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MARCH IS NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH *Local WIC Services Help Residents “Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day”*

YPSILANTI, Mich., March 1, 2013 – The theme of this year’s National Nutrition Month is “Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day.” Each March, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics encourages Americans to embrace the basics of healthy eating. This year’s theme emphasizes including foods you love as part of an overall healthful eating plan that is tailored to your own lifestyle, traditions, health needs and tastes. In Washtenaw County, WIC services are available to women with low and moderate incomes who are pregnant, breastfeeding or postpartum and children up to age five. WIC can help local families eat healthfully – their way. To learn more about enrolling in WIC, Washtenaw residents may call the local WIC office at 734-544-6800 or 211.

“WIC provides client-centered nutrition education that encourages participants to play an active role in their own learning and staff to act as facilitators. This allows clients to eat right in their own way every day!” says Gayathri Akella, Washtenaw County WIC Service Coordinator.

WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) is a federally-funded program, operated locally. WIC provides supplemental food, nutrition education and counseling and referrals based on health screenings and needs assessments. WIC has demonstrated positive effects on pregnancy outcomes, child growth and development.

A common misperception is that eating healthfully means giving up favorite foods. According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 82% of U.S. adults cited not wanting to give up foods as a reason for not eating healthier (“Total Diet Approach to Healthy Eating,” 2011). The most important focus of healthy eating, however, is the total diet, rather than any one food or meal. All

foods can fit within an overall healthful pattern when enjoyed in moderation and combined with physical activity.

There is no particular way to eat that is right for everyone. When eating is customized to suit personal needs and preferences, healthful eating becomes a part of a lifestyle that can be sustained over time. Planning ahead is one of the best ways to satisfy nutritional needs and your appetite on a busy schedule. Whatever your lifestyle, a registered dietitian can help you personalize an eating plan to meet your nutritional needs and food preferences.

Tips to Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Busy work days and business travel can lead to on-the-fly meals.

- For desktop dining, keep single-serve packages of crackers, fruit, peanut butter, low-sodium soup or canned tuna in your desk.
- Tuck portable, nonperishable foods in a purse, briefcase or backpack for a meal on the run. Try granola bars, peanut butter and crackers, unsalted nuts, fresh fruit, trail mix or single-serve packages of whole-grain cereal or crackers.

The student lifestyle can be fast-paced and low-budget, but even students can eat right with some savvy tips.

- Stock smart snacks that combine protein and complex carbohydrates, such as: apples with peanut butter; carrots and hummus; hardboiled eggs and fruit; banana and yogurt; almonds with low-fat cheese; or whole-grain cereal. These choices can double as quick breakfast foods to wake up your brain and muscles for the day.
- At the cafeteria, salad bars are a great choice; just go easy on the cheese, bacon, creamy dressings and other high-calorie add-ons. Use salad dressings with olive oil or other polyunsaturated oils.
- Follow the “MyPlate” guidelines at www.choosemyplate.gov and make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

Caring for family—children, elderly parents or both—can be a handful. However, family meals allow parents to be role models to promote healthy eating. And, just because a meal is made quickly doesn’t mean it isn’t nutritious.

- Keep things simple. Build a collection of recipes for quick and easy family favorites. Choose ingredients that you can use for more than one meal. For example, cook extra grilled chicken for chicken salad or fajitas the next day.
- Ask for help. Involve the kids in making salad, setting the table or other tasks.

As a part of the National Nutrition Month public education campaign, the Academy’s [National Nutrition Month website](#) offers a variety of helpful tips, games, tools and resources.

Washtenaw County Public Health promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Visit us online at <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>. The mission of the Michigan WIC program is to improve health outcomes and quality of life for eligible women, infants and children by providing nutritious food, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support and referrals to health and other services. Call 1-800-26-BIRTH for the WIC office nearest you.

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