

Try Something New, Eat Some Healthy Blueberries

Tallahassee Democrat

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“Eat Right”!! Sounds simple enough; doesn’t it? Why do we make it so hard? During National Nutrition Month® celebrated each year in March; the American Dietetic Association (ADA) encourages us to make informed food choices and develop sound eating and physical activity habits. We can do this and there is no better time to begin than now.

The eating right celebration is a perfect opportunity to improve the entire family’s eating habits. We know families don’t always eat as healthfully as we would like. ADA encourages the following healthy eating habits in celebration of National Nutrition Month®.

1. Be a good food role model for your children. Telling your children to eat nutritious foods is one thing, actually showing them is even better. If you offer nutritious foods regularly and if they see you eating these foods — they learn from you.
2. Serve a variety of fruits and vegetables each day. In addition to the regulars; like apples and bananas, try something new like kiwi or mango. Serve fruits for desserts and make them available as easy snacks. Add veggies to stir fries or casseroles.
3. Have a scheduled snack time. Space snacks 2 to 3 hours before a meal.
4. Registered dietitian and ADA Spokesperson Melinda Johnson encourages us to involve children in planning and preparing the family’s meals. She states, “Bring kids into the kitchen by allowing them to help with the menu and do age-appropriate tasks like setting the table or tearing lettuce for the salad.” Children often will eat foods they plan and prepare.
5. Trying out new foods expands your food knowledge, experience and skills. Encourage your family (and sometimes yourself) to try new foods with an open mind. We all like some new things, but not all and that’s OK!
6. Allow your children to stop eating when they are full. We don’t have to “clean our plates”. Encourage your children to eat slowly. By paying attention to feeling full and learning how hunger feels children will learn to eat enough, but not overeat – a lesson adults need to learn as well.
7. Eat as a family. If it is possible have a family meal at least once a day and it does not have to be dinner. If breakfast works better for your family, then set the table the night before so there is less effort in the morning. Don’t eat in front of the TV. Have the family eat around a table and not sitting side by side at a counter. Enjoy your meal. Avoid fussing, arguing or complaining at the table. A meal that is stress free and not rushed promotes family bonding and helps everyone enjoy what they are eating.
8. Be active. A good diet is just one part of a healthy lifestyle. Involving the entire family in regular physical activity is a great way to encourage and influence the importance of being active through out life.

Make your celebration last all month and remember to just . . . “Eat Right”!

Source and for more National Nutrition Month® information:

<http://eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/index.html>

If you have a question, write to Jo Shuford-Law, Extension Agent Family and Consumer Sciences, University of Florida/IFAS Extension--Leon County, 615 Paul Russell Road, Tallahassee, FL 32301-7099; or call the Extension Office 487-3006, between 8 a.m. to noon or 1 to 5 p.m. weekdays.

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