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Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County
Department of Family Medicine at Stony Brook Medical Center

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NUTRITION UNIT

6TH GRADE

LESSON 4 - THE FINAL TIP - EASY DOES IT

OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to identify foods in the Tip of the Pyramid, the "other" group.
- Students will be able to state 3 reasons why it is important to limit the foods they select from this group.
- Students will recognize that they are responsible for and can change what they eat, especially regarding their snack choices.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Provided in the curriculum:

- Snack Trade-Offs handout
- Think What You Drink handout

Other:

- empty soda can
- 9 teaspoons of sugar
- clear glass

These materials are adapted from Frischie, S. and Konzelmann, KL. Exploring the Food Pyramid with Professor Popcorn. Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, West Lafayette, IN 1993.

The Blue Waves Heart Links Project
Sponsored by: *The Department of Family Medicine, SUNY Stony Brook
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County*
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REVIEW

Has anyone switched from whole milk to 1% or skim milk or 1% chocolate milk? How many servings of milk did you have yesterday? How many servings of milk each day is recommended. What nutrients are found in milk? Has anyone tried a food in the meat group that comes from a plant? Did everybody have 2 servings from the protein group?

INTRODUCTION

What do you notice about the size of the tip of the pyramid compared to the other pieces we've studied? (It is the smallest group.) Is there a reason it is the smallest? (Yes, we should eat the least amount of foods found in the tip.) What are some of the foods in the tip? Foods in the tip include foods that are almost pure fats (such as cooking oil, margarine, butter, salad dressing, mayonnaise, and cream cheese), and foods that are very high in sugar (such as soda, hard candies, table sugar, and sherbet). Foods that are based on grains or milk, such as cake, cookies and ice cream, but have a lot of added fat and/or sugar are also in the tip. This includes low fat cookies that are grain-based and low in fat, but very high in sugar. Many of these foods are also high in sodium and salt. These foods are generally quite high in calories.

While foods in the 5 food groups in the first 3 levels of the Food Guide Pyramid also contain some salt, fat and sugar, they give us energy plus nutrients. Remember, we need nutrients to be healthy, to grow, and to repair our bodies. Foods in the tip of the pyramid give us calories and energy, but don't give us many nutrients. Therefore, people who eat lots of food from the tip are likely to gain weight but not be well nourished.

They will feel sluggish and tired, they won't be able to perform at their best. and they will not be well nourished. They may get by, but why get by when you could choose foods that make you look and feel great.

ACTIVITIES

1. SNACK TRADE-OFFS

The snacks on the worksheet are available in the cafeteria. Arrange with the School Food Service Director, to bring your students down to the cafeteria or to pick up a few sample packages that you can return after class. Have students complete the worksheet.

2. THINK WHAT YOU DRINK

What do you drink when you are thirsty? Water should be a good choice. Your body needs lots of water every day to run smoothly, and water is a good thirst quencher. Most people, however, are influenced by advertisers who want to convince us that the only thing that will satisfy our thirst is a cola or sweet drink. We're going to compare the sugar and nutritional content of several drinks - cola drinks, fruit drinks and fruit juices.

First let's talk about soft drinks or soda. Why should we drink soda? (Refer to label on can.) What vitamins does it contain? Any protein? Soda has absolutely nothing in it that is nutritional. It's sugar, carbonated water, and flavoring. It can cause tooth decay and it contains caffeine, a drug that affects nerves. But many people drink soda anyway. You can buy it just about everywhere, and many famous people tell you how great it is. If soft drinks are somewhere between useless and harmful, why do we drink

them? The companies that make them spend millions of dollars to convince us we want soda. We do like their sweet taste.

And sweet they are! Does anyone know how many teaspoons of sugar are in one can of cola? Illustrate this point with an empty dry soda can. Before class, pour 9 teaspoons of sugar into the can. In class dramatically pour out the sugar into a teaspoon measuring spoon and then into clear glass, having kids count the number of teaspoons you pour out. In soda, the sugar is there, it is just dissolved. You can check the nutrition facts food label to confirm this (each teaspoon of sugar has 4 grams of sugar). Are fruit drinks or fruit juices better? Carefully read the labels. Look for the word "juice". (Show several samples, a 100% juice, a juice drink, and a powdered drink mix.) Only products that are 100% juice can be called fruit juice. When a product contains less, the label must tell you how much - a fruit drink may contain only 10% real juice. The rest is flavored water and sugar.

Pass out Think What You Drink worksheets. Help students calculate the number of pounds of sugar they get in one year from soda.

CONCLUSIONS

- Foods in the Tip of the Pyramid should be eaten in limited amounts. They provide a lot of calories, but few nutrients, and may lead to weight problems, dental carries, and heart disease.
- Foods included in the Tip may be based on grains, fruits, vegetables, milk or meats but have a lot of fat and/or sugar added to them.
- Drinks may also be very high in sugar, and therefore in the Tip of the Pyramid. These should also be taken in limited amounts.