

HEALTHLINES

Summer 2005

Chad's Corner

Summer is a time for outdoor activities, so go outside and do something. Springfield has more to offer than one might realize. There are many multi-purpose trails surrounding our community. A prime example is the Wabash Trail. I know this trail all too well; having it literally in my backyard was really nice over the last 5 years. Bikers, runners, and roller bladers utilize this wonderful trail year round.

Last month Betsy Link, Sara Mansfield and Adam Freehill attended the *American College of Sports Medicine* annual meeting in Nashville, Tennessee. One topic that was of particular interest to me was the USDA's updated Food Pyramid. In this edition of "*Healthlines*", Sara Mansfield does a fine job of familiarizing you with all of the intricacies.

I don't know about you, but I was always a bit confused by the old Food Pyramid guidelines. There was absolutely no way I could consume 11 servings of grains each day, unless I wanted to gain an extraordinary amount of body weight. Personally, I felt the old Food Pyramid was probably pretty jaded with all of the special interest groups looking to capitalize on getting their respective food item to market. According to Sara, once again the governments' unveiling of the new and improved Food Pyramid was very cautious. Apparently, the government doesn't want to necessarily exclude and/or chastise any particular agricultural industry for fear of stepping on anyone's toes.

Body Symmetry recently finished producing its first DVD, "Baseball Conditioning for Pitchers". I was able to film most of the video over the winter with Ryan O'Malley, a pitcher in the Chicago Cubs' organization. So if you know of any young pitchers that might be interested in learning how to improve their performance on the pitcher's mound, give us a call!

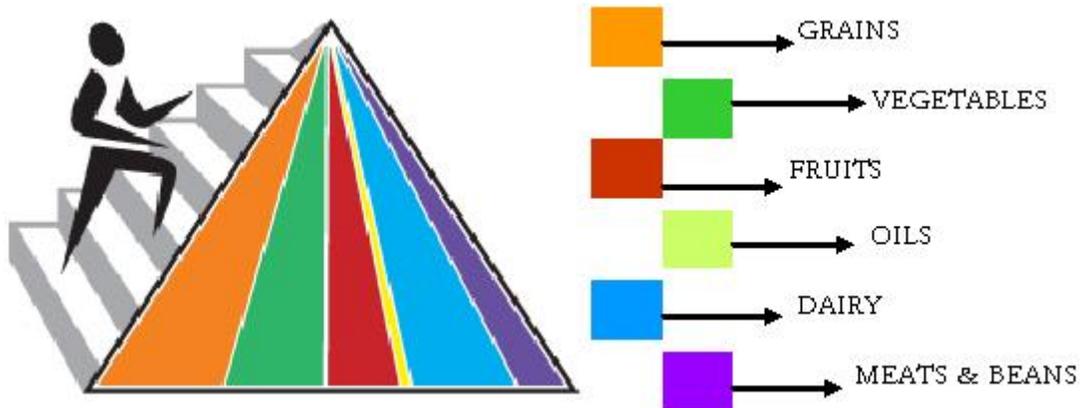
Have a great activity filled summer!

Yours in Health, Chad Marschik

Life is about balance.
If something throws your life out of balance,
YOU must find a way to bring it back into balance.

MyPyramid.Gov by Sara Mansfield, M.S.

Yes, its that time again. A new food guide pyramid has been unveiled. Our government has been hard at work for the last several years to re-configure our nutrition guidelines. Just when you thought it was safe to eat one way here we come with a different suggestion. In all reality, its not that different, but it does attempt to address some of the issues Americans seem to have concerning diet and exercise.



Recently, I attended a presentation at the American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting by three of the folks who had a lot to say about what went into this offering. No small task, when you consider the initial goal to improve the health of our population, especially children, combined with the pressure from special interest groups to make their foods look good. Add in the little voice in their heads that says the science must be correct and some professional integrity and pride, and you've got quite a pressure cooker. The people that spoke seem to be very knowledgeable and diplomatic about the process and provided some insight for me at just how monumental this task can be. I applauded the effort, but also am aware that these are only guidelines and are in no way all inclusive. Let's call it food for thought.

An interesting note about the process is that the many experts that are recruited to head up and join committees end up making their recommendations in one report. Then, this report is made user friendly by the marketing experts. Their task is to make the guidelines as easy to understand as possible...ala a fun and colorful graphic. Pretty clever, and now they have done even more by developing a website, mypyramid.gov, that helps people to understand the pyramid and gives tools to use to make guidelines more specific to each person. Check out this site if you get a chance.

Whether you take advantage of the extras or not, the basic principle it gets across is still useful. Each color represents a different food group. The foods that appear in the wider part of the color are more nutrient dense and healthier, therefore eat more of those. If a food you like is in the thinner part of the stripe, eat less of that food. These are foods that usually contain more solid fats and

added sugars. Also important to notice is the figure climbing the stairs on the side. If you are not able to be active consistently (injury, illness, just lazy?) then you need to eat foods from the healthier section. If you are very active (climbing high up to the top) then you have a little more leeway to eat some of the not-so-great foods. This is your choice. This is a principle that I believe most people miss.



Exercise Spotlight

Having a Tense Day? Try this exercise to loosen your back and keep your spine mobile.

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Prop your head up on a small pillow if necessary.

Picture your spine for a moment, recalling how it is a series of vertebrae, connected by tissue (muscle, ligaments, etc.) and separated by discs. Now, picture a pearl necklace lying on a table. If you pick up the necklace slowly only one pearl lifts off at a time. Try to do this with each one of your vertebrae.

Slowly tilt your pelvis toward the floor so your tailbone lifts up. Now, start to lift each vertebrae off of the floor from your tailbone to your upper back. You can do this by contracting your stomach muscles, squeezing your gluteal muscles and pressing your feet into the floor. Remember to breathe, go slowly and try to separate the lifting of each vertebrae. Once you are up, slowly put the “pearls” back down.

This task is very difficult and should be done cautiously. Listen to your body. If anything hurts or feels uncomfortable, ease back a bit. Spinal immobility doesn't correct itself overnight and overstretching doesn't get the job done. As you do this exercise, you should be feeling your muscles release their tension. Be patient and persistent. If you repeat this 5-10 times, you will find your back releasing its tension and you will feel a whole lot better.