**YOGA AND SCHOOL CONCERNS** (Posted 8/27/2013)

There are 5 health-related components of physical fitness:  Muscular Strength, Cardiovascular Endurance, Muscular Endurance, Flexibility, and Body Composition.  It is the job of a school’s Physical Educator to make sure that students are meeting standards for these fitness components.  Yoga, a physical activity that focuses on a combination of posture and breathing techniques, has reported both increases in flexibility, muscular strength, and muscular endurance, in both children and adults.  Not only can a wide range of age groups participate in yoga and benefit. The non-competitive nature and wide variety of poses from easier to harder make it an appropriate activity for any fitness level.

Nevertheless, Yoga is also an activity that can be tied heavily with spirituality and religion.  This connection makes yoga a controversial activity for schools.  Some parents with certain religious beliefs might not feel comfortable having their children participate, feeling that spirituality or religious connections might conflict with what they believe in.  Additional problems arise from the possibility of students losing participation points as a result of not participating in the activity, and the student’s overall grade in the class will have limited potential.

In my opinion, I feel that physical education and other programs involving physical activity would benefit from a yoga program as long as two key points are covered.  The first is to establish the goals and expectations of the program and how the yoga exercises are going to allow students to achieve those goals.  Make sure the goals and expectations mention nothing about religion or how spirituality can be tied to the exercises in the program.  The reason for this is that the physics and physiological concepts of the breathing and postures are being used to achieve program goals, NOT religion and spirituality.  The second key point is to make sure to have papers that parents can sign if they don’t feel comfortable with their children participating in any yoga activities.  These papers should mention that students will not lose participation points from not participating in yoga as long as the students agree to participate in an alternate physical activity of the educator’s choosing, such as static or ballistic stretching.

**Eating As Healthy As Possible at the State Fair**

(Posted 8/20/2013)

Let's face it-there are 365 days in a year and not every one of those days does a person go to the State Fair. There is too much food that is too good to pass up, regardless of whether or not it is considered 'healthy.' While one cheat day at the state fair isn't going to cause a person to become overweight or develop chronic health problems, it might extend the amount of time it takes for a person to achieve fitness goals such as losing weight or decreasing body fat. People who don't have such fitness goals can still suffer from eating too poor on fair day by becoming dehydrated, constipated, etc.

I've listed several 'healthier' food options for the state fair including where to find them and approximate costs. I've also listed some tips to get the most out of your day at the fair without having those fatty foods foil your fun.

Water

Water is essential for all humans to survive.  A person should drink at least eight 8 oz. servings of water each day, and more in high temperature.

**Where to find it:**  Any restroom with a drinking fountain and the majority of food stands and restaraunts

**Cost:**  Free-$2

Corn on the Cob

Corn generally has a low amount of calories, and usually only break 100 calories when butter is added.  The trick is to avoid smothering the cob with giant blocks of butter, and going easy when adding salt as well.

**Where to find it:** The 'Corn Roast' close to the Grandstand, at the corner of Nelson St. and Dan Patch Ave.

**Approx. Cost:** Unknown

Salmon Wrap

Not only is the salmon an excellent source of protein and Omega-3s, but the whole-wheat wrap will allow you to avoid any gassy or bloating sensations a person can get from eating too much dough.

**Where to find it:** 'Giggles' on Cooper St. & Lee Ave. in The North Woods

**Approx. Cost:** $6.50

Chicken Taco Boat

This is an excellent treat for all those 'gluten free' fans.  It is also only one of the options off of an entire 'gluten free' menu at Tejas Express.

**Where to find it:** Tejas Express in the Crossroads Building.

**Approx. Cost:**  $6

Milk

If you need to wash down food with something thicker than water, consider dropping by the 'All You Can Drink Milk Stand.'  For only a buck, you can get a healthy dose of calcium to go with your meal and keep your wallet full.

**Where to find it:** North side of Judson Ave between Clough St and Nelson St

**Approx. Cost:**  $1

**General Tips:**

**Balance Diuretics with Water**

Diuretics increase urination and reduce the amount of water in the body.  Two common diuretics are alcohol and caffine.  To avoid losing to much water and becoming dehydrated, be sure to drink at least 8 oz. of water in between beverages containing alcohol and caffine.

**Eat Enough Fiber Beforehand**

The week before the fair, don't forget to eat your fruits and vegetables, because the high fiber in these foods absorb water for the body's digestive tract to use and get rid of solid waste.  Fods high in fat and sugar prevent water in the digestive tract from being absorbed and used, making it harder to get rid of waste products.  So don't neglect fruits, veggies, and whole grains-you'll thank me!

**Avoid the Sodium and Sugar Chain**

Foods that are high in sodium and sugar cause the cells in the body to get rid of their own water to maintain chemical balance.  This is followed by the cells sending 'thirst' signals to the brain demanding more water.  If washing down french fries or cotton candy with a large coke, don't be surprised if you get thirsty.  At the same time, don't try to quench the thirst with more soda or alcohol because that won't make the thirst go away.