

Wellness Roundup

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Ride the Fitness Wave This Summer

By Lisa Noack, Certified Youth Fitness Trainer, C.P.T.

Nutrition & Wellness Committee Lang Ranch PTA

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Green Ribbon Week THANK YOU!

The Nutrition & Wellness Committee would like to thank everyone who helped make Green Ribbon Week possible including the teachers, staff and PTA at Lang Ranch, the parent volunteers, our generous sponsors and especially all the enthusiastic kids who participated in the activities everyday!

Don't Forget the Sunscreen!



When we were kids swimming, bike riding and outdoor games were daily warm-weather pastimes... we'd be gone all day and only manage to wander home when we were hungry. Today, because of increased safety concerns and technology, more kids than ever wind up inside for hours with TV's and play stations....and for older kids spending time with friends often means "IM-ing" while sitting in front of the computer.

Many studies have linked physical inactivity to a sharp increase in childhood weight and medical problems during the summer months. The unstructured nature of summer, as compared to the controlled environment inside a school where students eat and exercise at specific times, makes it

more difficult for parents to monitor kids and kids to monitor themselves.

Summer is the season to take a break from routine, and that includes the routine of robotically turning to familiar – and passive – ways to unwind or beat boredom. When the family exercises in a supportive way children feel more accepted, their self-esteem increases and they view physical activity as positive. A recent study from UCLA indicated that the more active the child the higher they scored in optimism and resiliency – pretty inexpensive preventative medicine. Helping your children create an active lifestyle forms habits that they'll carry into their adult years.

Children over the age of two should get at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity daily for the

greatest health benefit. Weight-bearing exercise, or activity that relies on your feet and legs to carry your weight, helps build strong bones and joints.

Remember that the most important thing with kids, no matter whether it's a structured sport or a backyard game, is that if the activity is not fun they won't want to do it. Sounds simple, but we can often push our kids into activities *we* like while ignoring their subtle and not so subtle hints that they are not enjoying themselves or feel pressured. Forcing kids to undertake a sport or activity they don't appreciate will teach them to turn away from exercise rather than embrace it.

Here are some summer fitness tips:

(Continued on Page 4...)

HOW TO MAKE HEALTHY FAST FOOD CHOICES By Lisa Ross

We all know there's nothing like a home-cooked meal... just as we all know that sometimes there is just not enough time to make that home-cooking happen. Here are some guidelines to help you make the healthiest choices possible in places where convenience and speed are more the focus than health.

MOST UNHEALTHY FAST FOOD CHOICES:

- *Chicken nuggets
- *Anything on a croissant
- *Fried fish or chicken sandwiches (anything "crispy")
- *French fries & onion rings

All of these popular items are loaded with saturated fat. It is so important for our health and the health of our children to learn to make

substitutions for these high-in-bad-fat items. Fruit or small salads can replace French fries, and low fat milk or water can be chosen instead of soda or high-sugar fruit punch drinks. Let's face it, French fries are pretty hard to replace, but if your kids aren't used to getting them every single time they go to McDonalds, *(Continued on Page 2...)*

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they will know they can be a special treat once in a while.

Quite often in fast food restaurants it is the *condiments* that make food items high in saturated fat and calories. McDonalds offers Newman's Own Ranch dressing for their salads. It contains 170 calories and 15 grams of fat per serving! If you choose the Newman's Own Low Fat Balsamic Vinaigrette dressing it brings the totals down to 40 calories and 3 grams of fat. Burger King's "Fire Grilled Garden Salads" with vinaigrette dressing have 300 calories and 4 grams of fat, as opposed to their "Tender Crisp Salads" with fried chicken strips which contain 10 grams of bad fat and 500 calories. Here's a great idea from Oprah's fitness instructor Bob Greene: order your dressing on the side and dip your fork into it before each bite, and don't pour any dressing on the salad. This may cut the calories in your salad in half!

At healthy fast food Mexican restaurants such as Baja Fresh, La Salsa and Sharky's, what seems a

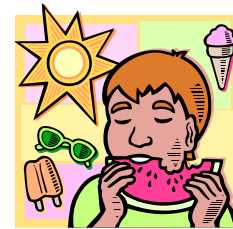
healthy meal can actually be very high in saturated fat. Avoiding the "enchilada style" (cheese sauce on top) and sour cream can cut saturated fat way down, as well as ordering items with less cheese and more lean meat or beans. For example, Baja Fresh's "Bare Burrito" with chicken has only 1 gram of saturated fat. In comparison, the "Baja Burrito" (which has melted cheese inside) contains 15 grams of saturated fat, and the "Burrito Ultimo" has 18 grams of saturated fat. Believe it or not, the kid's quesadilla at Baja Fresh has 13 saturated fat grams, as opposed to the kid's bean and cheese burrito which has only 7, and about half the calories. Asking for whole wheat tortillas (if they are available) instead of flour is another way to make your meal healthier.

HEALTHY FAST FOOD CHOICES:

- * Grilled chicken or fish sandwiches.
- * Fruit or fruit with yogurt. (McDonald's fruit & yogurt parfait has 160 calories and only 1 gram of bad fat; apple dippers are also a good choice.)

- * Salads with low fat dressing and/or dressing on the side.
- * Single hamburger without cheese, mayonnaise or sauces.
- * Bottled water or low fat milk.
- * Wraps in whole wheat tortillas.
- * Low fat deli sandwiches on whole wheat bread.

Remember to skip the high fat condiments like sour cream, mayonnaise, cheese and most special sauces and instead choose flavorful additions like salsas and extra veggies.



Eating healthy not only helps our own well-being, but shows our children good examples of how we make choices because we care about our bodies. We want to live long, healthy lives so we can enjoy seeing them grow up, and relish every moment.

Have a happy, healthy summer! Lisa

Family Friendly Hiking Trails by Debbie Aleman, cpt

Spending time in nature is a wonderful way for a family to escape from the hustle of our busy lives and slow down long enough to enjoy the little wonders of the beautiful area we live in. There are many hiking trails and picnic areas throughout the Santa Monica Mountains Recreation Area; you can visit their Visitor Center at 401 W. Hillcrest Drive to pick up maps and get more information. They're open daily till 5pm and if you stop by on a Thursday afternoon you can also go to the Farmer's Market. It's a terrific place to sample new varieties of fresh fruits and veggies and it makes a great family outing.

The Conejo Open Space Foundation also maintains miles of hiking trails close to home, like beautiful Wildwood Park at the west end of Avenida de los Arboles. There are many great trails suited to all ages

and abilities, with interesting features like waterfalls, caves and creeks, as well as many shady picnic areas. One of my favorites is the Indian Creek Trail. The trailhead is on Frontier and Arboles, one block before the main parking area for Wildwood Park. It's a mostly shaded trail that follows Indian Creek down into a canyon, past Indian Creek Falls and ending at Meadows Picnic area. You can cross the bridge and take a short walk to Indian Cave or just relax by the creek and look for turtles and lizards sunning themselves on the rocks. Conejo Open Space has an excellent website that details hiking trails in all the parks they oversee. It includes difficulty ratings and detailed maps and descriptions of various hikes. The especially unique and helpful features are the pictures that accompany the step by step

descriptions of each hike. You can get a visual preview to help you choose the best hike before you head out on your adventure. Their website is www.COSF.org. Just click on "TRAILS", choose your park and all the details are there!

Make sure to bring plenty of water and snacks, even on short hikes, and don't forget the sunscreen. Watch out for poison oak, especially around creek beds. Try to beat the heat by heading out early, before the morning fog burns off and let your kids set the pace. Take the time to really notice the little details with your children like the birds, plants and animals. If you set out with a sense of adventure and discovery the whole family will have a great time in the great outdoors!



HELPING CHILDREN DEAL WITH FEAR- By Karen Begun, Psy.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Summer is fast approaching and many children will be going off to camp, taking swimming lessons and traveling. Some children may experience fear or anxiety when faced with new situations and experiences. Most children will experience fear and anxiety in the normal course of development. Children naturally move through many of their fears as they come to a more balanced or sophisticated understanding of the world. But that takes time. What can parents do in the meantime? How can we help our children when they're in a period of accentuated fears?

Although there are no remedies that will work in every situation, here are some ideas for helping your child deal with fear and anxiety:

Know your child: Children's fears, their timing, and their expression, are unique to each child. Observations of your child and knowledge of his temperament will give you important clues about where his fears are coming from and how best to respond to them.

Avoid scary situations: When possible, avoid exposing your child to things that terrify him. Often things that seem quite harmless to an adult can be very upsetting to children. Check out books, TV shows, movies, or excursions ahead of time if you suspect that something particularly scary awaits.

Take your child's fears seriously: Even if a little bug or stuffed animal isn't scary to you, it may be very frightening to your child. Fears are often based on the very best thinking your child can do at the time. Respecting your child's fears is a way of respecting her natural growth and intelligence.

Respect the fear but don't reinforce it: There is a fine line between acknowledging your child's fears ("I can see you're really scared of the monsters") and validating the reality of those fears ("Those are scary monsters!") Joining your child in her fears can make her feel confused and more frightened.

Don't try to talk children out of being afraid: Logic, bribery, and cajoling won't eliminate children's fears. If kids get the message that it's not okay to be afraid, their fears will just go underground. Even though they might stop talking about them, the fears will still be there. And as many of us know from personal experience, it's much harder to face fears alone.

Don't try to fix it: Parents are often tempted to jump in with "I'll scare the monster away for you." Rather than just "getting rid" of the monsters in the

bedroom, help your child figure out what she needs in order to feel safe. This gives her the message you think she's capable of dealing with her fears.

Talk with children about their fears: Sometimes parents think it's best to tiptoe around children's fears, as if not mentioning them might somehow keep them at bay. In reality, the opposite is true. Fears become less obscure and generally diminish in size as children address and define them. Asking children questions enables you to get information you can use to help them. "Tell me about your monster." "What does it look like?" Once you have an idea about the content of their fear, you can sometimes provide information which may help children put their fear in perspective.

Expect children to dwell on their fears: Your child may need to talk about the scary thing repeatedly. Often this will be far past the point that you want to hear about it. For children, talking about the fear with a supportive person is a crucial part of overcoming it.

Invite children to act: Since children feel helpless in the face of fear, it is useful to help them think about what they can do: "What do you want to tell that monster?" "What can we do to help you feel safe?"

Help your child make a book: Have your child draw pictures or tell a story about the thing that is scary. Reading and rereading their book can be a safe way for your child to revisit the fear and start gaining mastery over it.

Help children face the fear in increments: Think about the least scary kinds of steps your child can take. If your child is afraid of dogs, you might want to look at a picture of a dog together. You might want to read a book about a dog. You might want to make a tape recording of dogs barking so that your child can listen to the sound when he wants to-and stop it at will.

Don't force anything: When encouraging a child to approach a scary situation, don't push. When your child cringes and runs away, respect those feelings. But always leave the door open to trying again. You can say, "okay, we'll leave now, but maybe we can try another day." In doing so, you give your children the message that fears are not static and that their relationship to a fear can change over time.

Find the manageable distance: Rather than remove children entirely from the things that scare them, work

to find the closest distance at which they can feel safe enough to confront the thing they fear. Always observe your child for signs that he wants to move closer and is ready to take the next step.

Find other ways to support children's competence: When children are experiencing a lot of fear, they're usually feeling scared and powerless in the world at large. You can help them feel more competent in the world by supporting their developing sense of mastery.

Let children know that everyone gets scared sometimes: Kids benefit from the information that fears are a normal part of life. Knowing that the adults around them have successfully dealt with fears can be reassuring for kids. Share a story about a fear you successfully dealt with as a child. But make sure the "fear" and the "story" are appropriate for your child and not something that will add to her fear.

Try to see the bigger picture: Dealing effectively with your child's fears doesn't necessarily mean those fears will go away. Usually eliminating a fear takes time and maturity. But that doesn't mean that our efforts are ineffective or that our teaching isn't relevant. Children learn tools for dealing with fear even if they aren't ready to overcome the fear that is immediately before them.



Remember that children have their own timetable for successfully working through fear. Because overcoming fears is a complex interface between intellectual and emotional development, one can never predict the timing of the process. It is useful to remember that even though children are sometimes quite undone by their fears, they have enormous potential for learning as they work through them. Once a child has successfully dealt with something that has frightened her, she'll be equipped to deal with fears that come up later in life. However, if the particular fear is excessive, lasts over a relatively long period of time, and creates problems in living for the parents and/or child, therapeutic intervention can be considered.

DON'T SUPER SIZE YOUR SUMMER BY MELISSA DORVAL, RD

We all see the headlines about our “super-sized” children. Childhood obesity is truly becoming an epidemic in our country, particularly among children in the “tween” years (8-12). According to the Center for Disease Control, since 1980 the percentage of overweight children ages 6 to 11 has doubled and the percentage of overweight adolescents has tripled.

In some communities, over half of type 2 diabetes (this is adult-onset diabetes) is among children. And the facts are this; overweight children have a 70% chance of becoming overweight adults. So we do live in a super-sized economy with super-sized children and adults. One in every 6 children ages 6-19 is obese. So what should parents do?

This summer, take advantage of the delicious summer fruits which are packed with antioxidants like blueberries, raspberries, peaches, apricots, plums and watermelon. For a delicious treat compliment them with free radical fighting fruits such as

papaya and mango, which are available year around. Try freezing grapes for a cool down snack that children love. Melt dark chocolate and dip fruits such as pineapple and strawberry into the chocolate. It's some fun, child-friendly cooking in the kitchen, and a desert that adults love to indulge in too.

Now, let's talk summer exercise. If our children see us making physical activity a priority in our lives, they are more likely to follow in our footsteps. Not an exerciser? Well there is no better time to find some physical activities that you can do with your children than this summer. For example, go on afternoon or evening walks together, take a family bike ride, play tennis at the local park. Have a blast from the past with old-fashioned roller skating (or roller blading) with your children. (Check out the Roller Dome for summer hours, it's right up the street!) To cool down from the summer heat, go ice-skating or visit a bowling alley. And of course, swim,

swim and keep swimming this summer. Teach your children to do activities you enjoy and you will have the opportunity to enjoy the activities together. Be sure to also expose your children to activities you may not have enjoyed, as they may take a liking to it.

Even though we are bound to have a hot, California summer, be sure to limit TV, video game and computer time for yourself and your children. These habits lead to a sedentary lifestyle, which increases the risk for obesity.

Make a commitment to yourself and to your family to make Summer 2007 a physically active and deliciously nutritious season. Face it, healthy people tend to be happier and we can certainly use some more happy people in this world!

I'd like to acknowledge my sister Ali Fish-Kamen, MPH, for contributing to the above article.

Have a great summer! Melissa

Cool Tasty Treats BY DEBBIE ALEMAN, CPT

Nothing says summer like a cool tasty scoop of ice cream on a hot day, but that innocent looking cone can do a lot of damage to our waistline and our arteries. The cones of today aren't like the 25 cent single scoops in a little sugar cone that we had when we were kids. They've grown to be baseball-sized mega scoops in chocolate coated waffle cups with cookie and candy pieces mixed in. These “little” after dinner snacks can easily top 1000 calories and contain a days worth of saturated fat! So what do we do? Skip ice cream?? No way- it's not summer without it, but limit your treats to single scoops and skip the high fat mix-ins like peanut butter cups and candy bars. If you scoop up your ice cream at home try the

new lower fat versions and add banana slices and chopped nuts for a little extra nutrition. Use small bowls to help control your portion sizes and alternate with other cool treats like all fruit popsicles. You can also try making these frosty treats- they're so delicious that you'll forget they're healthy!

Healthy Banana Split- Serves 1 Ingredients:

1 Small Banana, 1/3 cup non-fat vanilla frozen yogurt, 1/8 cup granola, 2 Tbs. chopped walnuts, 1 Tbs. mini chocolate chips.

Halve the banana lengthwise. Top with frozen yogurt, granola, nuts and chocolate chips. You can substitute sliced strawberries for the chocolate chips if desired.

Berry Sorbet: Serves 2

Toss 2 cups frozen mixed berries or strawberries into a blender with 4 Tbs. of orange juice and (if desired) a squeeze of lime juice. Blend until smooth, then scoop into two bowls. Freeze 1 hour and enjoy!



Banana Honey

Smoothie: Serves 2

2 ripe bananas,
2 cups low fat soy milk, 1 Tbs. honey or maple syrup, 1/4 cup non-fat plain yogurt

Put all ingredients in a blender and blend until frothy. Serve immediately. (For variety you can substitute berries, mango or papaya for the bananas in this recipe- Be creative!)

KID'S CORNER

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT SUMMER?

Students, teachers & parents all love summer break— Here are some of the things they look forward to the most...

- "Going to the beach" Mike - 2nd grade "Being out of school" Nick - 5th grade
"Swimming all day long" Alyssa - 2nd grade "More time to play with friends" Matt - 5th grade
"No homework and no baseball" Brandon - 5th grade "Going to Taiwan" Ryan Chin- 2nd grade
"Going on vacation and having fun with my family." Haley - 2nd grade
"My birthday" Nicholas - 2nd grade "Being with my family" Phoebe Dorval- 1st grade
"Swimming with my Dad, having fun and having play dates." Larissa Tawil- 2nd grade
"I like staying up late and I like having play dates." Jordan Kuchta- 3rd grade
"Playing with my friends on the street, and staying up late" Evan Dorval- 4th grade

Ever wondered what some of your favorite staff members at the Ranch do all summer??

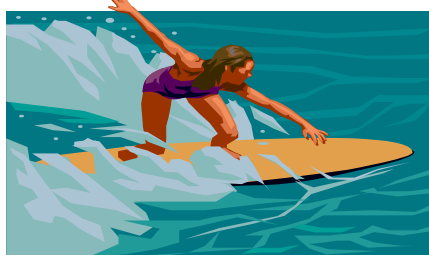
- "My favorite part of summer is spending time with my family!" Pam Kilgore, Office Manager
"My favorite part of summer is relaxing, gardening, catching up on my reading, and visiting my children."
Jane Meade, Librarian
"My favorite part of summer is not having to get up at 4:45 a.m. and not having one to three nights out until 8:30 p.m. Just slowing down and being able to spend more time with my family and friends in the month of July is a wonderful gift. The rest of summer I spend at the school getting ready for the big day back. I enjoy the break but the excitement of the first day of school still motivates me to work hard making sure everything is perfect for every student to feel welcomed back and excited about the new school year."
Brad Baker, (Our hard working!) Principal

Ride the Fitness Wave This Summer...continued from page 1

- Plan ahead...look for camps, activities and teams early as spots fill up and feeling organized will reduce stress.
- Get moving in the morning... getting up and eating breakfast will jump start their metabolism.
- Create firm screen-time rules for the house to limit the amount of time kids are inactive. If kids are winding down in front of the TV encourage them to do a "commercial challenge"....complete 100 jumping jacks, 60 crunches, 30 push-ups, etc.
- Plan family activities at least once a week, such as hikes, day trips or picnics with other families. When walking or hiking seek out hills, as climbing over rocks and on rugged paths increases cardiovascular benefits much more than on flat ground.
- Play games....summer evenings are great for tag, badminton and

volleyball. Organized team sports teach sportsmanship but even without a team kids can sharpen their skills by catching balls or shooting baskets.

- Get in the water! Swimming in a pool, lake or ocean provides a cooling aerobic workout while utilizing all major muscle groups.
- Ride bikes...cycling is a great cardiovascular activity that strengthens lower-body muscles while increasing flexibility and balance.
- Set up obstacle courses in the backyard using jump ropes, balls and cones to increase agility...get creative! When trying new or vigorous



activities make sure your children are warmed up and that they never work or play through pain. Children don't recognize when they are over-heated or dehydrated so push the water before, during and especially after activity and familiarize yourself with the symptoms of heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat stroke.

Help encourage your kids to exercise by setting a good example. Even if you're not in the habit of exercising or think you are too busy to model fitness for your kids, this summer is a good time to start. After working all day – in or out of the home – take a daily walk after dinner...kids can join in by walking with you, biking or rollerblading alongside you. Not only does an active family enjoy better health, but it's a great way to spend time together while building lasting memories.

Keep moving, stay cool and enjoy the summer! Lisa Noack