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Nutrition Solutions For the Busy Parent

It's the third month into those goals of small and large proportions that we set at the brink of each new year. Just how are you doing on your resolution to be more nutritious? Your family? Resolution undertakings can often be daunting and, perhaps, that is why the holiday celebrated this month seems to have such a perfect fit into the year. March is celebrated as National Nutrition Month; this month-long holiday gives all a chance to breathe new life back into the associated resolves for the year.

Resolutions relating to health and nutrition are of the top made each year. However, realistically, all family members seem to be more on the go which can often lend itself to unhealthy nutrition practices. Busy parents may ponder just what the best solutions to nutrition resolutions are for themselves and their children.

Despite the hectic lifestyle that parents lead today, they are a child's best anchor when it comes to rectifying the health related stigmas attached to today's youth. Studies consistently show that the diet of most teenagers is high in sugar and fat which is undoubtedly connected to the statistic of 1 in 5 teenagers being overweight. Also outside of weight, parents have to deal with the special nutritional guidelines that are signature to child gender and athletes as well as the general nutritional issues regarding well-rounded diets important to all growing children. It's obvious that parents today have their plate full; however, there are some quick tips they can employ as well as some good advice to bear in mind:

- * Establish a regular eating time. Even if it is not everyday, this is a first step toward the reduction in high sugar and high fat on-the-go eating.
- * Don't leave the grocery store without fruits and vegetables. Make them a mainstay in your house. Everyone needs at least 5 fruits and vegetables servings daily.
- * Make sure your child gets proper calcium intake. Many teenagers especially females do not consume the recommended food and beverages containing calcium.
- * Enlist the entire family in cooking and pulling off dinnertime.
- * When eating on the go, consciously, start a regimen that consists of healthy on-the-go selections. Packing your own may make this an easier task.
- * For athletic children, make sure they especially have a diet that is high in iron and calcium.
- * Consciously, reduce portions whenever possible. If dining out, the reduced portions can be taking home to be enjoyed as a separate meal.

A few last tips for the road:

Don't forget breakfast and exercise. Simply make it happen, even if requires enlisting a little creativeness in pulling it off. Also, keep these and similar efforts focused on health versus weight to combat the very serious issues regarding youth and body image. Attaining this popular resolution can definitely become more feasible when one looks at its smaller components and recognizes successes in every step. A parent's investment into their child's nutrition today is one that comes with great outcomes for the entire family as well as yields continued investments into healthier families thus healthier communities for tomorrow.

For more information on this or related topics, contact Synithia Williams, Regional Extension Agent in Family and Child Development for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System at (205) 338- 9416 or email at willisl@aces.edu.

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