Community Strategies to Increase Physical Activity and Fruit & Vegetable Consumption

Created for: Tompkins County Human Services Coalition
April 7th, 2010
Physical Activity, Fruits & Vegetables, and Tompkins County Residents

- 11% of us report no leisure time physical activity
- 6.7% of those of us who commute, walk to work
- 70% of us do not meet guidelines for 5 or more fruit & vegetable servings a day
What are the recommendations for Physical Activity and Fruit & Vegetable Intake?

- 30 min of moderate physical activity on most days of the week
- 5+ servings of fruits and vegetables per day

But why is this important?
**Why eat more fruits and vegetables?**

- We can reduce our risk of cardiovascular diseases.
- We can see health benefits just by adding FV to our daily diet.

**Why increase physical activity?**

- Being physically active enhances our quality of life at all ages,
- We can see health benefits just by increasing the number of steps we take each day.
So how do we increase fruit & vegetable intake and physical activity?
How do we think about *healthy eating* and *physical activity*?

**Context in which choices are made:**

**Individual Choices:**
- *Physical Environment:*
  - Proximity to food stores with fresh produce
  - Proximity to parks and play areas

**Policies:**
- Rules and ordinances for market permits
- Requiring public transportation availability during certain hours

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**OR**

**Physical Environment:**
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- Proximity to parks and play areas

**OR**

**Policies:**
- Rules and ordinances for market permits
- Requiring public transportation availability during certain hours
Q: So how do we increase *fruit & vegetable intake* and *physical activity*?

A: By creating *environments* and making *policies* that make it *easy* for us to choose *healthy foods* and to be *physically active*!
Increasing **Physical Activity** through **Changes in the Environment**
Environment:

30 min

Places to Be **Physical Active**

- **Activity** of children who live closer to active recreational facilities (play spaces, parks, health clubs, etc.) are **more active** overall

- Aesthetics and amenities of the recreation space also influences how often space is used
  - Trees, attractive buildings, water
  - Water fountains, nice benches, toilets
Environment:
Places to Be **Physical Active**

**What’s already being done to increase the number of places to be physically active in Ithaca?**

**Cayuga Waterfront Trail Initiative**
- A partnership of the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce Foundation & the City of Ithaca
- The multi-use trail will be **6 miles long** & provide us with a non-motorized transportation & recreation way
- It will **connect popular waterfront destinations** like Cass Park, Ithaca Farmers Market, and Stewart Park
Environment:

30 min
Places to be Physical Active

What have other community organizers done?

- Organized Walking Groups
  - On trails (Lehigh & Delaware, PA)
  - In downtowns (Catskill, NY)

"Since the group started two years ago, I have begun looking forward to my lunch hour as a time to get outside and exercise. I have learned that my lunch hour is a great time to relax. I don't walk with the group that I founded, but [the pond is very pretty] and the rest relax on the walks."

Christine Forget, Nurse
So how do we increase the availability of places to be physically active in Ithaca?
Increasing the Number of Places to Be **Physical Active**

Ideas for Ithaca:

- **Enhance existing parks:** Stewart Park and Southside Community Center Park *(amenities and aesthetics)*
- **Hold park promotional programs & community awareness events**
- **Promote community member maintenance of parks**
Increasing the Number of Places to Be Physical Active

How can you help increase the number of places to be physically active?

• Add a physical activity component to programs and events you plan or are currently running

• Help publicize park upgrades to your membership through park visits or holding events in the park
Increasing *Fruit & Vegetable Consumption* through Changes in the *Environment*
Environment: Availability of Fresh Produce

People who live in neighborhoods that have better access to supermarkets tend to have healthier diets and fewer chronic diseases.

Supermarkets tend to have a greater variety and higher quality of fresh produce for more affordable prices than convenience stores.
Environment: Availability of Fresh Produce

Some healthy foods like low-fat dairy and fresh produce are less often available or perhaps of lower quality in minority and low-income neighborhoods.
Increasing the Availability of Fresh Produce

In underserved areas we could:
- create new food services or
- enhance existing food services
Environment: Availability of Fresh Produce

What has Ithaca already done to increase the availability of fresh produce?

• Ithaca Farmers Market
• Congo Square Market (SCC, IYB, SCC)
• Ithaca Community Gardens

News
New Farmer's Market Seeks Larger Demographics for Ithaca's Residents
July 6, 2009 - 12:00am
By Megan Carney

June 12 marked the opening of the Congo Square Farmers Market, located in the Ithaca Commons. The market is the latest addition to the city's growing network of local food producers and vendors.
Environment: Availability of Fresh Produce

What have other community leaders done to increase the availability of fresh produce in their neighborhoods?

“...I stopped shopping for produce at the grocery store early this summer. I always spend about 1/2 the money, and get twice the experience. The produce is always higher quality, too.”

- Nate, Midtown Public Market shopper

– Waverly Farmers Market, Baltimore
– Midtown Public Market, Minneapolis
Environment: Availability of Fresh Produce

5+ per day
So how can we increase the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in our neighborhoods?
Increasing the Availability of Fresh Produce

Ideas for Ithaca:

• **Develop a new Farmers market** dedicated to improving food access for the underserved in the Northside neighborhood

• **Create new community gardens** in Northside and Southside neighborhoods

• **Implement use of “MarketBucks”** at new and existing Farmers markets
How can you help increase the availability of fruits and vegetables in Ithaca communities?

- Connect local growers with convenience stores, food pantries, and new markets
- Help these convenience stores, food pantries and new markets advertise in the community
- Help new and existing farmers markets publicize affordability and EBT and WIC acceptance
Who else is involved?

Everyone in the community has a role to play in creating environments that support physical activity and healthy eating:

- Community & Advocacy Organizations
- Community members
- Schools & Worksites
- Policy-makers and elected officials
What would you like to see in your community?
Helpful Resources for Strategies to Increase Fruit & Vegetable Intake and Activity

- New York State Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Alliance - nyshepa.org
- National Alliance of Nutrition and Activity - www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nana.html
- National Center of Physical Activity and Disability- www.ncpad.org
- The Prevention Institute - www.preventioninstitute.org
- Active Living Research, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation- www.activelivingresearch.org