

Healthy Weight

INITIATIVE

NEWSLETTER

SET THE TABLE! FAMILY MEALS

Summer is over and school is back in session. Children are on a more consistent routine and it is a great time to get back in the habit of eating meals together as a family. When meals are eaten at home instead of on the go, families are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables and less likely to eat high calorie items like fries and soda. Younger children who eat frequently with their family are less likely to be overweight. This can protect children from some of the diseases associated with being overweight such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Many studies have shown the benefits of having regular family meals go even beyond nutrition. While it is true that eating dinner at home increases the likelihood of eating a nutritious meal, it can also decrease your child's risk for harmful behaviors. Research reveals that children that eat regular meals at the table are less likely to try cigarettes, alcohol, and other drugs. Family meals have also been associated with better grades in school. Making family dinners a regular part of your weekly routine can help your family strengthen relationships and reduce stress.

Here are some ideas to make family dinners a part of your routine.

- First of all set a goal and be realistic. If you currently are not having any family dinners, set a goal for 1-2 dinners per week and build from there.
- Don't over think it. Having a family dinner does not have to be extravagant. Especially when starting off you want to keep it simple. Try easy family favorites



like spaghetti or chili. Once you have mastered your schedule for family meals, you can work on being creative with dinner and adding more healthy choices.

- Make prep time family time. Have family members involved in preparation of the meal and setting the dinner table. This makes meal preparation quick, easy, and a lot more fun.
- Remove the screens. Avoid watching TV and spending time on phones and other electronics. This time should be set aside for the family to enjoy each other's company.
- Try using the crock pot. Putting everything together before you leave for work will allow you to come home to a delicious smelling meal that is ready to serve.



TRICKY TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER HALLOWEEN



Having a healthy Halloween doesn't mean you have to give up candy. Alternatively, it doesn't mean that you only hand out candy full of empty calories either. What is a candy monster to do? Lori Mooney, a registered dietitian at the Center for Healthy Weight and Nutrition at Nationwide Children's Hospital says that the most important thing a parent can do on Trick-or-Treat night is feed kids a nutritious meal beforehand. This will prevent candy from substituting as dinner and prevent overeating of treats. On the days following Halloween, Lori recommends that parents pair candy with other nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables, low fat milk, and lean protein. Other ideas that give children a choice include allowing your child to decide if they want to sell their candy to you, to share their candy with others, or possibly trade it for a toy. Remember, keep the bag of candy outside their bedroom, having candy so close may be irresistible. Set a day to throw all remaining candy away. For example, after one week the leftover candy will be tossed.

When deciding what you will hand out, consider these candy alternatives:

- granola bars
- flavored popcorn
- trail mix
- animal crackers

- sugar-free gum
- raisins
- stickers, pens, pencils, and small toys that aren't choking hazards

If you can't resist handing out candy look for choices that are lower in fat, sugar, and calories and always choose miniature size candy.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle at Halloween is easier if parents are motivated and are a positive role model. Binging on candy and then asking children to limit their candy won't work, it sends the wrong message. Even though a little indulgence occurs on Halloween, it won't derail your healthy lifestyle as long as your family eats nutritious meals on a regular basis. Here is an activity that is fun and makes a healthy treat.

Quarter apples and take a wedge out of the center of each quarter. Dunk them in water with a little lemon juice to prevent browning. Use slivered almonds for teeth (I toasted mine for color and taste!) Eyes are optional. I stuck pretzel rods in and attached candy eyes with peanut butter. www.ourbestbites.com



WELCOME JULIA SOSA MS, RD

Ms. Sosa will be joining the Healthy Weight Initiative team starting in October. She has over 26 years experience in both the delivery and management of health care services. She obtained a Bachelors Degree in Dietetics from the University of Alabama and a Masters Degree in Clinical Nutrition from the University of Alabama. As a registered dietitian, she has worked in different healthcare settings including inpatient, outpatient, long-term care, community clinics and public health departments. She has served 22 of her 26 years as a health professional with the Alabama Department of Public Health. Currently, Ms. Sosa is the Assistant Director of the State Office of Minority Health of the Alabama Department of Public Health.

The Healthy Weight Initiative is very happy to have Ms. Sosa on board. Get to know Julia at the October orientation meeting!



BACK TO SCHOOL!

If your child's healthy habits went on vacation this summer, it's time to get back on track! Proper nutrition and physical activity gives your child an advantage in the classroom. A great way to start your child off right is with a nutritious breakfast. When children eat breakfast they have better attendance, less tardiness, and fewer hunger pains in the morning. Children that eat breakfast are focused on their school work instead of their stomach rumbling. Try giving your child whole-grain cereal, toast, or granola bar with some fruit and milk or orange juice. If your child eats lunch at school, review the school's lunch menu and talk to your child about what healthy choices they can make. If you pack your child's lunch, make sure you include choices with whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and low-fat or fat-free dairy. When

you go grocery shopping, take your child with you to help pick out their favorite healthy lunch choices so that they will be familiar with the food they are eating. If your child is staying after school for any activities, make sure to pack a snack for them to have beforehand. Fruit or vegetables slices, whole-grain crackers with peanut butter or low fat cheese can provide the energy they need until dinner time. It is important for children to get plenty of physical activity each day. Encouraging children to play their favorite sport or active game after school and on weekends will keep your child healthy. Playing with your child is a great way for you to maintain your own health while spending time with your children. Children tend to mimic the behaviors they see so it is important to be a healthy role model in your home.

ALABAMA'S WELLNESS SUMMIT

Please join us for "Alabama's Wellness RX: Healthy Families, Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities" hosted by The Alabama Obesity Task Force and Alabama Action for Healthy Kids. This one day summit will discuss solutions for creating a healthier environment to live, learn, and play in our Alabama communities. Featured speakers include State Health Officer, Dr. Donald Williamson, Stephenie B. Wallace, MD, Robert Murray, MD and Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox just to name a few. Mark your calendar for Tuesday, October 29th and invite colleagues in your respective organizations. School professionals, community and government leaders, health care providers, health professionals and concerned citizens are encouraged to attend this exciting event. Cost is only \$10 per person. Seating is limited so register and pay \$10 on line to ensure a spot and lunch choice at <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/events/event/52>. Registration and payment will also be accepted at the door but only if seating is still available.

ALABAMA'S WELLNESS RX: HEALTHY FAMILIES, HEALTHY SCHOOLS, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

PELHAM CIVIC COMPLEX
500 Amphitheater Road, Pelham, Alabama 35124
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2013 • 8AM UNTIL 4PM

The Alabama Obesity Task Force invites you to a one day wellness summit with solutions for creating a healthier environment to live, learn, and play.

Recommended for school professionals, community leaders, health care providers, health professionals in the medical and public health arena, government officials, and concerned citizens.

Cost is \$10 per person.
Box lunch will be provided.
Registration details coming soon!
Visit www.adph.org/obesity for more information.



WATERMELON QUEEN

Summer programs in Selma, Tuscaloosa, Haleyville, Guntersville, and Tarrant had a special appearance from the 2013 Alabama Watermelon Queen. Miss Jordan Skipper of Ashford, Alabama visited with children around the state to enjoy some watermelon tasting and talk about the importance of eating watermelon and other fruit. As this year's Watermelon Queen, Jordan will make appearances in schools, supermarkets, parades, festivals, and more promoting the watermelon industry and the importance of this fruit in the diet.





NEWS AND EVENTS

NATIONAL BULLYING PREVENTION MONTH

The End of Bullying Begins with Me: that's the message during PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month in October. It's a time when communities can unite nationwide to raise awareness of bullying prevention through events, activities, outreach, and education. Resources from PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center make it easy to take action. Go to www.pacer.org/bullying for more information.

When: October 2013

Where: Nationwide

OBESITY TASK FORCE MEETING

Attend the state obesity task force meeting to network with partners across the state working on obesity issues in adults and youth. Hear about programs and strategies that create healthier lifestyles and environments. Task force meetings are open to the public.

When: November 12, 2013

Where: Alabama Power Company, Clanton

What time: 9:00am until noon

AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH

American Diabetes Month® (ADM) is designed to focus the nation's attention on issues surrounding diabetes and the

many people who are impacted by the disease. American Diabetes Month takes place each November and is a time to come together as a community to Stop Diabetes®! Visit www.diabetes.org and click on "In My Community", then "Community Programs" for more information.

When: November 2013

Where: Nationwide

SCALE BACK ALABAMA 2014

Scale Back Alabama is a statewide contest held in January each year to encourage Alabamians to lose weight, exercise, and have fun while doing it. The 2014 contest begins soon! We encourage you and your school to participate. There is no cost to take part in Scale Back Alabama. The contest is for adults age 18 and older. Visit www.scalebackalabama.com for more details.

When: January 18- 24, 2014

Where: Statewide, weigh in locations will be on the website in January

