

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 11, 2017

**HEALTH PLAN OF SAN JOAQUIN (HPSJ)
CELEBRATES
FRUITS AND VEGGIES – MORE MATTERS MONTH, ALL SEPTEMBER**



“Eating healthy is a fun way to explore new foods and try new recipes. Find out what fruits and vegetables are on sale that week and try something new with your family.” – HPSJ Health Educator Setar Testo, MPH

(French Camp, CA) – September is **Fruits and Veggies – More Matters Month**, a health initiative spearheaded by the Produce for Better Health Foundation. The foundation has partnered with the federal government’s Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help spread the word about the health benefits of eating more fruits and veggies.

This health initiative focuses on how Americans can eat more fruits and veggies for better health.

- Add one more.
- Try something new.
- Educate yourself.
- Teach the kids.
- Try a new recipe.

In this spirit, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) joined with the Health and Human Services Department to create *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*. The guidelines recommend Americans make half their plate fruits and veggies, for meals and snacks, as shown by the MyPlate nutrition guide.

According to the *Community Health Needs Assessment of Stanislaus County, 2013*: “51.3% of Stanislaus County adults reported not eating 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day, while 49.9% of Stanislaus County children and 16.9% teens do so”. The San Joaquin County 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment states that “65.6% of San Joaquin adults reported not eating 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day, compared to 71.5% of adults in California”.

Here are eight compelling, irresistible reasons, to eat more fruits and veggies, adapted from the **MORE matters initiative**:

1. Fruits and veggies add color, texture and appeal to your plate.

(more)

HEALTH PLAN OF SAN JOAQUIN (HPSJ)

CELEBRATES

FRUITS AND VEGGIES – MORE MATTERS MONTH, ALL SEPTEMBER

September 11, 2017

Page 2 of 3

2. They have more nutrients in any form – whether fresh, frozen, canned or dried – so they are ready when you are!
3. Their natural fiber helps fill you up and keeps your digestive system happy.
4. They are low in calories.
5. Eating plenty of fruits and veggies as part of a balanced diet may even help cut the risk of many health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure and some cancers.
6. Both fruits and veggies are rich in vitamins and minerals that can help you feel healthy and energized.
7. They are full of antioxidants, which can keep cells healthy.
8. Fruits and veggies are nutritious and delicious!¹

Practical advice from HPSJ's Quality Improvement Nurse Jennifer Norris, RN –

“Eating healthy on a tight budget may not seem likely on some days. It is often simpler, and cheaper, to buy fast or junk foods for you and your family. This was all too true for my family when I was young. There is a solution to this!

- Watch for local ads for your nearby grocery stores.
- Buy fruits and veggies while they are on sale.
- Try different ones to make great salads for any meal of the day.
- Fruits are great with oatmeal and other cereal grains and make a healthy breakfast.
- Try mixing any salad greens (such as lettuce, spinach, or kale) and other fruits and veggies to make a healthy and filling lunch or dinner.

The ideas are endless and will lead to a healthier body. ”

From Health Plan of San Joaquin – The bottom line on fruits and veggies

Challenge yourself and family members of all ages to eat more fruits and veggies each day. Eating many colors of fruits and veggies is more vital than ever. Here are some fun ideas that you can try –

1. **Keep a bowl of fruit handy** where the whole family can see it.
2. **Cup up fruits and veggies** ahead of time, so they're ready for quick and healthy snacks.
3. **Challenge your family** to try a new veggie or fruit each week.
4. **Spread the word** about programs that support local agriculture.
5. **Encourage family and friends to make small changes**, like keeping fresh fruit or carrot sticks within easy reach.
6. **Plan for fruits and veggies to be the center of the plate**, and then add proteins and grains.
7. **Buy in season.** Most fruits and veggies are less expensive when they are in season.²

¹ “Top 10 Reasons To Eat MORE Fruits and Vegetables”. <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/top-10-reasons-to-eat-more-fruits-and-vegetables>. Accessed August 2, 2017.

² “September Fruits and Veggies – More Matters Month”. <https://healthfinder.gov/NHO/sep2Announce.aspx>. Accessed August 2, 2017.

**HEALTH PLAN OF SAN JOAQUIN (HPSJ)
CELEBRATES
FRUITS AND VEGGIES – MORE MATTERS MONTH, ALL SEPTEMBER**
September 11, 2017
Page 3 of 3

Health Plan of San Joaquin invites you and your family to make these healthy changes, together, for healthy living. Join us in September, and every day after, as we celebrate a healthier you!

For more healthy tips on how to eat more fruits and veggies, please visit:
<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/> and bookmark HPSJ's pages including
<https://www.hpsj.com/colors-fruits-vegetables/>

© Health Plan of San Joaquin – used with permission of HPSJ, September 2017

#####

Related HPSJ Health Library Article:
[Learn about ways to promote healthy growth in children and prevent obesity](#)



About HPSJ

HPSJ, a not-for-profit health plan, has been serving members and the community since 1996. With over 300 employees, HPSJ is located in the heart of California's multicultural Central Valley. HPSJ is the leading Medi-Cal Managed Care provider in San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties and offers a broad network of providers and works closely with physicians to develop programs and services to ensure quality health care for almost 350,000 members.

HPSJ is one of only 11 health plans in California with NCQA Accreditation for a managed care Medi-Cal program. Medicaid is known as Medi-Cal in California. Only 160 Medicaid/HMO plans in the U.S. had this NCQA seal at the time of HPSJ's 2015 Accreditation.

Media Contact: HPSJ VP External Affairs **David Hurst**, Phone: 209-461-2241, dhurst@hpsj.com