

FOR FAMILIES

.....the link between the need and the solution

SPRING 2006 Newsletter

Tips for Families	2
Spring Class Offerings	3
Where to Turn for Assistance	
35 Ways to Eat Well & Stay Active in Irvine	5
About FOR Families	6



FOR Families is a community service offered through the City of Irvine for those who live or work in Irvine.

Childhood Obesity: Prevention Tips for Parents

By Debbie Brunn, MS, MFT
Manager of the FOR Families Program

We are indeed much more than what we eat, but what we eat can nevertheless help us to be much more than what we areAdelle Davis

As we begin a new year, many begin to make resolutions for improved health including more nutritious eating habits and increased exercise. But what about our children's eating behaviors and exercise?

Issues of childhood obesity are visibly gaining notoriety as seen in recent media and legislative actions. According to the National Institutes of Health, obesity in youth is now reaching epidemic proportions in the United States and is affecting both children and adolescents in all age, race, and gender groups (Word on Health, June, 2002). As a result, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger recently signed legislation imposing the strictest standards for foods and beverages sold on public elementary and high school campuses.



developing diseases such as type-2 diabetes or at higher risk for heart disease due to increases in blood pressure and cholesterol, but also suffer the devastation of teasing inflicted by their peers which often leads to the development of a low self-image or symptoms of depression. Playing video games, surfing the web, and watching television seem to be consuming children's free time. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 25% of children of all ages spent at least 4 hours per day watching television (CDC, *Indicators Report on the Conditions of Children, Youth, and Families in Irvine*, 2005). Research suggests limiting children's recreational screen time to fewer than 2 hours a day (Mayo Clinic, *Childhood Obesity: What Parents Can Do*, 2005).

Obese children are at increased risk not only for

(Continued on page 2)

CHILDHOOD OBESITY*Continued from page 1*

The goal of this newsletter is to provide parents with information and resources on how to help their children prevent and reduce childhood obesity by offering suggestions to encourage healthy eating, places to turn in the community for assistance, and community activities for maintaining a healthy body weight. The following tips may help:

- **Provide a Supportive Environment:** Encourage your children to talk with you about issues causing them distress. Let them know you understand and are there to help.
- **Provide Healthy Snacking:** Limit sugary beverages and provide healthy choice alternatives to junk foods such as veggies and dip or low fat yogurt.
- **Plan Family Dinnertime:** Life can be hectic, so consider setting aside time with the family to enjoy a meal together. Talk with your children and ask about their day at school, their friends, and interests. Share with them some bits and pieces of your day as well.
- **Set Guidelines:** Consider limiting your child's TV, video and computer time. Encourage outdoor activities such as bike-riding, family walks, or community sports. This is a great way for you to enjoy quality outdoor time with your children.
- **Be An Example For Your Children:** Model healthy eating and encourage the whole family to enjoy an active lifestyle.

Continued on page 4

USDA Tips for Families to Foster Healthier Eating Habits

TIPS FOR FAMILIES

EAT RIGHT

- 1 Make half your grains whole.** Choose whole-grain foods, such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, brown rice, and lowfat popcorn, more often.
- 2 Vary your veggies.** Go dark green and orange with your vegetables—eat spinach, broccoli, carrots, and sweet potatoes.
- 3 Focus on fruits.** Eat them at meals, and at snack time, too. Choose fresh, frozen, canned, or dried, and go easy on the fruit juice.
- 4 Get your calcium-rich foods.** To build strong bones serve lowfat and fat-free milk and other milk products several times a day.
- 5 Go lean with protein.** Eat lean or lowfat meat, chicken, turkey, and fish. Also, change your tune with more dry beans and peas. Add chick peas, nuts, or seeds to a salad; pinto beans to a burrito, or kidney beans to soup.
- 6 Change your oil.** We all need oil. Get yours from fish, nuts, and liquid oils such as corn, soybean, canola, and olive oil.
- 7 Don't sugarcoat it.** Choose foods and beverages that do not have sugar and caloric sweeteners as one of the first ingredients. Added sugars contribute calories with few, if any, nutrients.

EXERCISE

- 1 Set a good example.** Be active and get your family to join you. Have fun together. Play with the kids or pets. Go for a walk, tumble in the leaves, or play catch.
- 2 Take the President's Challenge as a family.** Track your individual physical activities together and earn awards for active lifestyles at www.presidentschallenge.org.
- 3 Establish a routine.** Set aside time each day as activity time—walk, jog, skate, cycle, or swim. Adults need at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week; children 60 minutes everyday or most days.
- 4 Have an activity party.** Make the next birthday party centered on physical activity. Try backyard Olympics, or relay races. Have a bowling or skating party.
- 5 Set up a home gym.** Use household items, such as canned foods, as weights. Stairs can substitute for stair machines.
- 6 Move it!** Instead of sitting through TV commercials, get up and move. When you talk on the phone, lift weights or walk around. Remember to limit TV watching and computer time.
- 7 Give activity gifts.** Give gifts that encourage physical activity—active games or sporting equipment.




HAVE FUN!



Community Services Spring Class Offerings

Parenting

Talking to Your Teen

Do you feel like your teen acts like an alien? Communication with teenagers can be more difficult than expected. Come get ideas on how to communicate and understand what your teenager is trying to say and help guide them to be safe and make good choices. Inst: Aldimassi.

Location: Lakeview Senior Center
#35180 Th 6pm-7:30pm May 11 \$20

Setting Limits

Is getting the behavior you want from your kids a problem? Are you fluctuating between laying down the law one minute and being a doormat the next? Learn the tools and techniques necessary to get the behavior you want from your kids. Learn how to set and enforce clear and effective boundaries, how to apply appropriate consequences and how to deal with power struggles. Inst: Trecia Davis, MA.

Location: Tustin Area Senior Center
#37580 Th 7pm-9pm Mar 29-Apr5 \$40

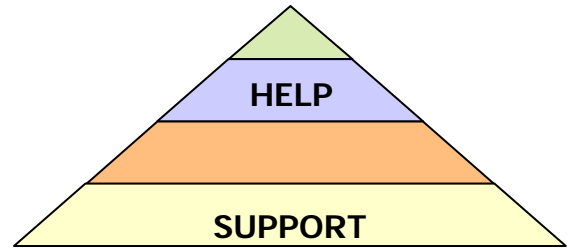
Parents' Morning

Hear interesting guest speakers; participate in stimulating discussion and an exchange of ideas. Learn how to become more effective parents, enrich family and marital relationships, and grow as individuals. Parents and infants participate together. Supervised childcare is available free of charge. Ages 2-5, enroll in same class number. More info. 949-724-6638. Fee is \$5 for residents and \$7 for non-residents per session/adult. Day/time: Mondays 9:15-11am

Location: Turtle Rock Community Park
#37864 M Apr 10 Positive Discipline Strategies
#37865 M Apr 24 Improving Your Child's Communication Skills
#37866 M May 8 The Fine Art of Parenting
#37867 M May 22 Power Struggles

To register or for information on additional classes offered through the City of Irvine go to:
www.irvineQuickReg.org or
Program Registration
(949) 724-6610

Where to Turn for Assistance



Reliable Health and Nutrition Information: County of Orange Health Care Agency

For information or lists of newsletters, websites, books, journals, and organizations:
www.ochealthinfo.com/public/nutrition/nac_resources.htm
Or (714) 834-7874

Department of Health Services Child Health and Disability Prevention Program

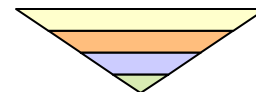
Preventative health services for children and youth that are Medi-Cal eligible or income-qualified
www.dhs.ca.gov/pcfh/cms/chdp

Irvine Unified School District

Contact the school nurse or
District Health Services
(949) 936-7920 (6-18 yrs old)
or
School Readiness Program
(949) 936-5870 (0-5 yrs old)

Mission Hospital's Camino Health Center WIC Program

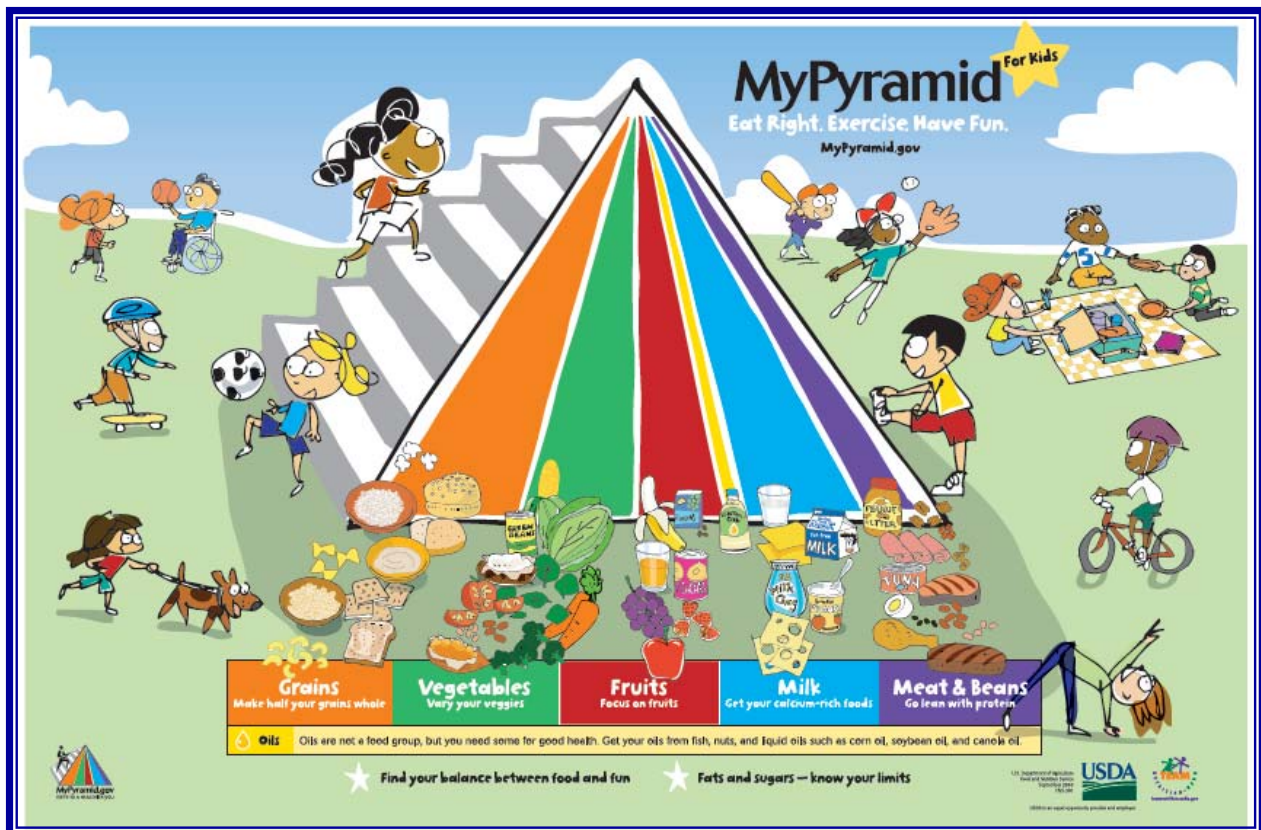
Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program for Medi-Cal eligible or income qualified
(949) 488-7688



CHILDHOOD OBESITY*Continued from page 2*

The percentage of overweight youth has more than tripled since 1980: among children and teens aged 6-19 years, more than 9 million young people (16 %) are considered to be overweight (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Overweight and Obesity: Home*, 2005). As a result, it is essential for parents to assume a proactive role in educating their children about the importance of good nutrition and physical activities. Setting a good example and becoming more involved in the lives of your children can go a long way to improve their self-esteem and bring the family closer together.

The following Food Pyramid provides healthy eating suggestions and exercises for parents and families to consider in promoting a healthier lifestyle for their children. Replacing some fat, oil, salts, and sweets with fruits, calcium-rich foods, and proteins may greatly improve your child's health. Ask your family doctor about appropriate nutrition and exercise programs for your children.

**References:**

United States Department of Agriculture: www.mypyramid.gov
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov

About the newsletter author:

Debbie Brunn, FOR Families Program Specialist, graduated with her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Ecology from UC Irvine and with her Master of Science Degree in Counseling from Cal State Fullerton. She is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist experienced in counseling children, chronically mentally ill adults, and providing professional consultations to persons with dementia and their families. Debbie currently resides with her husband in Irvine and has been a resident since 1971. *Debbie may be contacted by phone at (949) 724-6650 or via e-mail at dbrunn@ci.irvine.ca.us.*

To celebrate Irvine's 35 years as a City, here are 35 activities you might enjoy that may help improve the health and well-being of you, your children, and your family

35 Ways to Eat Well & Stay Active in Irvine

1. Shop the Farmers' Market at the Marketplace on Saturday morning
2. Find a new recipe and cook your fresh vegetables as a family
3. Explore Irvine using some of the 42 miles of off-road bicycle trails
4. Schedule a group tour at Tanaka Farms (May, June)
5. Feed the ducks at Heritage Park
6. Burn those calories at the Harvard Skateboard Park
7. Explore the new bike crossing at Jeffrey and the 405
8. Take a leisurely walk in the San Joaquin Marsh Reserve
9. Enjoy a homemade picnic at the Reserve
10. Form a group and volunteer for a gleaning project
11. Enter the 26th Annual Heart Walk —Kids Fun Run or 5K
12. Race model boats at Mason Park
13. Take the dog to Central Bark
14. Take a Sunday morning wilderness walk in Hicks Canyon
15. Have teens join in a mountain bike ride at Bommer Canyon
16. Visit the Bill Barber Park Accessible Playground
17. Encourage your children & teens to take an age-appropriate cooking class
18. Take a swim at the Aquatics Center
19. Join a bowling league for fun
20. Enjoy the Full Moon Hike at Bommer Canyon
21. Start kids early in Kids Gym
22. Join in the "Great Egg Hunt"
23. Plan a sunset picnic in Bommer Canyon (pack your own low fat dinner)
24. Enjoy fishing at Irvine Lake—fish are a great source of nutrients
25. Surprise everyone with a HEALTHY dish at Bingo Potluck Night
26. Join Day in the Park—fun activities for families with young ones
27. Earn that dessert playing Drop-In Table Tennis
28. Play basketball with the kids at one of Irvine's beautiful parks
29. Walk off breakfast with a day hike in Bommer Canyon
30. Explore All Sorts of Sports for parents and children
31. Build a fort or play in the mud at the Adventure Playground: a must for the kids
32. Sign up for a fun filled dance, music, or drama class
33. Join the Birding Hike in Bommer Canyon
34. Check out the great summer camps offered
35. Trek on over to the Nature Center at Turtle Rock Park and discover the amazing creatures



Check out the Community Services Brochure for many of these activities.

About FOR Families

The FOR Families Program provides short-term support and information to families and individuals living or working in Irvine who need assistance identifying and accessing needed services and resources. The FOR Families staff offers **free, confidential consultations** to determine community members' needs and develop action plans to help meet those needs.

Some of the issues FOR Families addresses include:

- relationship difficulties
- separation and divorce
- substance abuse concerns
- parenting issues
- stress and depression
- financial and legal issues

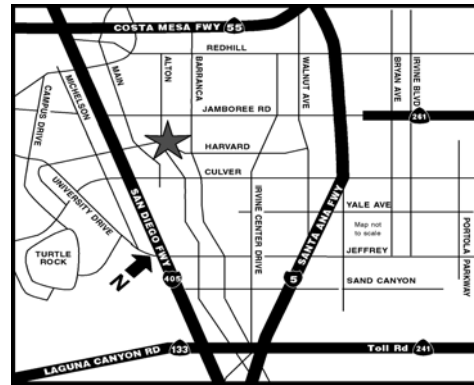
FOR Families will assist with creative problem-solving, resource linkage, and referrals for counseling.

Hours: 9-5 Monday - Thursday and alternate Fridays

Phone: (949) 724-6650

Fax (949) 724-6608

www.irvineforfamilies.org



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