



Catawba County Public Health

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NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH: THREE GUIDELINES FOR BETTER NUTRITION

With thousands upon thousands of products filling our grocery store shelves, and scores of restaurants with tantalizing meals, deciding what to eat can be a challenge. Fortunately, National Nutrition Month is a perfect time to learn more about nutrition to help make that decision a little easier.

Figuring out the nutritional needs of most of our bodies comes down to three guidelines that we can use to look at nutrition as a whole. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' three guidelines can get almost anyone on the path of eating more nutritious foods:

- Emphasize fruit, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat or fat-free milk and milk products.
- Include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts.
- Make sure your diet is low in saturated fats, trans fats, salt (sodium) and added sugars.

These days, when it comes to balancing our diets, the old food pyramid is out, and the new My Plate is in. The idea behind My Plate is to show what a balanced meal actually looks like. There is less emphasis on grains, and half the plate is taken up by vegetables and fruits. The number of servings for each category is gone. Instead, the visual divisions on the plate are a guide. The other major difference is the meat category from the old pyramid has been replaced with a protein category on the plate, which includes meats, nuts, eggs and other plant proteins.

With MyPlate, you can create a daily nutritional checklist at www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlate-Daily-Checklist. It's customizable and can be used for children or adults.

Another great local resource for children is the Catawba County Women, Infant and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC). It's funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for infants and children up to age five, and pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women. WIC helps ensure that families have access to foods that are rich in protein, iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C. To help families plan healthy meals, the program also offers nutritional counseling. For more information about WIC, log on to <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth/Child/WIC.asp> or call 828-695-5800. Catawba County Public Health is an equal opportunity provider.

Catawba County Public Health promotes and protects the health of all Catawba County residents through preventive services, innovative partnerships, and community health improvement initiatives. For more information, please call (828) 695-5800 or visit www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth.

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"Leading the Way to a Healthier Community"

