



# North Central District Health Department

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## **NCDHD Encourages Healthy Eating**

North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) joins the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in celebrating National Nutrition Month. National Nutrition Month is held annually in March and focuses on the importance of making informed food choices and developing good eating and physical activity habits. NCDHD encourages all residents to eat healthy and to be active this spring.

“Spring is a great time to jump start your healthy eating and physical activity regimen,” said Patrice Sulik, NCDHD Director of Health. “As the weather gets warmer, more local vegetables become available. It’s a good time to lighten your eating habits and incorporate lighter and more refreshing meals such as salads.”

Good health comes from eating a well-balanced diet. This means making sure you regularly eat foods that have a lot of vitamins and minerals. The National Cancer Institute and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommend eating a variety of foods that you get enough of the essential nutrients you need. Avoid too much fat, cholesterol, sugar and sodium, and eat foods with adequate starch and fiber. To ensure healthy eating during the day:

- Eat a healthy breakfast

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Choose the leanest cuts of meat, poultry, and pork
- Use light or low fat dairy products
- Use butter or margarine sparingly
- Use a low fat salad dressing

Good nutrition is a key component of staying healthy. Eating healthy foods promotes growth and sustains life. Well-nourished and active children and teens grow, develop and learn better. Proper nutrition helps ensure a healthy pregnancy and successful breastfeeding. Active living helps adults and seniors feel their best, work productively, and lower their risk for some diseases. Making healthy food choices helps you live a longer, healthier and more active life.

Controlling your portion size is also very important to healthy eating. The Dietary Guidelines encourage you to enjoy your food, but to eat less and to avoid oversized (or supersized) portions. The USDA ([choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov)) offers tips to help you control portion size.

- Determine how big your portions really are by using a measuring cup. For example, if you normally eat cereal for breakfast, pour the amount you would eat into a measuring cup to see how big the portion size really is.
- Measure a fixed amount to use as a guideline for controlling your portions.
- Prepare, serve, and eat smaller portions of food. Only have seconds if you are still hungry.
- Pay attention to feelings of hunger. Stop eating when you are satisfied, not full.
- Use a smaller plate, bowl or glass.
- Don't overeat when dining out. Order smaller size portions when it's available.

Sulik reminds residents that stores will have a wider variety of fruits and vegetables as the warm weather moves in, making it easier to incorporate into your favorite recipes. Farmers markets are also a great source of locally grown produce.

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### **About NCDHD**

The North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) serves the communities of Enfield, East Windsor, Ellington, Stafford, Suffield, Vernon, Windham, and Windsor Locks. NCDHD is a full-time public health department with a full-time staff funded by its member towns and an annual per capita grant from the Connecticut State Department of Public Health. NCDHD provides professional public health services in the areas of health education and disease prevention, environmental health and emergency preparedness. The mission of NCDHD is to prevent disease, injury, and disability by promoting and protecting the health and well-being of the public and our environment.

For more information about NCDHD visit [www.ncdhd.org](http://www.ncdhd.org).