Fact Sheets

Kaiser Permanente and Healthy, Sustainable Food

Kaiser Permanente recognizes that healthy eating is critical to healthy living. The need to support good nutrition has taken on added urgency with our increased understanding of the obesity epidemic in the United States, and its causes. Over the last few years, a farmers market movement has taken hold at Kaiser Permanente. Individual facilities have supported farmers markets that help staff, members, and the community to eat well and make good choices by increasing access to fresh produce.

Because Kaiser Permanente recognizes that people can’t be healthy when they live in unhealthy environments, the organization’s efforts go beyond the doctor’s office and into communities — focusing on schools, neighborhoods and workplaces.

- In May, 2003, Preston Maring, MD founded the first ever hospital-based farmers market at the Kaiser Permanente Oakland Medical Center. The community embraced the market, and now Kaiser Permanente has more than 35 farmers markets in four states.

- Kaiser Permanente also has started to offer the delivery of produce "farm boxes" to employees and physicians who don’t have close access to farmers markets.

- Kaiser Permanente strives to provide locally grown produce for hospital meals. The organization is now serving local produce for patient meals at 21 Northern California Kaiser Permanente Hospitals and the Kaiser Permanente Post Acute Care Center in San Leandro, Calif., and patient meals and cafeterias at four medical facilities in Southern California. The project will be expanding in Southern California.

- In 2009, Kaiser Permanente purchased 74 tons of the fresh produce served in Northern California hospitals from local farms, and 43 tons in Southern California. This effort is part of a collaboration with the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, which supports family-scale agriculture that cares for the land, sustains local economies and promotes social justice.
• In addition, starting in June 2010, Kaiser Permanente began serving an additional 600 lbs per week of sustainably grown vegetables on patient entrée plates at 21 Northern California Kaiser Permanente Hospitals and the Kaiser Permanente Post Acute Care Center in San Leandro, Calif., which represents over 4,000 plates per week.

• By partnering with local growers, Kaiser Permanente hopes to support the development of local and sustainable food systems as a public health tool and reduce long-distance food shipment.

• Through Kaiser Permanente’s Health Eating/Active Living initiative, the organization works to bring healthy food to the communities it serves. These efforts include work with community groups and store owners to bring healthy food into corner stores, in addition to working with schools, city parks and other youth-serving organizations to offer healthier foods to young people.

• Kaiser Permanente sponsors farmers markets and farm stands in neighborhoods where there is no other source of healthy food.

• Kaiser Permanente serves hormone-free milk in hospitals as well as cafeterias and vending services in California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington.

• Kaiser Permanente has implemented a "Healthy Picks" program in 34 medical centers in California, Hawaii and Oregon. Offerings include whole grains, lowfat dairy products, and fruits and vegetables, as well as products made with trans fat-free oils. The program has been successful in helping our members and staff make healthier food and beverage choices through vending and cafeteria services. As of December 2008, Kaiser Permanente eliminated the use of artery-clogging trans fat from all of its Southern California facilities, over two years in advance of a new state law banning such fats from food-serving establishments throughout California. The Northern California, Hawaii and Northwest regions met the same goal in 2009.

• In 2009, energy saving devices were installed on 719 snack and beverage machines at Kaiser Permanente facilities in the Northern and Southern California regions. Annual energy savings and rebates are projected to be $73,000 and reduction in CO2 emissions to be over 413,350 pounds.

• Kaiser Permanente has incorporated sustainable and healthy food criteria into its Northern California cafeteria contracts, and is partnering with its cafeteria vendors to offer more healthy and sustainable food choices.
Additional Information:
Kaiser Permanente Farmers Markets on Google Maps
Dr. Maring's Recipe Blog
Community Alliance with Family Farmers
List of Kaiser Permanente Farmers Markets
Kaiser Permanente's Health Eating/Active Living
Statement on the Let's Move Campaign and Partnership for A Healthier America

Find a KP Farmers Market

Thrive

Community

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