



Jackson County Department of Public Health

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March is National Nutrition Month®
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The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has released the 2024 theme for National Nutrition Month®. This is an annual campaign established in 1973 by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The Academy shares “this year's theme is ‘Beyond the Table’, which addresses the farm-to-fork aspect of nutrition, from food production and distribution to navigating grocery stores and farmers’ markets, and even home food safety and storage practices. It also describes the various ways we eat, not only around a dinner table, but also on the go, in schools and restaurants, at games and events. This theme also includes sustainability, for instance, decreasing food waste from school and work to home and beyond.” Throughout the month of March, the Academy will highlight topics through weekly messages.

The first week in March will highlight eating healthy on a budget. Families may find these tips especially helpful due to rising food costs. The Jackson County Department of Public Health (JCDPH) employs two Registered Dietitians / Nutritionists (RDNs) and a Nutritionist. They are available to help residents learn cooking tips, food preparation and meal planning to help stretch their grocery dollars. They can teach individuals how to use a grocery list and shop sales. They also refer families to community resources such as SNAP, WIC, and local food pantries. The second week of March will provide guidance on making connections with local RDN’s. Anyone who feels they may have a need for individualized Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) should talk with their doctor about a referral. JCDPH currently provides MNT at no charge with a referral from a physician. During the session with the RDN, clients will receive personalized nutrition information to meet their health goals.

The third week of March will promote ways individuals can eat a variety of foods from all the food groups. Individuals will be encouraged to include favorite cultural foods and traditions and to eat foods in various forms including fresh, frozen, canned and dried. To avoid boredom and eating the same foods repeatedly, the Academy will encourage folks to experiment with different recipes and ingredients and to try new foods. The Nutrition staff at JCDPH can provide families with resources for recipes using healthy, low cost ingredients.

The final week of National Nutrition Month® will help families learn to eat while keeping the environment in mind. Families are encouraged to get creative with leftovers to reduce food waste. There are also many resources available to promote eating more plant-based meals and snacks. Jackson County is fortunate to have local farmers, and buying in season foods from local farmers is beneficial to the consumer, the environment and the community. Families may also



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be inspired to grow their own food at home or in a Community Garden. JCDPH is available to help with these activities as well. For information on the Cullowhee Community Garden reach out to Garden Manager, David Claxton, at gardenmanager@jacksonnc.org.

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