



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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ADPH promotes fruit and vegetable consumption for improved nutrition

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Parents and teachers are more concerned than ever about the quality of food that children eat in schools, and eating fruits and vegetables is a key component of better nutrition. The Alabama Department of Public Health encourages parents to first make sure their children have access to fruits and vegetables and second to encourage children to eat generous amounts of fruits and vegetables as a part of a healthful diet.

During September several schools in Alabama are promoting the first ever Fruits & Veggies—More Matters Month, a national effort to get Americans to understand the importance of fruits and vegetables to their health. The theme, which targets school-aged children and their parents, is Exploring the World with Fruits and Vegetables.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, “Better nutrition and increased physical activity in schools become more important as more children are overweight than ever before. Children are beginning to suffer from diseases that were mostly adult diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, and to have more risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Fruits and vegetables play a critical role in weight management and disease prevention.”

Teachers and child nutrition staff are getting children interested in fruits and vegetables with promotions that relate to subjects they are learning in class and to their cultural heritage by Exploring the World with Fruits and Veggies.

South Highland Middle School in Union Springs will be setting up a fruit and vegetable display where nutrition information and healthy recipes from around the globe will be available for students and teachers. The school will also host a presentation for parents on eating healthy during the first parent night of the school year. Schools in Dallas County will be participating in fruit and veggie month by decorating their cafeterias with posters and banners to raise awareness.

E.D. Nixon Elementary School in Montgomery will have a registered dietitian speak to pre-kindergarten students and their parents about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables. After school programs are also getting involved. The Southeast YMCA in Montgomery will have

nutrition information available for members, and third grade students will take part in a nutrition program that focuses on fruits and vegetables.

When asked why he supports nutrition messages such as eating more fruits and veggies, Derrick Harris, vice-principal of South Highland Middle School and 21st Century Learning Coordinator states, "I have a real concern for the children and youth in my community and school, particularly in the area of obesity and diabetes. I want to give the students and their parents programs and materials that will help them make healthy food choices like eating more fruits and vegetables. "

For more information, visit www.adph.org/nutrition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov, and the Produce for Better Health Foundation at www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org.

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