



Nutrition Education  
Training Academy

# NETA QUARTERLY NEWS

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Nutrition, Physical Activity & Gardening for Early Childhood Providers

## Fall Focus

- Autumn is traditional harvest time, take advantage of the season's bounty.**
- Don't just throw away those seeds after you carve a jack o' lantern. Separate the seeds from the pulp and toast them in your oven, skillet or microwave then spice or salt to taste for a high fiber snack.**
- Soup can be a warm and satisfying meal as the days grow colder. Use a tomato base and add plenty of vegetables for a highly nutritious, low fat and low calorie dish.**

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**Errata:** Volume 6, Issue 3 was dated July – September 2006 in error; that issue should have been dated April – June 2006

University of California Cooperative Extension in Alameda County



1131 Harbor Bay Pkwy , Ste. 131 Alameda, CA 94502 Ph: 5105676812 Fax: 5107489644

## Is There a Link Between Food Insecurity and Obesity?

The obesity epidemic is getting a lot of attention these days. What's not, though, is the significant relationship between food insecurity and obesity.

Food insecurity is defined as a lack of access to nutritious, affordable, culturally appropriate foods through non-emergency sources. Over thirty million people in the US are food insecure and thus at a higher risk of obesity and chronic disease.

Obesity is often equated with an abundance of food; in truth, lack of nutritious foods, heavily processed foods high in fats and calories, and an unstable food supply can put all eaters at higher risk of obesity. Research shows that families who are food insecure have a higher risk of obesity because:

- 1) To satisfy hunger, low-income families need to maximize the quantity of food they get for every dollar spent. This often means foods high in calories, but low in nutrition. In our current food system, eating the recommended portion of fruits and vegetables is too expensive for many families.
- 2) Lack of transportation means limited access to appropriate foods recommended by US Dietary Guidelines. Many economically-challenged families are forced to shop within walking distance of home. Most low-income neighborhoods lack grocery stores that carry a full line of produce and other whole and nutritious foods. Corner stores are often stocked with packaged foods – heavily processed and high in fats and sugars, and fast food restaurants offer super-sized bargains.



3) Food Stamps and other federal food programs often run-out mid month, forcing families to choose who gets to eat. Our metabolism is affected by chronic ups and downs in food supply. When the metabolism adjusts to compensate for reduced food intake, it increases the risk of obesity.

Food insecurity and obesity are parallel problems that most affect the poor and place them at a higher risk of contracting other chronic diseases. We cannot solve the obesity problem if we do not develop policies and programs that support solutions for both epidemics simultaneously. Until all communities can access affordable healthy and nutritious foods, food insecurity — and therefore obesity — will continue to plague our nation.

## References

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- Food Research and Action Center. Obesity, Food Insecurity, and the Federal Child Nutrition Programs: Understanding the Linkages. October 2005. [http://www.frac.org/pdf/obesity05\\_paper.pdf](http://www.frac.org/pdf/obesity05_paper.pdf)



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## What do the Experts Say About Eating Healthy, Exercise and Success in School?



**W**hen you encourage students to eat healthy foods and exercise you are improving their health, but did you know that you are also improving their chance of succeeding at school? Conventional wisdom tells us that well-nourished kids are less likely to become ill and less likely to miss school. Because they spend more days in the classroom, these children are more likely to succeed academically. There is increasing evidence confirming the link between proper nutrition and reduced absenteeism.

Studies from around the world have linked inadequate food intake with lower academic achievement in children. A

New York study shows that even minor nutrient deficiencies affect intelligence and academic performance. Getting an adequate amount of food is not enough, the quality of the food counts too. Children that consume

foods high in fat, sugar and sodium are at risk for nutrient deficiencies as well as becoming overweight.

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Research from the nutrition and education fields find that children who participate in school breakfast programs have fewer absences, fewer morning trips to the nurse, fewer behavior problems, and score higher on composite math and reading tests. Studies comparing kids that eat breakfast at home or school with those who skip breakfast show similar results.



According to the latest studies, physical activity also improves academic achievement. One study found that using 240 minutes per week for physical activity instead of academic instruction resulted in higher math scores. Another study found that when trained classroom teachers implemented a physical activity curriculum, their students scored higher on a standardized academic test than students in classes where there was no change to the amount or type of P.E. offered. Surprisingly, this study also found that students in the trained teacher-led classes scored higher than students in P.E. classes led by physical activity specialists.

Despite this evidence, many schools are cutting P.E. to make more time for academic instruction in hopes of improving test scores. This may be the wrong approach.

Most experts agree that early childhood is the most important age to teach a child the importance of eating well, and being physically active. Early childhood nutrition most likely affects what a child can learn now and in the future since these are some of the brain's most formative years. With your encouragement, the preschoolers you teach now will be more likely to eat healthy foods and exercise when they are older... and do better in school.

***One study found that using 240 minutes per week for physical activity instead of academic instruction resulted in higher math scores.***

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Shephard et al. "Required Physical Activity and Academic Grades: A Controlled Longitudinal Study." In Children and Sport, ed. Ilmarinen and Valimaki. Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1984, pp. 58-63.

Symons, Cynthia Wolford. "Bringing Student Health Risks and Academic Achievement through Comprehensive School Health Programs." Journal of School Health, 67(6):224, August 1997.

## You Can't Beat the Beet!

**W**hat's red and green and ripe all fall? **Beets!!** Colorful, nutritious, and delicious, beets are a versatile addition to any meal.

High in fiber, folate, manganese, and potassium, the beet root can be eaten raw or juiced for a tasty liver tonic. Baked, the root makes a hearty addition to any dish. Their edible leaves are rich in vitamins A, K, and some B vitamins, and can be eaten steamed, in a stir fry, or anywhere that you would normally use dark leafy greens.



The deep red of beets can also be used for art projects — including painting, stamp making, and dying clothing. While red



beets (*Beta vulgaris*) are said to have originated in Europe and North Africa., their use has spread all over the world because of their high nutritional and aesthetic value.

At your local farmer's market this fall, look out for golden beets and chioggia beets — striped bright pink and white. They're both equally pretty, but only

red beets have the highly nutritious and exceptionally delicious greens. Nothing beats beets!

### Beet Greens:

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1 cup (30g)	
Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value*
<b>Calories 8</b>	Calories from Fat 0
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 86mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 2g	1%
Dietary Fiber 1g	6%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 48% • Vitamin C 19%	
Calcium 42% • Iron 8%	
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
NutritionData.com	

### References:

Oregon State University <http://food.oregonstate.edu/faq/uffva/beet2.html>  
<http://www.nutritiondata.com>

## A Raw Delight for Fall:

### Shredded Beet and Carrot Salad with Toasted Pepitos and Sautéed Beet Greens



#### Ingredients:

- 3 large beets with greens
- 4 medium carrots
- 1/2 cup raw pumpkin seeds (pepitos)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- Salt to taste

#### Directions:

##### Salad

1. Cut and set aside greens from beets (you will eat these too!)
2. Peel, rinse and pat dry beets and carrots
3. Coarsely grate beets and carrots into med-sized bowl
4. Add olive oil and vinegar, salt to taste

##### Toasted Pepitos

1. Heat medium sized frying pan
2. Pour seeds in dry pan
3. Stir regularly to toast on all sides
4. When lightly brown and puffed, remove from heat
5. Sprinkle onto salad, toss and eat

##### Sautéed Beet Greens

1. Thoroughly wash the beet greens and pat dry
2. Remove the stem and chop greens finely
3. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in pan
4. Toss in greens and stir until soft, but still GREEN
5. Add salt, pepper or other spices to taste



## Helping Children Grow Up Healthy and Strong

“**T**here is so much information out there,” says fitness icon Jake Steinfeld, chair of Arnold Schwarzenegger’s Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. “One day exercise 30 minutes a day is good and then it is two hours. What ends up happening is that people get fed up and don’t do anything.”

Exercise can be boring unless you are enjoying what you are doing, and it must fit your lifestyle, not someone else’s. To keep going it is important to find people who inspire you, and people who will be your cheerleaders.

Healthy Lifestyles is a Family Affair. Here are some tips

1. Schedule your exercise like an appointment
2. Set reasonable goals

3. Start slowly, take “baby steps” if you have not exercised in a while
4. Participation not perfection is your goal
5. Avoid getting bored, use a variety of activities
6. Listen and dance to music you enjoy
7. Remind yourself it is not too late, small steps make a big difference
8. Limit inactive behavior
9. Plan an active weekend

Playing hopscotch, tossing a ball back and forth, and dancing are some of the ways a child can be active. A child needs opportunities to be active, even though not all of them are good athletes or like organized sports.

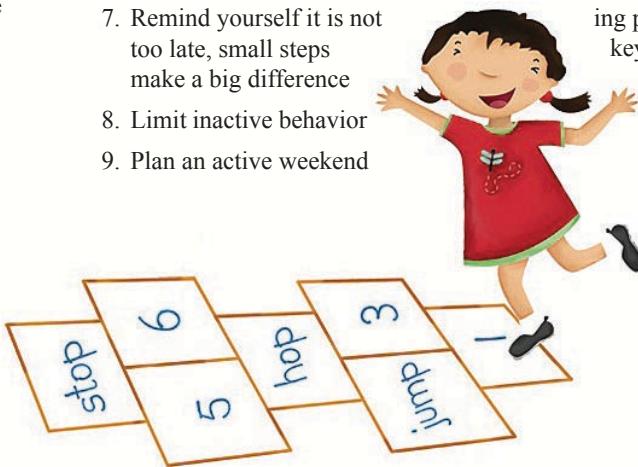
Remember “Eating well and being physically active every day” are keys to your health and well being.

### References:

U.S Department of Health and Human Services, <http://www.smallstep.gov/pdf/helpyourchildgrowuphealthyandstrong.pdf> downloaded September 30, 2006

Dietz WH. Physical activity recommendations: Where do we go from here? *J Pediatr* 2005; 146:719–20.

Bright Futures <http://www.brightfutures.org/physicalactivity/ec/index.html>



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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lorraine S. Johnson".

County Director, UC Cooperative Extension in Alameda County



Funded by the USDA Food Stamp Program, an equal opportunity provider and employer, through the California Nutrition Network. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. Helping them buy nutritious food for a better diet. For more information about the California Food Stamp program call 18009525253.

### Tidbits – Are We Making Any Progress?

**O**besity and other weight related problems have become frequent media topics, but there is a lot of conflicting information being reported. It is often difficult to find reliable information. The media often features experts that emphasize the role of individual choice but ignore the circumstances under which those choices are made. While there is no doubt that eating too much and not getting enough physical activity are big problems, we must understand that many environmental factors including social and economic disparities contribute to the obesity problem.

Resources that can help!

UC Cooperative Extension – Alameda County  
1131 Harbor Bay Parkway, Suite 131  
Alameda, CA 94502  
Phone: 510- 567-6812 Fax: 510-748-9644  
[cealameda@ucdavis.edu](mailto:cealameda@ucdavis.edu)

Healthy Kids Resource Center  
Alameda County Office of Education  
313 West Winton Ave. Room 180  
Hayward, CA 94544  
Phone: 510-670-4581 Fax: 510-670-4582  
<http://www.californiahealthykids.org>

The Center for Weight and Health  
101 Giannini Hall #3100  
Berkeley, CA 94720  
Phone: 510-642-2915 Fax: 510-642-4612  
<http://nature.berkeley.edu/cwh/>