

## Harrisonburg Dietitians, LLC

Written by Elizabeth Gerhart

Edited by Julie Thurnau, RD, CNSD

**The American Academy of Pediatrics has recently approved the use of reduced fat (2%) milk** for toddlers ages 1 to 2 years if heart disease risk is a concern. Reduced-fat milk may be appropriate if the toddler is obese or if there is a strong family history of cardiovascular disease, dyslipidemia, or obesity. After age 2 years it is still recommended to use low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk for better health unless weight gain is desired.

**US obesity rates are on the rise** according to the 2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey. The proportion of obese (BMI greater than 30) adults nationally has risen to an average of 25.3% of survey respondents. In comparison, Virginia has risen to an unprecedented 25.6%, which is slightly higher than the national average. This figure could be even higher as the Center for Disease Control (CDC) assumes that this is a conservative estimate because “people are likely to underestimate their weight”.

Additionally, of respondents only 30% said that they engaged in the recommended 30+ minutes of moderate exercise five days per week and a mere 23.6% claimed they ate five or more servings of fruits and/or vegetables daily. These two healthy habits have been positively associated with better health.

Furthermore, childhood and adolescent obesity are among the biggest concerns. Although Virginia ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in the nation for childhood obesity rates, the rate has doubled over the past three decades accompanied by a rise in incidence of chronic diet-related disease among minors.

**California has officially banned trans fat** from use in restaurants and bakeries. The legislation was approved by state lawmakers and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Trans fats occur naturally in small amounts in red meats and dairy. The largest consumed amount is from eating foods made with hydrogenated oils that are present in processed baked foods to extend the shelf life. Eating small amounts (5 grams/day) of these fats have been proven raise bad cholesterol (LDL), lower good cholesterol (HDL), and increase levels of inflammatory markers that have been associated with chronic diseases. Trans fat amounts are required to be listed on food labels- so start reading!

### Calculate Your Body Mass Index (BMI)

$$\text{Weight in pounds} \div \text{Height in inches} \div \text{Height in inches} \times 703 = \text{BMI}$$

Example:

$$150\text{lbs} \div 64 \text{ inches} \div 64 \text{ inches} \times 703 = 25.7$$

19-25 = healthy weight

26-30 = overweight

> 30 = obese

## **Omega-3 Fatty Acids and Heart Health**

Diets high in Omega 3 fatty acids have been associated with better heart health. Here are some ways to increase the amounts in your diet. If weight loss is desired, remember to control your portions for lower calories.

- Eat fatty fish at least twice a week. Salmon, herring, anchovies, and sardines are good choices. Choose only wild caught fish not farm raised for higher Omega 3 fatty acids. Other sources include cod, snapper, shrimp, halibut, and scallops.
- Eat walnuts as a snack or a dessert topping.
- Add ground flaxseed or walnut flour to sauces, milkshakes, toppings, and entrees.
- Purchase free-range egg and meat products from your local farmer's market.
- Limit intake of corn, soybean, and sunflower oils. These oils are the higher in non-omega-3 oils. Canola, olive, and peanut oils are better choices for cooking.

### **Salmon Broccoli Bake**

- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon canola, olive or peanut oil
- 1 1/2 cups cooked wild or brown rice
- 1 (7 ounce) can salmon (wild preferred), drained, bones and skin removed
- 1 egg (free-range best)
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise or sour cream (low fat preferred)
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped broccoli, thawed and drained
- 1 1/2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese, divided (low fat preferred)

In a skillet, sauté onion in butter until tender. Remove from the heat; stir in rice and salmon. Combine egg and mayonnaise; add to the salmon mixture. Spoon half into a greased 2-qt. baking dish; top with half of the Parmesan cheese and broccoli. Sprinkle with 1 cup cheddar cheese. Top with the remaining salmon mixture, Parmesan and broccoli. Bake, uncovered, at 350°F for 30 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining cheddar. Bake 5 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Serves 4. Adapted from *AllRecipes.com*.

## **Welcome Carmen!**

Carmen Moreno is a Registered Dietitian with a Master's degree in Public Health. She has over 25 years of experience working in the field of nutrition and public health. She has extensive experience working with multi-cultural groups, particularly the Latino population, in different parts of the country. Her areas of expertise include program planning and development, qualitative health research, materials development, and nutrition education for diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular health.