

Planting the Seeds to Better Health



*2013
Texas WIC
Dietetic Interns*

Take Time to Admire the Fruits of Your Labor

At Texas WIC we know that leading a healthy lifestyle takes more than effort and education. Careful preparation, planning, and consistency are also vital to achieving and maintaining health. Starting off small, using the proper resources, and providing regular care is the best recipe for limitless potential and growth. That's why this issue of the Texas WIC News is dedicated to planting the seeds to better health.

Starting from the ground up, WIC takes great pride in "home growing" many of our dietitians. This month we feature the latest graduating class of dietetic interns. Turn to page 14 to learn about each of these unique individuals' paths and future goals.

In an effort to nurture our clients while they grow within our program, we strive to give the most up to date and useful information while correcting any misinformation. Myths, especially, can be damaging pests. Read about some common misconceptions in *Fruits and Vegetables — More Matters*

Month: Busting the Farmers Market Myth (page 7) and *Debunking the Myths about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders* (page 12).

Because you ultimately cultivate the perfect environment for our clients, you are our most valued resource. While we often focus on the participant, know that we want to make sure you too are happy, healthy, and honored. In this issue, we highlight and applaud several of Texas WIC's own who have overcome personal obstacles to achieve happier, healthier lifestyles. Read how they did it and the tips and tricks they offer to those who want to do the same (page 4 and in WIC Wellness Works).

As our program continues to grow and develop, take a moment to step back and admire the fruits of your labor. Whether you're seeing a participant for the first time or continuing to care for a returning client, take pride in knowing that you are helping raise healthier Texans every day.



From the Texas WIC
Acting Director
— Ray Krzesniak



Editor's Note: We are excited to welcome Lindsay Rodgers as the new director of the Nutrition Services Section in the Division of Family and Community Health Services. Rodgers, who has a Master of Arts degree in health education, is a registered and licensed dietitian. She currently oversees 12 nutrition programs in approximately 9,000 schools and 15,000 community organizations as the lead administrator for food and nutrition at the Texas Department of Agriculture. She previously worked in the Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention areas at DSHS, where she was instrumental in developing the Farm to Work program. Rodgers begins her new position at DSHS on September 9.



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"You're looking good!"

— You've got to tell me what you did to lose the weight."



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOS:
Above – Ruby Garcia, LA 27.



By Clare Wolf
Editor/Designer, Texas WIC News
and
Mandy Seay, R.D., L.D., C.D.E.
Nutrition Education Consultant

When Ruby Garcia, LA 27, clerk/IT assistant, stepped on the scales in July 2012 she was mortified to see just how much weight she had gained. It was at that moment she decided to make a change. But, why did Garcia, who had always maintained her weight, gain it in the first place?

"After leaving active duty, I became pregnant with my daughter and just decided I wanted to eat anything and everything," Garcia, who has lost a total of 38 pounds, said.

Overeating is the primary reason people give for gaining weight. Finding what causes excessive eating is the first step toward doing something about it. For Andrea Nunez, senior office assistant at LA 33, it was a lack of nutritional knowledge. When Nunez, who lost 13 pounds, was feeling professional or personal stress she craved unhealthy foods.

Many things can trigger overeating. For LA 33 clinical assistant, Cecilia Gonzales, who lost 10 pounds, it was "Watching TV and seeing all the food ads."

Losing those excess pounds is a lot harder than putting them on. So, it's only natural when you see someone who has had success losing weight to want to know how they did it. Texas WIC News contacted local agencies throughout Texas to find the success stories of WIC staff. This article explores the weight gain, eating



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOS:

Left – Yadira Ponce, LA 22.

Below and right – Jennifer Jones, LA 34.



triggers, motivation to lose, and weight loss tips used by seven successful WIC employees.

When asked about her weight gain, LA 34 breastfeeding peer counselor and WIC Wellness coordinator Jennifer Jones, who has lost 113 pounds, said, “I am not sure, I think once I got so big I just gave up and thought if I am going to be big I might as well just eat what I want and be happy (or so I thought).”

To combat a stomach illness, Jones started eating healthier. She soon found that she was feeling better and losing weight. “I just kept going (and so glad I did). Seeing my weight loss number on the scale and fitting into smaller sizes I haven’t worn for years and years has kept me on track,” said Jones.

Many factors contributed to Priscila Quevedo’s, LA 33 nutritionist/center supervisor, weight gain, including over eating, not sleeping well, fast food consumption, and going out to eat. When she decided to lose her excess weight,

Quevedo, who lost 30 pounds, consulted a nutritionist for personal counseling.

“I eliminated all types of processed sugars, junk foods, fast foods, high-glycemic index carbohydrates, and trans fats,” said Quevedo.

Calories do count, at least for Cynthia Luna, LA 33 breastfeeding peer counselor, who not only counted calories but also eliminated a lot of unnecessary foods to lose a total of 20 pounds.

(continued on page 6)

You're Looking Good!

(continued from page 5)

Yadira Ponce, LA 22 breastfeeding peer counselor, dispels the myth that to lose weight you have to starve yourself. "I now know that eating properly to fuel your body is what is needed instead of starving it," said Ponce who lost 50 pounds by eating healthily and working out. There are similarities and differences in their daily routines; however, it's important to find a plan that works for you whether it's just cutting back on a few things, counting calories, or eating healthier foods.

Ruby Garcia recommends focusing on healthy eating and being "...patient because losing too much weight, too fast is not healthy."

Cynthia Luna agrees that eating right and exercising is best. She also adds, "You will see amazing results to motivate you and you will not want to stop until you see more great results."

Eat right! Exercise! But, most of all don't get discouraged. Yadira Ponce says, "Don't think that you are not able to lose weight. You are capable of a lot more than you think. Don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it, I can help you!"

Jennifer Jones sums it up, "You can do it! If you want to lose 10 pounds, 100 pounds or more, you can do it!"

Daily tips

Yadira Ponce	Yadira recommends eating breakfast first thing in the morning, and two snacks during the day along with a regular lunch and dinner. She also exercises and prepares the next day's meal ahead of time.
Andrea Nunez	Andrea recommends being physically active and exercising. She walks for one hour Monday through Thursday and does low impact aerobic DVDs for 30 minutes and a moderate walk for one hour Friday through Sunday.
Cynthia Luna	Cynthia makes sure she snacks on apples, grapes, or whatever fruit she has available. She also exercises with Zumba Monday through Saturday.
Priscilia Quevedo	Priscilia makes sure she has breakfast first thing in the morning. Her daily routine also includes two between-meals snacks and three meals, using MyPlate. She exercises four times a week for 1.5 hours (aerobic and anaerobic exercises).
Ruby Garcia	Ruby, who is always in a hurry, realized she needed to start eating and snacking healthier. Her snacks consist of fiber bars or cereal bars to curb her sweet tooth. Since dinner included cooking for the entire family, Ruby serves herself just half of what she used to eat. She also drinks lots of water. Her exercise routine includes playing on her Wii, basketball, softball, or volleyball at the park with friends.
Jennifer Jones	Jennifer, who stays active all day, exercises with the Wii Just Dance series. Food wise she enjoys Albacore tuna mixed with a variety of healthy foods to make it more filling. She also loves egg white omelets (no end to the healthy items that can be added to an omelet). To keep from over eating, Jennifer makes it a routine to get right up after every meal and start cleaning up.
Cecilia Gonzales	Cecilia's primary exercise consists of housework, gardening, and walking. She hardly ever watches TV. Most importantly, she eats small portions and divides her plate into four sections.

Fruits and Vegetables — More Matters Month

Busting the Farmers Market Myth

by Katie Lanier
Nutrition Education Consultant



Everyone working for WIC knows the benefits of consuming fruits and vegetables. You have these benefits memorized and are sharing them with participants every day. But do you know the benefits of buying your produce from a local farmers market? Celebrate *Fruits and Vegetables — More Matters Month* by supporting your local farmers and enjoying some nutritious produce.

Benefits of Local Produce

When you purchase locally grown food, the benefits greatly increase for both you and the environment. Once fruits and vegetables are picked, the nutritional value begins to decrease. So getting the produce straight from the farm will ensure you have the most nutrient dense foods. Local produce is also usually more flavorful because it is allowed to ripen on its own. Imagine how long and far your apple from Brazil has travelled. If you buy that apple from a local farmers market, you are maintaining vitamins and also decreasing the carbon footprint left by shipping methods. Buying locally also supports your neighborhood farmers because many farmers' salaries are determined by their harvest. So, if these foods have the power to help us live a long and happy life, what is holding us back from eating more locally grown fruits and vegetables?

Busting the Myth

One of the biggest myths of farmers markets is that the produce is more expensive than at the supermarket. Sure, it's true that eggs, milk, local honey, and other specialty items are pricier at

local markets but conventionally grown fruits and vegetables are often less expensive. Farmers try to compete with the supermarket to get your business so they lower their prices. Three different studies in Vermont, Washington, and Indiana have shown produce was either cheaper or comparable in price to surrounding grocery stores. Organic produce was found cheaper at the farmers' market every time.

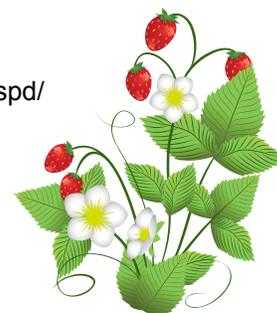
Texas WIC Buying Locally

We sent a survey to Texas WIC participants who took part in the Farmers Market Pilot to find out their views on buying local fruits and vegetables. To help bust the myth, yet again, 93 percent of participants surveyed said that most of the time the fruits and vegetables were worth the amount of money they cost. The quality and taste of the fruits and vegetables, getting to talk to the farmers, and learning new ways to prepare the fruits and vegetables were just a few of the reasons they shop at their local market.

Grab your reusable bags, the kids, and your grocery list. We challenge you to check out your farmers market and enjoy the quality of local produce while supporting your community by buying locally. You won't regret it!

Resources:

Eating local produce has great benefits. The Torch, 9(7). Retrieved from <http://www.in.gov/spd/files/July12.pdf>
Estabrook, Barry (2011). The Farmer' Market Myth. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/print/2011/05/the-farmers-market-myth/238661/>



The Approved Foods Process Just Gets

By Paula Kanter, R.D.
Nutrition Specialist

Ever wonder how the approved brands shown on the Shopping Guide brochure are chosen? For most of the foods, WIC participants can choose any brand that meets the specifications on the brochure, but there are a few foods that are brand specific. Why is that and how are they chosen?

There are five brand specific WIC approved foods: breakfast cereal, canned beans, oatmeal, soy milk, and tofu. The State agency obtains information on these through a 30-day open enrollment process each spring. For all other WIC approved foods that are not brand specific, companies can submit the products any time during the fiscal year for WIC approval



The online Texas WIC Product Submission system was designed and developed by Gary Pavek, Brent Merkle, Jeff Wilson and Jwalasinh Brahmhatt of the WIC IT department.

and inclusion in the Authorized Product List (APL) Universal Product Code (UPC) database.

Open Enrollment and New Online System

Texas WIC has a new online system through which companies may submit their foods during open enrollment for approval to the program. The online WIC food application is called the Texas WIC Product Submission (TWPS) system. This new system was developed in 2012 with input from a variety of partners in the industry who are "end users."

Any company interested in presenting their product as a potential Texas WIC approved food item must first establish an account in the TWPS system. Then the product and brand name, UPC, nutrient listing, price, and product image can be entered along with verification that the item is available throughout Texas. Once entered, the information will be maintained in TWPS for future years. Products only need to be updated if there are changes in the nutrient content, price, or product image.

Additionally, if a food company enters in a product that does not meet requirements, the system will stop the submission process. This time-saving feature was met with great enthusiasm.

April 2013 was the second year to utilize TWPS. Comments from companies submitting products included:

"Can I say that I absolutely LOVE this submission process? ...Not only was it easy, but it kept all the information from previous submission intact. You just made my day." — HELEN TAMORO – SAFEWAY

"Just tested updating a package and it was FANTASTIC! I did not have to make any changes to the file, reformat or anything! Wonderful. Thanks for making improvements." — JUDY JOST – GENERAL MILLS

Better and Better



Far left: Debbie Lehman's daughter, Evie, is all smiles over the prospect of tasting more cereal. Karen Clement's son is excited about his cereal sample. Loves them!

Once the open enrollment period is closed, the foods are reviewed to determine if they meet state and federal requirements. Taste testing the products also helps in the selection. State office staff are often given cereal to take home to their family to try. Nutrition Education Consultant Debbie Lehman's daughter, Evie (almost 5 years old), is a cereal taste tester super star. Debbie had to share her daughter's comments about the new Scooby-Doo cereal she tasted the day before.

"...keep in mind she is an EXTREMELY picky eater, and she will also argue to the death that she is a cat! I didn't think the dog bone shaped cereal would stand a chance with her," said Debbie.

In Evie's words:

"They're not bad... (pause to taste)... They're pretty good... (pause)... Kind of like the best healthy dog bones. Grandma gives me the sugary kind of bones, but these are healthy... Maybe I'll have a whole bowl... Hmmm. Tastes like honey... Think I'll have some for dinner 'cuz they're good. And, I'll save some for tomorrow night in case I want more... Hey, mom, just in case they have these at work

tomorrow, I would like more. And, if they don't have them at work, then maybe you could check HEB. And if they don't have them at HEB, well, then,... I'll just go back to peanut butter on crackers for dinner."

On the day after Evie's 5th birthday, she was so excited to see a different cereal sample when she got home, she had to say:

"The people at your work give me real good cereal to try. You can tell them to keep up the good work! Mmm."

Karen Clement's son, Colt, did not have to share words. He gave the cereal a thumbs up!

Approved Foods Materials

Back by popular demand, the approved foods shopping guide will be printed in the smaller pocket sized version. To assist participants in knowing which WIC approved foods must be purchased as the least expensive brand (LEB), a new poster displaying all the LEB items will be available in the fall. The Smart Choices Healthy Families DVD has also been updated for the new fiscal year.

New Resources to Aid Clinicians in Fight Against Tobacco Addiction

By Barry Sharp, MSHP, MACM, MCHES
Tobacco Prevention & Control Program Coordinator



Clinicians now have access to a new set of resources to help patients who are ready to break their tobacco addiction. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) introduces the *Yes You Can Healthcare Provider Toolkit*, an evidence-based, comprehensive package of online and print materials designed to help promote tobacco cessation for patients. The toolkit is available at www.yesquit.org in the “Healthcare Provider” section. The toolkit and resources are available at no cost and follow guidelines from the U.S. Public Health Service for treating tobacco dependency.

Dr. Philip Huang, medical director for the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department, says the toolkit can help clinicians make a difference in their patients’ lives. “Research has shown that the 3 to 10 minutes a physician takes to counsel a patient about tobacco use can more than double his or her chances of quitting,” said Dr. Huang. “The toolkit helps you provide a simple approach to tobacco intervention.”

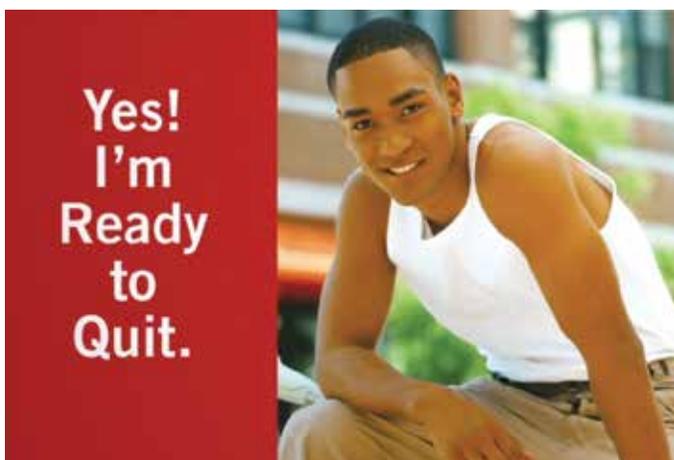
DSHS has designed the toolkit to promote the three-step approach to tobacco intervention known as “Ask, Advise, and Refer.” The initial “ask” consultation will help identify the patient’s willingness to quit. There are materials to help determine where a patient is in the quitting stage (*Yes, I’m Ready to Quit, Maybe*

I’m Ready, No, I’m Not Ready To Quit) as well as information targeting pregnant and teen smokers. There is also a cessation treatment template developed by The University of Texas at Austin that can automate the intervention and referral process. The template is compatible with electronic health record systems. In one central Texas clinical group, the use of the template within their electronic health record increased referrals from seven to more than 1,200 in just one year.

To help complete a successful tobacco intervention, the toolkit also provides information on referring patients to the Texas Quitline, a free phone counseling service offered by DSHS. Confidential and bilingual, the professional counselors provide regular counseling sessions while offering nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). Research has shown that NRT and prescription medications can double quit rates. In addition, research from the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center has shown that clients who are referred by a clinician are 30 times more likely to enroll in cessation services than clients who are only given a brochure.

Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable death in Texas, claiming more than 24,000 lives each year and costing Texas taxpayers in excess of \$6 billion in health-care costs. Clinicians across the state deal with this public health crisis on a daily basis as they treat patients for various tobacco related health issues including multiple cancers, cardiovascular disease, and pulmonary disease.

“Tobacco addiction is an overwhelming health crisis. It is not easy for your patients to quit,” added Dr. Huang. “But research has proven over and over again that a clinician’s influence on a patient can be profound. By harnessing the resources and implementing the interventions provided in the *Health Care Provider Toolkit*, a patient’s success rate can be significantly improved.”



From Couch to Pavement: **A Beginner's Guide to Walking and Running**

CONTRIBUTED BY: AMY FRICK
TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY DIETETIC INTERN

Walking and running are becoming more popular forms of exercise that are inexpensive, satisfying, and convenient. Fun runs, charity walks, and adventure races for just about everyone are popping up across the country. Chances are someone you know has participated in one. So what is all the hype about? These cardiovascular exercises help lower your chance of getting diabetes and heart disease, burn lots of calories, and contribute to happiness and confidence, among many other benefits. Walking can be a great way to introduce exercise into your life, and it is safe and doesn't require practice. A daily brisk walk or run can help you live a healthier life and even become a family bonding experience or social activity.



What is the best way to begin?

Make a plan and put it in writing or on a calendar. This helps you set time aside for exercise and may increase your chance of success. Next, create a log to keep track of your activity and watch as you're able to cross off sessions as you complete them. Another great suggestion is to have a goal in mind, whether that's signing up for a race or being able to walk or run a certain distance or length of time.

I have tried before and lost motivation.

Many of us have every intention of beginning and maintaining an exercise schedule, but it falls through the cracks once life gets hectic. Set yourself up for success by packing clothes to go exercise directly after work. Getting out of the door is often the hardest part. Just put your shoes on and go! Find someone to keep you accountable. Whether they workout with you or not, this person can be there to inspire you or just keep you going in the right direction. Even if you have tried before, try again.

But I'm not in shape.

People of all ages and sizes, pending a doctor's approval, can exercise at some level. Start at a comfortable level and build up gradually. If you find that your sessions leave

(continued on WWW — Insert D)

It Takes A Village – A Personal Testimony

Contributed by Veronica Hendrix, LVN, IBCLC, RLC,
Texas Ten Step Program Coordinator

*Inspiration
to build your
village at home,
work, or school;
with family
and friends; or
whatever it takes.*

It's no secret. I do not like to exercise. I have very comfortably accepted that fact over the last several years. As a busy, commuting mother of five, it is easy to get comfortable

in life's routines, and I know there are many mothers out there like me that put their health needs at the bottom of life's "To-Do" list. With kids, work, and a spouse, who has time for exercise and eating right?

Late last year, however, I decided to work toward

a different attitude, but I knew I would need help. I slept poorly, ate poorly, rarely exercised and, in general, always struggled to feel good. What message was I sending to my children? Could I really change my habits this time? I wanted to stop avoiding these questions, and so I decided to try and change the path that my health choices had me on.

I began to find my answers and the support I needed while working at the state WIC office. Here, I was surrounded by experts that not only talk the talk, but walk the walk. I scheduled a dietary consult with Mandy Seay, RD, LD, CDE, in early February, and we talked about my overall health. She took an inventory of my lifestyle and my eating and exercise patterns, and she looked at recent lab work that I had done with my family physician. Mandy helped me to see that with just a few tweaks in my diet and routines, I could turn this into a personal victory. I still meet with Mandy on

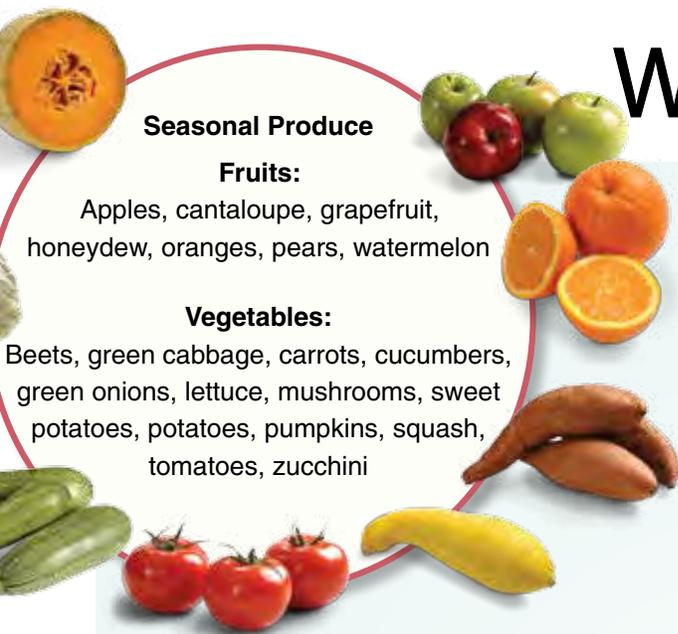
occasion if I have questions or to update her on my progress.

I also use a fun iPad app called "My Fitness Pal" to track my nutrition intake and log my exercise routines each day. I can share recipes with friends and get new ideas on how to change up my workouts using this app. The app even allows me to set up a password so that Mandy has access to view what I'm eating — how's that for accountability? Other state staff began to take notice of my choices and would send me great websites and healthy recipes. I would print the weekly wellness tip sheets from Debbie Lehman, *(continued on WWW — Insert D)*



Veronica (right) and her daughter, Millicent, preparing a healthy meal for the family.

Share your wellness success stories for a chance to be spotlighted in Texas WIC News and inspire other WIC staff! Contact your State Wellness Coordinator, Debbie Lehman, at Debbie.Lehman@dshs.state.tx.us or 1-512-341-4517 or Katie Lanier at Katie.Lanier@dshs.state.tx.us or 1-512-341-4514.



Seasonal Produce

Fruits:

Apples, cantaloupe, grapefruit, honeydew, oranges, pears, watermelon

Vegetables:

Beets, green cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, green onions, lettuce, mushrooms, sweet potatoes, potatoes, pumpkins, squash, tomatoes, zucchini

Mind Games



Magic Square:
Arrange the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 in the 3x3 square below so that the sum of every row and column, as well as both diagonals, is the same number.

Answers

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

recipe

Broccoli, Ham, and Cheese Quiche

Source: EatingWell.com

Serves: 6

Ingredients:

- 16 ounces precooked shredded potatoes or frozen hash browns (thawed)
- 1 ¾ cups liquid egg substitute, divided
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon canola oil or extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups finely chopped broccoli florets
- 1 cup shredded extra-sharp cheddar cheese
- ¾ cup finely diced smoked ham
- ¾ cup reduced-fat sour cream
- ¼ cup minced fresh chives
- ⅛ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Generously coat a 9-inch springform pan with cooking spray. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil.
2. To make the crust, toss shredded potatoes or hash browns (if using hash browns, squeeze any excess moisture from the thawed potatoes) with ¼ cup egg substitute, flour, oil, and salt in a medium bowl. Pat the mixture into the bottom and 2 inches up the sides of the prepared springform pan. Bake until the potatoes are



beginning to brown at the edges, 35 to 40 minutes.

3. Fill the crust with broccoli, cheese, and ham. Whisk the remaining 1 ½ cups egg substitute, sour cream, chives, and pepper in a medium bowl. Place the springform pan containing the crust on the prepared baking sheet and pour the egg mixture over the filling.
4. Bake the quiche until the center is just set, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool for 15 minutes. Run a knife around the edges to loosen the sides, remove the pan sides and cut the quiche into wedges.

Make Ahead Tip: Prepare crust; cool, wrap, and refrigerate for up to 1 day. Let stand at room temperature while you continue with Step 3 and preheat oven.

Nutrition Information Per Serving:

296 calories; 16 g fat (7 g saturated fat, 5 g monounsaturated fat); 42 mg cholesterol; 17 g carbohydrates; 0 g added sugars; 22 g protein; 2 g fiber; 603 mg sodium; 440 mg potassium

From Couch to Pavement

(continued from page WWW — Insert A)

you absolutely exhausted, you're probably overdoing it. It's amazing how quickly you can progress when properly following an exercise routine.

I don't have the energy or time.

Exercise can actually give you energy through the release of brain chemicals called endorphins. When you do not have enough time for longer exercise sessions, fit in whatever you are able to, even if it's only 10 minutes of stretching or walking on your lunch break or before bed. Playing around with your kids or doing housework can count too. Morning risers may find it possible to wake up earlier to squeeze in exercise before the day's activities.

Take every effort you can to make your health a priority.

Check out an app for tracking your routine.

There are numerous free or low cost fitness apps available for helping you reach your exercise goals. While some of these apps provide fitness workouts, others are geared to tracking, walking, or running routines. The apps enable GPS tracking, distance, speed monitoring, calories burned, and activity history for any number of activities you do. Many apps also allow you to download your music playlists or share your data on a website to monitor progress publicly.

Remember, no matter how fast or slow, when you're moving, you're still beating everyone on the couch.



It takes a Village

(continued from page WWW — Insert B)



PHOTO COURTESY DANA LEHMAN PHOTOGRAPHS

Above: Veronica Hendricks

PhD, RD, LD, state WIC Wellness Works coordinator, to share with my family. The information around me was so easy to access and incorporating it into my life was easier than I imagined.

I cannot overlook my family as the largest key to my success. My husband, who is always my biggest cheerleader, has always been very active. He understood my desire to get healthier and supported this by giving me a gym membership for Christmas — one that allowed me to workout in my hometown of Giddings and also during my work lunch break in Austin. My family joined me in this journey from the very beginning. We participated in a family 5K in March and even my 6-year-old son almost ran the entire way. My 3-year-old daughter enjoys doing Wii Yoga and Zumba with me, and my three older kids have increased their own personal exercise routines to better support me. Their words of encouragement have replaced the negative messages that used to occupy my mind. “You can do it, mama!” and “Keep going!” have become my current mantra. So far, I am 25 pounds lighter and it feels like fifty. Exercise, eating right, along with support at work and home continue to carry me toward the finish line!



Quick WIN

The state WIC program is working with Catapult to plan, build, and deliver a reusable technology solution for WIC staff and clinics while work is being completed on Texas Integrated Network (TXIN) system. These reusable solutions include nine Quick WIN applications:

1. Secured Portal – In this module staff can access Medicaid verification, income calculator, growth charts, client search and gateway verification.
2. Medicaid Verification/Income Calculator – This application will verify whether a participant is eligible or ineligible for Medicaid by swiping the Medicaid card or manually entering the required fields in order to determine eligibility for the program. The income calculator is an online tool that will provide WIC staff the ability to determine income accurately, consistently, and automatically across the state. This will also allow the state agency to change income eligibility behind the scenes, without having to re-train users.
3. Growth Charts – This module includes a web-based version of growth charts giving staff more centralized access.
4. Client Search – This application allows staff to view WIN information from a central source statewide, providing “view only” screens to display information from the WIN state database and helping clinic staff with day-to-day decisions.
5. Public Portal – This project replaces the existing public TexasWIC.org portal and includes WIC classes with a revamped version based in SharePoint 2010.
6. Schedule and Resource Management – This application allows participants to request, track, and

be notified of appointments with clinics.

7. Learning Management System – This module will include a database that will allow state agency and WIC staff to view, document and track trainings statewide.
8. Online Application – This tool allows participants to fill out an online certification application, streamlining the process and decreasing paper consumption.
9. Gateway Verification/Unified User Experience – This application allows staff to enter and receive information regarding a participant’s status in a gateway program (i.e., Medicaid, SNAP, and TANF). The Unified User Experience keeps staff from having to look up information in multiple systems.

TXIN

The WIC Program is working with Currier, McCabe and Associates (CMA) to design and replace WIN, the current processing system. TXIN, the new web based system, will improve program efficiencies, effectiveness, outcomes and the quality of service while engaging Texas WIC, local agency clinic staff and participants. Key features for TXIN:

- Comprehensive clinic and participant case management system.
- Client scheduling system statewide.
- Automated infant/child growth chart plotting and pregnancy weight gain/weight loss grids.
- Automated calculation of body mass index (BMI).
- Tailored participant food packages to meet specific client nutritional risk needs.
- Complete client history to support improvements in measures of outcome and accountability.
- Automated development of high risk individual participant care plans.

- Interfaced/integrated service delivery systems internal and external to Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) (Immunizations, SNAP/TANF Programs, Medicaid, etc.).
- Improved data communication between the state agency and clinics to resolve daily issues with client transfers.
- An environment with current technology support.
- Paperless office environment to the extent possible.
- Network mobile site environments (i.e., multiple laptops).
- Improving the provision and interaction of client nutrition education through the support of internet access and integrated online nutrition education offerings.
- Enhanced reporting and ad hoc query capability.
- System tools to support income eligibility calculation.
- Enhanced ability to conduct nutrition/health surveillance and support for referrals.
- Strengthened audit trails, quality assurance and fraud and abuse prevention and detection.
- Deployment as an integrated enterprise Web-based system.
- Additional access channels for engaging participants to interact with the WIC program.
- Improved processes for food redemption, settlement and reconciliation.
- Maximize new technologies to improve functionality and service.
- Improve the timeliness of data for key management decisions.
- Minimize the potential for fraud and abuse.
- Decrease training and technical assistance time.
- Enhance the state’s ability to handle electronic benefits transfer (EBT) data.

Debunking the Myths about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

by Angela Gil, R.D., L.D.
Nutrition Education Consultant
and
Leah Davies, L.M.S.W.
Associate Director, Texas Office for Prevention of Developmental Disabilities

WIC staff understand the importance of health during pregnancy. We counsel moms to take prenatal vitamins, to go to regular prenatal checkups, and to abstain from all drugs including alcohol. And yet, moms-to-be often receive mixed messages. For example what if, at that prenatal checkup, the doctor says it is okay to have an occasional glass of wine? With so much conflicting information, it's no wonder there is confusion surrounding the topic of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).

FASD is not a diagnosis but an umbrella term used to describe the range of neurological, behavioral, developmental, and physical effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank while pregnant. What makes FASD different from other birth defects is that it is 100 percent preventable if a woman does not consume any alcohol during her entire pregnancy, even before she knows that she is pregnant.

Let's take a look at a few of the common myths about FASD:

MYTH: You can tell someone has an FASD just by looking at them.

FASD is a spectrum of disorders caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol that can impact people in different ways. While there are some distinct facial features associated with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (one of the diagnoses under the FASD umbrella) most people who have an FASD look like everyone else.

People who have an FASD may function at different levels in various ways than people who were not prenatally exposed to alcohol. For example, some people with an FASD have difficulty with social situations, poor memory,

and difficulty learning and understanding the consequences of their behaviors.

MYTH: It is okay to drink a little bit of alcohol in the third trimester after the baby has developed.

There is absolutely no known safe time, amount, or kind of alcohol which can be consumed during pregnancy. Development occurs throughout pregnancy. There are many factors that influence whether or not a woman who drinks alcohol will have a child with FASD. The best choice is to abstain from all alcohol during the entire pregnancy.

MYTH: FASD is not very common and only affects babies who are born to alcoholics or low-income women.

Recent estimates are that one in every 100 children has FASD. It is more common than any other preventable birth defect but is often less known or addressed. In fact, FASD is often misdiagnosed as other behavior disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorders or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, just to name a few.

FASD can affect any woman regardless of race, culture, age, or class. Women who drank alcohol before they even knew they were pregnant have given birth to babies affected by FASD. With about half of all pregnancies being unplanned and a high rate of alcohol use, prenatal exposure to alcohol does occur. As soon as a woman knows she is pregnant, she should stop drinking even if she has already had some alcohol.

MYTH: FASD only affects children and teens. They outgrow it by the time they are adults.

FASD is a brain-based lifelong disability that children do not “grow out” of. However, early identification and appropriate interventions can improve outcomes for individuals with an FASD. As children with an FASD grow into adults, they face greater challenges because their actions and behaviors may be seen as less age appropriate. Without proper support and services, people with FASD are at higher risk of developing secondary issues that may lead to adverse outcomes like trouble with the

law, substance use or abuse, homelessness, or early death.

FASD Awareness Day is celebrated on September 9 every year. Help raise awareness about FASD. Pass on the information to someone you care about who may be pregnant or planning to be. If a family thinks they may have a child with FASD, they should consult their doctor. To learn more about FASD, visit www.topdd.state.tx.us.

Mercedes Alejandro and her son, Nicholas.



My Personal Story with FASD

BY MERCEDES ALEJANDRO

My name is Mercedes and my child has FASD. There was a time I would hide it. I felt so guilty and ashamed. I was full of regret, and yet – my life has come full circle and I am speaking out. The damage that alcohol can make to a developing baby makes an impact for the rest of that baby’s and family’s lives. A lot of people think the birth mother is a drug addict and I am living proof that this is not always the case. My husband and I were very social and on two occasions, while visiting friends, I drank too much, but I did NOT know I was pregnant.

When my son was born he was floppy and didn’t move much. At his 3 month checkup, the doctors were worried he still could not roll over on his own or lift his head. It was discovered that he was missing part of the bridge in the brain that connects the left side to the right side. We were told that he would not walk, talk, and would have Intellectual Disability

and Developmental Delay. We went home not knowing what to expect or how we were going to raise our child. I never stopped asking why he was born this way.

With help from Early Childhood Intervention, our son learned how to walk with leg braces. It was not until my son was 10 years old that I heard about causes of Intellectual Disability and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder was one of them. I then remembered I was drinking with friends before I found out I was pregnant. I was devastated! It was so painful and shameful to find out I had caused his disabilities! People would try to make me feel better by telling me, “you didn’t know you were pregnant, don’t feel bad.” But you can’t control how you feel and I finally looked in the mirror and forgave myself.

It is now my mission and goal to warn other women to be very careful before they get pregnant and to avoid drinking any amount of alcohol. No one sets out to be the “poster mom” for FASD but if I did not speak out, more babies could be hurt because their parents did not know how to prevent it! Another woman warned is another baby saved!

When my son was 15 years old, I thought he was ready to learn the truth, so I faced him and said, “Son, I think you should know what caused your disability. I did not know I was pregnant and I drank alcohol, I did not know it would harm you and I am so sorry!” He looked at me with his gentle eyes and hugged me and said, “Don’t worry mom, I won’t tell anyone.” Today we are a team telling anyone who will listen that they should not drink any amount of alcohol if they are pregnant!

Meet the 2013 Texas WIC Dietetic Interns

by Ann Sullivan, M.P.H., R.D., L.D.
Texas WIC Dietetic Internship Coordinator

Have you ever planted a tomato seed and then watched it grow? It's almost magical the way the seed goes from a tiny sprout to a seedling, and then in a matter of weeks, it becomes a tall, beautiful plant full of blossoms and the promise of red, ripe tomatoes.

The same scenario is true for this year's dietetic interns. During the 8-month internship, these interns completed multiple rotations in food service management, clinical dietetics, and community nutrition, and they successfully met the program's stringent

competencies and performance expectations. The next step will be to pass the registration exam, and then Texas WIC local agencies will have another new and talented crop of home-grown registered dietitians!



Kristie Cooper first planted her nutrition seeds in 2004 by completing a bachelor's degree in nutritional sciences at Texas A&M University in College Station. She then began working at Local Agency 54 in Tarrant County where she's been for 7 years. For Kristie, the internship was like a ray of sunshine, giving her a renewed sense of purpose and direction in her career.

"I originally started working at WIC because I wanted to make a difference in our participants' health. The internship experience helped remind me of that! Bringing health education to my community is truly what I enjoy and where my focus will be," said Kristie.

Married with two children who keep her busy, Kristie appreciates every minute with her family. "Whether we're throwing tea parties or building Legos, we always have fun."

Adriana Archer, from Local Agency 33 in El Paso, earned a bachelor's degree in nutritional science-dietetics, with a minor in restaurant hotel institutional management from Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

Like a Texas gardener watching a rainstorm, Adriana is both thrilled and grateful when she looks back at her experience as an intern. "The Texas WIC Dietetic Internship allowed me to experience different fields in the nutrition world which have changed me forever. It enhanced my dietetics knowledge and taught me things I did not know before. The things I have seen and learned throughout this experience will definitely help me be a better nutrition educator to my community by allowing me to provide information and care on a higher level," said Adriana.

The internship taught Adriana some important things about herself, "Being a wife, homemaker, and mother of a toddler while going through this internship has brought out a whole new dimension of me that I did not know existed!"

After graduating from The University of Texas at Austin with a bachelor of science and dietetics in 2010, **Karla Luna** started working at Local Agency 42 in Williamson County, where she's blossomed ever since. Karla's life-long goal is to help motivate people to live healthier lifestyles so they can enjoy good health, prevent disease, and improve their quality of life.

Karla says that from the beginning of the internship, she was in "high nutrition spirits" and her appreciation for the field of dietetics grew tremendously. "I have also realized how blessed I am to come from a WIC background. It has provided me with the tools necessary to help influence change to improve the health status of our communities, and I look forward to returning to Williamson County to continue to fulfill my goal!"

Karla loves traveling and learning about other cultures' beliefs, traditions, and the foods they eat. "By seeing the world and meeting people from all over, I feel that I will be able to better connect with potential future patients from different parts of the world and help them live happy, healthy lives, their way!"



Lindsey Randall who earned a bachelor's in nutritional science from Texas A&M University, is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant working at the state agency.

"I graduated college on a Friday and started working for Local Agency 36 the following Monday and have been with WIC for my entire adult career. It is my passion, but it is all I've known until the internship."

The internship gave her the chance to work with different populations in all stages of the life-cycle. "I learned to assess and meet the dietary needs of both genders of all ages, with a variety of diseases and in different stages in the disease process."

As a gardener, Lindsey appreciates what goes into growing strong plants and healthy food, and she has the same appreciation for preventative health programs like WIC.

"The internship helped me appreciate my position at WIC and the importance of our program. As health professionals within the WIC program, we are able to help ensure healthier futures for families and their babies." She adds that "ultimately, my passion is my own family... that's one reason I enjoy WIC — it is a place that recognizes the importance of family."



Dahlia Gomez, who works in San Antonio at Local Agency 41, began her career at Texas A&M University where she earned a bachelor's degree in nutritional sciences. She continued her education in San Antonio at the University of the Incarnate Word, earning her master's degree in nutrition.

Dahlia believes, "you have to take advantage of the opportunity at hand and make the best of it and have no regrets... you cannot be bashful or embarrassed to ask to do things even if the answer is no. You never know if you don't try."

And like a farmer during a Texas drought, Dahlia says "I have learned that I can do anything and to not give up on my goals if I have a few barriers fall along my path. You have to learn from your mistakes and keep going because if you put in enough effort and work, you will see the rainbow at the end."



Emmeline Carrasco (Emily), who works for Local Agency 53 in Pleasanton, Texas, spends her spare time dancing, running, or doing bikram yoga.

As in intern, Emily grew like a vine, taking on any challenges that came her way. "The internship gave me the chance to step out of my comfort zone and accept challenges that have helped me grow, both professionally and personally."

She also says that she learned firsthand that living a healthy lifestyle is the most important thing a person can do to protect their health, and she wants to help spread the word. "I feel more prepared than ever to go back into my community and share all my newfound knowledge. The internship was an experience of a lifetime and I cannot be grateful enough to everyone involved in helping my dream come true."

Whitney King, who works for Local Agency 27 in Levelland, Texas, earned a bachelor of science in nutritional sciences from Texas Tech University in Lubbock in May of 2008.

Whitney enjoyed the practical, hands-on, "dig in the dirt" aspect of the internship. "I felt like in college we are given a wealth of information, but the internship really helped me understand how to put it all together. The Texas WIC Dietetic Internship has been such a blessing to me in that it provided me with opportunities to experience so many aspects of the dietetics profession — from seeing how dietitians manage employees, menus, and budgets in the food service, to learning how to assess a patient's needs in the clinical setting. I have grown so much through this experience, and I plan to bring my knowledge back to my WIC clinic where I can put it to use."

As for other aspects of her life, Whitney says "I love being a mom, and spend all of my spare time chasing my kiddo around!"



Colby Myers says the WIC internship gave her the opportunity to experience hands-on training and exposure to other nutrition fields that she may not have had otherwise. “I learned to think outside the box and I feel my critical thinking skills have grown tremendously. My confidence as a nutrition professional grows every day, and I am reminded of the importance of staying informed on the most recent research.”

Colby, who works for Outreach Health Services, Local Agency 76, in Gatesville and Hamilton, earned her bachelor of science in nutritional sciences at Texas A&M University.

She has a sincere appreciation for the dietitians who helped her reach her potential. “The preceptors were wonderful. It’s amazing to work with so many RDs who are willing to take the time to share their experience and knowledge.”

Colby is still growing — she has plans to take online graduate courses toward a master’s degree in nutrition and says she looks forward to returning to the WIC clinic and applying what she has learned.



Kyle Blanton just can’t stop blooming and growing! In 2005 he graduated from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts, and in 2011, he earned a bachelor’s in food, nutrition, and dietetics from Stephen F. Austin State University.

Kyle, who works at Local Agency 108 in Longview, says “the Texas WIC Dietetic Internship was one of the best experiences of my life. It helped me apply the knowledge obtained through my undergraduate work along with the seminars we had throughout the year,” adding that he owes a big “thank you” to his wife Erin for all her support.

Kyle hopes to become a certified diabetes educator and plans to incorporate his culinary skills into his practice to better suit the needs of clients and patients. “I will take with me all of the great experiences obtained throughout the WIC internship and the wonderful directors and preceptors that make this program such a great success. I was also privileged to have a wonderful group of colleagues in my intern class that I will have a bond with for the rest of my life. Go WIC Interns 2013 — we did it!”



Yes, you did. Congratulations to all of you!



Planting Seeds with Eaton

by Eaton Wright, BS, NUT
Nutrition Expert

If one were asked what is your favorite seed, most of us would probably say pitseed, goosefoot, or wattleseed, not wheat, pinto beans, or even coconut. Even so, seeds like these and many others are an important part of our diet. In fact, of the major plant parts, seeds are arguably the most important source food for humans.

Quiz:



1. True or False – When roasted and ground, peach seeds make a wonderful tea.
2. The introduction of this article may have you asking, “*Well Eaton, if that is your real name, what are the major parts of a plant?*” *Well, they are, from the ground up – root, stem, leaf, flower, and seed. Which part is responsible for making food for a plant?*
 - a. Root
 - b. Stem
 - c. Leaf
 - d. Flower
 - e. Seed
3. True or False – The seed from a Red Delicious apple is an example of a gymnosperm.
4. Which of the following is not an edible seed?
 - a. Soybean
 - b. Rice
 - c. Filbert
 - d. Chia
 - e. All of the above are edible



Answers:



1. False. Like apple, apricot, cherry, and plum, peach seeds contain amygdalin. When metabolized in the small intestine, amygdalin produces hydrogen cyanide — not a good thing. Lucky for people passionate about peaches, the body can detoxify cyanide in small amounts, and peach seeds are probably too big to swallow.
2. C. Leaf. Food is made through a process called photosynthesis. During this process, carbon dioxide, water, chlorophyll (the green in plants), and sunlight are changed into glucose. Plants use this sugar for food. Amazingly, a plant “exhaled” the oxygen you are breathing right now. BTW... photosynthesis is unique to green plants.
3. The answer is false. Rookie mistake. Seeds from the Red Delicious come from a class of plants called angiosperms. The mature angiosperm produces a seed within an enclosure, like an apple. Trees belonging to the angiosperm class are deciduous — meaning the leaves usually change color and die every autumn, think apple, oak, and dogwood. On the other hand, seeds from gymnosperms produce seeds that are not enclosed, like the seeds in a pine cone. Gymnosperm trees are conifers — meaning they usually have needles that stay green throughout the year, think yew, fir, and bald cypress. Most edible seeds are angiosperms.
4. E. All of these seeds are edible, even the cha...cha...cha...chia. In fact, chia not only makes a good hair replacement for our follicly challenged co-workers, but the seed is a good source of omega-3 fatty acids and makes a good addition to a smoothie or yogurt parfait.

About the author: Eaton Wright is a certified NUT living in Austin, Texas.





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