News Release

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Make a plan for an active, healthful summer

Summer is officially here! What can you do to make your summer active and healthful? The weather is warmer and is a great time to exercise. According to MyPlate (www.choosemyplate.gov), exercise can reduce your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stroke and Type 2 diabetes.

Choose activities that you enjoy and can do regularly. Keep it interesting by trying something different on alternate days. Mix it up. Swim, take a yoga class, garden or lift weights. Make sure to do at least 10 minutes of activity at a time, shorter bursts of activity will not have the same health benefits. Every little bit adds up and doing something is better than doing nothing. Stock up on fruits and vegetables. According to MyPlate, eating a diet rich in vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may reduce risk for heart disease and it may also protect against certain types of cancers.

One way to enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables is by visiting the local farmers’ markets and roadside stands, purchasing and serving locally grown produce. At these markets (http://hagerstownedc.org/agricultural-marketing/farmers-market) you can try samples and talk with farmers about ways to prepare these local fruits and vegetables. Seasonal produce is fresher, tastier and often less expensive than the produce you may find in the grocery store. Visit http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html and click on “Liven up your meals with vegetables and fruits” for tips to improve your meals with vegetables and fruits.

Watch out for empty calories in foods might choose during the hot summertime. Many snack foods have added solid fats and added sugars that add calories with few or no nutrients. The key is moderation not deprivation. When you choose snacks and treats try to have it in small portions that you can enjoy. Most of the time find healthful alternatives. Check out
http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html and click on “MyPlate Snack tips for parents” and “Cut back on your kids’ sweet treats” for healthy snacking tips.

Hydration is very important, especially during the hot summertime and even more important when you are active and exercising. What you drink is as important as what you eat. Many beverages contain added sugars and offer little or no nutrients, while others may provide nutrients but too much fat and too many calories. Drink water instead of sugary drinks when you are thirsty.

Let thirst be your guide. Water is an important nutrient for the body, but everyone’s needs are different. Most of us get enough water from the foods we eat and the beverages we drink. A healthy body can balance water needs throughout the day. Drink plenty of water if you are very active, live or work in hot conditions.

Visit www.extension.umd.edu/washington-county Click on the Food & Nutrition tab, then click on News Articles for more information on MyPlate Tips for ideas that can help you make your summer active and healthful.