

HEALTH WATCH

## Prescribing diet overhaul

### Harvard Medical School and Culinary Institute of America team up to improve Americans' eating habits

By Mark Graham

Special to the Tribune

March 26, 2008

ST. HELENA, Calif.—The Harvard Medical School and The Culinary Institute of America want you to be healthier by eating better. The institutions have joined forces and placed doctors and chefs on the same team in an attempt to fight the battle against obesity in the U.S.

"If there is bad news in the diet and health arena—alarming high rates of chronic diseases and related health problems and, at least in part as a result, skyrocketing, unsustainable health care costs—there is also some good news," said Dr. David Eisenberg, director of the Osher Institute at Harvard Medical School and one of the leaders of a recent series of educational conferences held at the Greystone campus of The Culinary Institute of America. "Increasingly, Americans are seeking out the big, bold, bright flavors from a wider range of cultures, from the Mediterranean to Asia and Latin America."

These cultures "represent a rich, delicious source of inspiration for cooking with vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, vegetable oils, and other healthful foods from plant sources—all foods that should be more emphasized in our diets," Eisenberg said.

The conferences include a twice-yearly event called "Healthy Kitchens, Healthy Lives" and an annual "Worlds of Healthy Flavors" leadership retreat. The Healthy Kitchens conference teaches doctors and other health care professionals about cooking better food, during seminars and hands-on cooking instruction taught by some of the best chefs in the world. "Worlds of Healthy Flavors" is aimed at industry chefs for chain restaurants, leading hotels, supermarkets and volume food-service operators. (For more information, visit the Web site: [healthykitchens.org](http://healthykitchens.org).)

Harvard Medical School proposes an Eat, Drink and Weigh Less Food Pyramid with a

base of daily exercise and weight awareness, followed by eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, plant oils and whole grains. The pyramid is topped by nuts, tofu, legumes, fish, seafood, poultry and eggs, then dairy foods and daily vitamins.

The pyramid also suggests that lean red meat and refined carbohydrates (sweetened beverages, white bread, white rice, white pasta, potatoes and sweets) should be consumed sparingly.

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