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WIC Urges Michiganders to Make Informed Diet Choices During National Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program is joining with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to remind Michiganders about the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

Good nutrition is an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle. Combined with physical activity, your diet can help you to reach and maintain a healthy weight, reduce your risk of chronic diseases and improve your overall health.

Unhealthy eating habits have contributed to the obesity epidemic in the United States with about one-third of U.S. adults and approximately 17 percent of children and adolescents aged 2 - 19 years being considered obese.

Even for people at a healthy weight, a poor diet is associated with major health risks that can cause illness and even death. These include heart disease, hypertension (high blood pressure), type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and certain types of cancer. By making smart food choices, you can help protect yourself from these health problems.

Michigan and Jackson area residents are urged to follow these healthy eating tips throughout National Nutrition Month and the rest of the year:

- Get into a wellness state of mind. Balance your diet with food from all food groups. Get active every day with enjoyable movement.
- Eat right with MyPlate. Make small changes to make healthier choices you can enjoy. (Choosemyplate.gov)
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables. They add color, flavor and texture plus vitamins, minerals and fiber. Focus on whole fruits. Vary your veggies.
- Make half your grains, whole grains. Vary your protein routine, include seafood, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, soy products, eggs and lean meats and poultry.
- Become a smart shopper by reading food labels to find out more about the foods you eat.
- Reduce food waste by transforming leftovers into meals, using the foods already on hand, and practicing good food safety.
- Change to low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt to cut back on saturated fat.
- Drink and eat less sodium, saturated fat and added sugars. Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

For more information about healthy eating and lifestyle, visit Eatright.org.

WIC is a federally-funded program that serves low income women, infants and children up to age 5, by providing nutritious food, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health care and other community services. WIC foods are selected to meet specific nutrient needs, such as calcium, iron, folic acid, vitamins A and C. “WIC food benefits are a great example of what a healthy diet should consist of, and whether you are a WIC participant or not, choosing to consume the foods that WIC has researched is a smart move,” states Stefanie Horning, Registered Dietitian and WIC Coordinator for the Jackson County Health Department WIC Program.

To learn more about WIC and the foods they provide, contact the Jackson County WIC Program at (517) 788-4484. To find WIC in other areas of Michigan, call 211 or visit Michigan.gov/WIC.

#NationalNutritionMonth