July– Navy Fruit & Vegetable Month

Activity Ideas to Promote Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

The Navy and Marine Corps Health Promotion Programs focus on improving the nutritional fitness of our military personnel and their families. July has been designated as Navy Fruit & Vegetable Month. We know that eating a variety of fruits and vegetables helps Sailors, Marines and their families get the essential vitamins and minerals that only these foods can provide, supporting them in maintaining optimal health and performance. But access to fresh fruits and veggies may sometimes be an issue, especially for our deployed service members, so it's important to know that all forms count. So even if fresh isn't available, they can still get their fruits & veggies in as canned, frozen, dried or juice.

In addition to supporting weight loss, consuming the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables daily also helps decrease the risk of various diseases, such as heart disease, cancer, and type-2 diabetes.

You can support this month's theme by:

- Making the DoN "Fruits & Veggies-More DOES Matter" video available at your command. This video clearly shows how easy it can be to fit in the recommended number of fruit and vegetable servings daily when "All Forms Count." You can request a copy by sending an E-mail to: HP-Products@nehc.mar.med.navy.mil.
- Offering the 30 Day Fruits and Veggie Challenge during the month of July. You'll find it at: http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/general-tools-and-programs/hp-toolbox/Fruit_Veggie_Challenge_Activity_Card_Toolbox_2014.pdf.
- Encouraging your command to establish a "healthy food policy" for command events which includes plenty of fruits and vegetables. Guidelines can be found at: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/downloads/healthy_worksite_food.pdf.
- Recommending that every service member at your command determine their individual recommended number of daily servings of fruits and vegetables, which can be found at: http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/.
- Encourage your command personnel to support local farmer's markets and "pick your own" farms. A list of your local farmers markets is available from the USDA at: http://search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/Accessible.aspx.
- Support the Fit Pick™/Healthy Alternatives NEXCOM vending program by encouraging them to add fresh or dried fruits and vegetables to the vending machines at your command.
- Supporting the DeCA "Healthy Choices for Life" program, which promote purchasing and consuming fruits and vegetables that are in season throughout the year.
- Assessing your command's nutrition environment by completing the m-NEAT Assessment which can be found at: http://www.nmcphc.med.navy.mil/Healthy_Living/Nutrition/chow.aspx.

- Supporting the USDA in promoting one of their key messages from the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, “Fill half your plate with fruits & vegetables.”
- Using the additional resources available in this month’s HP Toolbox!

Your leadership in promoting the consumption of fruits and vegetables benefits not only the individuals at your command, but the entire military population. We look forward to your support in this effort!