



Adapted from the *Health Fair Planning Guide* written by Carol A. Rice, Ph.D., R.N, Luwana Rider, B.S., and Janet M. Pollard, M.P.H.

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# Acknowledgments

The authors would like to acknowledge and express our sincere appreciation to all who contributed to the writing and editing of the *Nutrition and Physical Activity Fair Planning Guide*. In particular, we recognize the support provided by Dr. M. Kathleen Volanty and Dr. Judith L. Warren; they were consistently responsive to the needs and concerns of this project.

We would also like to thank the following individuals for their significant contributions to this guide. The guide would have never been possible without their direct and indirect assistance.

Dr. Jenna Anding, Associate Professor and Extension Nutrition Specialist Janie Bell, American Diabetes Association – Area Director, Coastal Bend Area Maria Eva Fernandez, Master's Degree Student at UT – Houston Dr. Stephen Green, Associate Professor and Extension Child Development Specialist Elizabeth Gregory, Associate Professor and Extension Communications Specialist Belinda Huff, Nueces County Extension Administrative Assistant – Family and Consumer Sciences Alice Kirk, Program Coordinator, Better Living for Texans (BLT) State Office Susan Lee, Extension Assistant and Editor Helen Orsak, Texas Certified Master Gardener – Nueces County Senior Clerk, Horticulture Dr. Carol A. Rice, Professor and Extension Health Specialist Jed Villa, Health Initiative Director – Corpus Christi Mid-Metro Unit

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# Nutrition and Physical Activity Fair Planning Guide

The **Nutrition and Physical Activity Fair Planning Guide** provides information and guidance for individuals, educators, community leaders, and others to successfully plan, implement, and evaluate a nutrition and physical activity fair. The suggested activities may also be coordinated and implemented in combination with any community event, or an activity may be utilized as a stand-alone event on a small or large scale. You may have some of your own ideas to add, and some modifications to the suggested activities may be necessary to adapt this plan to the needs of your fair. For example, you may want to implement a nutrition and physical activity fair in conjunction with an annual health fair; during a spring or fall festival; during the month of March, which is National Nutrition Month; on El Día de los Niños (April 30); at the end of the school year; or at another special community event. The opportunities are endless.

If additional games, activities, or workshops are developed that may assist others in learning and grasping the importance of nutrition and physical activity, please write up the instructions and send that information and any photos—preferably by e-mail—to:

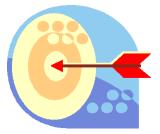
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### **Objectives of a Nutrition and Physical Activity Fair**

A nutrition and physical activity fair will:

- increase families' activity levels and improve their nutritional practices;
- increase early detection of diabetes and hypertension, especially in higher-risk groups;
- form community leadership teams interested not only in supporting this activity but in continued improvement of nutrition and physical activity levels in their community;
- increase awareness of local, state, and national health services and resources;
- motivate families and participants to make positive nutrition and physical activity behavior changes;
- identify participants and educational topics for future Extension nutrition and physical activity programs; and
- establish Extension agents as a source for educational nutrition and physical activity programming in the county.

By motivating, encouraging, and actively engaging participants in these behaviors, individuals are more likely to adopt the behaviors and make them part of their everyday lifestyles.



## Planning the Nutrition and Physical Activity Fair

Successful nutrition and physical activity fairs require a tremendous amount of planning. Planning should begin at least six months before the target date; however, beginning a year in advance is even better. The first task is to identify a chair or co-chairs. Additionally, it is important to form the Planning/Coordinating Committee far in advance of a large event. When planning a small nutrition and physical activity fair, however, a chair or co-chairs may be identified as little as four to six months before the event. The number of subcommittees and the amount of time required in the planning phase is determined by the different types of activities involved in the fair.

# Setting Up Committees and Subcommittees: Duties and Responsibilities

## **Chair or Co-Chairs**

The (Extension) educator may elect to be the chairperson or may share the responsibilities with another person as his/her co-chair.

### Planning/Coordinating Committee



Organize a Planning/Coordinating Committee of eight to ten individuals. Planning/Coordinating Committee members could be chairpersons of the subcommittees, providing leadership to the subcommittees and coordination between the Planning/Coordinating Committee and the subcommittees. The Planning/Coordinating Committee can also identify key people for subcommittees and additional nutrition and physical activities for the fair. To maximize community efforts, it is highly recommended—but it is not

absolutely necessary—that the nutrition and physical activity fair be implemented in conjunction with a health fair (for information on planning a health fair, see the Texas AgriLife Extension Service *Health Fair Planning Guide* at <u>http://fcs.tamu.edu/health/health\_fair\_planning\_guide/index.php</u>). Whether the nutrition and physical activity fair is held as a stand-alone event or with other community events, it is a good idea to provide basic health screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose testing, Acanthosis Nigricans, etc.

Try to have a representative from the following groups on the Planning/Coordinating Committee:

- health professionals: registered dieticians, physicians, dentists, chiropractors, podiatrists, optometrists, nurse practitioners, physicians assistants;
- health agencies: hospitals, home health agencies, clinics, nursing homes, retirement centers, emergency medical services;
- school personnel: coaches, principals, teachers;
  - faith and non-faith centers;
  - county, state, and local officials, employers, and community leaders;
  - local media;
  - 4-H parent volunteers/adult leaders;
  - youth clubs: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, YWCA;
  - Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) leaders/volunteers;
  - Department of Transportation safety officers;
  - youth recreational centers/volunteers; and
  - other members of your target audience.

A broad-based community Planning/Coordinating Committee will provide:

- widespread support and better attendance;
- ideas that better meet the unique needs of the target community or community-at-large;
- selection of the time, date, and place least likely to conflict with other community activities/events;



- more volunteers to share the work and responsibilities;
- more media promotion, attention, and coverage;
- safe, practical, and best practice hands-on activities for the nutrition and physical activities; and
- overall and specific clientele evaluation of the event.

### Planning/Coordinating Committee Duties

- Identify the target audience.
- Identify the best ways to reach the target audience. Plan fun hands-on nutrition and physical activities (see the section on Activity Ideas for Nutrition and Physical Activity Fairs). Should the nutrition and physical activity fair be a stand-alone event, or should it be held in conjunction with a health fair or other community-wide event? Identify what type of hands-on activities should be offered.
- Develop a theme, such as "Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Expo," "Nutrition and Physical Activity Fiesta," "Día de Los Niños Celebration," etc.
- Develop a time table (sample included in the Appendix).
- Select a date for the fair.
- Identify the subcommittees and possible members; if possible, identify chairs/co-chairs and leaders for each of the subcommittees.
- Set and manage the budget, considering:
  - space facility cost;
  - publicity and promotion costs;
  - equipment and tables, chairs, audiovisual, rentals;
  - decorations;
  - refreshments/food for committee and subcommittee members, volunteers, and exhibitors;
  - permits and insurance requirements;
  - printing;
  - mailing, including promotional and follow-up;
  - food demonstrations, giveaway fruits/vegetables, and other booth giveaways; and
  - screening costs.
- Give subcommittees their allocation if budget funds are available; otherwise, each subcommittee may need to obtain donations, financial assistance, etc. (Note: It is important to coordinate donation and financial assistance to avoid competition among subcommittees.)
- If budget funds are available, set policies for budget management and reimbursement of expenses. Identify the person(s) responsible for writing and signing checks.
  - How will deposits for equipment, tables, etc. be handled?
  - How will records of expenditures be maintained?
  - What are the policies regarding handling cash?
  - If there is a petty cash fund, who will maintain and authorize withdrawals?
  - Set a deadline for submission of bills after the fair is completed.
- Identify possible locations of the fair for the Facilities Subcommittee to consider, or make the selection if, for some reason, the site is already known.
- Identify potential donors, sponsors, supporters, and exhibitors.
- Coordinate the contact of all donors, sponsors, and exhibitors.
- Provide oversight and coordination for subcommittees. For example, make sure that booth space is adequate and that all hands-on activities are age appropriate for a nutrition and physical activity fair. Avoid booths that do not present positive and healthy lifestyle change messages, booths that promote the sale of dietary supplements, or booths with activities that are not research-based. Also, make certain that subcommittees stay within budget.
- Determine the method that will be used to evaluate the results of the fair.



- Create a schedule for the fair, including set-up and clean-up times, and times for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and other necessary breaks.
- Assist with management of the fair, and ensure that at least one or more managers of the event are available the day of the fair to "put out the inevitable fires." (To keep communications open, it is advisable that all managers share cell phone numbers to contact one another during the event. Walkie/talkie units may also be used.) Managers should welcome vendors, volunteers, participants; assist with sign-in sheets, escort school groups, etc.

# **Nutrition and Physical Activity Subcommittee**

Many health professionals are uniting to encourage families to incorporate sensible nutritional and physical activity practices into their lives. Unfortunately, many children and adults have sedentary

lifestyles, which often leads to obesity and places them at a high risk of developing cardiovascular disease and the possibility of developing diabetes later in life. A variety of strategies to optimize health benefits in children should be promoted during the fair, including the daily consumption of healthy, nutritious foods and daily physical activity to help prevent and/or reduce projected catastrophic health outcomes.



Health professionals selected to be on the Nutrition and Physical Activity Subcommittee will help determine what nutritional and physical activities are appropriate to include during the fair for the

target audience. Recruit subcommittee members who will advocate safe and fun hands-on activities that promote participant involvement. Individuals from all sectors of the community should be considered for the committee, but especially recruit individuals who will represent and advocate for the target audience. The more diverse the subcommittee is, the more possibilities, opportunities, and possible resources can be made available.

Always keeping the target audience in mind, subcommittee members will selectively plan and implement hands-on, activity-focused demonstrations and events that will benefit children and families. Keep in mind that the activities should be appropriate, culturally sensitive, and accomplish



the goals of the fair. Not every brochure, idea for a giveaway, or hands-on activity should be included in the fair. For example, since families with young children attend the fair, hands-on activities that require very small objects should be avoided because such items could be swallowed by toddlers.

### Nutrition and Physical Activity Subcommittee Duties

• Identify key nutritional and physical activity health topics and booths, keeping the target audience in mind.

 Determine the types of hands-on activities and demonstrations that will benefit the target audience. The hands-on activities and demonstrations will address these key goals:

- gradual increase of physical activity for families through active play;
- decrease sedentary activities including "screen time" (TV and video games), and limit screen time to two hours per day;
- improve diet quality, and discourage "super-sized" food orders when eating out;
- increase fruit and vegetable intake amounts as recommended by the Food Guide Pyramid;
- limit sweetened beverage consumption (including soft drinks, sport drinks, imitation fruit juices, sweetened teas, Kool-Aid, etc.);

- encourage "engaged parenting" in which parents participate with children in physical activity and provide healthy food choices; and
- increase family meals together to improve nutrition.
- Plan and arrange for booths from agencies, such as the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, Texas Department of Health, Texas Department of Agriculture, YMCA, YWCA, parks and recreation departments, and CATCH.
- Format hands-on activities, presentations, and demonstrations for the target audience.
- Incorporate a Kick-Off Walk at the beginning of the fair (this activity may be planned by the Family Walking Subcommittee, if one is established).
- Plan and arrange for entertainment.
- Plan for healthy refreshments at the fair.
- Plan for first aid needs during the event.

# **Clinical Subcommittee**

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Health professionals on the Clinical Subcommittee can help determine what health services/screenings are appropriate to include during the nutrition and physical activity fair for the target audience. Screening for blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose, immunizations, anemia, etc. may be planned if they are appropriate for the target audience. Screenings are much more useful to people than a health risk appraisal. (Do <u>not</u> use the health risk appraisal given to Extension agents a number of years ago. It is outdated and no longer useful.)



Not all health screenings are required, necessary, or appropriate to incorporate as part of the fair. Some children's health screenings are required and performed at schools such as checks of height and weight, scoliosis, vision, and hearing; except in certain target populations, checking children's cholesterol is not appropriate. No intrusive procedure like drawing blood or finger sticks can ever be done on children without their parent's signed permission. Hands-on, activity-focused demonstrations will be of more benefit to children and families.

If screenings are provided, the Clinical Subcommittee must help in determining appropriateness for the audience, find appropriate providers, make sure universal

precautions are followed and screening results are accurate, and participants are properly informed about the results and provided with follow-up suggestions. Provisions must be made for situations when someone's blood pressure or blood sugar is found to be dangerously high during the screenings. Where will that person be directed for immediate help?

For these and many other reasons, having a Clinical Subcommittee is critical for any community-wide event that incorporates health screenings. For information on how to plan a health fair, go to <u>http://fcs.tamu.edu/health/health\_fair\_planning\_guide/index.php</u>.

#### **Clinical Subcommittee Duties**

- Identify key health topics and booths for the target audience.
- Determine the kinds of screenings/services for the target audience, such as:

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- blood cholesterol (total, HDL, LDL, and triglycerides),
- blood glucose,
- blood pressure,
- iron (hematocrit)
- skin cancer,
- lung capacity,
- vision screening,
- glaucoma screening,
- hearing tests, and
- foot screenings.



- Plan for meeting universal precautions regarding drawing and handling blood.
- Plan for the delivery of results to participants.
- Plan and arrange for treatment referrals for participants with abnormal results, both immediately and longer term (for example, if someone has a very high blood glucose or blood pressure level, where can they be seen immediately?).
- Define and review the kinds of health information, brochures, and giveaways appropriate for the target audience (for example, no small objects for young children; no free drug samples).
- Plan for immunizations appropriate for the target audience.
- Plan for obtaining parental consent forms if children are having any screening procedure or immunizations.
- Plan and arrange for "Ask a Doctor," "Ask a Nurse," "Ask a Podiatrist,"
   "Ask the Registered Dietitian," and "Ask a Pharmacist" booths.
- Plan for equipment needs, such as different sizes of blood pressure cuffs (the wrong-sized cuff will give wrong results); this includes blood pressure cuffs for children (note: blood pressure screening is not usually done for children unless the target population is deemed high risk), average-sized adults, and obese adults.
- Provide information on the actual costs for clinical services—such as lab work—to facilitate interpretation of the value of the fair to the community.
- Plan to protect the participants' confidentiality regarding results.
  - Results must be given only to the individual participant.
  - Sign-up sheets should not identify participants' blood pressure, lab results, etc.
  - Results may never be delivered to the employer at a worksite or to an insurance company.
  - If height and weight measurements are taken, for example, it must be done so no one can even accidentally be made aware of someone else's results—this is true for children as well as adults. (Note: Another type of measurement that could be taken is Body Mass Index [BMI]; explain the meaning of the results. To calculate BMI, go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's calculator at

<u>http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/adult\_bmi/index.html</u> for adults or <u>http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/childrens\_bmi/about\_childrens\_bmi.html</u> for children and teens. Another option for adults might be helping them calculate their waist-to-hip ratio—see this website for instructions:

http://fcs.tamu.edu/health/health\_fair\_planning\_guide/waist\_to\_hip\_ratio.php.)



### Family Walking Subcommittee



Walking activities can be fun and motivating. They can also create friendly competition among participants, families, and communities. Additionally, kicking off a nutrition and physical activity fair with a "Family Walk" is a way to attract families, schools, and walking clubs to the fair. Once a walking event is planned and executed, it may lead to the creation of other walking groups and programs. (For information on Texas AgriLife Extension Service's *Walk Across Texas* program, visit *http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu/*.)

Members of the Family Walking Subcommittee should be recruited from all sectors of the community, including the police department, parks and recreation department, department of public works, civic associations, local and state politicians, and businesses in the community. The more diverse the subcommittee is, the more possibilities, opportunities, and possible resources will be available. Subcommittee members should start planning the walk as soon as possible, or preferably six months in advance, to ensure that proper security is available and all contingencies have been addressed. When preparing for such an event, the subcommittee should ensure that all promotional materials are culturally sensitive. Be sure to check for other walking events or competitions that are being held at the same time or are on the same route, or on part of the planned route, to avoid conflicts.

If any participants in the "Family Walk" are also Walk Across Texas participants, encourage them to enter their accrued mileage for this event.

#### Family Walking Subcommittee Duties

- Identify the route for the walk. If possible, have a contingency plan for an indoor walk in case of bad weather.
  - Determine the length of the route. (Depending on the time of the year, the weather, and terrain conditions, the planning committee may want to map a one-mile route; however, shorter or longer walks may be planned. If possible, plan the walk around a trail and/or scenic/historical route.)
  - Check with the city police and county sheriff to see if the proposed route is safe and convenient.
- Check with city and county entities to learn if a permit is required for the walk and how far in advance the permit must be obtained.
  - File the necessary paperwork to obtain a permit, if one is required. Some cities/counties may charge a fee, which usually covers the cost of security; the cost of the permit could range from \$0–500. In some circumstances, the cost could be higher depending on the entity issuing the permit.
  - Sometimes, payment arrangements can be made, and the payment can be made after the event. Check with the department issuing the permit.
- Plan and secure special event liability insurance. It may be required before obtaining a permit and/or by the group or facility hosting the event. Note: Liability insurance policies can range from \$350 \$2,000 depending on the type of coverage, number of participants, etc. and whether the policy is issued to a profit or non-profit entity. For liability insurance quotes, visit <a href="http://galescreek.com/">http://galescreek.com/</a>.
- Plan and make arrangements for water, first aid stations, and refreshments along the route.
   Place these stations at approximately the <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> mile marker on the route.
- Create a plan to mark the route with signs and positive messages.

- Plan and make arrangements for a SAG Wagon (an ambulance or a marked vehicle that circles the route on a regular basis during the walk, providing assistance to participants and/or volunteers).
- Plan to provide a map of the route to all participants during registration.
- Seek donations for refreshments, if necessary.
- Plan for enough water. Water dispensers and disposable cups are highly recommended.
- On the day of the event, volunteers must setup water and first aid stations at least an hour before the event. It is recommended that at least two volunteers tend to each water and first aid station.
- Recruit volunteers to setup and take down water and first aid stations.
- Plan for advanced and on-site registration. Recruit enough volunteers to assist with on-site registration, with four to six volunteers for every 500 participants. Do not expect participants to wait a long time in registration lines.
- Include a disclaimer waiver on the registration form. You may also want to ask for names, age ranges or date of birth, ethnicity, etc. (See the Appendix for a sample registration form.)
- Publicize the event in the media. Depending on the time allotted, your message may include the different activities that will take place. At the very least, provide the name of the event, time, place, and a contact name and phone number.
- Create a friendly competition among potential participants. Invite schools, faith and non-faith centers, families, etc. to participate.
- Distribute promotional flyers to the target audience (see sample flyer in the Appendix).
- Plan for trash collection along the route.
- Ensure that all stations are taken down immediately after the "Family Walk" event. Several vehicles may be required to ensure that all volunteers, supplies, and equipment are picked up.

### Youth Volunteers Subcommittee

Youth community service is an important part of 4-H, Junior League, Girls and Boys Clubs, and many other youth groups and clubs. Since 1927, a portion of the 4-H pledge has been "I pledge my hands to larger service," and service plays a critical role in the leadership development of 4-H members. Many young people seek out opportunities to volunteer, with many volunteering at school-based service-learning programs and others volunteering at churches and community-based programs. Community service is required for some young volunteers; some participate because they enjoy volunteering, and others may need to enhance a project with volunteer service. Regardless of the reason young people choose to volunteer, never underestimate the power and the tremendous impact these young volunteers can make.

Recruiting and properly training young volunteers is just as important as the project itself. The Youth Volunteer Subcommittee may contact different youth groups to ask if they are willing to adopt the nutrition and physical activity fair as a volunteer project. Always highlight the fair's goals, outcomes, and benefits to the community-at-large. It is important to recognize and reward **all** volunteers for their time and efforts. There are many forms of rewarding volunteers; work with the Planning/ Coordinating Committee to determine the most appropriate method that fits within the budget. It is important valued.

#### Youth Volunteers Subcommittee Duties

- Identify youth volunteer opportunities. If possible, briefly describe job duties and the total number of youth volunteers required.
- Contact potential youth volunteer groups in writing at least six months in advance. Other groups may need to be contacted a year in advance.
  - Describe the fair, and inform them of the areas where their assistance is needed.
  - Highlight the fair's goals, outcomes, and benefits.



- Outline the benefits of volunteering—benefits to the volunteer, to the recipient(s), and to the community.
- Include the date, time, and location of the event and the time that they need to report.
- Once young volunteer groups have accepted/adopted your project, contact them again and inform them of the types of jobs/responsibilities they will be expected to conduct. If possible, provide them with a brief description of the different duties/responsibilities.
  - Specify how many volunteers will be needed and if they need to be trained. Inform them of when the training will be provided.
- Request a list of names and t-shirt sizes of all youth and adult volunteers. It is also critical to
  find out who will be your point of contact. Obtain, this person's name, telephone/cell number,
  and e-mail address because they will be corresponding with you and disseminating all types of
  types of information to the potential volunteers.
  - For emergency and/or insurance purposes, it may be necessary to have emergency contact information for all volunteers. Check with the Planning/Coordinating Committee.
- Assign duties to all volunteers. It is recommended that such information be provided in a
  matrix format to make it easier for volunteers to keep track of responsibilities. (See Appendix
  for a sample form for volunteer responsibilities and duties.)
- Provide the Refreshments/Food Subcommittee with an approximate number of volunteers who will be working at the fair if food and beverages will be provided.
- If food will be provided, inquire from the youth volunteer group if special foods are required by anyone. If so, find out what they are, and work with the Refreshments/Food Subcommittee to accommodate the special food needs. If such accommodations cannot be made, it is imperative that the youth point of contact be notified. It is possible that anyone who has special dietary needs may be asked to bring their own food or may need to be released from their assigned duties to eat.
- Mail the matrix with the volunteers' responsibilities/job duties to the youth group point of contact. Ask the point of contact to disseminate and post the information.
- A month before the event, send a friendly reminder about the event, and request that the reminder be disseminated among all potential youth volunteers. The reminder should include the date, time, and location of the event and acknowledge their contribution to the fair.
- Also, mail reminder notes of upcoming training sessions associated with the fair. Don't forget to include the dates, times, and locations of such training.
- Two weeks before the event, send another friendly reminder about the fair. This time, specify the exact location of the command center table where volunteers need to report.
- Whether or not training is provided, it is recommended that you ask the volunteers to report to the command center table 30 minutes to an hour before their assigned volunteer time. Ensure that someone is appointed to direct newly arrived volunteers to their assigned areas.
- If possible, youth volunteers should be thanked as they complete their assignments. If not, send a thank-you letter to the youth group point of contact.
- Write and mail thank you letters to the youth group. If possible, highlight their contribution to the fair. You may want to include newspaper articles, press releases, etc.

### **Facilities Subcommittee**

The Facilities Subcommittee should consider the following when selecting an appropriate facility for the fair:

- Will the fair be held indoors or outdoors? If the fair is outdoors, a contingency plan will be needed for bad weather, including wind. Booth workers may need sun screen.
- Plan for equipment and electrical needs.
- Are tables and chairs available?
- Are adequate restroom facilities available?
- Are drinking water and refreshments available?

• Food safety is **critical** during preparation and storage. (Depending on the county and/or city, the local health department may need to be contacted. Some facilities will not allow the preparation and serving of food without a permit.)

- Is there adequate parking?
- What type of setup and cleanup is required?
- Safety: Does the facility have stairs, working elevators?
- Is the location near public transportation?

• Is the location easily accessible for the target audience? For example, is there a safe place to load and unload school children from school buses?

• Is the location easy to find?

• Plan for security. Where can purses and other valuables can be kept safely during the event? Crowd control?

- Plan locations for exhibit booths (competing agencies do not like being right next to one another).
- Plan for crowd flow.
- Decorate the facility. (The Procurement Subcommittee is responsible for securing decorations.)
- Create a map for participants to locate booths of interest at the fair, as well as essential services like restrooms and water fountains.
- Post signs at the fair for booths and directions to restrooms, water fountains, refreshments, entertainment, first aid, lost parents, and exits. The signs may be created by the Administrative Subcommittee.
- Develop an action plan that must be followed if children get lost. Share the action plan with vendors, exhibitors, volunteers, and security.
- Develop a plan for lost and found items.

### **Procurement Subcommittee**

The duties of the Procurement Subcommittee include:

- Arrange for obtaining incentives, giveaways, brochures, promotional items, bags for collecting fair brochures and giveaways, and door prizes.
- Secure decorations for the fair.
- Plan for trash control both inside and outside of the facility.
- Plan for and obtain supplies, including:
  - garbage cans;
  - garbage bags;
  - velcro;
  - tablecloths;
  - pens, pencils, and markers;
  - paper, notebooks;
  - extension cords;
  - surge protectors;
  - three-prong adapters;
  - tape—scotch, electrical, and masking;
  - scissors;
  - stapler; and
  - hooks and 1/4 inch rope to hang banners.

### **Refreshments/Food Subcommittee**

The Refreshments/Food Subcommittee is responsible for all refreshments and food that will be provided to volunteers, committee and subcommittee members, and exhibitors. Before deciding on the types of refreshments to



provide, check with the facility to be sure you can serve food—some facilities will only allow food inside if the food is donated by one of their approved vendors. If this is the case, see if one or some



(depending on how much food you need) of these approved vendors will donate food. If not, the Refreshments/Food Subcommittee may have to consider other options such as designating a vehicle (a van with four doors, for example) to be the location to serve refreshments. Have volunteers serve healthy and nutritious foods. When making food option decisions, consider the following:

- appropriateness of the refreshments;
  - sources for the refreshments;



food safety (particularly heating and cooling temperatures); and
offering healthy food choices such as fresh fruit and vegetables, whole wheat breads/crackers, and water with sliced lemon or lime instead of sodas.

### **Administrative Subcommittee**

- Provide necessary clerical support, including writing letters and invitations, and creating the following forms:
  - sign-in or registration forms, and
  - evaluation forms for participants (see the evaluation section for more information).
- Plan for setup and cleanup the day of the event; procure adequate staff to assist.
- Plan for and procure adequate staff for the fair, considering breaks and meal times. Having a break room for exhibitors is helpful. In some circumstances, a break room cannot be designated or may not be available. Consider designating an area for that purpose, and have it draped 8 feet above the ground as to completely enclose it.
- Develop an assignment list for the day of the fair so volunteers can be easily directed to their assigned areas.
- Schedule a manager to be present for setup and other times to "put out fires" as they arise (a reliable form of communication is critical).
- Assist with the management of the fair.

## Publicity/Community Relations Subcommittee

Duties of the Publicity/Community Relations Subcommittee include:

- Develop, copy, and disseminate posters, flyers (see sample promotional flyer in the Appendix), and mailings.
- Develop and distribute bilingual (if appropriate) announcements to the media, including radio, TV, newspapers, store bulletin boards, and faith-based bulletins.
- Design a "pocket I.D. badge" or a ribbon that can be worn by committee and subcommittee members, exhibitors, 4-H youth, and other volunteers during the fair. These could have a slogan reading, "I'm Going to the Nutrition and Physical Activity Fair" or "See You at the Fair!" Or, design and distribute brightly colored t-shirts to the volunteers. (Note:

the more colors used in designing t-shirts, the more they will cost.) Check with local vendors or the Internet to obtain bids for the t-shirts.

- Involve 4-H members by asking them to make and display posters; have a poster contest.
- Include nutrition and physical activity fair information in the county Extension newsletter, local newspapers, etc.
- Ask the county judge to proclaim the week of the fair as "Nutrition and Physical Activity Week in \_\_\_\_\_\_ County," or implement the fair during Nutrition Month (March) or during El Día de Los Niños (April 30— visit <u>http://www.nlci.org/</u> to learn more about El Día de Los Niños and to see if your community celebrates and how to get involved).





- Distribute flyers to grocery stores/convenience stores, and ask store managers to allow checkout clerks to place flyers in grocery bags. Also distribute flyers to public utilities, video stores, restaurants, etc., and ask banks to include them in their monthly statements or other regular mailings. (Note: 1/4 page mini-flyers printed on colored paper work great; the flyer might have to be modified for this type of distribution.) Include a brief announcement about the fair in faith-based bulletins,
- recreational centers, public/college/university libraries, etc.
- An important point to emphasize is the estimated amount of money that fair participants save by taking advantage of free screenings. You can also advertise giveaways, like pedometers and t-shirts.

# Activity Ideas for Nutrition and Physical Activity Fairs

Hands-on, activity-oriented fairs inspire more learning than passive look-and-see fairs. Hands-on nutrition and physical activities are limitless. The fair's Planning/Coordinating Committee and/or Nutritional and Physical Activity Subcommittee can help choose or develop ideas. Ask participating agencies, partners, and exhibitors to come prepared to provide at least one hands-on teaching activity for their booths. Exhibitors should provide hands-on activities that provide participants with the opportunity to learn and to be involved in the activity. This section includes some activity-oriented, hands-on ideas for your nutrition and physical activity fair.

## Plan for at Least One County Extension Booth

Extension's booth(s) can offer information on various Extension programs and provide sign-up sheets for some of Extension activities and programs, such as Walk Across Texas and Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes. This is a good place for participants to sign in and register for door prizes. Keep participants' names from these door prize registrations for your mailing lists, too. Another idea for this booth(s) is to have a program interpretation flyer on Extension's accomplishments in your county and/or the Better Living for Texans and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. Also,



distribute a promotional flyer that provides information about upcoming Extension programs being offered. If you do not have adequate space in your booth for participants to sign in and for a door prize registration, set up a separate table/booth near the entrance of the fair. Having this type of setup will provide opportunities for volunteers to assist and encourage participant involvement.

## Photo Opportunities and Educational Messages



Prior to the fair, Master Gardeners or another volunteer group can make 4-foot fruit and vegetable wooden cutouts and displays that can be exhibited throughout the facility/area. These fruit and vegetable wooden cutouts will include health messages and nutrition and portion size information. See the Appendix for instructions on how to construct the cutouts.



Phytochemical Person Display — The Phytochemical Person display promotes fruits and vegetables and the importance of phytochemicals. The model recommended is expensive, but it is easy to make. Volunteers can use their creativity and create a different one. The Phytochemical Person display can be placed at the entrance of the fair to be used as a family photo opportunity and/or an educational display. The Appendix provides instructions to construct this display.

# Nutritional Booths, Exhibits, and Demonstrations

The following are suggestions for hands-on booths you can put together or solicit others to provide during the fair. The suggested activities are not all original—many were developed by the 2004 Nueces County Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Expo Planning Committee (where the first Texas AgriLife Extension Service Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Expo was piloted). Other hands-on activities were re-created from participation of various state and national nutritional fairs/expos.

Key to Suggested Target Audiences:

Children: С Adolescents (youth): Y Teenagers: Т Teen Parents: TP Adult Parents: AP Families: F Grandparents: GP Adults: А All Audiences ALL Older Adults: 0

### **Nutrition Activity Suggestions**

#### **5-A-Day: Eat Your Colors**

5-A-Day Photo Opportunity (C, Y, T, TP) — Use comic wooden figures of fruits and vegetables with the faces cut out. The participant can place his/her face in the cut-out hole and have his/her picture taken. The picture could be given to young participants in a picture holder that has positive health messages about the importance of daily consumption of fruits and vegetables. Participants could also be given refrigerator magnetic picture holders with positive health messages. See the Appendix for samples and instructions on how to construct the fruit and vegetable cutout wood figures.

5-A-Day Coloring Exercise (C) — Set a table aside for the 5-A-Day Coloring Exercise, and provide non-toxic crayons for children to color the pictures from coloring books that emphasize the importance of fruits and vegetables. Avoid a booth setup for this activity—a table where children sit around the table and color works best; however, any other ideas that maximize space and table usage will work. A coloring book is included in the Appendix, or you may want to search the Internet to find other coloring books that emphasize the importance of fruits and vegetables.

*Food Demonstrations* (ALL) — Demonstrate how to prepare fruit and vegetable cups using various fruits and vegetables. Instructions for preparing the fruit and vegetable cups are included with the recipes found in the Appendix..

#### Dairy



*Milk Mustaches* (ALL) — Invite a milk distributor to be part of the dairy booth. Ask the distributor to donate low-fat and skim milk so participants can taste these products and create their own milk mustaches, as well as develop a fun, interactive activity.

*Milk Display* (ALL) — Contact the district Extension office to obtain the "Where's the Fat?" display for use in this demonstration. Using the fat tubes from the display, participants can learn how much fat is in whole, low-fat, and skim milk. Be sure to

point out actual serving sizes of milk, as shown on the display. (This information is also included on the Food Guide Pyramid that is available in each district Extension office.)

*Osteoporosis Display* (ALL) — To locate an osteoporosis display for use in this booth, check with local hospitals; Women, Infant, and Children offices; clinics; and your Extension office. The Better Living for Texans (BLT) program has a calcium lesson plan (from the *Eat Better to Live Better* curriculum). Engage participants in identifying healthy, strong bones. Stress the importance of consuming adequate amounts of low-fat milk products.

### **Healthy Food Options**

*Modified Food Demonstrations* (ALL) —Demonstrate how to prepare tostadas delgadas, "retried" beans, and cabbage salad. See the Appendix for recipes and a list of ingredients, and/or visit the following website: <u>http://snap.nal.usda.gov/</u>.



clear plastic covers (like the covers used on rectangular sheet cakes purchased in grocery stores). Tape each plastic cover completely to the bottom edge of its tray to prevent fair participants from



handling or eating the food that is on the tray. Have youth volunteers display the healthy fast foods by walking around the fair with the covered trays. They may also distribute the food value information cards provided by the restaurants. This demonstration can also be setup in a booth, with youth or adults exhibiting the displays. (Note: some public facilities do not allow food to be brought into the facility, even if they are not being consumed and/or sold; therefore, before planning for this activity, check with the facility/grounds management and inquire if they permit these types of foods—specify that these displays are only for educational purposes.)

Allow committee members to use their imagination to incorporate other fast food educational activities. It is not uncommon at fast food restaurants to find improved nutritious meals; however, many individuals are not aware of these choices and have never sampled them.

#### Sugar Exhibits (ALL)

In this demonstration, participants will be asked to estimate how much sugar they believe is in the demonstrated items. The actual amounts of sugar will also be displayed to create awareness. Encourage food label reading as part of the hands-on activity.

To set up this exhibit, show the items listed below, or choose any other sugary food item to display. Along with each of these items, also display containers, covered with clear plastic wrap, that contain the exact amount of sugar in the item. (For example, if a cup of cereal contains 4 teaspoons of sugar, display the cup of cereal in a container, and separately display a container with 4 teaspoons of sugar.) To learn how much sugar is in an item, check the label and/or use the following website to convert grams to ounces, teaspoons, tablespoons, or cups: <u>http://www.gourmetsleuth.com/gram\_calc.htm</u>. This website **should not be used** for measuring medicines or anything else that requires **100 percent** 

**accuracy**. The converter chart is based on 229.92 grams per cup and is not accurate enough for medicinal measurements. However, the site is the easiest way convert from grams for our purpose.

Suggested display items include:

- 8, 12, 16, and 32 oz soda cans/bottles
- 1 cup of regular Fruit Loops cereal
- 1 cup of less sugar Fruit Loops cereal
- 1 cup of Frosted Flakes cereal
- 1 cup of less sugar Frosted Flakes cereal
- 1 pitcher of sweetened Kool Aid/tea, etc. as well as a 10-oz and 16-oz glasses of the sweetened beverage
- 1-15-oz can of fruit cocktail packed in its natural juice, light syrup, and heavy syrup

Texas AgriLife Extension Service has a sugar display that could be used as well in conjunction with the above recommended displays.

**Note:** When converting the total number of grams, it must correspond with the actual serving size of the food item. Always multiply the number of serving sizes by the number of sugar grams if you are displaying the amount of sugar for the entire contents or for the grams listed for the serving size you are displaying.

### Fat Exhibits (ALL)

This hands-on activity will allow participants to use some of their five senses. Use a 9-inch plate, divided into quarter increments; label the quarters as A, B, C, and D. Ask participants to place an unsalted saltine cracker in section A, a graham cracker in section B, a Ritz cracker in section C, and a piece of a brownie (about a 1" square-sized piece) in section D. Ask participants to use their four senses to identify which of the four items contains the most fat. They must first see, then feel, then smell, and finally taste each of the individual items. By the end of the exercise, they will know how fat looks, feels, smells, and tastes. The exhibitor should point out to the participants that the brownie in section D left a grease mark. The items in this exercise demonstrate low-fat to high-fat foods. You may also use Texas AgriLife Extension Service's Fat and Butter educational displays.

#### Face Painting (ALL)

Face painting is an excellent way to involve youth volunteers. Youth volunteers can paint healthy nutritional messages and/or fruits and vegetables on children's and/or adult's faces using non-toxic face paints. This exhibit requires small containers of water with covers, small plastic bowls, non-toxic paint, different small-sized paint brushes, towels and/or paper towels, small plastic plates, and mirrors. Ensure that the mirrors used do not have any exposed edges, are broken, etc. — small mirrors with handles are recommended.





#### Salad-in-a-Pot (ALL)

Master Gardeners can plant and grow a Salad-in-a-Pot in advance of the fair and demonstrate it during the fair. Master Gardener volunteers can also demonstrate how participants can grow their own salad-in-a-pot. Participants will receive an instruction card, which is found in the Appendix, and a packet of seeds so they can attempt to grow their own salad-in-a-pot at home. Master Gardeners will need to meet before the fair to pack and label seed packets.

#### What is a Tortilla Portion Size? (ALL)

Participants will try to identify how many tortilla portions are in a burrito-size tortilla. They will also attempt to identify an actual tortilla-size portion and how many grams of fat are in a burrito-size tortilla. They will be introduced to corn tortillas, whole wheat tortillas, and be provided with a modified tortilla recipe that uses applesauce instead of lard/butter/shortening/oil etc. See the Appendix for the modified flour tortilla recipe.

### **Physical Activity Suggestions**

#### Kick-Off Event with a Family Walk (ALL)

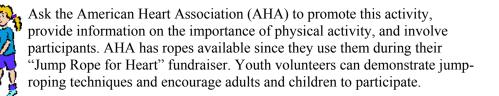
A family walk can be planned and implemented as a kick-off to the fair. (See the Appendix for a sample registration form for the Family Walk.) Walking pedometers could be acquired as giveaways through donations,

sponsors, and supporters; they can be distributed during the walk registration or check-in process on the day of the walk. Advertising free pedometers in promotional brochures and flyers (see sample promotional flyer in the Appendix) can significantly increase the number of participants. Invite schools to participate, and ask them to bring their school banner so they can display it as they walk. Students who participate in the CATCH school programs usually have special t-shirts, which they could wear.

A music walk can also be planned and implemented. The music could be provided by school marching bands or Mariachi bands, for example. The band could be strategically placed at intervals along the walk route, or the band could follow behind the walkers or be positioned at the beginning/end of the route. Bands can also entertain during the fair.

Cheerleaders and pep squad teams could also be asked to participate and cheer their school classmates and parents as they walk by. They could walk with their schools or be strategically placed along the walk route. Additionally, they could be involved in a friendly competition by asking them to develop healthy and positive cheers; the cheers could then be submitted to the Planning/Coordinating Committee to be judged. The committee could award certificates for the top 5–10 cheers (the committee decides how many certificates to award).

#### Jump Rope (ALL)









#### Hula Hoops (ALL)



Youth volunteers can demonstrate how to hula and ask for audience participation. Most YMCAs and recreational departments (city, county, college, university, etc.) have hula hoops; however, if you don't have access to such organizations, check with your local discount stores or other stores, and ask them to donate hula hoops for your event. Requests might need to be in writing.

#### Boom-Box Jam (ALL)

Youth volunteers can play their favorite music and demonstrate fun dance steps and/or body movements (i.e., arms, hands, shoulders) as they walk around the fair. Youth volunteers can also display fun ways to dance to their favorite music either in a booth or on a stage. Youth should be instructed to control the sound level of the music to avoid annoying or offending fair participants.



### **Buzzing Bees (ALL)**

Youth volunteers can demonstrate and lead participants in how to fly and buzz like a bee. As they walk around during the fair, they can recruit participants or just demonstrate the activity.

### Fun in the Gym (C, Y, T, TP)



Volunteers can demonstrate and assist young participants in a variety of physical activities using different sports balls, boxing gloves, jump ropes, and exercise equipment. Ask local aerobics, fitness, or karate experts to provide free hands-on activities, such as beginning step aerobics or information on the benefits of
<sup>(G)</sup> strength training. A large area is required for this exhibit, and many volunteers should be available to assist participants. Rope off the area, and have a designated entrance/exit.

Also, ask an exercise physiologist, sports trainer, or physical therapist to conduct presentations on how to buy appropriate

walking shoes, exercise equipment, choosing the best sports drinks and/or how to make your own sports drinks. Teach participants how to find their target heart rate, how to safely exercise in heat and cold extremes, or how to start a walking club.



### Limbo (ALL)



Have volunteers pair up, and encourage audience participation. This activity can be done in a booth or with the Fun in the Gym activity. Additionally, volunteers can walk around the fair and demonstrate the activity.

### 5-a-Day Jugglers (ALL)

Have youth volunteers who can juggle to juggle plastic fruit and vegetable food models to encourage 5-a-Day fruit and vegetable consumption and to encourage participants to increase their daily physical activity.

### **Clowning Around (ALL)**

If your community has a clown association or club, ask them to volunteer and entertain participants. They can walk around or be at a booth demonstrating fun ways to increase physical activity, such as hopping, jumping, and skipping.

#### **CATCH Physical Activity Performances (ALL)**

Schools that participate in the CATCH program can be asked to demonstrate physical activities as a stage performance for the audience. Check with the program administrator in advance to schedule the students. Also ask them to participate in the walk.

### **Develop a Scavenger Hunt Form**

A good way to help participants visit each booth is by developing a scavenger hunt form that keeps them involved in the fair. A sample scavenger hunt form, which may be modified to meet your needs, is found in the Appendix, or you may want make a list of questions that can only be answered at specific booths. (You may also wish to use this form to collect information about participants for use in the final process of evaluating the fair. More information about this process is provided in

the section that follows.) Provide each exhibitor with a rubber stamp (or ask the exhibitor to initial the form) to mark the scavenger hunt form when participants take part in an activity at that booth. You may tell the participants at which booths they can find the answers, or you may want to let participants find out for themselves. Ask participants to redeem their completed scavenger hunt forms for a door prize, which will be drawn at the end of the day. Of course, not all fairs are the same, and the planned activities will vary; however, here are some sample questions you might ask on your scavenger hunt form:

- What is the correct method to contact emergency services? (Call 911)
- If you're out in the sun, you should consider wearing a \_\_\_\_\_. (Hat)
- A properly fitted \_\_\_\_\_\_ should be worn every time you ride your bicycle. (Helmet)
- Posture is important. True/False (True)
- Children and teenagers should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity on five or more days a week. True/False (True)
- Does walking count as physical activity? (Yes)
- What are some ways to control diabetes? (Diet, exercise, education, and medications)
- House and yard work do not count as physical activity. True/False (False)



# **Evaluating the Nutrition and Physical Activity Fair**

# **Participant Evaluations**

It is very challenging to collect data from fair participants; therefore, you may wish to use the scavenger hunt form to collect that information, in addition to using it to involve participants in the fair. The Appendix includes a sample scavenger hunt form; however, your Planning Committee may want to change the form to meet needs and goals of your fair. (You may also want to use the back of the scavenger hunt form to promote activities, presentations, food demonstrations, and workshops that are going on during the fair.)

Participant evaluations can be distributed as participants register or sign in, and the completed forms can be placed in a well-marked and located box as they leave the fair. Another option is to have tables at the entrance and exit areas; distribute the forms there, and ask people to complete the forms before leaving. Or, have volunteers interview people as they are leaving the fair to gather evaluation data.

As an incentive for participants to complete the evaluation form, they could be entered into a drawing for a door prize when they complete the form and provide their name and phone number on it. If desired, the participant's name and phone number could be at the bottom of the form so it could be cut off and placed in a box for the drawing; the scavenger hunt form that will be used for final evaluation purposes could then be collected and kept separately.

Another option is to mail evaluation forms or call a sample of registrants after the fair. Be sure you have collected addresses and phone numbers as people sign in if you choose this evaluation method. Mailing evaluation forms is not likely to have a high return percentage—expect between 10–20 percent of the participants to return the evaluation, at best. Volunteers could help with this evaluation effort.

## **Exhibitor Evaluations**

It is also challenging to collect data from exhibitors because they are very busy during the fair. If you would like to survey the exhibitors, download and modify the Exhibitor's Evaluation form from the Health Fair Planning Guide at: <u>http://fcs.tamu.edu/health/health fair planning guide/index.php</u>. The Planning/Coordinating Committee should decide if they want to impose this type of evaluation request on the exhibitors during the fair. If so, exhibitor evaluations could be distributed near the end of the day at the fair and the completed forms deposited in a box as the exhibitors leave. (To make the exhibitors' evaluation forms easy to distinguish from the participants' evaluation forms, print the forms on two different colors of paper.) Other options for surveying the exhibitors include: an on-line post-evaluation; mail an evaluation form to exhibitors; interview exhibitors as they leave; or conduct a telephone survey with exhibitors a few days after the fair.

#### Texas AgriLife Extension Service