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Kansans asked to 'change something'

WICHITA — What if the best parking spot weren't the closest to the door? What if the American classic cheeseburger weren't served with fries but green beans instead?

These are the kind of small changes the Kansas Health Foundation is asking Kansans to make in their new public motivation campaign, "change something," launched Sept. 9.

"You don't have to change everything to live healthier; just change something," said Marni Vliet, president & CEO of the Kansas Health Foundation. "The 'change something' campaign serves as a reminder that opportunities exist all around us to be more physically active and incorporate healthier eating habits. It can be as easy as trying a new fruit or taking the family for a walk to the park. Simple, daily changes like these can add up to healthier lifestyles and improve the health outlook for Kansans."

Recent studies give a clearer view of the health issues facing Kansans. New data confirms that Kansas ranks as the 26th heaviest state in the nation. One report also found that 81.2 percent of adults in Kansas do not consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day, while more than half do not meet the recommended guidelines for moderate physical activity.

Making healthy changes could not only improve the health of Kansas adults, but these changes will make an impact on the development of our children, too.

"The most amazing thing we've found is that one small

positive change can promote more changes," said Dr. James Early, clinical associate professor for the KU School of Medicine. "And making one small change as a parent, where your children can watch, is one of the most positive things you can do for a child. It's the children seeing us change, and seeing we're not stuck, that allows them to grow even better."

The "change something" campaign illustrates little changes that can be incorporated into busy, everyday lives. Examples include taking the stairs instead of the elevator, eating an apple instead of drinking a soda and walking to a colleague's desk rather than e-mailing. Change something today. Here are ideas to get started:

- Skip the extras (sugar, salt, sour cream, etc.).
  - Park in the last parking space and walk. Or you could skip.
  - After your first 8-ounce of water, think to yourself, "One down, seven more to go!"
  - On your daily to-do list, add the word "exercise."
  - Spend time catching up with a friend on an evening walk.
  - Graze on healthy snacks. Fresh fruit, yogurt, granola bars.
  - Take the stairs.
  - Eat on smaller plates to help control the portions you take.
  - Organize a pedometer competition. See who can walk the most in a week.
  - Skip the chocolate syrup on your next bowl of ice cream. Better yet, have a bowl of yogurt.
- The Kansas Health Foundation is a private philanthropy dedicated to improving the health of all Kansans.