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Extension Helps Families “Live Well”

Raising kids, eating right, spending smart, living well—that’s the theme of a national Living Well Campaign that is being promoted by the Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, both at the national level and here in Tennessee. The goal of the Living Well Campaign is to provide people with the education and information they need in order to “live well.”

The University of Tennessee Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences works through UT Extension to offer information that will help families achieve a positive, healthy lifestyle. Whether you are trying to manage your diabetes through meal planning and exercise, make decisions about health care, or get tips on effective co-parenting techniques, Extension likely has a research-based answer.

To make every month a “Living Well Month,” consider these eight tips.

1. Engage children in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week. Adults need at least 30 minutes of physical activity. Besides participating in sporting activities, turn on some music and dance. Be creative by assembling an obstacle course or using hula-hoops. Start planning a garden. Take a walk or bike ride in your neighborhood.
2. Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. The average adult human body is approximately 60 percent water, which is found in muscle, blood, brain, bone, etc. Water regulates every living cell’s processes and chemical reactions. It transports nutrients and oxygen. Water helps to maintain normal bowel habits and prevent constipation. Limit the amount of soda and fruit drinks consumed daily.
3. Eat a variety of healthful foods. Be sure to have plenty of colorful fruits and vegetables every day. Most people need at least 4 ½ cups to meet the daily recommendation. Have a glass of 100 percent juice or sliced banana on cereal for breakfast, enjoy raw vegetables with dip to accompany a sandwich at lunch and have a sliced apple for dessert. At dinner, steam some vegetables and prepare a fruit parfait with yogurt for dessert. Try a new fruit or vegetable. See www.choosemyplate.gov for more information about nutrition for yourself and members of your family.
4. Read, read, read. Go to the library and check out books. Keep the mental stimulation flowing throughout the year.

5. Work on 4-H projects, or open-class exhibits for the county fair.
6. Check out parenting, health and nutrition classes offered locally. Go to www.coffee.tennessee.edu for more information, or call 723-5141.
7. Maintain a healthy home. Be sure your smoke detector is working correctly and test for the presence of Radon. Help manage allergies and/or asthma by cleaning and vacuuming regularly to reduce allergy triggers in the home. Avoid accidental poisonings by keeping medications locked up, and cleaning agents and other poisons out of reach of children.
8. Keep your family finances in check. Track your expenses and update your budget regularly. Eat at home often because meals outside of home usually cost more. Plan your menus and use the coupons to help plan your menus. Use leftovers as the basis for another meal.

Extension Family and Consumer Science professionals are part of a nationwide educational organization funded through the Land Grant University System and United States Department of Agriculture. There are no barriers to the practical, relevant, non-biased, research-based information available for everyone.