



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

Nutrition and Exercise 2006

Learning for Life

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

The Problem

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 59% of adults in Georgia are overweight or obese. Twenty-three percent (23%) of non-Hispanic whites, 32% of non-Hispanic blacks and 17% of Hispanics in Georgia are obese. Obesity and being overweight contribute to the development of many chronic diseases including diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, heart disease, arthritis and gall bladder disease.
- According to the Georgia Department of Human Resources, three-quarters of Georgians are inactive. Inactivity contributes to at least 32% of all heart disease, 18% of all cases of high blood pressure, 32% of all strokes, 18% of all diagnoses of diabetes, and 32% of all falls due to osteoporosis.
- According to the 2003 Georgia County Guide, heart disease is the number one cause of death in Georgia.
- During the 1990's, Georgia experienced a 101% increase in the incidence of being overweight and being obese - the highest increase in the country.
- Obese people have a 50-100% increase in risk for all causes of death - especially from cardiovascular disease, the number one killer in Georgia.
- Research done at the University of Georgia found that 20% of Georgia's children are overweight compared to 15% of all children in the United States. Overweight children and children at risk for becoming overweight were found more often in rural areas.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control, 26% of high school students and 33% of middle school students in Georgia are overweight or at risk for being overweight. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of low income children 2-5 years of age in Georgia are overweight or at risk for becoming overweight.
- Direct and indirect costs due to obesity and being overweight to the US economy was estimated to be \$117 billion in the year 2000.

Research-based Solutions

- Work place activity programs can reduce health care costs by 20-25% and cut sick leave by 6-32%, as well as increase productivity among employees.
- Individuals with the most information about nutrition choose better diets.
- Body weight has less impact on morbidity and mortality if the person is physically fit.
- Reduction in risk for chronic diseases is difficult without regular physical activity.
- People with pre-diabetes can reduce their risk by nearly 60% by losing 5-7% of their body weight and being moderately active for at least 30 minutes five or more days a week.
- The Centers for Disease Control estimates that if Americans were moderately active on a regular basis over the next 15 years, direct medical costs could be reduced by as much as \$76.6 million.

Extension's Role

- Conduct nutrition and exercise programs to reduce the incidence of chronic disease in those at risk and control chronic disease in those that have been diagnosed.
- Lead *Walk-a-Weigh* programs to increase physical activity and promote dietary change to control weight in adults.
- Use the *Win Kids*, *The Power of Choice* and other curricula provided at the childhood obesity training to promote community, parent and child involvement in infrastructure and behavior changes that will prevent children from becoming obese or overweight.

Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem

- Extension provided over 46,500 hours of nutrition and chronic disease educational programs to 25,727 individuals in 2006. Nearly 67% of the participants were low-income Georgians.
- The *Walk-A-Weigh* nutrition and exercise extension program provided 1,163 contact hours of education and reached 889 Georgians in 2006.
- Extension provided healthy lifestyle education by media to thousands of Georgians. For example, 52 food, nutrition and exercise-related articles in newsletters reached 5,400 subscribers; 35 exhibits reached over 53,000 viewers; 9 radio spots were broadcast to a listening audience of over 360,000; and 53 newspaper columns went to a circulation of over 1.7 million readers.

Impact on Georgians

- Comparison of the pre and post-evaluations of participants who completed nutrition education programs show that 58% of participants improved their knowledge of nutrition. Eighty-three percent (83%) said the workshops helped them to make healthy food choices. For example, 89% planned to use the nutrition facts on the food label to make food choices; 86% planned to trim the fat from meat; and 99% planned to choose the regular size foods instead of the deluxe and super sizes.
- The comparison of pre and post evaluation data shows that 88% of the participants who completed the *Walk-A-Weigh* nutrition and exercise program significantly improved their dietary and exercise habits, helping them to reach their weight loss goals and reduce risk factors. For example, 66% of the participants began using low-fat condiments; 68% began modifying recipes to lower fat; 69% began reading nutrition labels to help make food choices; and 57% began exercising three times a week for 30 minutes at a time. Participants in the *Walk-A-Weigh* program typically report an average weight loss of 4 pounds during the six-week course.
- Children who completed the *Power of Choice* nutrition program significantly improved their health and nutrition knowledge. Most of the children planned to adopt healthy nutrition and dietary habits. For example, 68% of the children planned to drink milk or water when they eat out; 82% planned to add more variety to their fast food meal by choosing at least one serving of fruit, vegetable, or a low-fat food made from milk; 76% planned to eat slowly; and 71% planned to try at least one new or unfamiliar food when they have the opportunity.
- Participants in the nutrition education program, *What is that Yellow Bar Doing on MyPyramid?*, planned to follow the new recommendations for consuming oils. After the program, 82% of the participants planned to use liquid oils instead of solid fats in food preparation; 75% planned to use the nutrition facts on the food label to make food choices; and 82% planned to bake, broil or grill rather than fry their food.

Economic Impact on Georgians

- Based on the cost savings of medical expenditures by preventing inactivity, the estimated economic value of the *Walk-A-Weigh* nutrition and exercise program was \$1,104,636 in 2006.

Contacts

Connie Crawley, MS, RD, LD, Public Service Associate and Nutrition Specialist,
ccrawley@uga.edu, (706) 542-3773,

Gail Hanula, EdS, RD, LD, EFNEP/FNP Coordinator, ghanula@uga.edu
College of Family and Consumer Sciences, (706) 542-8866,
or your local Cooperative Extension Service office