

PARENTS CAN DO

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- Avoid fried foods.
- Limit the use of butter and margarine.
- Avoid processed baked goods such as cookies, cakes, and doughnuts.
- Present healthy foods in fun and attractive ways. For example, arrange a few raisins, a banana slice and a peach slice into a face on a plate.
- Substitute low-fat cheese such as part skim mozzarella for American and cheddar cheese.
- Avoid using food as a reward or withholding food as a punishment.
- Treat an overweight child like everyone else in the family when it comes to food. For example, if the overweight child is served fruit for dessert, then everyone should eat fruit for dessert, not cake or ice cream for the thinner ones.
- Don't ban overweight children from ever eating higher-calorie foods. Once a food becomes forbidden, it becomes more desirable. Serve these higher-calorie foods on occasion and always at meal time where portion size can be regulated. Don't allow children free access to the refrigerator and cupboards all day long.
- Most importantly, support your overweight child. Don't criticize or blame him or her for the problem. Talk with your child about their concerns with weight and health.
- Be a role model and set a good example.

Increase Your Family's Physical Activity

- The point is not to make physical activity an unwelcome chore, but to make the most of the opportunities you and your family have to be active. Some simple ways to increase your family's physical activity include:
- Increase the child's physical activity level, particularly between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. when most over-eating takes place. They could participate in organized sports.
 - Plan family activities that provide everyone with exercise and enjoyment, like walking, dancing, biking or swimming. Make sure you plan activities which can be done in a safe environment.
 - Reduce the amount of time you and your family spend in sedentary activities, such as watching TV or playing video games.
 - Be sensitive to your child's needs. Overweight children may feel uncomfortable about participating in certain activities. It is important to help your child find physical activities that they enjoy and that aren't embarrassing or too difficult.
 - Become more active throughout your day and encourage your family to do so as well. For example, walk up the stairs instead of taking the elevator, or do some activity during a work or school break.

Source: Helping Your Overweight Child, Federal Citizen Information Center, online at www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/health/overweight-kid/helpchld.htm

LPS Task Force to Make Recommendations for Policies, Practices Which Promote Healthy Weight

Kathy Karsting
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In Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) we see the childhood obesity and eating disorder issues first hand. Any school nurse can speak of children who are clearly very uncomfortable with their weight and being weighed. LPS nurses pool our ideas to provide privacy, demonstrate sensitivity and show positive attitudes and acceptance. The school nurses also want to be attentive to the child whose growth patterns during the school years indicate possible medical disorders that need further attention.

What should we in the school do about these issues, especially in these days of tight budgets and emphasis on classroom performance first and foremost?

Whatever we do, we don't want to make the problem worse by making children feel stigmatized. Food and meal patterns, body image

and even physical activity are important aspects of family culture and tradition. School nurses desire to be a good resource to educators about eating disorders. We want to help identify the child who is living the dangerous nightmare of eating disorders such as bulimia or anorexia and work with families to get the help they need. In the course of producing an educated person ready to be a responsible adult, it would be nice to produce a graduate who is an informed healthful consumer of food products and enjoys regular physical activity.

Yet some would ask, to what extent are these matters actually related to educational priorities? To help chart an appropriate and meaningful course through these issues, LPS has formed a "Promoting Healthy Weight" task force of community members and school personnel.

The task force is made up of public health, diabetes, nutrition and family and community education experts with school personnel representing building principals, health

services, health and physical education, nutrition services and school social workers. The volunteer physicians and health professionals on the district's medical advisory committee are also very involved in planning our health screening program.

Our task force goal is to develop 4-8 prioritized, implementable consensus recommendations for district policies, practices and standards to promote healthy weight. While the task force members are not asked to oversee the implementation of the recommendations, their work will provide the basis and focus for internal change that can be undertaken from within the district.

We used as our starting point, *The Role of Michigan Schools in Promoting Healthy Weight*. This document includes a long hard look at the school setting and how we create environments that are/are not conducive to healthy eating and physical activity. The recommendations and questions raised about screening programs in which children are weighed and

measured are very provocative.

The issues of healthy eating, physical activity, respect for oneself and others may not be measured on report cards or statewide performance standards. They are eventually evident, however, in the health and happiness of our children, their life expectancy, and the quality of life. The school alone will not solve the problems of obesity and eating disorders. However, as school health personnel, I think we can expect to:

- contribute to the solutions that are evidenced by science;
- do no harm and don't make the problems worse;
- use the resources and expertise we have in the most effective and efficient means we can to help students.

If you would like more information or have comments about the role of the school in addressing obesity, please contact Kathy Karsting (kkarsti@lps.org) or Marybell Avery (mavery@lps.org).

LOCAL EFFORTS

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physical activity. Events and resources provide parents and schools strategies to encourage a safe, healthy walk to school. Contact: Mike Heyl, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department, at 441-8000.

All Recreate on Fridays (ARF) — The Nebraska Health and Human Services System Cardiovascular Health Program is launching ARF for elementary- and middle-school aged youth. Participants aim to be active at least 60 minutes every Friday through school, family and community activities. Contact: Michelle Garwood at 471-0505 or go to americonthemove.org and click on "My Community" and then select "Nebraska."

Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) — A way to combat the epidemic of overweight children in the school setting. A nationwide initiative to promote nutrition and physical activity in Nebraska schools. Contact: Janice Strang at 800-279-2643, Jamie Hahn at 471-3493 or go to www.actionforhealthykids.org.

Mayor's Run for Children/ Kids Grand Prix — 10 select Lincoln Track Club races are part of the Kids Grand Prix which is a noncompetitive program open to all students up to sixth grade. The Mayor's Run for Children one-mile run is America's second largest children's running event, attracting approximately 2,000 youth annually. Contact: your school PE teacher or go to www.lincolnrun.org.

Red in Motion — This program fosters change through mentoring. University of Nebraska students from the Healthy Living Center are paired with fourth and fifth grade children who are at risk for obesity-related health problems. This effort is a partnership between Saint Elizabeth Medical Foundation, LPS and UNL. Contact: Christina Perry, UNL Nutrition and Health Sciences, at 472-3922.

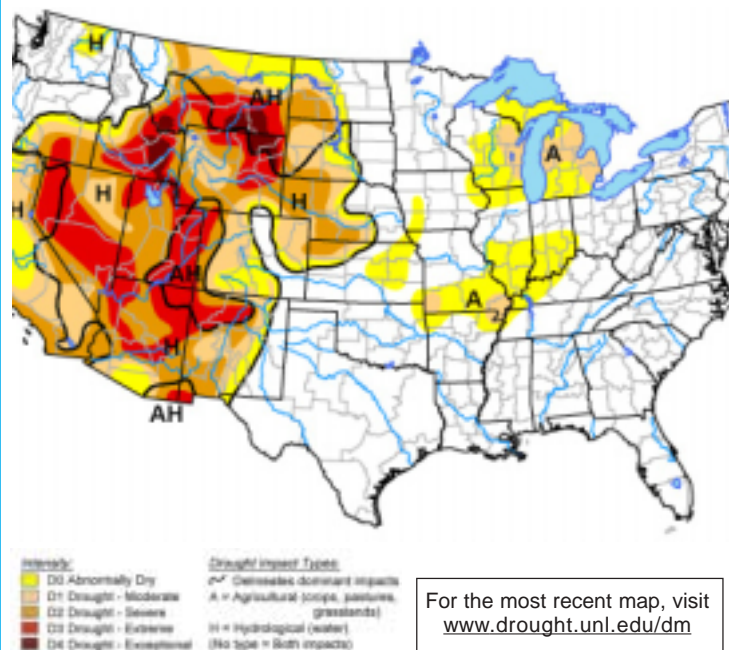
N-Lighten Nebraska/ N-Lighten Kids — In this annual four-month competition, teams of 2 to 10 members (families, friends, etc.) work together toward the common goal of living healthier lives. 2005 dates are Feb. 1 to June 1. Contact: Cornhusker State Games at 471-2544 or www.n-lightennebraska.com.

4-H — More than 450 Lancaster County 4-H'ers are currently enrolled in 4-H food/nutrition projects. Other 4-H projects encourage youth to stay active, such as gardening, pets, entomology and rocketry. 4-H is open to all youth ages 5-19. Contact: UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County at 441-7180 or lancaster.unl.edu/4h

Women, Infant and Children (WIC) — WIC provides nutrition education, health assessments, information about physical activity and vouchers for nutritious foods to income eligible pregnant/postpartum women, infants and children under the age of five. Contact Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department at 441-6200 or Family Service WIC at 441-8655.

Latest U.S. Drought Monitor Map

As of Oct. 12, Lancaster County was not in drought conditions.



Can You Guess It?



Did you guess it? Find out at
lancaster.unl.edu

Did you guess it from the October NEBLINE?
The answer was a tree pushing against the sidewalk.