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THE JACKSON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH RECOGNIZES NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

There is no one food, drink, pill or machine that acts as the key to achieving optimal health. A person's overall daily routine is what is most important. That is why, as part of National Nutrition Month 2015, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics urges everyone to "Bite into a Healthy Lifestyle."

Each March, the Academy encourages Americans to return to the basics of healthful eating through National Nutrition Month. This year's theme encourages consumers to adopt a healthy lifestyle that is focused on consuming fewer calories, making informed food choices and getting daily exercise in order to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of chronic disease and promote overall health.

Age, gender, body type, family history, existing health conditions and daily routines all play a factor in determining which foods we should eat more of and which we should avoid when trying to optimize our health. Understanding what is in food is essential to making informed food choices while building an eating plan that meets your tastes.

The Jackson County Department of Public Health (JCDPH) offers a variety of nutrition education for each stage of life through a variety of programs. Good nutrition begins before birth, and pregnant moms are educated about prenatal nutrition and the benefits of breastfeeding when they participate in the agency's prenatal clinics and in the WIC Program, a Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. WIC provides healthy foods, health care referrals, breastfeeding support and eating tips for the family. WIC is for children up to 5 years of age, infants, pregnant women, breastfeeding women who have had a baby in the last 12 months, and women who have had a baby in the last 6 months.

The agency also offers Medical Nutrition Therapy for all ages which provides nutritional counseling to individuals for weight management and a variety of chronic conditions such as heart disease or diabetes with a physician's order. A registered dietitian works closely with clients to help them set goals and incorporate lifestyle changes to improve their health as they learn to manage their conditions.

Further, JCDPH offers group weight-management and nutrition classes that follow the Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less curriculum. This 15-week program uses evidence-based strategies proven to assist participants in weight loss and maintenance. Lastly, JCDPH offers educational classes throughout Jackson County that provide insight on nutrition, healthy decision-making, and much more.

To learn more about these programs, contact the Health Department at 828-587-8289 or visit <http://health.jacksonnc.org/>. WIC is an equal opportunity employer.

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