

# The Clover Cat Way to Wellness:

## Advanced

Welcome  
to the Clover Cat  
Way to Wellness  
Advanced Level.



Welcome to the Clover Cat Way to Wellness! Have you heard of wellness? Wellness can help you to have balance, health, and happiness in your life.

### What Does Wellness Mean to You?

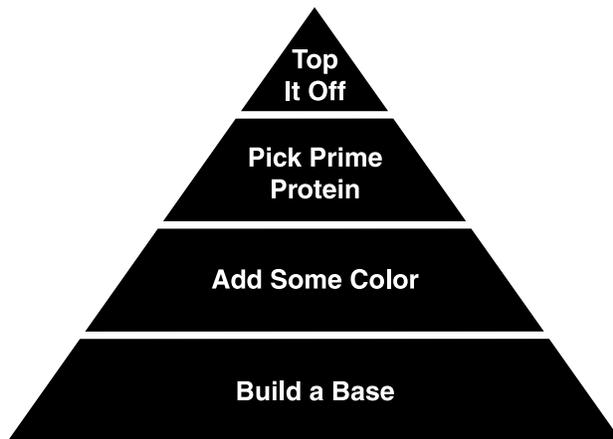
- Freedom from disease.
- Feeling good.
- Improving health.
- Keeping in shape.
- Being stress free.
- Being your best.

The Clover Cat Way to Wellness is a personal approach to better health. It is designed to help you find better ways to take care of yourself and your community. The program will show you how to take steps to improve your diet, your activity level, and your well-being. The Clover Cat Way to Wellness will help you learn about CATSkills.

### The CATSkills are:

- Choose foods for a healthy diet.
- Activate your life.
- Take time to be well.

So, how can you find the way to wellness? This program will help you learn how you can take steps to improve health.



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## **Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Choose Foods for a Healthy Diet**

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Let's start with some background information on nutrition and teens. An architect designs buildings and works closely with the building contractor to make sure all the supplies and workers arrive on time and in the proper sequence to build the building. What happens when there's a shortage of drywall or the electricians don't arrive? Everything slows down, and the project may even grind to a halt. In a sense, you are the architect. The building you are designing and constructing is your body, and all the supplies are the nutrients from the food you eat. As a teen, you are still growing and still under construction. The quality of those supplies affects what shape that building will be in now and in the future. So, what do teens need to know about nutrition and food choices to be healthy?

### **Too Many Teens Weigh Too Much**

Many teens are overweight. The percentage of overweight teens has tripled in the last two decades, and the numbers are increasing. Being overweight increases your

chance of developing diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Teens today live in a world of computers, TVs, and fast food. In this environment, it takes special skills to maintain a healthy weight.

### **Eating Disorders**

Some teenagers think they are overweight when they are not. Signs of eating disorders include severe food restrictions, obsessions with food or weight, and/or excessive physical exercise. Eating disorders can be serious if they are not treated and can even lead to death. If you or someone you know have these signs, you should seek help from a family member and a health professional.

### **Weight Balance**

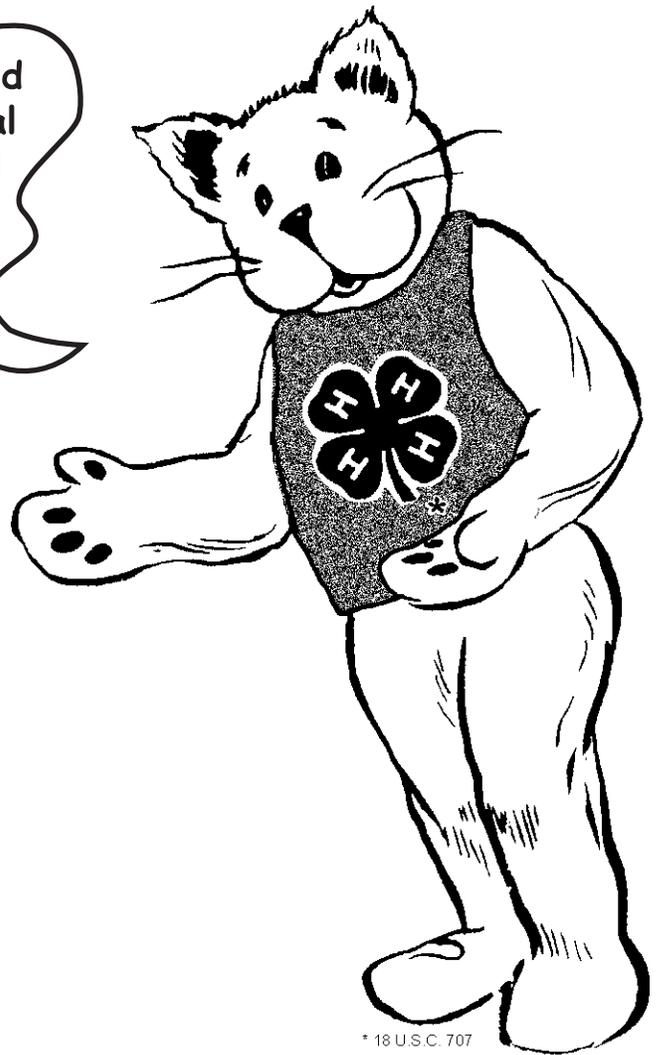
Weight is a balance between energy intake and energy output. Weight is influenced by many factors, including age and gender. Some other factors that influence energy intake are:

- The types of food you eat (low-fat or high-fat foods).
- Where you eat (at home or in a restaurant).
- How much you eat.
- Who you are with.
- Why you are eating (bored, stressed, studying, etc.).

You spend energy whenever you do physical activity. Physical activity can be influenced by:

- Your lifestyle.
- Hobbies.
- Jobs or chores.

If you need to lose weight, avoid fad diets or starvation. For real success, increase your physical activity and eat a balanced healthy diet with sensible portions of food.



## **If You Need to Lose Weight**

If you need to lose weight, avoid fad diets or starvation. Diets set you up for a cycle of success and failure. Weight loss pills, supplements, and special teas are not a good idea. Many are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA); therefore, they are not proven to be safe or effective.

So, if you need to lose weight, you should balance both energy intake and energy output. This happens through regular physical activity and healthy, sensible portions of food. It is a good idea to talk to your doctor or a registered dietitian first.

## **Nutrition**

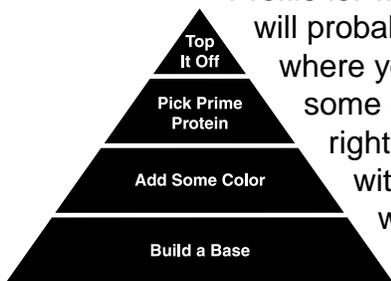
Not getting enough nutrients can affect:

- How you look:
  - Dry, flaky skin.
  - Brittle hair.
  - Split nails.
- How you feel:
  - Tired.
  - Run down.
  - Headaches.
- How you think:
  - Trouble concentrating.

## Cooking with Pyramid Power

Did you know that people who prepare foods at home are more likely to eat a healthy diet than those who eat out all the time? It's true. Learning how to select and cook foods for good health now will serve you well throughout your life.

You will complete a Personal Pyramid Profile for what you eat. You will probably discover where you can make some changes that are right for you. Cooking with Pyramid Power will show you how.



## Reshaping Your Diet

If you are a typical teen, you are eating too few foods from the base and middle of the Pyramid and too many foods from the tip, making it easy to become “tip heavy.” A diet for good health has more balance and better proportion—it’s in the shape of a pyramid. To reshape your diet, the Clover Cat Way to Wellness offers this guide below.

### Build a Base

Most of the base of the pyramid is made from grains. Grains are foods made from seeds of the grass family. Grains include rice, wheat, barley, oats, rye, durum, and corn.

Building a good foundation is the key to eating with Pyramid Power. You can build a solid base with good sandwich bread, cornbread, muffins, bagels, and tortillas. You can add hearty soups and salads to that base. Foods with the layered look, such as pizza and pasta, that build on a carbohydrate base are not only healthy but also reflect our taste for ethnic flavors and convenient one-dish meals.

### What Is a “Build a Base” Serving?

- One slice of bread or half a hamburger bun. (A sandwich counts as two servings.)
- 1/2 cup of cooked pasta or rice.
- 3/4 cup of breakfast cereal.
- 4 crackers.
- 1 4-inch pancake.
- 1 6-inch tortilla.
- Half a bagel or English muffin.

## Add Some Color

One of the easiest ways to shape up your diet is to add more fruits and vegetables. Think of it as adding some color to your diet.

## Five-a-Day

Five servings of fruits and vegetables a day is the guideline for better health. Try taking fruits and vegetables in your lunch, choose them in the cafeteria, or keep them around for snacking. You can keep a bowl of favorite fruits on the counter, such as apples, bananas, and oranges, and take a piece of fruit with you when you leave for the day. Use salsa to add color, flavor, and nutrition to eggs, cheese, and potatoes. Add some color to a pizza using vegetables. For extra nutrition, add fruits and vegetables to desserts, treats, breads, and other baked goods.

Fruits and vegetables are loaded with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants. Antioxidants are compounds that may help fight some diseases, such as heart disease and cancer.

**What Is a  
“Five-a-Day” Serving?**

- Half a banana or grapefruit.
- A medium apple, orange, or peach.
- 1 cup strawberries.
- 3/4 cup of 100 percent juice.
- 1 cup raw, leafy vegetables (spinach, cabbage, lettuce).
- 1/2 cup cooked vegetables (broccoli, carrots, cauliflower).

Teens need at least three to five servings of vegetables and two to three servings of fruit each day. How many are you eating now?

**Pick Prime Protein**

Prime protein picks are those that are lower in fat. You'll need two to three servings of low-fat dairy foods, such as milk, yogurt, and cottage cheese. Try using dairy products in cooking and baking to add extra nutrition. Lean beef, chicken, pork, and turkey make good ingredients for healthy dishes and as sandwich fillings. Eggs are another good lean source of high-quality protein. Dried beans and peas are also prime protein picks.

Protein is important for cell growth and repair. Meats are good sources of iron and zinc. Iron is an important part of hemoglobin, which carries oxygen in your blood. Zinc is used for growth and repair of body tissues.

**A Word on Calcium**

Dairy foods are high in protein and in calcium. Do you know that 80 percent of girls and 50 percent of boys do not get enough calcium? Calcium is essential in building and maintaining strong bones. People who do not get enough calcium are

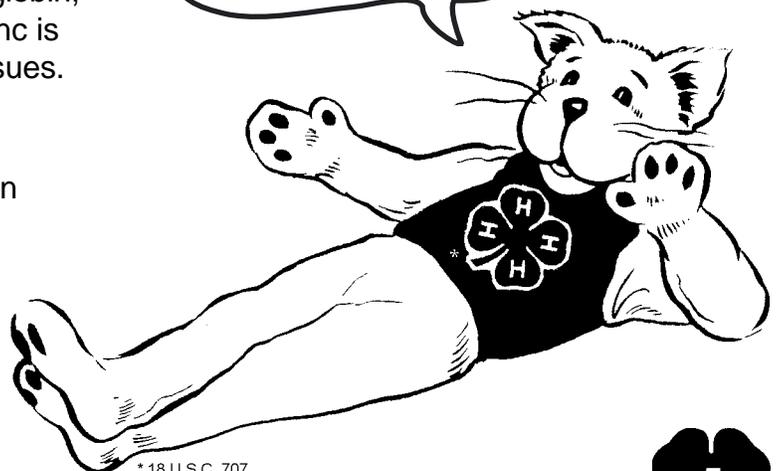
**What Is a  
“Prime Protein” Serving?**

- 1 cup of skim milk or yogurt.
- 1 to 2 ounces of low-fat cheese.
- 2 to 3 ounces of lean meat, poultry, or fish (the size of a deck of cards).
- 4 ounces of soy food.
- 1 egg.
- 1/2 cup of cooked beans or lentils.

at risk of developing osteoporosis later in life. This is a condition in which the bones become weak and brittle. Often people suffer fractures and pain. Calcium may also help prevent certain cancers and reduce risk of cardiovascular disease.

Even more important to some teens, new research suggests that dairy foods can help you reach a healthy weight. So, how can you get enough calcium? Milk, yogurt, and cheese are all good sources of calcium. You can also find calcium in broccoli, calcium-fortified orange juice and cereal bars, and fortified soy milk and soy cheese.

Protein helps your body grow and develop.

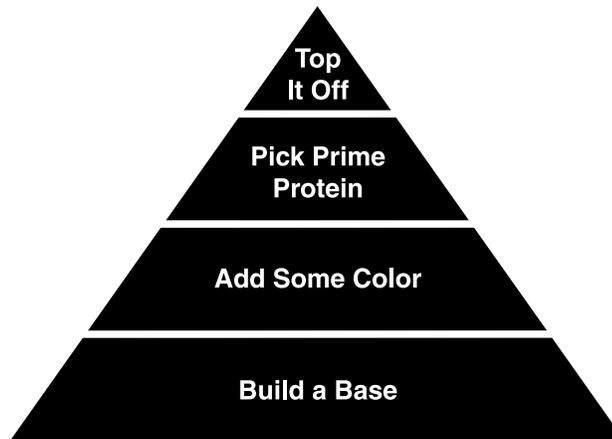


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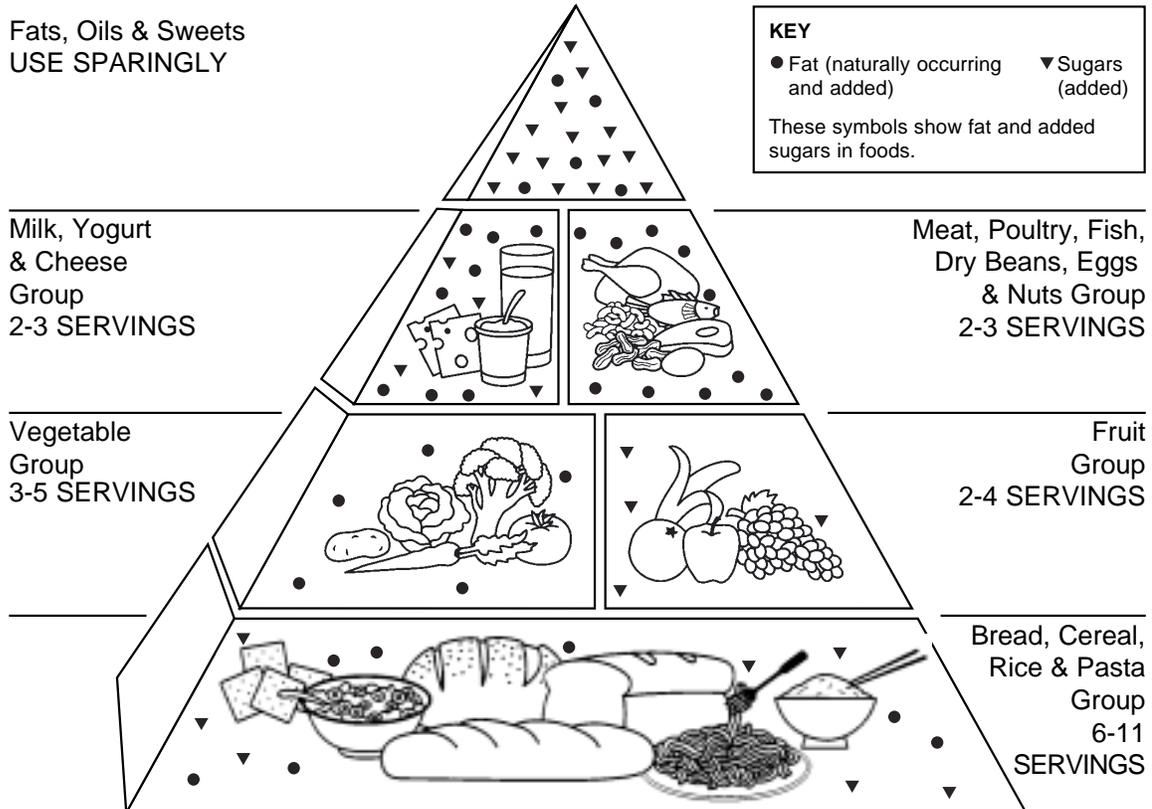


*The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Choose Foods for a Healthy Diet*

**Clover Cat Food Pyramid**



**U.S.D.A. Food Guide Pyramid**  
 United States Department of Agriculture

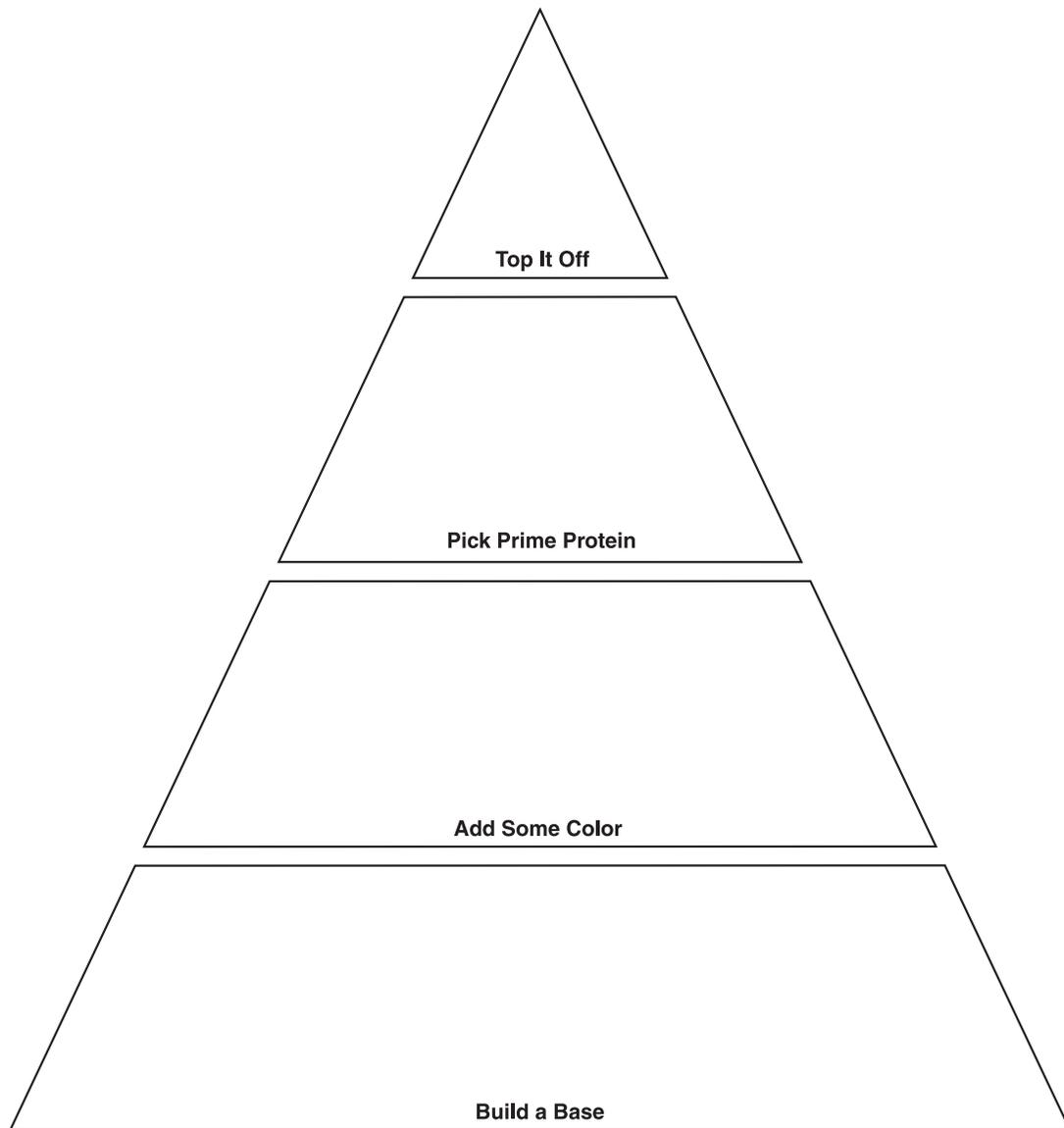


***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Choose Foods for a Healthy Diet***

**Activity**

Write down everything you ate yesterday, including beverages. Try to estimate food amounts. Complete the Personal Pyramid Profile. Use the Food Guide Pyramid and the portion size reference sheet to help you. Compare your Personal Pyramid Profile with the Food Guide Pyramid. Did you eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables? Did you eat any whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, and brown rice? How much fat and sugar (the tip of the pyramid) did you have? What can you do to improve your pyramid profile?

**CLOVER CAT PERSONAL PYRAMID PROFILE**  
"What do you eat?"



## Top It Off

Most of us are looking for ways to make fewer calories deliver more nutrition, and you should look for recipes and foods that help you trim the tip of your pyramid. Sometimes, however, you may need to use a little of the real thing. Try to add flavor to foods and “top it off” with fewer calories. Here are some tips for cooking with Pyramid Power—adding flavor without too much fat or added sugar:

- For some foods, such as cheese or salad dressings, try reduced-fat instead of fat-free products. You may want to try using a ratio of two-thirds reduced-fat product to one-third regular product.
- Try using one-third less sugar in your recipes.
- Make your sweet treats count. Cook with fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy ingredients in muffins and in desserts, such as banana cream pie or sweet potato pie.

## Too Much Fat and Sugar?

Of the calories consumed in a day, about 15 percent are from added sugars. What do you think is the main source of sugar in the diet? The largest source is non-diet soft drinks. Other foods include sugars/sweets (such as table sugar, candy, and jams), cakes, cookies, and fruit-ade beverages. The top sources of fat in the United States are beef, non-skim milk, cheese, margarine, and bread-like foods (cakes, cookies, and donuts).

These foods should be eaten only in moderation because they are high in calories but low in nutrients.

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## Other Tips for a Healthy Diet

- It takes a lot of fluid to get most of us through the day, so make your beverage choice part of the way to wellness. Try to drink both milk and orange juice. Both are packed with good nutrition, and without them, it may be hard to get enough calcium, folate, vitamin C, and vitamin A. Most of us could use a lot more of these nutrients in our diets, so drink up.
  - Find dishes you like and rely on these favorites like old friends. Everyday cooking need not be by the book. Cooking without recipes means less measuring and more time saved. Try some new dishes, too. Newspapers, magazines, and advertisements are good places to get ideas.
  - Let fresh produce be your inspiration for seasonal dishes for everyday eating, holiday meals, and other special occasions. Cooking with Pyramid Power is an all-year way of eating.
  - Eat breakfast. If you can't eat before you leave in the morning, take something with you, such as a breakfast bar, bagel, yogurt, or fruit and milk.
  - Try not to eat out very often. Eating right is easier when you control the menu. Pack your lunch instead of eating fast food. Make a pizza instead of ordering one. You'll save money and travel farther down the road to wellness by being your own chef.
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***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Choose Foods for a Healthy Diet***

***Activity***

Look at your completed Pyramid Profile. On a separate piece of paper, write down ideas to improve your pyramid. Do you have too few fruits or vegetables? If so, think of fruits and vegetables you like. Where can you add them in your day? Can you bring them for lunch or have them as an afternoon snack? Do you have a lot of foods with high amounts of sugar or fat? What other foods can you eat instead? Can you add more dairy foods? Make a list of possible changes. Pick one or two changes and try to make the changes for three days during the next week. Report back to the class on how easy or hard it was to make changes. Why?



## Shopping the Clover Cat Wellness Way

Do you go to the grocery with your family or friends? Have you ever done the shopping for your family? Have you ever thought about shopping for groceries for yourself once you graduate from high school? Do you help with the cooking? Do you prepare some meals on your own?

### ***“Build a Base” Shopping Ideas***

Look for these foods to build a base:

- Rice and pasta dishes.
- Pizza crust.
- Grits and oats.
- Hearty sandwich bread.
- Reduced-fat baking mix.
- Muffin mix.
- Cornmeal mix.
- Ready-to-eat cereals.

Look for products that offer both convenience and good value.

### ***“Add Some Color” When Shopping***

Buy some colorful fruits and vegetables—fresh, frozen, or canned.

- Canned beans.
- Canned vegetables and tomato products.
- Applesauce.
- Orange juice.
- Fresh vegetables to keep on hand:
  - Celery.
  - Onions.
  - Cabbage.
  - Carrots.
  - Potatoes.
- Fresh fruit to keep on hand:
  - Apples.
  - Oranges.
  - Bananas.

## ***Pick “Prime Protein” When Shopping***

- Pick up a variety of low-fat dairy products, such as:
  - Milk (skim, 1/2 percent, or 1 percent) for drinking, cereal, and cooking.
  - Cheeses, such as part-skim mozzarella, for pizza.
  - Low-fat cottage cheese for lasagna, tuna salad, or on a tomato.
  - Yogurt for a quick breakfast.
- Keep eggs on hand for baking and for quick meals, such as omelets. Look for good value in lean meats to put in one-dish meals.
- Have a supply of sandwich fillings:
  - Peanut butter.
  - Pimiento cheese.
  - Tuna salad.
  - Egg salad.

With sandwich fillings, a little goes a long way.

### ***“Top It Off” Shopping Ideas***

- Buy flavorful fats and oils that help you avoid being “tip heavy,” such as:
  - Low-fat and reduced-fat salad dressings.
  - Flavored vinegars, such as apple cider vinegar.
  - Cooking sprays flavored with garlic, lemon, or olive oil.
  - Cheeses, such as bleu, feta, Gouda, and cheddar.
  - Sugar, brown sugar, and honey to add flavor.
  - Garlic powder, oregano, chili powder, cinnamon, or nutmeg to add flavor without adding calories.

## Taco Pizza

### Cornmeal Pizza Crust:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1 package fast-rising yeast
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 cup very hot water (but not boiling)

Combine 1/2 cup of flour, cornmeal, yeast, and sugar in a medium bowl. Add hot water, stirring until smooth. Mix in enough of the remaining 1/2 cup of flour to make a soft dough.

Knead dough on floured surface until smooth and elastic, 3 to 5 minutes. Cover dough with a bowl; let stand for 15 minutes before using.

### Topping:

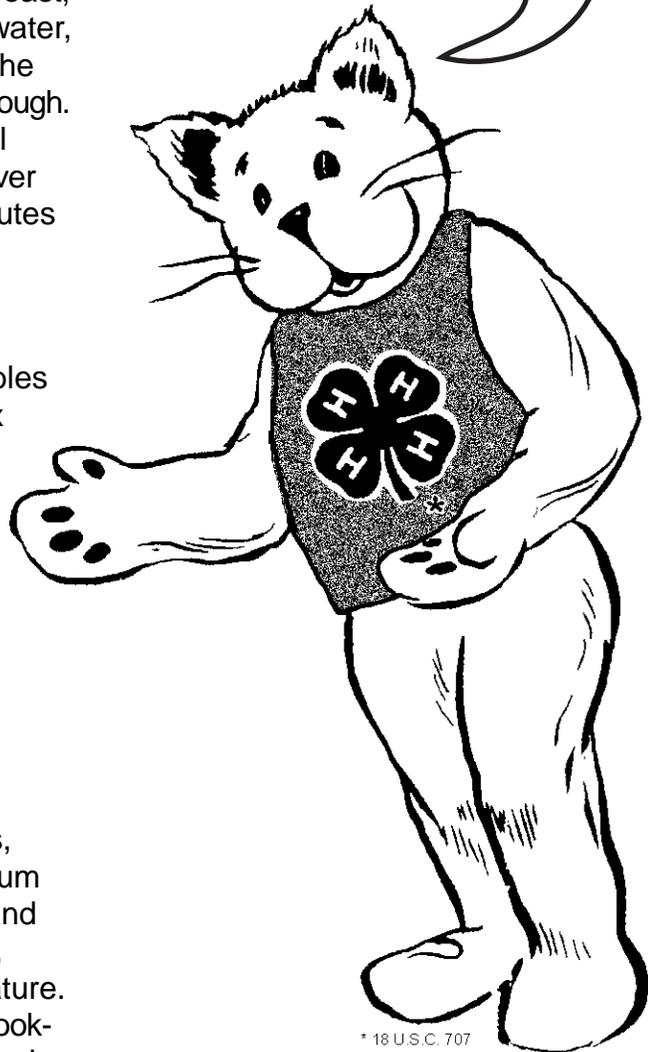
- 1/3 package (12-ounce size) pre-browned vegetable protein crumbles
- 1 to 2 teaspoons taco seasoning mix
- 2/3 cup of water
- Cooking spray
- Cornmeal Pizza Crust dough
- 1/2 cup low-fat cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 green pepper
- 1 cup chopped lettuce or spinach
- 1/2 cup chopped tomato
- 6 tablespoons of low-fat sour cream
- 6 tablespoons of salsa

Combine vegetable protein crumbles, taco seasoning mix, and water in medium saucepan. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, until mixture is dry, about 5 minutes. Cool to room temperature.

Spray pizza pan or cookie sheet with cooking spray. Spread dough on pan, making a rim around the edge. Sprinkle dough with vegetable crumbles, cheese, and green pepper.

Bake pizza at 425° until crust is browned, 15 to 20 minutes. Sprinkle with lettuce or spinach and tomato and serve with sour cream and salsa.

You can usually alter a recipe to fit your tastes. Are there other vegetables you would like to add to the pizza?



***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Choose Foods for a Healthy Diet***

**Activity**

Make a grocery list for the Taco Pizza recipe. Think about the ingredients you already have at home. How many different grocery stores are there in your area? Is there a farmers' market where you can buy seasonal fresh produce? What would you need to buy? After you have made your list, put the items in the correct areas of the pyramid grocery list.

**Activity Worksheet**

1. How many grocery stores are there in your area?
2. Is there a farmers' market?
3. What do you need to buy?

**Cooking with Pyramid Power: Grocery List**

Build a Base

Add Some Color

Pick Prime Protein

Top It Off





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## **Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Activate Your Life**

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Try to work in more activity throughout your day, making time to enjoy nature on a regular basis and becoming stronger in muscles, heart, and mind. Activity you can live with will help you feel better and get more done.

New research reveals some very good news. You can improve your health significantly by working just a few minutes of activity into your daily routine. Even fidgeting seems to help people stay fit. Now you can garden, take nature walks, or make housework your workout and know that any activity is good for your health.

### **Activate Your Life**

Most of us don't need to be as physically active as our ancestors were in order to accomplish our daily duties. Appliances, grocery stores, and cars help us have more time to do what we want to do. Look at your Personal Pyramid Profile for what you do to determine how active you are. Start by considering how active you are around the house, at school, and during your free time. Do you regularly go up and down stairs,

carry laundry, or run the sweeper? Household duties or activities during the day can help keep you in shape. Think about how you get to school or friends' houses. Could you walk or ride a bike?

### **Walk a While**

Walking is probably the most popular form of fitness because you can do other things while you walk. Do you need some quiet time by yourself? Walking can give you something most of us need—time to think. Would you like to listen to some music? Walking is ideal for enjoying some tunes. Is there something you need to talk over with someone? Do it over a walk. Is there a friend or neighbor you'd like to see more often? Schedule a regular time to walk.

On the weekends, make time to get out and enjoy nature. State parks are among the places we can go to see nature at its best. Walking is good for your health, both mind and body.

### **Build Some Strength**

Building and keeping strong muscles and bones is important for people of all ages and sizes. We also need good aerobic fitness to be able to enjoy life to the fullest. If you have been inactive, you might want to start with something you can do in front of the television or when you wake up, such as a body awareness routine, including stretching and toning. Use of weight-resistance equipment (like weight machines or hand weights) can help you maintain bone strength and muscle mass. But you don't need special equipment; you can use canned goods as hand weights.

## Activity Breaks

Do you do homework at a desk or computer? Do you watch television or read books? If so, you might be able to work activity breaks into your routine. A good goal is to not sit still for more than 30 minutes at a time. Try to stretch or walk for a few minutes at least twice an hour. Give yourself a break.

Look at your Personal Pyramid Profile at the activities for what you do. Think about what you do and what activities you could do that might help you on your way to wellness.

## Keep Moving

Did you know that physical activity tends to decrease as you get older? The biggest decline is often seen in the late teen and early adult years. Young people today have more activities to choose from than ever before, from television to computers to video games. Unfortunately, physical activity is often left out of the mix. But it's easy to include daily activity in your life. Any activity is worthwhile as long as it gets you moving. According to researchers, even light to moderate activity (gardening or going for a walk) can improve overall health and decrease your risk of disease. Best of all, studies show that active kids and teens will be active adults. What are you waiting for?

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## Tip for Daily Activity

- Focus on the process, not the outcome. Life-long fitness is a journey. Don't worry about the outcome. Just concentrate on participating in a physical activity for 30 minutes most days of the week.
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***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Activate Your Life***

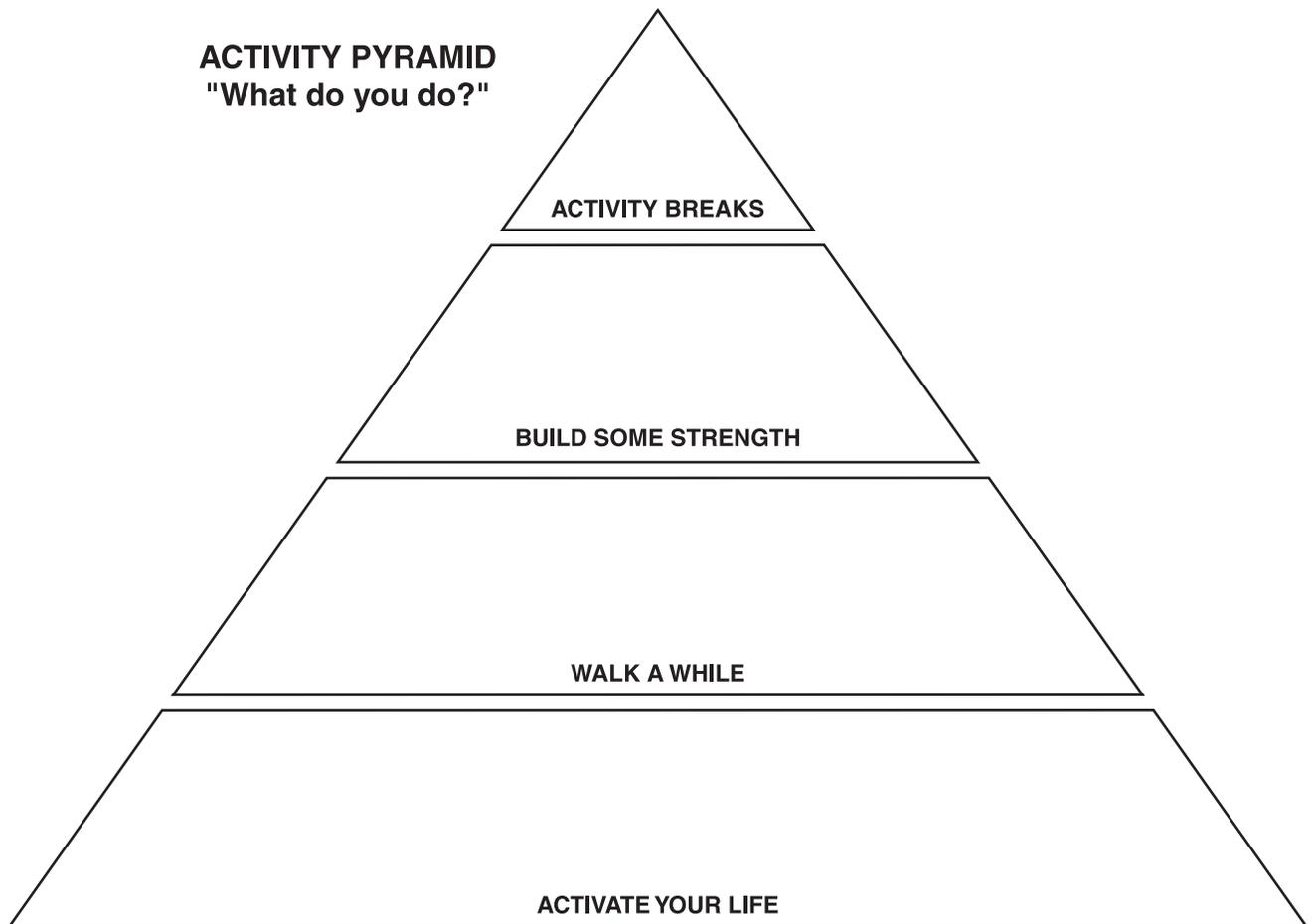
**Activity**

Fill out the “What do you do?” activity pyramid below.

**What Do You Do?**

1. Do you get 30 minutes of activity five or more times per week?
2. Do you walk for at least 20 minutes three or more times per week?
3. Do you do any strength building or aerobic activity three or more times per week?
4. Do you take activity breaks while doing homework or while watching television?

Think of ways you can increase your activity. Is there a sport you have wanted to try? Do some of your friends play basketball or volleyball regularly?



## **Activity Equals Good Health**

Physically active teens tend to have lower blood pressure and higher HDL (good) cholesterol than those who are less active. Cholesterol is a substance that is produced and used in the body. Cholesterol is also found in some foods. A diet high in saturated fat can increase cholesterol levels. There are two main types of cholesterol: low-density cholesterol (LDL), which is the bad cholesterol, and high-density cholesterol (HDL), which is the good cholesterol. High total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol, as well as high blood pressure, increase one's risk for developing heart disease. Physical activity can help increase the good cholesterol and can help in lowering blood pressure. Daily activity also promotes long-term weight loss and weight maintenance.

## **Activity Benefits Everyone**

Not everyone can be the star quarterback or high-flying basketball standout; however, anyone can benefit from regular exercise. Regular activity reduces your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus, and many forms of cancer. Exercise also improves self-esteem and mental health and builds strong bones.

## **Do What You Like**

Any activity is a good activity. Organized sports, such as football, basketball, baseball, and soccer, are great for staying in shape and learning how to be part of a team. But there are a number of great activities you can participate in alone or with your friends. Jump rope or take a walk. Do some push-ups and sit-ups. Roller blade or visit a skate park.

## **Fitness Can Be Rewarding in More Ways Than One**

Physical activity is important for your physical and mental health. It can also be profitable. Start your own neighborhood lawn mowing service (walking, of course) or dog-walking enterprise. Help your parents out in the garden or wash their cars. Complete your activity for the day and make a few bucks in the process.

***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Activate Your Life***

***Activity***

Divide into small groups. Each group should come up with three activities they enjoy (walking, dancing, tennis, biking, hiking, basketball, etc.). List how you can participate in these activities in your area. Can you do this at school? At a park? In your neighborhood? At your home? How could your community be changed to promote more activity? Let each group discuss the results with the rest of the class.



## **Walking Your Way to Wellness**

Do you know a family member or friend who walks for exercise? Do you walk for exercise? Do you know the benefits of walking? Let's look at some facts and benefits of walking.

Walking is one of the most popular ways to become more active. You can walk with a friend or choose to spend some time alone. You can walk with family members, friends, or an animal friend. Walking can be done while you talk or while you enjoy some silence. This section will help you learn more about the benefits of walking, how to walk safely and effectively, and what it takes to walk across Kentucky.

In a recent survey, nearly half of Kentucky adults (45 percent) reported no leisure time physical activity. We spend a lot of time in front of televisions, computers, and video games or in cars while we eat fast food. We often wish there was more time to spend with family and friends, or we long for some time alone. The lack of physical activity and the stress of our over-scheduled lives are taking a toll on the health of Kentucky children, teens, and adults.

Walking may offer a way for you to become more active, enjoy better health, and spend more time with others or by yourself. Regular walking can decrease your risk of heart disease, diabetes, and perhaps some forms of cancer. Walking seems to promote "brain fitness," leading to a more positive outlook and greater mental agility. People who walk tend to have lower blood pressure and a decreased risk of stroke. Walking strengthens bones and muscles and can help you control your weight. Walking is a good way to reduce stress, increase energy levels, and may even help you sleep better at night.

## **Walking Well**

Warming up before starting your walking program will help prevent injuries. Ease into it by walking slowly for five minutes and then stretch for a few minutes. Helpful stretches include head and arm circles and hip and leg stretches. Walk at an easy pace during the last five to 10 minutes of your routine to let your body cool down.

Proper form will make your walk easier and more comfortable, helping you get the most from your exercise routine.

- Stand up straight, keep your eyes forward, and keep your chin parallel to the ground.
- Keep your arms at a 90-degree angle and close to your body.
- Hit the ground with your heel first, roll through the step, and push off with your toe.
- Try to take a comfortable-length step, not too short or too long.
- Walk at the right pace, taking time to warm up and cool down.
- Try to walk at least three times a week. During the first week you may want to warm up by walking slowly for five minutes and then stretch, walking briskly for five minutes, and then cool down by walking slowly for five minutes. In the following weeks, increase your brisk walking by two to three minutes a week until you can walk at a fast pace for 30 minutes to one hour. You should try to walk at least 30 minutes three to five days each week.

Current recommendations for good health state that you should be moderately active for a total of 30 minutes at least five days a week.

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## **Tips for Walking Safely**

- Walk in the daytime.
  - Walk with a friend or group.
  - Do not wear headphones that prevent you from hearing potential dangers.
  - Pay attention to your surroundings and be cautious.
  - Walk on sidewalks and stay away from high traffic areas.
  - Wear bright, reflective clothing and shoes.
  - Carry identification and water.
  - Do not assume that cars can see or have seen you.
  - Consider carrying a cell phone or change to use a public phone for emergencies.
  - Wear comfortable, well-fitted shoes and socks.
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### ***Walking, Your Way***

Before you begin a walking routine, take some time to think about why you want to walk. You probably want to be more active in order to feel better and to become healthier. Consider what other goals you might be able to accomplish while walking. Maybe you would relish some time alone to

think or let your mind wander. You may have a friend, family member, or pet that you would like to spend more time with. Perhaps you would like to visit the library more often. Give careful consideration to these additional goals. You may want to walk alone sometimes and with company at other times. Try to establish regular times for walking to keep yourself committed and to help you schedule walking with others. Finding ways to make walking work for you will help you stay committed to being more active.

Try taking these steps to make walking a part of your regular routine:

- Avoid automatically turning on the television when you get home.
- Establish regular, limited hours for computer use and video games.
- Get into the habit of changing into your walking clothes when you get home or try walking in the morning.
- Try walking when you need to run errands or get somewhere.

## Walk across Kentucky

How many miles would you need to log in order to walk across Kentucky? The Commonwealth of Kentucky is approximately 420 miles wide from the most western to eastern points. Here are some interesting mile markers with approximate distances to help you track your progress if you decide to take this route to walk across Kentucky (for a total of 420 miles):

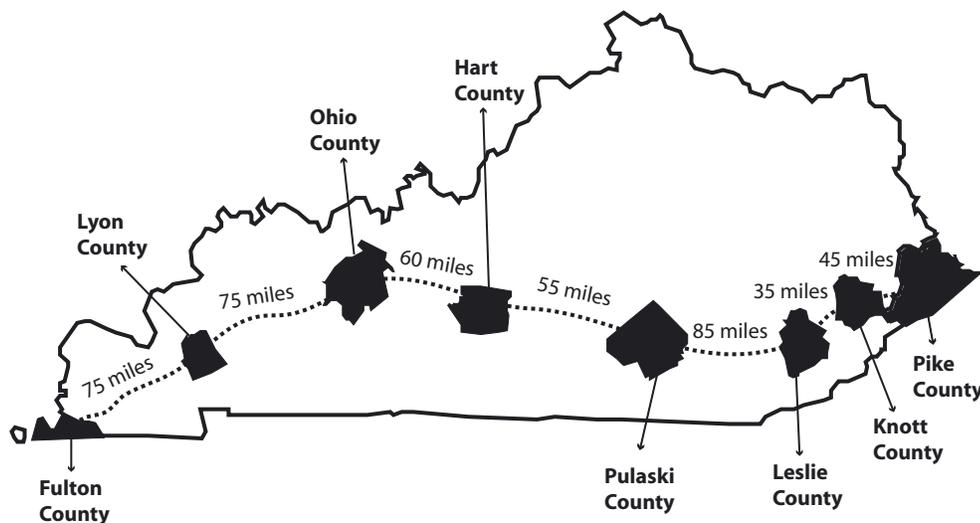
- Sassafras Ridge (Fulton County) to Kuttawa (Lyon County): 75 miles.
- Kuttawa (Lyon County) to Beaver Dam (Ohio County): 75 miles.
- Beaver Dam (Ohio County) to Horse Cave (Hart County): 75 miles.
- Horse Cave (Hart County) to Indian Hills (Pulaski County): 55 miles.
- Indian Hills (Pulaski County) to Thousandsticks (Leslie County): 85 miles.
- Thousandsticks (Leslie County) to Pippa Passes (Knott County): 35 miles.
- Pippa Passes (Knott County) to Stopover (Pike County): 45 miles.

If you can walk a mile in about 15 minutes, then you are covering about four miles per hour. If you walk for one hour five days of the

week, you will log 20 miles per week. At this rate, it will take you 21 weeks to walk 420 miles, the equivalent of walking across Kentucky.

From Pike County in the east to Fulton County in the west, Kentucky has a beautiful variety of scenery with mountains, rivers, and lakes. Our state has an abundance of forests, wildflowers, and birds to watch while you walk. Kentucky State Parks and other recreational areas have hiking and walking trails.

Becoming a walker can open your eyes to a new way of seeing things. One of the often-unexpected benefits of walking is how much more you will see of the world around you. You may meet new neighbors. You can watch new buildings take shape. You will have the opportunity to witness nature's ever-changing seasons. You may also find that walking helps you to better see inside yourself. Many people find they have creative ideas or suddenly see a solution to a long-standing problem when they walk alone and have time to relax. An open mind and an active body can take you wherever you need to be.



***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Activate Your Life***

**Activity**

Using the week-long chart, think of and write down the activities you are involved with this week. Include school, social obligations, time to do homework, practice for sports, music or other activities, and anything else that you do during a week. Now, think about when you could add a walk. Try and pick four times throughout the week where you could walk for about 30 minutes. Remember, this could be with a friend, a family member, or a pet. Also think about things that may prevent you from walking. These things that may prevent you from walking are called barriers. Get into groups of three or four and discuss the possible barriers. As a group, see if you can help each other think of ways to overcome the barriers.

**Activity Worksheet for “Walk across Kentucky”**

	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Afternoon</b>	<b>Evening</b>
<b>Sunday</b>			
<b>Monday</b>			
<b>Tuesday</b>			
<b>Wednesday</b>			
<b>Thursday</b>			
<b>Friday</b>			
<b>Saturday</b>			

<b>Possible Barriers :</b>	<b>Possible Solutions:</b>



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### **Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Take Time to Be Well**

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Leading a balanced life improves your sense of well-being. School, family, work, and fun should all be a part of life. But you should make time to activate your life, to learn to eat well, and to enjoy life.

### **Time to Be Well**

You can learn how to take time to be well because the latest research shows how thoughts and behaviors today help shape what you think and do tomorrow. We now know much more about how to make changes in our diet and exercise behaviors to get in better shape. But the most exciting research news may be about how and why we make those changes. It may be that the old saying of “mind over matter” has some scientific basis.

### **Research Spotlight: Thoughts Affect Health**

We now know that chemicals in the brain called neurotransmitters play an important role in human behavior.

One of the neurotransmitters you may have heard about is serotonin, which is known to affect moods and behaviors, such

as eating (which it affects in part through its influence on appetite) and sleeping. In the 1970s, scientists began to realize the influence thoughts can have on behavior and began to develop a treatment for depression called cognitive therapy, which helps people change their thought patterns. Cognitive therapy has been shown to be as effective as medications in the treatment of depression and may influence serotonin levels in the brain.

Perhaps the most exciting implication about serotonin is that positive thoughts and actions, because they influence serotonin levels, can promote behavior changes. People in generally good health who do not need medications seem to be able to use thought and action to make positive changes in their moods, appetite, and sleep patterns, which can have a significant effect on wellness.

David Burns, M.D., author of a popular book on this subject, observes that “you feel the way you think.”

### **Changing Thought Patterns**

Your response to life’s events is a matter of choice. Sometimes negative thoughts pop into your head automatically, but you can learn to turn the pessimist inside you into an optimist. Your thoughts are under your control, and you choose how you react to a given situation.

Researchers agree that you can positively change your sense of well-being by:

- Engaging in regular physical activity.
- Thinking positive thoughts.
- Managing your emotions.
- Coping with stress effectively.

We cannot always control our environment, but we can control how we react to it. It is not always easy, and it does take practice. Additionally, it is beneficial to think of stressful or unpleasant situations and how you could choose to react more positively. Has a friend ever hurt your feelings? Do your parents or teachers sometimes make you mad? Does your little brother or sister borrow your clothes or other items without asking? Are your friends sometimes late for social events? It is easy to get mad or yell or silently feel hurt. How can you change your response to the situation?

## **Positive Thoughts**

Sometimes we worry without purpose. Certainly, some amount of worry encourages us to do what we need to do. But rumination without either resolution or action is seldom productive. Try to forgive and forget, especially with yourself. Many people are harsh self-critics. It is important to make decisions about which thoughts or behaviors you would like to change. Then, consider whether you are willing to make those changes.

For example, if you want to lose weight, you will need to change your eating and activity behaviors. Try to select changes you are comfortable making and go slowly. If you are not willing to change your eating or activity patterns, try to accept yourself at your current weight. No good will come from continually telling yourself you need to lose weight. If you are able to focus on a goal of better health rather than weight loss, you may succeed.

One way to check your thought patterns is to keep a log of automatic thoughts. This will help you see if you are thinking negatively. By learning to rethink your thought response to different types of events, you can reshape your attitude, which in turn will help you be in a better mood, have more energy, and enjoy a greater sense of well-being. Take heed of current research on how thoughts affect behavior, because a positive outlook and the belief that we are making progress helps us move down the road to wellness. Remember—“you feel the way you think.”

***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Time to Be Well***

***Activity***

Write down five situations that would make you mad or cause other negative responses. Think about how you normally react to these situations. Be honest. Now, try to think of five positive ways to react. Get together in groups of three or four and discuss some of the situations. How would others in the group respond? Think about the five situations you wrote down and the five positive solutions each day for a few days. When one of the situations arises, practice the new response.

You may want to try to think of other situations and how you could control negative responses. Remember, it takes planning and practice.

***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Time to Be Well***

**Activity**

Have you ever heard of a mantra? A mantra is a word or phrase you can say over and over to yourself. Mantras can help to train your mind to think positive thoughts. Think of one positive phrase or word about the world, your environment, or yourself. It can be simple or complex. It could be one word or a favorite quote. Some examples are “peacefulness,” “I am worthwhile,” “I am important,” “I am good,” or “the tree is beautiful.” A mantra can be anything. Practice saying it to yourself. You do not have to share your mantra with the group. Over the next few days, try saying your mantra over to yourself. If you find yourself stressed or about to yell at someone, try repeating this mantra five times.

Do you ever talk negatively to yourself? Negative self-talk or thoughts may start as insecurity but become a powerful, repeated thought. Someone may say over and over, “I am fat” or “I am not smart” or other negative statements. Negative self-talk can certainly hurt confidence and self-esteem. Often people hear this negative self-talk all day. During the teen years, many people find themselves unhappy with the way they look or other characteristics. It is important to recognize when you are telling yourself negative things and try to change those thoughts. Think of something negative that you tell yourself. Now, think of a positive statement about yourself. Even if you do not believe the positive thought at first, continue to repeat it to yourself. Try using your mantra to replace the negative thoughts when they spring into your head.

### Taking Time

We live in a world where time always seems to be lacking, but slowing down and taking care of ourselves is an important part of staying well. Here are some ideas to help you:

- Learn to enjoy moving. Physical activity can have a very positive influence on mood and appetite. Activate your life to be truly well.
- Make time to get out into nature. Hiking, boating, swimming, or just sitting in the great outdoors can help us gain perspective on our place in the universe.
- Do something daily for your spirit. Inspirational reading or writing in a journal are just two examples. Visit your local library or bookstore to enjoy many books to help you nurture the spiritual side of your life.
- Use a sense of humor to help you through difficult times. Humor can indeed be the best medicine. Laughing and smiling have a positive effect on you and those around you.
- Take time every day to be “body aware.” For example, when you wake up or take a shower, for example, try stretching or moving all parts of your body.
- Use visual cues in your home, locker, or at school to remind you to take time to be well. They can be an ever-changing environment of encouragement to support you on your way to wellness.
- Take time to think about what you value, such as family, friends, school, time to read, or learning something new. Are you living in a way that supports what you value? Are your behaviors helping you reach your goals in life?
- Occasionally take time to become completely absorbed in something other than yourself. Some people do this by cooking, sewing, painting, or playing music. You could also try dancing or reading—whatever strikes your fancy.
- Take time to be with family, friends, and others in your community. Being with

people with whom you have something in common, volunteering, and belonging to a group can greatly enrich your life.

- Finally, take time to rest and sleep. You probably know how many hours of sleep you need to feel your best, so make an effort to get to bed on time. Many of us don’t get enough sleep during the week and try to catch up over the weekend. You may find that you’ll feel better and get more done if you take time each night to get enough sleep.

As recently as 50 years ago, people were more physically active but had little time for recreation. They also had strong ties to family and community. Now we have the luxury of choosing our activities and, in some cases, our company. Take advantage of what today’s world has to offer by taking time to be well.

### Journal Writing

Have you ever kept a journal or a diary? Writing in a journal or a diary can be therapeutic and relaxing. Dr. Sam Quick of the University of Kentucky’s Department of Family Studies says that there are several reasons to do journal writing, including:

- Gaining perspective.
- Clearing the mind.
- Solving problems.
- Generating new ideas.
- Gaining insight.
- Reflection.
- Self-expression.

If you are stressed, trying to work out a problem, or just need some time to yourself, journaling is a great idea. All you need is a pen or pencil and a notebook or journal. You can write about anything—your day, your feelings, a situation, something that makes you mad or stresses you out, or an object, such as a tree or a car. Let your writing just flow without worrying about grammar. You can keep your journal just for yourself.

***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Time to Be Well***

***Activity***

Spend 15 minutes writing about anything. Do not worry about grammar or punctuation. Simply write. You can write abstractly or about something that just happened. When the 15 minutes are up, stop writing. Did you write about things that you did not realize you were thinking? Try journaling a few times over the next week. You may find that it helps you clarify your thoughts or bring things into perspective.



Humor is likely a part of everyone's daily life. And for good reason. A good laugh takes us away from the stresses of the day and lets us enjoy the moment. The word humor is derived from the Greeks, who believed that physical and mental balance produced "good humor." Hearing a joke or reading a funny cartoon lifts your spirits and can pull you out of a bad mood. But did you know that humor can also improve your physical health? Scientists have found that laughing affects most of the body's systems. It can increase your respiratory, or breathing, activity and oxygen rate. This means your body can better deliver oxygen to where it is needed, making you feel more active and alert. Laughter increases muscle activity and heart rate and the release of endorphins. Dr. William Fry Jr. says that laughter is "an aerobic experience, an internal stationary jog." Endorphins give us a natural feeling of well-being. Our bodies release more endorphins when our senses experience something pleasant, such as the sight of a newborn baby, the smell of good food, finishing a good workout, or laughing at a funny joke. This gives us a moment of joy and a break from stress, which increases endorphins. When you look at the facts, laughter is a path to better physical and mental health.

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### **Tips to Help Your Mood**

- Cut out cartoons from the newspaper and post them in your locker or bedroom. This will give you a quick "pick me up" between classes and after a hard day at school.
  - Decorate your room with things you enjoy. Hang posters of your favorite musician or athlete. Stuffed animals and humorous cards or stickers will liven up your room. Place a funny screen saver on your computer.
  - Spend time with people with a good sense of humor. If your friends and family can make you laugh, you are in great company!
  - Read a humorous novel or comic book. Watch a funny movie or television show.
  - Don't forget to laugh at yourself. Sometimes we take ourselves too seriously. There is nothing like a good joke to put things in perspective. Remember that a day with laughter is a good day!
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***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Time to Be Well***

***Activity***

Divide the students into groups. As a class, discuss the aforementioned ways to incorporate humor into daily life. Have each group come up with five ways to add more laughter to their day. Each student can answer the following questions before the group project.

1. Do I laugh at least once every day?
2. What do I find funny?
3. Do I tell jokes that may be offensive to others?
4. What makes me happy? Sports? A good movie? Spending time with my friends and family?

## **Food Security**

Do you know what food security is? Food security is, "Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum: (1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and (2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways..." (Nord, 1999). There are many people in the world, the United States, and even Kentucky that do not have enough food to eat. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 9.7 percent of U.S. households and 8.4 percent of Kentucky households are food insecure (USDA, 1999). Often people or families that are food insecure do not have enough money to supply enough food for health at all times; therefore, poverty is a one main issue of hunger and food insecurity. Not having enough food or money to buy food can be very stressful. The poverty rate in the United States is 13.6 percent (USDA, 1999). In 1996, the poverty rate in Kentucky was 17.9 percent (Kentucky Department of Public Health). It is interesting to note that Kentucky has a food insecurity rate lower than the national average but a higher poverty rate. Can you think of any reasons why this is so? Some experts speculate that one reason may be that the cost of housing is lower in Kentucky than in other parts of the country (Nord, 1999), allowing a larger percentage of the income to be spent on food.

Having the right amounts and types of food is very important for health and wellness. Without appropriate food, it is difficult to have the energy to go to school, to work, and to play. Food is essential for growth and maintenance of the body. Additionally, not having food can increase stress and anxiety for individuals and families; therefore, a lack of food can affect nutritional status, activity level, and increase stress.

What can we do to help? Have you ever participated in a food drive? Is there a food bank in your county or city? Giving of your time to others not only helps the people in need but can also give you a sense of community and happiness.

## **Community Wellness**

When we consider other people and their needs and then act in a kind manner, it often boosts our own sense of well-being. Understanding and helping others is beneficial to the world, the community, and the individual. There are many things we can do to improve the lives of those around us. Often, just being kind and remembering the importance of each person can improve a community. Try saying "hi" to many people, even those you do not know.

Try to recognize when someone needs help. Can you hold open a door? Help someone carry a heavy load? Walk someone's dog? We sometimes hear of random acts of kindness. These acts can include any kind act that helps another human or animal. Random acts of kindness may seem small but may really make someone's day. There are also many ways in which we can volunteer to help different organizations.

Think about your community. Can you think of something that needs to be done? Think about your interests and strengths. Do you like animals? Are you good with children? Do you enjoy talking with older people? Often our own interests can lead us to volunteer work. Maybe you can help watch children at a church or visit with people in a nursing home. If you like animals, maybe you can volunteer at an animal shelter. The possibilities are boundless.

***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Time to Be Well***

***Activity***

As a group, discuss how to plan a food drive. Where can you collect food? What theme can you use? Is there an upcoming holiday, a homecoming game, or other event? What supplies do you need? How will you market the food drive (posters, fliers, announcements, etc.)? Will you leave a bin out all the time or only collect food during certain times? Will you have a goal of a certain amount of food to collect, or will you just collect for a certain amount of days? Is there a food bank in your county that can distribute the collected food? How will you get the food to the food bank?

Once the group has made decisions on the place, date, and time of the food drive, decide what needs to be done. Split into groups of three to five and assign each group a task. For instance, one group needs to contact the local food bank. What sort of food do they collect (canned food, dried food, boxed food, etc.)? Another group needs to plan and implement the marketing section of the drive. This includes making the fliers, posters, and other materials. You may need a group to plan the location, count the food, or collect the food. The number of tasks depends on the type of food drive the group has decided to run. Make sure to have a plan of action. Each group should be clear on the tasks they need to complete and the time period they have to complete the tasks. Plan a day in the near future to discuss progress. You may need to have frequent planning sessions until the food drive is complete.



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