

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

When money is tight don't sacrifice nutrition

Eating well is your first defense against disease, but when the economy sours and money is tight, most individuals look to cut corners. Before you cut costs on your next supermarket trip, Dr. Andrew Weil, renowned author and director of the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine at The University of Arizona Health Sciences Center, wants you to take a look at what you might be trimming.

"So often, people sacrifice nutrition to save money," Weil said. "Unfortunately, the best 'bargains' in grocery stores are often on food that carry the least nutritional value such as sodas, cookies, refined cereals, refined breads and pastas, processed meats, high-fructose laden juices and convenience desserts. Supermarket promotions cause consumers to gravitate to them. But while a diet made up of such foods may help trim your grocery bill, it could end up costing you big bucks in the long term."

High cholesterol, high sugar and high sodium diets, research shows, are clearly associated with chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and even Alzheimer's. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2005, 133 million Americans, nearly 50 percent of the population, were living with at least one chronic condition. Moreover, chronic disease accounts for 70 percent of all deaths in the United States. Of the nation's \$2 trillion cost for medical care, chronic disease eats up more than 75 percent.

Diabetes alone racks up direct and indirect costs of \$174 billion a year. Obesity costs in 2000 were nearly \$117 billion in 2000, the CDC notes. Heart disease and stroke were projected to cost \$448 billion in 2008. If you think major diseases such as these don't concern you, and those candies and sodas aren't a big problem, sink your teeth into this statistic: nearly \$98.6 billion is spent on dental services each year.

Still, nutritious, whole food can be more expensive than the give-away, nutritionally vacant foods. Vitamin and mineral rich foods don't appear in the bargain aisle. Still you can make wise choices and still save money. Here's why:

When you eat nutrient-rich foods, your body is more satisfied than when eating refined foods, so you'll eat less. Moreover, money spent on nutrition is money you won't need to spend on medications and doctor bills down the road.

During these difficult times, when people are losing their jobs and health insurance, healthy eating could be the first-line defense against economic defeat. The strong survive, and you cannot be strong with an undernourished body.

So eschew the convenient, sugary, fat-laden foods that are on sale. Instead, choose nutrient-rich foods and cook from scratch. You will immediately be ahead of the game nutritionally because you control the amount of sugar, salt and fat in the dishes.

On, Sunday, May 10, from 2:00 – 4:00 pm join Dr. Weil, Dr. David Katz and Rick Bayless at the 6th Annual Nutrition and Health Conference: State of the Science and Clinical Applications, to be held May 10 – 13, at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile Hotel, 540 N. Michigan Avenue. The forum on May 10, titled: “You Can’t Afford to Get Sick, Integrative Approaches To Health in a Downward Economy” is open to the public. For additional information, visit www.nutritionandhealthconf.org.

When looking at your shopping list, try and reduce, even eliminate, the following:

- Chips, cookies, pastries, cookies, sugary soda and fruit drinks (most have added sugar and there are added health benefits to eating the whole fruit)
- Ready-made meals – the sodium, sugar and trans-fat they often contain add up to no savings
- Refined foods, including pastas, rice, breads, and sugar
- Red meat
- Canned fruit in heavy syrup

Do include:

- Legumes – kidney, black, soy, lima and other beans
- Brown rice
- Fresh cold water fish
- Tofu
- Skinless poultry
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Whole grain breads, pastas
- Canned fruit in water

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About the Nutrition and Health Conference

Nutrition and Health: State of the Science and Clinical Applications is the premier nutrition conference for health professionals in the U.S. Co-presented by the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine, the conference, to be held May 10-13 in Chicago, assembles internationally-recognized researchers, clinicians, educators, and chefs, all of whose work focuses on the interface between nutrition and healthful living. A public forum on May 10 featuring Dr. David Katz, Dr. Andrew Weil and chef and restaurateur Rick Bayless will focus on family health. For more information visit www.nutritionandhealthconf.org.

About AzCIM

The mission of the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine is to lead the transformation of healthcare by creating, educating and actively supporting a community of professionals who embody the philosophy and practice of integrative medicine. Integrative medicine is healing-oriented and takes account of body, mind, spirit and lifestyle, making use of conventional and alternative therapies as appropriate. Since its inception, the Arizona Center in Integrative Medicine has focused its efforts on three domains: education, clinical care, and research - with the primary emphasis on education. To learn more about the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine visit www.integrativemedicine.arizona.edu.