Having a balanced healthy diet is important. Tonya Swim, a clinical dietician at the A-Mo Health Center, provides a look into each life phase when it comes to eating healthy.

“Having well-rounded eating habits is about having a healthy relationship with food. It isn’t about depriving yourself of things you love, but being able to balance food that is just for fun and food that provides what our bodies need,” Swim said.

Babies (0-12 months)
For babies less than a year old, Swim said they benefit most from breast milk or formula if producing milk isn’t an option. When a child turns 6 months old, solid food can be implemented into the diet.

Toddlers (1-2)
Swim said toddlers’ tastes for food change so she suggests not force-feeding them but instead letting their appetites be the guide.

“Children need to know that they are in control of what they eat,” she said. “What they once loved they may turn their head, too. That’s OK. Continue to offer those foods,” she said. “Their appetite will change from day to day also.”

Swim said meal times should be a “fun, happy and relaxed” time in a toddler’s day and foods should never be treated as rewards or punishments.

“Good behavior and accomplishments need to be rewarded with hugs and high fives,” she said. “Food should never be used as a reward or withheld as punishment. We want to avoid developing an unhealthy and emotional attachment to food.”

Children (3-12)
Swim said it’s important to get children to be “adventurous.”

“Encourage new foods and be adventurous, but do not force feed,” she said. “Three-year-olds may be very picky so try a new food with an old favorite.”

She said it’s also important to get them away from the TV when they eat and make eating together “family” time. “This will help children focus on their meal and not start to develop mindless eating habits.”

Swim said it’s also important to teach children about “special foods” like desserts and sugary beverages.

“Things that don’t have a lot of nutritious value like sugary beverages and desserts should be special foods,” she said. “Allowing your child to have a special food once or twice a day helps to teach them moderation.”

Teenagers (13-18)
Swim said it’s important for teens to learn that healthy eating and physical activity could improve their moods, help them in school and give them more energy. She added that calcium intake is important for bone health and protein for muscle growth.

Although teenagers are likely introduced to fast food and added sugars as children, Swim said teens should be wary of eating those items in excess.

“Fast food and sugar added foods and beverages are things teens need to be cautious of since they have extra calories and not a lot of nutrients for growing bodies.”

Young adults (19-35)
As teenagers begin to transition into young adulthood, Swim said they should be “realistic” about their routines.

“If you work two jobs, cooking from scratch for every meal may not be realistic. Plan, plan and plan some more. Things like a crockpot, (instant pot) and one-pot meals can be time savers,” she said.

Swim suggests those looking for more energy should stay away from energy drinks and over-sugary coffees as they only provide a “slight” boost and not “real” energy. She added that too much caffeine could be harmful. “While you don’t become addicted to caffeine, you can develop a dependency on them.”

Elders (60+)
Swim said it’s important to continue healthy routines as people age.

“Many people at this point in their life have been diagnosed with some type of health problem,” she said. “Meeting with your doctor and registered dietitian to help develop a plan and set goals to meet your health needs is important.”

Swim said there isn’t a one-size-fits-all diet and that people are different and should recognize their food triggers. “Keep a food and feelings journal so you can track patterns with your emotions and the food choices you make. Distraction yourself with other things you enjoy.”

Swim suggests contacting a registered dietitian if anyone has trouble getting into a healthy eating routine or figuring out what meals work best. For more information, visit www.cherokee.org/Services/Health/Health-Centers-Hospitals

STACIE GUTHRIE
Reporter

DIET TIPS FOR ALL AGES

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STACIE GUTHRIE
Reporter
Autism in 68

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ALL NATIVE AMERICANS QUALIFY FOR YEAR ROUND OPEN ENROLLMENT

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Sleep is important. Exercise is important. A good balance of both promotes a healthier lifestyle for children and adults alike.

According to the National Sleep Foundation’s website, sleepfoundation.org, children aged 6 to 13 years old need nine to 11 hours of sleep per night. However, there are factors that can lead to difficulty falling asleep, thus reducing sleep time. These factors can also cause nightmares or disruptions in sleep.

“School-aged children become more interested in TV, computers, the media and Internet as well as caffeine products — all of which can lead to difficulty falling asleep, nightmares and disruptions to their sleep. In particular, watching TV close to bedtime has been associated with bedtime resistance, difficulty falling asleep, anxiety around sleep and sleeping fewer hours,” the website states.

It suggests parents should educate their children about healthy sleep habits that include:

• Emphasizing the need for regular and consistent sleep schedule and bedtime routine,
• Making a child’s bedroom conducive to sleep – dark, cool and quiet,
• Keeping TVs and computers out of the bedroom, and
• Avoiding caffeine.

The website also states poor sleep habits and problems can lead to mental and behavioral problems. “Sleep problems and disorders are prevalent at this age. Poor or inadequate sleep can lead to mood swings, behavioral problems such as ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and cognitive problems that impact their ability to learn in school.”

Carol McCoy, Center for Therapeutic Interventions mental health counselor, said the mind is active during sleep and that activity is vital for a healthier mind.

“The more sleep they get the healthier the brain becomes, which allows for them to stay alert during the day.”

And the more a child is active during the day, the better sleep a child gets during the night. According to a study published in Medical News Today, exercise has a direct correlation when it comes to sleep patterns in children. The study states with every inactive hour during the day, it adds three minutes to the time it takes the child to fall asleep. The study also indicates children who fall asleep faster tend to sleep longer.

This is where exercise and physical activity come in. Children should spend 60 or more minutes per day getting physical activity. For children, this means playing on the playground, their back yard, in gym class or outside at school. It could also mean being part of organized sports or other physical activity classes.

According to kidshealth.org, there are benefits to children exercising, including having stronger muscles and bones, being less likely to become overweight, decreasing the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and lowering blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels. The website also correlates the need for exercise to help with sleep.

“Besides enjoying the health benefits of regular exercise, kids who are physically fit sleep better. They’ve also better able to handle physical and emotional challenges — they’re not running to catch a bus or stalling for a test,” the website states.

Limiting the time spent watching TV, on computers or tablets and other stationary activities is one of the best ways to keep children more active. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends parents “put limits on the time spent using media, which includes TV, social media, and video games. Media should not take the place of getting enough sleep and being active... Keep TVs, computers and video games out of the children’s bedrooms and turn off screens during mealtimes.”

MARK DREADWATER 
Multimedia Editor

Cherokee Nation citizen Jerry Smell runs with his daughter, Kylie, during past Cherokee National Holiday Fun Run.

According to kidshealth.org, there is a correlation between exercise and sleep in children.
With misinformation about sex so accessible, talking openly with teens about sex can help prevent unintended pregnancies and decrease risks of sexually transmitted diseases.

Barbara Williams, a Cherokee Nation certified prevention specialist, has taught pregnancy prevention for more than 20 years through programs such as “Date but Wait” and “Straight Talk.” Her mission is to help parents and children talk openly about sex to avoid misinformation, a sharp contrast to how she was raised.

“My mother never talked to me about how to prevent pregnancy or anything like that, and I asked her why. She said, ‘Oh, I don’t know. I figured you would learn it from somewhere,’” Williams said.

In 2015, Oklahoma’s teen pregnancy rate was 34.8 per 1,000 females, compared to the national average of 22.3, according to the State Department of Health. Within the CN, Adair County ranks significantly higher with an average between 55.2 and 67.4 pregnancies per 1,000.

“I know there’s a problem with teen pregnancy, and I know the gap back to parents not talking to their kids about it, especially in our Indian families,” Williams said. “There are no (Cherokee) words for anything that has to do with sex. We need to make the tribe know there’s a problem, especially in our rural communities.”

Williams also cautions teens that some STDs do not have a cure and those that are treatable are becoming more dangerous.

“There is now a drug-resistant gonorrhea, which we’ve always had a treatment for gonorrhea, and now it’s a superbug and there’s no guarantee,” she said. “We don’t know how long the medicine we have now is going to quell it. (Parents) need to know that you can’t tell by looking at someone if they have an STD. The best thing to do if you have sex is to wear a condom so you don’t have to worry.”

To request a presentation from Williams, call 918-207-4977, ext. 7186. For more information about teen reproductive health and pregnancy, visit www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy.

For confidential and free STD testing, visit https://gettested.cdc.gov.

BRITTNEY BENNETT
Reporter

“There are no (Cherokee) words for anything that has to do with sex. And so they don’t talk about it. We need to make the tribe know there’s a problem, especially in our rural communities.”

Barbara Williams, prevention specialist

2015: 34.8 per 1,000 females
Oklahoma’s teen pregnancy rate
Between 55.2 and 67.4 per 1,000 females
Adair County’s 2015 teen pregnancy rate

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Stress can come in different forms and be caused by various events such as childhood trauma or everyday troubles. Chris Wofford, Cherokee Nation Behavioral Health Services clinical supervisor, said in some cases stress from “past trauma” in young adults can present “similarly” to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or similar “disorders of attention.”

“So they might have difficulty focusing, difficulty staying on task once they start something, difficulty feeling calm or rested. Usually impacts sleep and certainly impacts their ability to feel comfortable in groups or around other people. So sometimes that leads to some isolation and stuff like that,” he said.

For day-to-day stress, Wofford said it’s “a little more” identifiable.

“Just regular stress you know day-to-day, ‘I’ve got this homework assignment or I’ve got this task for work that I have to complete.’ Kind of similar, but usually it’s a little more identifiable,” he said.

Wofford said not treating stress could have negative effects on the body.

“There is a lot of research that says your psychological stress is going to manifest physically so ulcers or hypertension or you know a lot of these things can lead to smoking or using some substance to cope and then that leads to addiction issues. Poor work performance or poor school performance certainly is correlated with having a lot of stress or anxiety as well,” he said.

Wofford said one of the “biggest” things is to “own” a feeling and not to shut them out.

“If you have a feeling about something instead of trying to shut it away or pretend it’s not there to just acknowledge that you have that feeling,” he said.

“Then if you’re having trouble dealing with that feeling that’s when you would talk to either natural supports like family or where you might seek out the help of a professional.”

Regardless of where a young adult’s stress stems from, Wofford said it’s important to find “relaxation” activities.

“One of the basic things we teach to pretty much all age ranges that get services here is breathing. Nice deep, relaxing controlled breathing is a way for the body to communicate to the mind to slow down.”

“Then if you’re having trouble just having some time and you’re doing things that you enjoy. It’s really easy to get caught up in the day-to-day routine and quickly it can be overwhelming.”

Wofford said both mental and physical health should be treated the same.

“If you would go to the doctor for a broken leg it’s OK to go to the doctor for a broken thought,” he said. “Just get some help in repairing that thought or that thinking process and just getting back on track and feeling like you normally do or like yourself again.”

“Many people have found a way through this and you will be able to as well. You’re not broken, you’re not crazy, you’re not anything except a person who’s experiencing life and has hit a bump.”

“Many people have found a way through this and you will be able to as well. You’re not broken, you’re not crazy, you’re not anything except a person who’s experiencing life and has hit a bump.” —Chris Wofford, Behavioral Health Services clinical supervisor
mammograms in the detection and diagnosis of breast diseases in women. A new, specialized imaging, it uses a low-dose X-ray system to see inside breasts. The X-rays make it possible to detect tumors that cannot be felt.

Screening mammograms can find microcalcifications (calcium deposits) that can indicate breast cancer. Mammograms can also check for breast cancer after a lump or other sign is found. This mammogram is called a diagnostic mammogram. Besides a lump, cancer signs can include breast pain, thickening of the breast’s skin, nipple discharge or change in breast size or shape. However, these signs may also be benign conditions.

A diagnostic mammogram can also be used to evaluate changes found in a screening mammogram or to view tissue when it is difficult to obtain a screening mammogram because of special circumstances such as the presence of breast implants.

Retired nurse practitioner Vickie Love said women’s health was a “priority” when she worked at the Wilma P. Mankiller Health Center in Stilwell.

“At the Mankiller clinic there were many people and departments committed to women’s health. The nurses, case managers and providers all reviewed charts to identify and remind patients if they were due for mammograms. The Cherokee Nation incorporated a system into our electronic health record that would remind patients if they were due mammograms. The Cherokee Nation W.W. Hastings Hospital in Tahlequah.

A medical professional looks over a mammogram X-ray. Early cancer detection with screening mammography means treatment can be started earlier, possibly before it spreads.

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Retired nurse practitioner Vickie Love, retired nurse practitioner for those few seconds would provide a better test for the radiologist to review.”

I advised the women that early detection was the key and treatment options were less radical if caught in the earlier stages.”

Vickie Love, retired nurse practitioner

DETECT IT EARLY

Clinical trials and studies show that screening mammograms help reduce breast cancer deaths among women ages 40 to 74, especially for those over 50. However, studies haven’t shown a benefit from regular screening mammography in women under 46.

To illustrate the importance of getting regular mammograms for women over 40, Love said she asked patients if they had a family member or friend who had breast cancer. “Often this was affirmed, and I would listen to their recount. I would inquire how the cancer affected the person and/or the family. I would talk about how the family members could be at a higher risk for breast cancer, how each woman needed to follow up and encourage their mothers, grandmothers, daughters and sisters to be vigilant about breast exams and mammograms,” she said.

“As women we couldn’t be complacent about our health because future generations depends on us. I also reminded them I had their address in their chart, and I would come looking for them. Caring about each of them and mammograms, “I advised the women that early detection was the key and treatment options were less radical if caught in the earlier stages.”

I think dispelling rumors and fears are important, but it takes time and effort to find what these are. I believe being a Native provider has also helped me establish rapport and trust with my patients. And I always tell stories from my own experience that coincides with what is being asked of them. Just be very helpful,” she said.

WILL CHAVEZ
Assistant Editor

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6 CHEROKEE PHOENIX • HEALTH GUIDE

OLDER ADULTS

Mammographer Kim Ruskie performs a mammogram on a patient at Cherokee Nation W.W. Hastings Hospital in Tahlequah. (COURTESY)

“I was honest to tell them there was pressure involved that could be uncomfortable for just a few seconds and then released. Our mammography technicians would ask if the women were OK or if they could withstand more compression. If not, the technician would not force them. I did advise the more they could withstand for those few seconds would provide a better test for the radiologist to review.”

Another frequent concern, she said, is the fear of finding cancer. “I advised the women that early detection was the key and treatment options were less radical if caught in the earlier stages.”

“I think dispelling rumors and fears are important, but it takes time and effort to find what these are. I believe being a Native provider has also helped me establish rapport and trust with my patients. And I always tell stories from my own experience that coincides with what is being asked of them. Just be very helpful,” she said.

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2018

OLDER ADULTS

Mammographer Kim Ruskie performs a mammogram on a patient at Cherokee Nation W.W. Hastings Hospital in Tahlequah. (COURTESY)
Exercise is important, but for senior citizens, physical activity is crucial in living healthier and longer lives.

Dr. Jana Jordan, of Cherokee Nation W.W. Hastings Hospital, said exercising is in the "most important thing for seniors to do to stay young." With frequent exercise, seniors can delay, improve and prevent diseases and aging-related conditions such as diabetes, stroke, heart and kidney diseases, high blood pressure, osteoporosis and cancer.

"Exercising improves cardiovascular health, so that lowers cholesterol. So in turn that prevents heart attack and stroke. It makes the heart stronger, so that goes along with helping high blood pressure. Almost any condition they may have like heart disease, kidney disease and diabetes is going to be improved by exercising," Jordan said.

Muscle mass is also important in senior health. It declines with age, resulting in loss of balance and bone strength, which can lead to injury. The National Council on Aging said falls are the leading cause of death among seniors. Jordan said exercising is essential to building muscle mass, which can allow seniors mobility and independence. "When those muscles start to decline you can’t get out like you use to. And the less you do means the less you’re able to do. So the people that are staying active can keep going and that keeps them healthy."

Along with physical benefits, seniors can improve their mental health with exercises. "I have patients that retire and they sit at home and don’t get out. Then their health starts to go bad, and they start to get depressed. So besides all the cardiovascular benefits and helping of the lungs and kidneys, it really helps their mental health. Exercise increases endorphins in the brain that makes them feel better, and when they feel good they become motivated to do more," Jordan said.

She said the exercise she recommends to seniors is walking. "You don’t have to go to the gym. You don’t have to go running, and you don’t have to go kayaking to be active, just walk. Anything weight-bearing is going to be the best exercise for seniors. Walking is weight-bearing and doing some kind of strength training is all weight bearing, so it improves bone density and also conditions like osteoporosis."

For handicap seniors or those with limited walking ability, Jordan recommends arm exercises or leg exercises. "If they can lift these legs up and down you can put a sack with some cans in it and move your legs up and down if they can’t walk. If they do that and it helps them improve their muscular strength there’s a possibility they may be able to get up and walk at some point in time."

For seniors who enjoy the gym or fitness classes, the CN Male Seminary Recreational Center in Tahlequah provides a senior stretch and exercise class focusing on balance, stability, range of motion and movements tailored to daily acts.

Heather Dobbins, a MBBT physical activity specialist who teaches the class, said she’s seen exercise positively impact seniors and their physical abilities. "I have seen a major improvement in chair squats, which is being able to get up and down from the chair without having to use their lap or the chair to get up and use just the strength in their legs. So everyone started out having to use their lap to get up and now they are able to do chair squats without their hands. That’s what my goal is for them to remain or be independent without needing assistance from a walker, for instance, and I am seeing that progress being made."

The National Health Service recommends 30 minutes of exercise a day, five days a week. However, Jordan recommends doing what is bearable, especially if beginning. "Everybody’s health is different, and they’re all at a different place. So start small and add in increments of how long you are doing that so each time you go out and exercise they are improving their ability to exercise. They’re improving their heart and lung function. They’re improving their muscular function so they can do a little bit more each time," she said.

Jordan also said it’s best to consult a physician, especially if experiencing chest pains and shortness of breath. She also said some exercise is better than none. "Being active is really, really important, and even if you’re not exercising they need to be getting out and socializing. Maybe they’re going down to the senior citizens center... They’re getting some exercise, and they’re getting some socialization."

"I have patients that retire and they sit at home and don’t get out. Then their health starts to go bad, and they start to get depressed. So besides all the cardiovascular benefits and helping of the lungs and kidneys, it really helps their mental health."

Dr. Jana Jordan, W.W. Hastings Hospital
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