illnesses like diabetes, cancers, and obesity. Dietary adjustments can feel restricting, but the reality is all you need to do is limit four items in your diet! Sodium is necessary for physiological function but an overabundance of it can lead to chronic illness down

the road. Processed foods are high in sodium, saturated fats, and added sugars, so an easy way to start reducing these in your diet is by cooking with raw ingredients! This allows you to address how much sodium your meals have!

Eat!	Limit!
 Vegetables Fruits Whole grains Fat-free or low-fat dairy Protein-rich foods: Fish Lean meats Eggs Nuts, seeds, and soy products Legumes Oils and foods high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats: 	 Added Sugars Saturated Fats Alcohol Sodium

OR!

Read the food labels on the back of packages to find sodium, saturated fat, and sugar content of the package or serving. Look for labels with nutrients that will be beneficial to your diet like fiber and iron and look for nutrients with a low Daily Value % (DV%) in saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium.

General Guide to %DV

- 5% DV or less of a nutrient per serving is considered low
- 20% DV or more of a nutrient per serving is considered high
- Based on a 2,000 Calorie Diet

Below are examples	based on a 2,000	calories diet.
Nutri and	DV	

Nutrient	DV	%DV	Goal
Saturated Fat	20g	=100%DV	Less than
Sodium	2,300mg	=100%DV	Less than
Dietary Fiber	28g	=100%DV	At least
Added Sugars	50g	=100%DV	Less than
Vitamin D	20mcg	=100%DV	At least
Calcium	1,300mg	=100%DV	At least
Iron	18mg	=100%DV	At least
Potassium	4,700mg	=100%DV	At least



Exercise

Aerobic exercise is crucial maintenance for our bodies. Many Americans do not have an active lifestyle. Thirty minutes of activity per day is not an active lifestyle if you spend your workday at a desk or the majority of your day watching tv. Thirty minutes of aerobic or cardiovascular (cardio) activity can positively impact our sedentary lifestyles though! Aerobic activity helps keep your heart active by pumping harder than it must for day-to-day activities. If you aren't currently incorporating cardio into your workout routine, you might be feeling winded by everyday activities, such as going up and down your staircase. This is because that is the most strenuous activity you require your heart to pump harder for, so it is



"out of shape." If you pick up an old rubber band that hasn't been stretched for a period of time it will just break, but if you grab a rubber band that has been used several times and maintained elasticity it will work just fine. Your heart is a muscle that needs to be exercised, otherwise it won't work properly similar to the rubber band. Examples of cardiovascular (aerobic) exercise are HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training), workouts, riding the bike (including stationary), and walking.

Identifying Your Risk

Everyone is different so assess your personal situation. If you have a strong family history of heart disease it is even more important to understand the impact diet and exercise has on your health.

Risk Factors:

- High Blood Pressure
- High Blood Cholesterol
- Overweight or obese
- Have prediabetes or diabetes
- Smoke
- Do not get regular physical activity
- Family History
- Unhealthy eating behaviors
- Women 55 and older
- Men 45 and older

If any of these risks resonate with you, discuss your risk for heart disease with your doctor and make a game plan to reduce the risk! Eating nutritious foods and regular exercise are easy ways we can work towards preventing heart disease!

Source: <u>https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/heart-healthy-living/healthy-foods</u> Source: <u>https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label</u>



Let's Declutter and Get Organized



2024.... A New Year... and a great time to declutter and get organized. Decluttering can have a positive impact on your mental health, improve your focus, increase your self-esteem, relax your mind, and enhance your overall well-being. Many of us experience stress over a messy or untidy home or office, but it is challenging to keep up with the clutter and excess stuff we accumulate over time.

Your mental health will benefit if you make the decluttering process as low stress as you can. Let's face it, getting organized can seem like an incredibly

overwhelming task that could make you feel defeated before you even start. Follow these helpful tips so it becomes more manageable and you see progress to your goal.

Helpful Tips to Declutter and Get Organized

• Schedule time to declutter – Set aside time to declutter. You can break this task into smaller chunks or dedicate a day or weekend to work on one area. Try setting due dates for each area or create a realistic timeline of tasks to be completed.

• **Prioritize and plan** – Choose 1 to 5 areas in your home (or one thing – bedroom dresser) that need your attention first. Once you have created this plan, stick to it. It is very easy to move to another area or become distracted by another task. Avoid this temptation and finish one task or area, then move to the next one on your plan.

• **Divide belongings into categories** – As you are cleaning off the dresser or area, have 3 bins ready to sort items into: *KEEP, DONATE/SELL, TOSS.* Do not have a MAYBE bin. Give yourself 5 seconds to remember the last time the item was used or worn. If you can't remember, then get rid of it. Once the dresser or area is empty, then do a quick clean. Also sort like items with like items, for example look at all your jeans and decide what action you will take.

• Use organizing tools – Start rearranging KEEP items and put them back inside the drawer or area into a specific space or "home". Use drawer separators or dividers with adjustable compartments to maintain structure and keep items from piling up or becoming a junk pile. If an item is left out after it was used, then return it to its proper place or "home." Use storage containers with a dual purpose, for example an ottoman with a lift-up lid.

• **Declutter high use areas daily** – Your living room and entry way are high traffic areas that need to be focused on daily. Spend time putting things away, for example, jackets, hats, and shoes. Choose permanent storage spaces for commonly used items like remotes, blankets, or electronics.

• **Celebrate your accomplishments** – Host an event or gathering at the completion of your project. Or take pictures of completed areas as a good reminder of how being organized looks and feels.

Other Useful Tips

• **Store and rotate seasonal items** – Use clear plastic storage containers or label containers for quick identification. Rotate clothing, footwear, or bedding when seasons change.



• **Be creative with storage areas** - Think vertically when storing items by using stackable tubs or ceiling or wall mounted storage. Use vacuum seal bags or space under your bed to store items.

• **Does it "spark" joy or a memory?** – It is hard to part with items we have had for a long time; deciding if they "spark" joy or a memory can make it easier to let them go. Ask yourself, why did I keep this in the first place? Does it have sentimental value? Do I use it? Will I use it again?

• **Designate a "put away" bin or "clutter basket"** – Have a basket for each member of your family. If a personal item is left out, place it in the specific basket or bin. This will make decluttering high use areas easier. Use baskets in the hallway or near the door to store hats, gloves, and scarves or for easy access to tissues, sunglasses, or flashlights.



• **Children's toys** – Think about rotating children's toys, books, or games. Have totes or open top containers so toys can easily be picked up and put in the labeled or color-coded container.

• **Bookshelves** – Bookshelves can be quickly overrun by books or non-book items. So, revisit books every once in a while and decide if you are still interested in the book or if the book needs to be donated. Once you have decreased the number of books to be displayed on the bookshelf, organize books by subject or author. Color coding books also make the bookshelf visually appealing to the eye. Plus, color coding is helpful for a young child to find their favorite book by the color of the cover.

• **Medicine cabinets** – Frequently check expiration dates on medications, makeup, after sun and insect bite creams. Store items you use most often at eye level.

• **Declutter as a daily routine** – Go through the mail by the garbage can so it is easy to throw out junk mail every day. Make it a habit and put your keys in the same place each day. Make your bed every morning, tidy up the living room each night, and put dirty laundry into designated hampers.

Keep working toward your goal and continue this decluttering momentum. Make it a habit! You will feel less stressed and have a sense of calmness. Remember, decluttering starts with a plan and small organized steps.

Other Resources:

How Decluttering Can Reduce Stress and Improve Focus (webmd.com) How to declutter your home: the new decluttering rules for 2023 (goodhousekeeping.com) Scientifically Proven Ways Clutter Takes a Toll on Your Mental Health | The Mental Health Effects of Mess | HGTV





Nutrient Navigator: Nutrition Label Importance

Food labels can be a great tool to help consumers manage a healthy diet, which is why it is so important to understand how to read a nutrition label efficiently. Labels allow consumers to make informed food choices that contribute to lifelong healthy eating habits. The purpose of nutrition labels on food products is to inform consumers about ingredients, nutrients, and products in the food. Labels can be complex and confusing as there is a variety of information listed. People look at food labels for a variety of reasons. For example, one may look at the label for weight control, high blood pressure, diabetes, or allergens. Regardless of your

individual reason for looking at the food label, there are a few key parts you may want to look at: serving size, calories, nutrients, and ingredients. If it seems overwhelming, try focusing on just a portion of the label for starters such as one of these categories that has the greatest effect on your personal health.

Serving Sizes

At the top of the label, it will show the serving size and servings in the container. Pay close attention to the serving size and the number of servings to discover the total number of nutrients or calories you consume. Serving sizes can sometimes be deceiving and we often eat more than the serving on the container. This is not always a bad problem, just note the nutrients and calories that should be adjusted accordingly. Sometimes, containers may also be labeled as servings for the entire package.

Calories

If you are looking closely at calories in your daily diet, that is the next section of the food label. Nutrition labels are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Daily calories needed may be higher or lower for people depending on their physical activity level, age, sex, height, weight, and current medical condition. Calories from food provide the energy your body needs to function and grow. It is important to balance the calories consumed with the number of calories we use to maintain a healthy balance. Watch for those 'empty' calories in products such as drinks, which don't give us high amounts of nutrients in comparison to calories. To take a closer look at calorie needs, go to <u>MyPlate Plan | MyPlate</u> for individualized information.

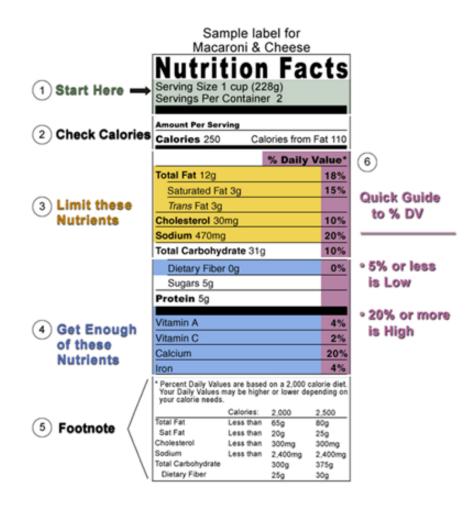
Nutrients

Nutrients in the food product are listed in the middle of the label. The percentage of daily value is used to show how many nutrients are in one serving of food that would contribute to your daily diet. Try to choose your nutrients wisely - choosing foods that have lower percentages of saturated fats, sodium, or added sugars. Foods high in cholesterol can increase your risk for heart disease. Look for foods that have high dietary fiber percentages along with vitamins and nutrients such as iron, potassium, calcium, or vitamin D. Foods high in fiber can be beneficial to a healthy diet, as fiber helps manage blood sugar levels and can lower cholesterol. If you are watching your sugar intake, looking at the total carbohydrates is going to be an important piece of the label for you. Foods high in carbohydrates are going to affect the glucose level in your body.

Ingredients

The ingredients list on food labels includes all components of the food or drink including additives and water. The list starts with the heaviest ingredients and the other ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. This section is also where you can identify allergens.

In addition to food labels just being on products from the grocery store, restaurants have started adding full nutrition data on their menus. Some recipe blogs and websites have also started to post labels to accompany the recipe, allowing consumers the overall nutrition facts rather than having to break it down themselves with ingredients purchased. Being informed of your health choices and taking the time to review nutrition labels creates opportunities for better health management. Knowing how to read a nutrition label can be tricky, but with time and practice, it can be a helpful tool for your overall health.



Source: <u>www.fda.gov</u> Source: <u>www.pennmedicine.org</u>



Winter Activities for the Family

Now that the holidays are over, you may be looking for some new activities to help keep your family entertained until Spring. You may be planning fun activities for your family indoors, but it is important to make sure youth have time to play outside too! Studies show even fifteen to twenty minutes of outdoor activity each day can have major health benefits for youth.

Constantly staying indoors and not getting enough sunlight can have a huge impact on sleeping patterns. The less sunlight people get each day, the more their body's natural rhythms are thrown off. Getting play time outside will help youth fall asleep at a regular time each night.



Having play time outside also helps keep youth active. It can be difficult to plan safe and

fun exercise indoors for youth, so if the weather is decent, plan some outside activities! If you have a sled at home, you can even take turns pulling each other around in the yard to get the whole family involved in a fun exercise.

Another benefit to having some play time outside is the fresh air. Studies have shown fresh air contributes to increased vitamin D, improvements in concentration, clearing lungs, lower blood pressure, and increased happiness levels. While it may be too cold during the winter months to spend an extended period outside, going out a couple of times for just a few minutes can be beneficial for youth.

Spending time outside is also linked to strengthened immune systems. It's no secret illnesses tend to run rampant though winter. One of the causes is that people are spending more time indoors leading to less ventilation and more germs circulating. The more time youth can spend playing outside, the stronger their immune system will be and the fewer germs will be circulating in the house.

Nature play also encourages problem solving and creativity in youth. Things tend to be less structured outside with changes in surroundings, weather, wildlife, etc. These variables make a great platform for learning. Outdoor play teaches youth problem solving and experimentation as they have to adapt to the changes around them.

Playing outside can also lead to increases in attention span for youth. Indoor activities tend to be more parentled, while outdoor activities allow youth to explore and be inventive. They may not stop to play with the outside toys and choose to find things in nature they can play with instead. Allowing youth to play outside and use their imagination can help increase their attention span.

It can take a long time to get youth bundled up to go outside, but there are so many benefits to playing outside that it is worth the time. Force yourself to get all the gear out, take a step, and reward yourself and your family with hot chocolate to warm up. You will all be happier for it.

Sources: <u>https://extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare/news/lets-go-</u> outside#:~:text=there%20is%20a%20great%20deal,%2C%20and%20social%2Demotional%20learning. https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/learning-environments/article/outdoor-play-benefits



Be Safe and Informed



January marks the time of year when people are setting goals and making resolutions for the new year. One of the most common resolutions is to lose weight, and weight loss products, diets, and recommendations run rampant. Obesity is considered one of the major public health concerns worldwide, but our

obsession with being thin is also on the rise and causes people to gravitate towards certain fad diets in hopes of fixing their struggle with weight loss or health issues. Although these diets usually lead to initial weight loss, they can also lead to weight regain, negative health outcomes and may be even more detrimental than being overweight.

Fad diets refer to popular or trendy dietary patterns known to be a "quick fix". These diets have certain characteristics that differentiate them from a healthy, balanced diet including promise rapid weight loss, absence of physical activity, promote short-term changes vs achieving lifelong goals and behavior change, focus on one type of food or eliminate food groups, cannot be maintained long term, do not provide adequate amounts/types of nutrients, do not provide health warnings for those with chronic diseases, and lack scientific evidence to support claims.

One of the current trends is the use of Ozempic, Mounjaro and Wegovy. Ozempic and Mounjaro are FDA approved medications for the treatment of Type 2 diabetes in adults but are not approved for weight loss. Wegovy, however, is approved for weight loss. Research and experts in the field recommend considering the benefits, concerns, and health factors before using these medications.

Benefits: Possible benefits to these medications are helping control diabetes for those who have it and may help some people become less focused on food and the anxiety around food. They often impact weight loss, and, for some people, may improve other health issues.

Concerns: Concerns related to these medications include the dependence on them long-term or otherwise the weight lost often returns. Nutritional deficiencies may occur, and these medications can be detrimental for those with disordered eating or certain health issues. One of the other concerns is that these medications have not been studied long term, so side effects from extended use are unknown.

Health Effects: Common side effects include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, decreased appetite, constipation, heartburn, and abdominal pain of various degrees for individuals. Muscle loss should be counteracted by eating healthy balanced meals with low fat and adequate lean protein sources along with regular weight bearing exercise. It is important to stay hydrated, be physically active and consume adequate amounts of fiber to prevent constipation. Consulting with a registered dietitian is also a good idea and can help with planning for next steps related to the typical weight loss plateau that occurs when using these medications.

Less common but more serious side effects can include pancreas inflammation (Pancreatitis), vision changes, low blood sugar (hypoglycemia), kidney problems, gallbladder problems, thyroid tumors or cancer.

If you or someone you know is considering taking these medications for either diabetes treatment or weight loss, be safe and informed. Make an appointment with a registered dietitian in addition to a physician and continue to meet with them monthly to monitor dosage and progress. Be sure to get these medications with a prescription from a licensed health care provider and purchase through a state-licensed pharmacy or facility registered with the FDA (Refer to https://www.fda.gov/drugs/quick-tips-buying-medicines-over-internet/besaferx-your-source-online-pharmacy-information)

Although these drugs currently show benefits for people with diabetes or major health issues due to their weight, there is more research needed and questions to be answered about how these drugs work, long-term side effects, and other health implications. It is important to note weight loss and being thin is not necessarily healthier. Focusing on a healthy, balanced diet and being physically active on a regular basis are essential for overall health regardless.

Walk During the Workday

Many adults struggle to stay physically active due to long working hours. Unfortunately, the number of sedentary jobs has increased by 83% since the 1950s. As a result, we are spending more time sitting at work than ever before. According to the World Health Organization, at least one in four adults does not get enough physical activity, which is a serious problem. A sedentary lifestyle can lead to various health issues, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, and certain cancers. In addition, leading a sedentary lifestyle can increase the risk of developing mental health disorders. Inactive and sedentary lifestyles are associated with a 20% to 30% greater risk of premature death compared to more active lifestyles. Unfortunately, 60 to 85% of people worldwide lead sedentary lifestyles, making it one of our time's most significant yet inadequately addressed public health concerns.



Walking is often overlooked as a form of exercise, but it is actually a great way to improve your health. Unlike other forms of exercise, walking doesn't require any special equipment or training, and its low impact, making it a good option for people of all ages, fitness, and skill levels. Additionally, walking can help improve your heart health, strengthen your bones and muscles, and even aid in weight loss. If you're struggling to find time for exercise, try breaking it up by following the guidance of Columbia University researchers.

According to a recent study by researchers at Columbia University, individuals who walked for five minutes after every 30 minutes of sitting experienced a reduction in their blood sugar and blood pressure levels. The research team found that a 5-minute walk every half hour led to a 58% reduction in blood sugar spikes after eating compared with sitting all day. All amounts of walking significantly reduced blood pressure by 4 to 5 mmHg compared with sitting all day. In today's modern world, where many adults have jobs or lifestyles that require them to sit for extended periods, this simple behavior change can help reduce health risks associated with sitting.

When we sit for long periods of time, our posture creates bends and constrictions in our blood vessels, ultimately altering blood flow and increasing blood pressure. Our muscles play a crucial role in regulating blood sugar and cholesterol levels, but they must be contracted or "used" to receive these benefits. Therefore, taking regular short walks can help restore blood flow to the legs, allowing for better blood pressure control. Over time, this can relieve strain on the heart and even prevent heart attacks.

The study also revealed that taking a five-minute light walk every 30 minutes can reduce feelings of fatigue and improve mood. Therefore, in addition to improving your physical health, regular short walks can help put you in a better mood and feel more energized. This may help you feel more productive at work.

Here are other tips to help you stay active throughout your workday:

- **Determine the best time to walk**. Consider the best time for you to take a walk. Is it possible to swap your coffee break for a walking break? Would lunchtime be more convenient? Alternatively, could you arrive a few minutes early or stay a little later at work to fit in a brief walk?
- Leave a pair of walking shoes at work. Keep a pair of comfortable shoes in your office or car, so you can take a walk without hurting your feet or using uncomfortable shoes as an excuse.

• **Make it social**. Find colleagues interested in walking at work. Help each other stay motivated, network, and talk while walking.

• **Be prepared**. If walking outside is your preference or only option, be prepared. Keep comfortable shoes available and have sunglasses, sunscreen, a coat, socks, or even an umbrella in your office or car.

• Walk and talk. Need to discuss something with a co-worker? A walking meeting may be more productive and healthier as well.

It's important to remember that even small changes made over time can have a lasting impact on our health. For instance, taking a 5-minute walk every hour during desk work can accumulate a significant amount of physical activity by the end of the workday. In an 8-hour workday, this amounts to 40 minutes of physical activity. By making these small changes, anyone can make a big difference in their health, one step at a time. Even small amounts of walking during the workday can significantly lower the risk of chronic illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes.

Adapted from: https://food.unl.edu/free-resources/newsletters/family-fun-run/walking-work

Sources: https://www.cuimc.columbia.edu/news/rx-prolonged-sitting-five-minute-stroll-every-half-hour https://www.who.int/news/item/04-04-2002-physical-inactivity-a-leading-cause-of-disease-and-disabilitywarns-who https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8315405/



Program Highlight

A Healthier Weigh 2024 – 12-week Health & Fitness Challenge – will be taking registrations for individual and team participation through the end of the year! Registration fee \$40/person with cash prizes! Be watching for more information soon on our County Extension websites and Facebook pages. Get your teams ready before the holidays!



Upcoming Events!

- A Healthier Weigh
 - Weigh in's for Logan, Morgan, and Yuma counties will be the week of January 2^{nd} .
 - Weigh in's for Kit Carson, Phillips, and Washington counties will be the week of January 8th.
 - Please contact your local Extension Agent for more details.
- Morgan County Cooking Matters -
 - Taking place every Thursday evening from 5:30-7:30 p.m. between January 11 and February 15 at the Morgan County Extension Office. Contact Katie to RSVP (970) 542-3544.
- Morgan County Matter of Balance
 - Every Wednesday morning from January 31 March 20 at 9:30 at the Gene Doty Senior Center in Fort Morgan. Contact Katie Seelhoff to RSVP (970) 354-8544.
- ServSafe Handler Training
 - Wednesday, March 6th from 9:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m., Logan County Extension Office. For more information or to register, contact Joy Akey at (970) 332-4151 or joy.akey@colostate.edu.

Be sure to check our Facebook page listed below to stay up to date on all our upcoming events.



CSU Extension – NE Colorado FCS: <u>https://www.facebook.com/CSUExtensionNortheastFCS</u> CSU Extension – Phillips County: <u>https://www.facebook.com/PhillipsCountyExtension/</u>

CSU Extension – Logan County: <u>https://www.facebook.com/csuextensionlogancounty/? tn =%2Cd%2CP-</u> <u>R&eid=ARCS5-NbtiQryVNn5X5I3c5--hwVu-1ZfnhynwZsPotP7AZIVStJaoCEoaVYzZjBFhCH0tHJLHaJxQuQ</u> CSU Extension – Morgan County: https://www.facebook.com/extensionmorgancounty/ pg. 12