



**Department of Health**  
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### **March is Nutrition Month**

One of the most simple and basic rules of good health is balancing energy expended with energy consumed resulting in maintenance of a healthy weight. Good nutrition, combined with physical activity, is the key to maintaining that balance.

March is Nutrition Month, which recognizes the role of nutrition in maintaining a healthy weight, preventing disease, and improving overall health. During Nutrition Month, we should remember to eat whole grains, vegetables, fruits and low-fat or fat-free dairy products.

Excess calories and too much fat and sugar are the primary nutritional problems challenging Americans today. Poor nutrition, combined with sedentary lifestyles, leads to obesity, the second most preventable cause of death in the United States.

In New York State, 58 percent of adults were considered overweight or obese in a New York State Department of Health survey conducted in cooperation with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2004. According to CDC surveys, the obesity rate among New York adults doubled between 1990 and 2002.

A person is overweight if his or her body mass index (BMI) is between 25 and 29.9, and considered obese if the BMI is 30 or more.

A 2005 CDC survey of New York State youth found that 28 percent of high school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. The 2005 Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System found that 32 percent of New York's low-income children between two- and five-years-old were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.

Choosing healthy nutrition helps to reduce the risk of disease. Good nutrition can decrease the risks of heart disease, osteoporosis, some cancers and high blood pressure.

Choosing vegetables and fruit helps to reduce the fat and cholesterol in your diet, while providing an excellent source of vitamins, fiber and energy.

The State Health Department recommends five to nine servings of vegetables and fruit and three or more servings of low-fat milk or other low-fat dairy product or calcium rich foods every day. The State Health Department, through its Eat Well, Play Hard intervention, asks parents, teachers and others to serve as role models to encourage children to adopt healthy lifestyles that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Eat Well, Play Hard also promotes at least 60 minutes of physical activity, including both free and structured play, for children over the age of two and at least 30 minutes for adults every day.

It is easy to incorporate tasty, healthful foods in your daily eating plan. For example, start the day with a glass of orange juice and add raisins to your cereal. Have a salad with lunch, and snack on dried fruit in

the afternoon. Add extra vegetables to whatever you are cooking for dinner, whether it is soup, stew or stir-fry. In the grocery store, buy one percent milk instead of whole milk.

For more information, visit on-line at [www.nyhealth.gov](http://www.nyhealth.gov) or call:

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