Colorado State University Cooperative Extension programs are helping Coloradans

- improve nutrition habits and reduce disease risks,
- focus on healthy nutrition and lifestyle habits that help maintain optimum body weight,
- reduce dietary fat, prevent high blood pressure and reduce risk for heart disease.

**The Costs...**

- About 61.8 million Americans live with some form of cardiovascular disease; it’s the No.-1 killer of men and women, 950,000 deaths every year. In 2003 Americans will pay about $352 billion for cardiovascular-related medical costs and disability. Economic costs of a stroke range from $90,000 to $228,000 over a patient’s lifespan.
- An estimated 800,000 Coloradans have some form of heart disease, stroke or related risk factor. Heart disease—the No.1 cause of death, and stroke—the No.-3 killer, account for nearly 40% of deaths in the state each year—more deaths than AIDS, cancer and injuries combined.
- Estimated expenditures related to coronary heart disease in Colorado total $2.5 billion per year, or over $6.9 million each day.
- Data show that more than 50% of U.S. adults are overweight and 1 in 5 are obese; overweight and obesity contribute to diabetes, cholesterol disorders and high blood pressure. Each year an estimated 300,000 U.S. adults die of causes related to obesity with an annual cost of more than $90 billion.
- Diabetes impacts 17 million Americans. In Colorado, the number of adult cases rose by 50% between 1994 & 2000 affecting both sexes, all ages & all ethnic groups.

**Improving Colorado’s Nutrition & Health**

Nutrition plays a vital role in overall health. In fact, research has found that diet is associated with the leading causes of death, many of which are preventable—heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and several types of cancer. Cardiovascular diseases and cancer together account for almost two-thirds of all deaths in the United States. Many Americans are still challenged by how to plan a nutritious diet and create a healthy lifestyle. They continue to consume more than the recommended levels of fat and less than the suggested amounts of fruits and vegetables. Recent data indicate only 26% of Colorado adults and 32% of high school students consume the recommended level of five or more fruits and vegetables a day. A large percentage of the U.S. population also continues to have difficulty balancing energy intakes with expenditures. The importance of physical activity in achieving energy balance is highlighted in the Surgeon General’s Report on Physical Activity and Health, yet the Centers for Disease Control estimate that 21.3% of Coloradans are sedentary and have no leisure-time physical activity.

Most health and disease risk factors can be changed, treated or modified to lower risk through dietary or lifestyle modifications. But despite the importance of diet and exercise, many Americans fail to achieve dietary practices that lower the risk of disease. Cooperative Extension puts a high priority on nutrition education for all populations to improve diet and health, and prevent disease.

Colorado State University Cooperative Extension puts a high priority on nutrition education that helps citizens lower risk for disease and improve lifestyle habits.
Healthy food habits prevent heart disease and stroke, and reduce health care costs. Every person who prevents heart disease and avoids coronary bypass surgery through changed nutrition and dietary habits saves approximately $50,000 in hospital & surgery costs. To treat heart disease, more than a half million coronary bypass operations are performed in the U.S. each year at a cost of $10-$25 billion. The key to reducing heart failure is reducing risk through lifestyle modifications--stopping smoking, eating a low-fat, low-cholesterol diet, being physically active--and using effective medications. For every 100 people who make dietary changes through Extension education to prevent heart disease and coronary surgery, the savings in health care costs could be $5,000,000. (American Heart Association, 2002; Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality, 2002)

• Data from the National Health Interview Survey show that more than 50% of U.S. adults are overweight and 1 in 5 adults are obese. Overweight and obesity are risk factors for a variety of chronic health conditions, including cardiovascular disease, hypertension and diabetes. Cooperative Extension programs that focus on “Healthy Hearts” teach consumers improved nutrition habits including how to reduce saturated fat in the diet—an intervention that the American Dietetic Association said could prevent thousands of cases of coronary heart disease and save billions of dollars in health costs. Last year, 84% of the 4,268 participants in Extension nutrition programs reported an increase in knowledge of nutrition and disease prevention; recent data showed 61% of those surveyed increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, 56% reported eating less dietary fat, and 26% reported reduced high blood pressure.

• A diabetes epidemic in Colorado has created challenges for patients to receive the support and education they need to manage their disease. Cooperative Extension collaborated with the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment—Diabetes Control Program to offer Dining With Diabetes to help diabetics and their families learn ways to control blood sugar through diet and exercise. Results from 14 communities showed improvements in knowledge, attitudes and behavior in pre- and post-tests including a 15% increase in overall knowledge of healthful food choices, a 10% increase in self-confidence to control carbohydrates, and increases in knowledge of how to use food labels, modify recipes and prepare healthy meals. One 300-pound disabled participant reported a drop in blood sugar from 150 to 80 after diet changes—significant progress toward managing his diabetes. A community-wide program in Gunnison County also offered glucose screening, blood pressure checks and referrals to health care providers.