



- ◇ MEATLESS MONDAY.....1
- ◇ TIPS FOR GOING MEATLESS....2
- ◇ SEND US YOUR IDEAS AND QUESTIONS .....2



# WIC Worksite Wellness Newsletter

## Meatless Monday

### Cut back on eating meat for your health and the planet's health

**Americans' consumption of meat has increased greatly over the last several decades. Today the average American eats about 195 pounds of red meat, poultry and fish each year. That's almost 50% more than an average person ate fifty years ago. Because there can be health and environmental impacts from consumption of this scale, a new campaign encourages taking a break from meat, even if it's only once a week.**

Making big dietary changes can be a challenge. Making smaller changes in the foods we choose is easy and more sustainable—and can still be effective. This is the idea behind Meatless Monday, a non-profit initiative started in 2003 by the Mondays Campaign in association with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The goal is to reduce meat consumption by 15%, to make room for health-enhancing foods like more fruits and vegetables and to curb the impact on the environment caused by high meat production.

Red meat and processed meats, such as hot dogs, bologna, sausage and other packaged lunch meats, are high in saturated fat and have been associated with an increased risk of colon cancer. Consumption of

these types of meats may also increase chances of developing heart disease or type 2 diabetes and Americans eat these foods in ample quantities. Meanwhile, most Americans don't eat the recommended amounts fruits and vegetables, foods that have been shown to have health benefits. For instance, a diet high in fruits and vegetables seems to reduce the risk of heart disease, some cancers and other chronic diseases. Meat does have nutritional value, such as providing vitamin B12, iron and zinc, but eating less makes room for more health-enhancing fruits and vegetables.

The environmental consequences of increased meat production are also significant. The livestock industry accounts for 18% of greenhouse emissions—even more than the



emissions from our cars and other vehicles. If the demand for meat continues to increase at the same rate, it could have a negative impact on the environment.

A little change by us all can go a long way towards enhancing our health and maintaining the quality of our environment. Try going meat-free one day a week—it's easier than you think!

**For more on this topic:**

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## Tips for Going Meatless

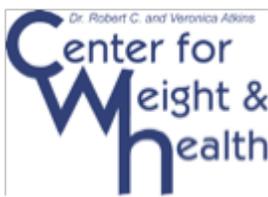
- 1. Find meatless recipes.** Share recipes with friends or coworkers or look online for recipes with good reviews. MeatlessMonday.com has many recipes that are both healthy and environmentally conscious.
- 2. Start with gradual change.** Making lifestyle changes is hard. Begin with small modifications. This is an easier way to start and makes it more likely that you will stick with it. Commit to something that will work for you. Just because it's called "Meatless Monday" doesn't mean it has to be on Monday.
- 3. Experiment with new foods.** Eating a vegetarian meal doesn't necessarily mean having a salad and it doesn't have to be about incorporating fake meat products. Try vegetables or beans you haven't had before or try new combinations.
- 4. Eat locally & in season.** When you can, cook with vegetables and fruit that are fresh and from local sources. Your food will probably taste better because of it. And when you do eat meat, try to find local providers that raise their animal with sustainable practices.

## SEND US YOUR IDEAS & QUESTIONS



We want to know what worksite wellness ideas are working for your agency. We also want to hear your questions and concerns about implementing worksite wellness. Share your agency's successes and/or questions by emailing us at:

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