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THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN ST. LUCIE COUNTY PROMOTES HEALTHY EATING DURING NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH®



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St. Lucie County, FL - March is National Nutrition Month and the Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County is promoting healthy eating and encouraging Floridians to make informed food choices. National Nutrition Month® is sponsored annually by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and this year's theme is "Put Your Best Fork Forward." The campaign serves as a reminder that each bite counts and to start with small changes in our eating habits – one forkful at a time. Making small changes in our food choices can add up over time to big health benefits.

"Something as simple as including more fruits, vegetables, nuts and whole grains daily supports good health," said Clint Sperber, Health Officer for the Department of Health in St. Lucie.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics suggests the following tips to 'put your best fork forward' for you and your family.

- Start the family's day with a nutritious breakfast;
- During each meal, fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables;
- Make at least half of the grains you eat whole grains; and
- Talk positively about eating healthy foods around your children and lead by example.

"Although all foods may be eaten in moderation, too much sugar, whether in the form of foods or sweetened beverages, contains hidden calories which may lead to excess weight gain and dental caries," said Mally Chrulski, Nutrition Program Director. "Reading the label of processed foods is a must to limit those with high fructose corn syrup, another hidden sweetener. A good rule of thumb is to include whole, natural foods in place of too many processed foods."

Improving overall well-being requires a lifelong commitment to healthful lifestyle behaviors, including daily physical activity. Parents can encourage their children to spend time each day playing fun, physical activities that include running, jumping, dancing, or skipping. Parents and their children can participate in a physical activity together like playing ball at the park, rollerskating or rollerblading, riding bikes or even just walking together.

"Reward your children with trips to the beach or park rather than using food as a reward," said Mrs. Chrulski. "This will help to encourage an active lifestyle as a positive choice while avoiding emotional attachments to food."

For further information about nutrition and National Nutrition Month®, visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website at www.eatright.org.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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