

Daily Union Article
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Title: Walk Kansas 2017

March 19, 2017 marks the beginning of Walk Kansas 2017. This health initiative is coordinated in Geary County through K-State Research and Extension. The success of the program across the state is commendable, but for Geary County, it has been extremely popular. Over the past 8 years, Geary County Walk Kansas has had an average of 50 teams yearly and 317 individual participants each year.

The focus of Walk Kansas is three-fold: physical activity, healthy eating, and celebrating successes.

Physical Activity: The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans published by the U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) offers guidance on how children, adolescents, and adults in the area of physical activity.

Americans of all ages are generally inactive, which results in unnecessary risks for disease and other health-related issues. In 2011, 25.5% of Geary county residents reported doing enough physical activity to meet both the aerobic and strengthening exercise recommendations. That leaves 74.5% of our county residents who are NOT meeting these guidelines.

The recommendation from ODPHP is that children and adolescents (aged 6-17) should do 1 hour or more of physical activity each day. Of these 60 minutes of daily activity, most should involve moderate- or vigorous-intensity activity on at least 3 of the 7 days of a week. Additionally, they should do muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening activity on at least 3 days per week.

For adults (aged 18-64), the recommendation is that they engage in 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. Aerobic activity should be incorporated in sessions of at least 10 minutes that should be spread throughout the week.

When the amount of activity for adults is increased to 5 hours (300 minutes) per week for moderate-intensity activities or to 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) per week for vigorous-intensity physical activity, the health benefits significantly increase.

For adults aged 65 and older, the adult guidelines remain in place with some exception. If a senior adult has limiting chronic conditions, they should be active at the level their ability allows. Some level of activity is still advised.

Healthy Eating: Walk Kansas follows Dietary Guidelines for Americans as the research-based foundation for this area of the program. We know that everyone has unique eating patterns. However, our eating patterns do not always follow a healthy

eating pattern. Even within our cultural and personal preferences for food we can all follow a healthy eating pattern. The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans highlight five core recommendations that Walk Kansas promotes:

1. **Follow a healthy eating pattern throughout your life. All food and beverage choices matter.** Our calorie needs vary depending on our level of activity and age. Choosing an eating pattern that support a healthy body weight, provides the nutrition needed, and reduces the risk of chronic disease is foundational to promoting a long health life.
2. **Focus on variety, nutrient density, and amount.** By choosing a variety of nutrient-dense foods across and within all food groups, you are able to meet the nutrient needs you have within the recommended calorie limits. Nutrient dense foods have lots of nutrients with relatively few calories. The most nutritious and nutrient dense foods include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, lean meat, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and poultry.
3. **Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake.** These guidelines recommend that you get less than 10% of daily calories from added sugars; less than 10% of daily calories from saturated fats; and consume less than 2,300 mg per day of sodium.
4. **Shift to healthier food and beverage choices.** The American Heart Association (AHA), recommends that the maximum amount of added sugars you should eat in a day are: Men: 150 calories per day (37.5 grams or 9 teaspoons). Women: 100 calories per day (25 grams or 6 teaspoons). A single 12 oz. can of regular caffeinated soda has 10.2 teaspoons of sugar in it. Even popular sports drinks can add too much sugar to your diet. For example, Gatorade's Thirst Quencher contain 21 grams of sugar for a 12 oz. serving, but it is the 20+ oz. servings that you find in many convenience stores and vending machines. Juices are another source of added sugar. Choosing an orange instead of orange juice reduces your added sugar intake while also providing you with more fiber and other naturally occurring nutritional benefits of eating a fresh fruit.
5. **Support healthy eating patterns for all.** Creating and supporting healthy eating patterns is a community effort – our homes, schools, workplaces, all impact eating patterns.

The average American diet is low in vegetables, fruits, dairy and healthy oil. We need to choose whole grains more often and make better protein choices. Instead, we exceed recommended amounts of added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. We have a lot of room for improvement!

Celebrations: As with any positive lifestyle change made, you should celebrate your accomplishments and recognize the hard work you have put in to make the change

maintainable. For example, you could make an afternoon fishing trip or a spa day your personal celebration for improving your lifestyle and daily decisions for health.

For Walk Kansas 2017, there will be recognition for goals met and a celebration at the end of the 8-week program will help motivate participants to continue their efforts throughout the year. Join the movement to work toward a healthier lifestyle this year. For more information on Walk Kansas 2017, go to <http://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/> and click on the Walk Kansas tab. Until next time, keep living resourcefully!