



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

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To: Local Media

From: Scott R. Miller, Health Educator

RE: September is Fruit & Vegetables Month

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DOES YOUR CHILD'S LUNCH "CRUNCH"?

September is Fruits & Vegetable – More Matters Month, and many American's aren't getting enough

September of 2013 is Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, National Whole Grains Month and Fruits & Vegetables – More Matters Month. And this last title may be harder for some Americans to swallow. The Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) both say lack of fruits and vegetables in American diets is a situation that needs attention. Many adults and kids aren't eating enough fruits and vegetables.

Providing enough leafy greens and crunchy carrots can be difficult for some families. Salad bars in schools are a great way to provide a greater variety of nutrient-rich foods to school-aged children who may not have that opportunity elsewhere. According to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), school children eat more fruits and vegetables when they have a choice. With a self-serve salad bar, good options are more available to students, increasing the opportunity for children to get the fruits and veggies they want and need.

Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD) has been working with many central Michigan schools to promote the Fruits & Vegetables – More Matters message. Several schools in central Michigan have partnered with the CMDHD to improve access to healthy foods for their students. Harrison Community Schools, one of CMDHD's partners, has created a school garden that provides many additional fresh fruits and vegetables to the school's salad bar. More schools, including Reed City Public Schools, are working on establishing school gardens through this partnership as well.

There are many ways to get more fruits and vegetables into your diet every day. Here are some quick tips for packing a healthier lunch:

- Cut fruits and veggies into bit-size pieces and place them in a tightly sealed plastic bag for lunches or snacks.
- Squirting a small amount of lemon juice on cut fruit will help keep them from turning brown. Spice up your fruit by sprinkling a little cinnamon on cut apple slices.
- Include a small dab of peanut butter, yogurt, or cottage cheese for added protein.
- Pre-peel oranges and tangerines for ready-to-eat munching.
- Raisins and dried cranberries are a sweet and delicious way to eat more fruit.

If you would like an opportunity to support proper nutrition in your area, consider joining Together We Can. Together We Can is a community project aimed at improving health status in the central Michigan area. For more information, LIKE Together We Can Health Improvement Council on Facebook, visit our website at www.together-we-can.org or email us at TogetherWeCan@cmdhd.org.

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This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org and LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook.

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