

NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

By Mitchell Spchell

Once upon a time there was a family of three bears. Each morning, Mama Bear would make her family a breakfast of pancakes with butter and syrup, chocolate cake, and Mountain Dew. It was not a really nutritious breakfast, so one morning the bear family decided to go for a walk to burn off some calories while their breakfast cooled.

Living nearby was a naughty little girl named Goldilocks. On the morning of the bear's walk, Goldilocks was wandering through the woods and spotted the bear's breakfast through their window. Being very hungry, she decided to go in and help herself. After trying Papa Bear's large plate of breakfast (too hot!) and Mama Bear's (too cold!), she ate every bit of Baby Bear's breakfast. But after devouring the whole plate, she felt like she had to lie down for a nap. That breakfast had made her extremely tired. When the three bears returned from their walk, they were surprised to find the girl asleep in Baby Bear's bed. She soon woke up and ran from their house, never to be seen again!

Poor Goldilocks! She had gotten so tired after breakfast. One sure way she could have gotten more energy was by eating a more nutritious meal. We should all eat foods that are high in fiber like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans, which aid in digestion and help lower bad cholesterol levels. Eating foods that are high in protein, like lean meats help keep our muscles healthy. Other important proteins are fish and nuts, because they also contain the more healthy fats our body needs for normal cell production. Dairy products made with less fat, like skim milk and low fat yogurt are important sources of calcium which we need for strong bones. The main reason we should eat is to provide our body with energy to grow and be active. Goldilock's breakfast was full of simple sugars and chemicals which provided her with little nutrition, so she felt really tired.

In addition to good nutrition, exercise also helps keep us healthy. Regular exercise helps control appetite and burns off calories to help us lose weight or maintain a healthy weight. Being inactive is a major risk factor for the development of diseases, such as obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, depression, the inability to sleep, and some cancers. Even as little as thirty minutes of moderate exercise a day can decrease our chances of developing one of these diseases.

Exercise that speed up our heart rates and breathing help build a strong heart. Activities that improve strength and flexibility help maintain strong bones and muscles. There are many ways to ad exercise to our daily routines. It can be as simple as riding a bike to school or work instead of driving or mowing the lawn with a push mower instead of a riding mower. Some people like to jog, swim, bike, golf, play basketball, dance, do yoga, or lift weights. There are so many ways to just get one's body moving.

It is really important for all of us to try to be as healthy as we can be. There are many diseases which can be prevented by adding proper nutrition and exercise to our daily lives. By preventing these diseases, we can decrease the cost of health care to everyone. So do your part and make good nutrition and exercise part of your life.