July Health Promotion Toolbox
Fruits and Vegetables Month

Plan of the Week

Each week during Fruits and Vegetables Month, share one of the paragraphs below with your command so they can learn more about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables. Personnel will also learn how to incorporate the daily recommended amount of fruits and vegetables into their diets to reduce the risk of chronic diseases and maintain a healthy weight. You can access additional information, tools, and resources by clicking on the blue, underlined hyperlinked text.

Week 1

Incorporate fruits and vegetables into your diet for optimal health and performance. Colorful fruits and vegetables are important because they are rich in antioxidants that have the nutrients your body needs to be healthy.[1] This is why eating the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables each day helps decrease the risk of various chronic diseases, such as heart disease, certain types of cancer, and type-2 diabetes.[1] Combined with exercise, eating more fruits and vegetables can also help you lose weight because fruits and vegetables are high in fiber which helps satisfy hunger.[2] Learn how many servings of fruits and vegetables you should eat each day by using the quick fruits and vegetables calculator. To learn new and interesting ways to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into your diet, start the 30-Day Fruit and Veggie Challenge.

Week 2

Fill your plate with plenty of different colors of fruits and vegetables to gain maximum nutritional benefits. You know that fruits and vegetables come in different colors. But did you also know that each color has a unique health benefit? For example, red fruits and vegetables such as cherries, tomatoes, and red onions support the heart and circulatory function. [3] The USDA encourages us to make half our plate fruits and vegetables at every meal. When deciding which fruits and vegetables to choose, the best option is to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables of different colors. Eating a variety helps you gain maximum nutritional benefits from your fruit and veggie choices because different antioxidants and nutrients are found in

different colored fruits and vegetables. To make sure you get the most out of your food, try to have at least three colors at every meal.[4]

Week 3

Explore local, sustainable options for fruits and vegetables such as farmers markets and community gardens. Farmers markets and community gardens provide fruits and vegetables fresh from a local farm or garden. At farmers markets and community gardens, you can access a variety of local, in-season fruits and vegetables that are often fresher and cheaper than what is available at the grocery store. If your installation or community does not yet have these options, chances are there might be a farmers market or community garden nearby. For an activity that people of all ages can enjoy, you may also be interested in starting your own garden.

Week 4

Incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables into your daily meals on a budget. Eating the recommended daily amounts of fruits and vegetables might be easier and more affordable than you think. Check out these tips for buying affordable, fresh fruits and vegetables all year long that won't break the bank. Fruit and vegetables that are in season cost less and taste better. So when you try a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, you can spend less. You can also refrigerate or freeze fruits and vegetables to make them last longer. For example, you can cut up and freeze fruit that is ripening quickly and vegetables that are beginning to spoil. You can also save money when you maneuver through the grocery store with a plan.

References

[1] Why is it important to eat fruit? United States Department of Agriculture. http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/fruits-why.html. Accessed April 2015.
[2] Healthy Weight – it's not a diet, it's a lifestyle. United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/fruits_vegetables.html. Updated July 2012. Accessed April 2015.
[3] Eat the Rainbow. Commander, Navy Installation Command Fitness, Sports and Deployed Forces Support. http://navyfitness.org/nutrition/noffs_fueling_series/eat_the_rainbow/. Accessed May 2015.
[4] Eat the Rainbow. Commander, Navy Installations Command. Fitness, Sports and Deployed Forces Support. http://navyfitness.org/nutrition/noffs_fueling_series/eat_the_rainbow/. Accessed April 2015.