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[Home](#)

[Arts & Entertainment](#)  
[Features](#)  
[Television](#)  
[Movies](#)  
[Travel](#)  
[Center](#)  
[Style](#)  
[Health](#)  
[Music](#)  
[Sports](#)  
[Technology](#)  
[Staff](#)  
[Contact Us](#)

[Archives](#)

## Eat Smart, Be Fit, Maryland

By Laura Chiriaco

Do you want to learn how to eat smart and be fit? Now it's simple with the help of the university's new website, Eat Smart, Be Fit Maryland.

The website includes tips on eating on a budget, staying active, food safety, and preparing healthy meals, among others.

Nancy Atkinson, assistant professor in the Department of Public Health and principal investigator for the project said that although the site is designed for families with limited incomes, students will find it to be very helpful as well.

"Students also struggle with stretching their food dollar and making healthy choices," she said, "there is a lot there that anyone could benefit from."

Atkinson said students can also find information on where to exercise, tips to make sure they don't get food poisoning, and where to find the best bargains from nearby grocery stores.

The first time you visit, take the website tour to find out which aspects of the site would be most beneficial to you. To search the rest of the site, you will have to register, which only takes a few seconds.

When students click on "Ask the Coach," they can browse through frequently asked questions about nutrition and fitness, or ask their own and a professor will respond.

Atkinson said the project was created by a team of researchers from the University of Maryland's Family Studies, Nutrition, and Kinesiology departments.

The site has been a work in progress for the last five years, according to Atkinson.

During the first year, the team of researchers performed a needs assessment of the community to find out how the website could be most helpful. A prototype for the site was developed in the second year, and for the past three years, the team has been creating and updating the website.

To visit the site, go to <http://www.eatsmart.umd.edu>.