

Health Bytes, March 5, 2010

National Nutrition Month

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This year's theme is "Nutrition From the Ground Up." Here are some ideas on how to eat healthy:

Start with the basics. Eating a balanced diet doesn't have to be complicated. A healthy eating plan consists of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy, lean meats, poultry, fish, beans and nuts. Reading labels and selecting foods low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt and added sugars are important considerations in following a healthy eating plan.

Make calories count by focusing on nutrient-dense rather than "good" or "bad" foods. Most food choices should contain a larger amount of vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients. Be conscious of portion sizes. Even low-calorie foods can add up when you eat a larger serving than you need.

Eat a variety of foods from all the food groups. Fruits and vegetables can be fresh, canned or frozen. Choose locally grown produce that's in season. Vary protein choices and try to include more fish, beans and peas. Aim for at least three servings of whole grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice or pasta every day.

Eat together as a family most nights of the week. Eating meals together helps children develop a healthy attitude toward food. It also allows parents to serve as role models, introduce new foods and establish a regular meal schedule.

Balance physical activity and healthy eating to manage weight and improve overall health and fitness. Set a goal to be physically active a minimum of 30 minutes a day.