

ShowMe Health

For Publication March 1st, 2011

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Subject: National Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month. This campaign, created by the American Dietetics Association, focuses on helping people make more informed food choices and creating healthier eating habits. All information given by the ADA is science-based and also easy to understand. Focusing on information from the ADA is a good way to cut through the clutter of the day-to-day changes of nutrition advice.

The theme for 2011 is, "Eat Right With Color". Do you ever look at your plate while eating breakfast or dinner and notice nothing but blobs of brown & white? Do you feel like you are constantly eating the same types of foods every day? The theme "Eat Right With Color" is promoting eating a wide variety of foods every day and including more fruits and vegetables in your daily diet. Fruits and vegetables are a good way to brighten up your plate. Most Americans aren't consuming the daily recommended 5-8 servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Eating many different colors of fruits and vegetables ensures you are getting a wide variety of nutrients.

Most Americans feel overwhelmed when trying to include 5-8 servings of fruits and vegetables in their daily eating routine. It is actually a lot easier than it seems. Including a fruit or vegetable with every meal and for one snack per day is one way to ensure you are getting plenty. Make sure the fruits and vegetables at your meal are taking up the largest section of your plate. The protein and grain foods should have a smaller section on the plate.

Here are some tips on how to fill your day with fruits and vegetables. Include a banana or berries with your cereal or oatmeal for your breakfast meal. Add vegetables such as tomatoes, onions or peppers to your breakfast omelet. Add frozen vegetables to a casserole or pasta for dinner. Snack on raw vegetables or fresh fruit for a mid-day snack. Make a fruit parfait (fresh fruit, yogurt, granola) for a late night snack. Add more vegetable toppings to your pizza. A fruit smoothie with breakfast or for a snack may include two or more servings of fruit. Cooking a vegetable beef stir fry at dinner time is another way to include many different vegetables at one meal.

Using the MyPyramid symbol is another tool to guide you in including different types of healthy foods in your daily diet. MyPyramid is a program developed by the USDA that gives individual guidance on improving overall eating habits. The colors in the MyPyramid symbol represent the different food groups and gives advice on making sound choices from each group. Orange represents grains of which half should be whole grains. Green represents vegetables and focuses on eating a variety every day. Red represents fruits and also focuses on eating a variety daily. Yellow represents oils and focuses on knowing your fats, which ones to limit, and which ones to include more of in your diet. Blue represents

milk and recommends choosing low-fat or fat-free milk products. Purple represents protein and focuses on choosing mostly lean protein foods. The oil and protein sections are much smaller than the other food sections showing we need to limit the amount of these in our daily diet.

At the Livingston County Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Clinic we offer group nutrition classes to our participants. We cover a range of nutrition topics that help guide participants in making healthy and smart food choices. We also have individualized nutrition counseling for prenatal and high risk WIC participants. For more information about the WIC Program, call the health center at 646-5506.

All services of the health center are provided on a non-discriminatory basis.