

Nutrition not just about fat grams anymore

Students urged to re-structure unhealthy diets

By **TODD ANDERSON**
Staff Reporter

For students who constantly count calories and fat grams, you may need to re-examine the way you plan your diet.

"In recent years we've come to think of nutrition in terms of fat and calories," said Karen Miller, chief dietician for the University Health Center.

She said in some cases the focus on calories and fat has led to vitamin and nutrient deficiencies.

Students should focus on balancing caloric intake with expenditure, while varying their diets to gain all necessary nutrients, said Marilyn Schnepf, chairwoman of the Nutritional Science and Nutritional Department.

Miller said building a healthy diet is all about making choices.

She said instead of doughnuts or potato chips, choose foods like bagels or fruit. She also suggested drinking juice or milk instead of soda.

"Most students tend to eat too many convenience foods," Schnepf said.

She said students should realize that fruits and dairy products can be convenience foods, too, and can save students money.

"There's always the perception by students that fresh fruits and vegetables are too expensive," Schnepf said.

But an apple or banana with milk compared to a bag of potato chips and soda can cost less and provide some of the nutrients required to lead an active life.

Schnepf and Miller recommended following the Food Guide Pyramid developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The guide prioritizes foods high in nutrients and low in fat and suggests the number of servings from each of five groups: breads and whole grains; fruits, vegetables and legumes; dairy products; meat and fish; desserts and alcohol.

Schnepf and Miller said it is important to eat a variety of foods from every group to ensure all the basic nutrients are supplied to the body.

"There are no good foods or bad foods. There are good diets and bad diets," Schnepf said.

Dave Ellis, coordinator for the Performance Nutrition Program and the Hewitt Dining Center, said the key is building a healthy meal using a simple structured plan and sticking to it.

Ellis said it can be difficult for a student who wants to follow a healthy diet in at campus.

Students who want a healthier lifestyle need to take their diets into their own hands, he said. A plan has to be developed and it requires discipline to stick to that plan, he said.

"An implemented plan equals changes," he said. "It takes people time and discipline, but first it takes a plan."

He also said students shouldn't try to do everything at once and should learn to vary their plans to fit changing needs.

He said student athletes can become confused because of all food choices and that is why Performance Nutrition has developed the three-point plan.

He said the performance guide that UNL athletes are trained to follow is scientifically detailed, and its concepts provide all the basic nutrients necessary for an active student.

The plan consists of three basic steps: incorporate fruits, vegetables and seeds into meals, alter carbohydrate intake relative to activity and select a lean protein source.

The plan, which is sold at Super Kmart Cen-

ter, is accompanied by a video explaining the specifics of the plan.

The plan stresses the importance of fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat carbohydrate sources, and lean protein sources.

While it's important to watch daily fat intake, Miller said, students shouldn't obsess about counting fat grams.

"We all need a certain amount of fat during the day," she said.

She said a reasonable amount is less than 30 percent of calories from fat. The total amount of fat a student should consume in a day depends on the total number of carbohydrates consumed in a day and the percentage of calories from fat the student is aiming for, she said.

For example, an average female student consumes about 1,800 calories per day. If she wanted to limit her fat intake to 25 percent of calories from fat per day, she would aim for 450 calories from fat, or 50 grams of fat, she said.

However, both Miller and Schnepf said every individual has different needs and cannot mold their diets into an ideal plan.

Schnepf also said the way dieticians advise people is changing. The main reason behind planning a healthy diet shouldn't be weight loss.

Schnepf said there is no magic number to determine if students are at the proper weight.

She said genetics play a large role in determining a person's weight.

"If you feel good and (your weight) doesn't prevent you from doing the things you want to do, then your weight's fine," she said.

Miller said increased energy, healthier skin and hair and improved concentration are other benefits of a healthy diet.

Healthy diets can also decrease the risk of heart disease, cancer, adult on-set diabetes and osteoporosis, she said.

Schnepf said students sometimes focus on the short-term benefits of a healthy diet.

She said students who are confused about nutrition or who need help planning their diets have many options.

The Family Resource Center on East Campus offers nutritional counseling with dieticians, she said.

In the spring, nutrition students will be presenting a nutritional education program to various student organizations.

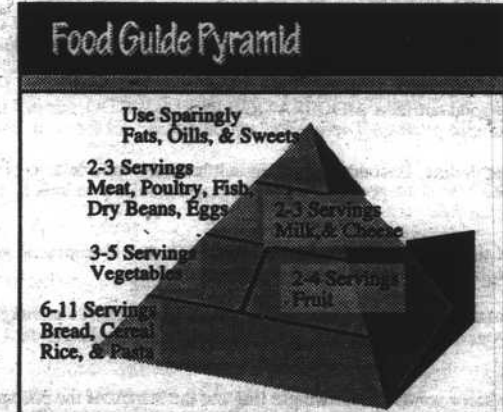
In addition to literature available from the government, health organizations and magazines, students can take an Introduction to Nutrition class offered by the Nutritional Science and Dietetics Department, she said.

Miller said she likes to counsel students individually from either of her offices in the University Health Center or Lee and Helene Sapp Campus Recreation Center.

She said the Campus Rec offers a one-hour course on nutrition and the wellness program can also help students plan a diet and exercise routine.

Both Schnepf and Miller said a healthy diet needs to be tailored to the person, and that there are a number of resources on campus and in the community that can help.

"It is a lifestyle change," Miller said. "It's a whole new behavior that you're learning. It takes time."



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Vitamins & Minerals		
Vitamin / RDA per day	Benefits	Food Sources
B12 / 2 micrograms	Needed for cell division	Cereal, Egg, Milk, Yogurt
B1 / 1.5 milligrams for men 1.0 milligrams for women	Conversion of carbohydrates to energy	Pasta, Oatmeal, Peas, Potatoes, Orange, Peanuts, Soybeans
B2 / 1.7 milligrams for men 1.3 milligrams for women	Acts as part of enzyme systems	Cereals, Asparagus, Mushrooms, Banana, Split peas, Milk, Eggs
C / 60 milligrams	Maintains the connective tissues of the body	Broccoli, Peas, Orange, Tomato
D / 5 micrograms	Maintain normal blood levels of calcium	Cereal, Milk, Egg
A / 1000 RE for men 800 RE for women	Needed for vision, growth and reproduction	Carrots, Tomato, Apricots, Cheese, Milk
Iron / 10 milligrams	A lack of Iron can form a type of anemia	Pasta, Pumpkin, Prunes, Tofu
Zinc / 15 milligrams for men 12 milligrams for women	A lack of Zinc can cause problems in sexual maturation and growth	Peanut butter, Brazil nuts, Cheese, Milk

Source: The Vegetarian Way

Aaron Steckelberg/DN

It's coming & it's WELL WORTH IT!

Focus on Wellness Week

Sunday, Sept. 22
Fitness Instructor Training
w/ Gin Miller (fitness expert)
at Campus Rec., 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 24
Get Real! Changing the Campus Climate Integrating Mind, Body & Spirit
An interactive video seminar with Richard Keeling, M.D.
NE Union, Noon - 2 p.m.

Thursday, Sept. 26
Walk/Ride to Work
Walk or ride a bike!

Friday, Sept. 27
Well Worth It Health Fair
Campus-wide health fair!
NE Union, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Fair activities include a variety of health screenings & health information booths!!!
Hourly giveaways!!!

All Students, Faculty & Staff Welcome!!!

Brought to you by the Chancellor's Wellness Planning Committee

The Chancellor's Wellness Planning Committee is working to enhance wellness efforts for the members of the UNL community.

Wellness - integrated, balanced activities/programs for people to enhance their quality of life focusing on the following dimensions: cultural, emotional, environmental, intellectual, occupational, physical, social and spiritual

UNL is a nondiscriminatory institution.