

Your Health Matters

FRUITS AND VEGGIES – MORE MATTERS

Recently I was inspired by my friend, Rachel Smith Weekley. She taught a healthy eating class at Reach Church, and her story inspired me to eat healthier.

Heart disease runs in my family. I was starting to have some health issues, and I wanted to “nip it in the bud,” as the saying goes. In June, I changed my eating habits to a plant-based diet. I believe eating real food will move my body toward health. I feel so much better after eliminating diet soda and processed foods.

Through my own personal nutrition journey, I came across a great website. It might help you eat more fruits and vegetables, too! Fruits and Veggies – More Matters is a health initiative focused on helping Americans increase their fruit and vegetable consumption for better health. Check it out at fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org.

With more than 200 choices and a variety of packaging options to make fruits and vegetables easy to store and serve, there’s bound to be something to please everyone, even the pickiest of eaters in your family. Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried – they all count. Fruits and veggies are nutrition powerhouses. Not only are they low in fat and calories, they are also good sources of a variety of nutrients, such as Vitamin C and folic acid, that promote good health.

Eat more! Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables. As a part of a healthy diet, they can:

- Help maintain a healthy weight.
- Help prevent certain cancers.
- Help maintain a healthy blood pressure.
- Reduce heart disease risk.
- Reduce risk of diabetes.

Recently we received an email from a mom thanking the Health Department for our Lana, The Iguana Program. Healthy eating habits start early. We use a hand puppet named Lana to encourage children to taste fruits and vegetables, like broccoli, peas, apricots, and cherry tomatoes.

“Thank you for your program that you're bringing into the schools teaching young kids about healthy vegetables,” said Jill, the mother of a “picky” five-year-old who refused to try new foods and wanted only chicken nuggets. “He now loves broccoli. . . He will even tell you that fresh broccoli is one of his favorite foods.”

Learn more about nutrition for you and your family on our website at montgomerycountyhealth.org.

The Montgomery County Health Department loves taking care of your family, and works every day to protect, promote and improve health in our community. To learn more, call 573-564-2495 or visit us online at www.montgomerycountyhealth.org or on Facebook or Twitter @healthyMOCO. ■

