WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for December 14, 2020
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, and Healthy Relationships we'll talk about how helpful conversions can help us to increase health and wealth.

My kids were back to virtual learning for the week following Thanksgiving. We had almost forgotten what it was like. Almost. One of the biggest challenges for my son was typing out conversions for math class. It is much easier to do that with pencil and paper.

All that converting got me thinking about some conversion tips from Small Steps to Health and Wealth, a tool developed by Rutgers Extension. One tip is to convert consumption to labor to better understand the real cost. Consumption can be looked at from both a health and a wealth standpoint. This could mean calorie consumption for our health (eating and drinking), or it could mean our consumption of goods and services for our wealth (spending money).

Here are some health conversions first. A moderate walk at 3.5 mph burns an average of 280 calories for 1 hour. Gardening and yard work for 1 hour burns about 330 calories. That means neither of those activities would expend the calories in one cup of Velvet Moose Tracks Ice Cream (380 calories). You'd have to run (like really run, without stopping) for 15 minutes before you burn the calories in one can of Coke or Pepsi.

Energy balance is when the calories we consume through food and beverages is equal to the calories we burn through physical activity. In simple terms, we gain weight as we consume more calories than we burn, because our bodies store those extra calories as fat. Alice Henneman from University of Nebraska explains it like this, "Adding more activity to your lifestyle is like getting a free 'loan' every day. It increases your 'calorie salary' because you can eat more if you use your feet more."

Just a gentle reminder here that there are more reasons than weight management for physical activity. Some of the more immediate benefits for our brains are improved thinking, learning and judgement skills. Physical activity can also reduce risk of depression and anxiety and help you sleep better. Long term benefits are lower risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes.

A few months ago, I was challenged to track my eating for one month. The main thing it reinforced for me is that we can be tempted to think that completing any amount of physical

activity gives us the green light on unlimited Oreos or chips and salsa. It is very helpful to do an occasional check of how many calories you are consuming compared to the calories you are expending.

This same principle can be applied on the wealth perspective as well. Consider how much you make an hour considering deductions and even commute time if applicable. The next time you are thinking of a purchase, consider how many hours of work it will take to pay for that item or service. Let's say your take home pay is $11.50 per hour. If you are thinking of buying new shoes that cost $85, then this means about 1 day of work to pay for those shoes. This could be a great exercise to do with your children.

If you have items you know you will likely purchase soon, then take some time to consider what kinds of things are worth working long hours and what kinds of things are not. Just like calories in and calories out, it can give you a different perspective when you convert the cost of an item into the work it takes to pay that cost.

A reminder that currently our OSU Extension staff will only be available by appointment for in person clients who need assistance. We are still available by phone and email Monday through Friday. To schedule an appointment, please call 740-622-2265. We will continue to update you as we receive information from our administration. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. We appreciate your patience and kindness during this time.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!