



Newsletter

Partnering Toward a Healthier Future: Celebrating Nutrition Awareness Month

Did you know that African Americans and Hispanics who live in the United States are more than twice as likely to live in poverty? And that low-income individuals have limited access to nutritious food?

As a result, many racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected by food insecurity—the limited availability of nutritious food—and the accompanying poor health outcomes of obesity and malnutrition. Being overweight and undernourished are significant public health concerns because these outcomes are precursors to chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and cancer.

To increase access to nutritious foods, several federal programs exist, including Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); Free and Reduced Meal Plans in public schools; and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Locally, in Montgomery and Prince George's counties, organizations are striving to fill the nutrition food gap for low-income communities.

Manna Food Center, a central food bank, offers food assistance at 14 locations throughout Montgomery County. Each month, *Manna* provides food to more than 3,300 homes in the county. In Prince George's County, the Community Support Systems food pantry partners with local farmers to provide fresh fruit, vegetables and meat to more than 7,000 people each year.

Increasing access to nutritious food is the first step to healthier eating. Creating a balanced diet of nourishing meals is another important step in proper nutrition.

Three keys to eating a balanced diet are:

Balance.

Eat the recommended number of items from each food group each day.

Moderation.

Enjoy a little bit of everything, but not in excess. Just enough to “feed your need.”

Variety.

Eat different foods from each food group to help you receive the proper nutrition and add “pizzazz” to healthy eating. The more variety of foods you have on your plate, the more colorful your plate will be and the more nutritious your diet.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Dietary Guidelines are an excellent source to guide nutritious eating. Visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov> for the USDA's current recommendations and nutritional tips for people of all ages and health categories.



Eat Well, Be Well.

Partnering Toward a Healthier Future,
Your Friends at The Center on Health Disparities

Data Sources: [Center on Health Disparities Social Determinants of Health 2010 Progress Report](#); Population Reference Bureau, <http://www.prb.org>; The Healthwise® Non-profit group; Kaiser Permanente, www.KP.org, and USDA, www.mypyramid.gov