

Eating Right Isn't Complicated!

By

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Since March is National Nutrition Month, in this month's column I want to share with you some thoughts about healthy eating that I read on the American Diabetes Association website (ADA). Anyone can eat healthy if they understand that it is not difficult at all to do. Here are some suggestions:

- **Start with the basics.** Eating right doesn't have to be complicated. A healthy eating plan emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy and includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans and nuts. A healthy eating plan is also low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt and added sugars.
- **Make calories count** by thinking nutrient-rich rather than good or bad foods. Most food choices should be packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients and lower in calories. Be aware of portion sizes. Even low-calorie foods can add up when portions are larger than you need.
- **Focus on variety** by eating a variety of foods from all of the food groups. Fruits and vegetables can be fresh, canned or frozen. Look for locally grown produce that's in season. Vary your protein choices with more fish, beans and peas. Include at least three servings of whole grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice or pasta everyday.
- **Make the most of family mealtime.** Eating meals together provides the opportunity to help children develop a healthy attitude toward food. It also enables parents to serve as role models, introduce new foods and establish a regular meal schedule.
- **Be physically active.** Balancing physical activity and a healthful diet is your best recipe for managing weight and promoting overall health and fitness. Set a goal to be physically active at least 30 minutes everyday.

I hope I have presented these ideas in a way that you can see how simple it can be to start making healthy changes in your eating habits. If it all sounds overwhelming to you, then just try one idea until it becomes a habit and then add another. Before long, you will have made the transition to living a healthier lifestyle. You will be pleased with the results I am sure! For more information contact the Hardee County Extension Office at 863-773-2164. (reference: www.foodculinaryprofs.org)