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Contact:

Susan Krahn, MS, RDN, CD, CLC
Public Health Nutritionist
715-839-6941
Susan.krahn@co.eau-claire.wi.us

Healthy Weight Week: Celebrate Healthy Diet-Free Living Habits that Last a Lifetime

EAU CLAIRE, Wis.- January 20, 2016 –With the beginning of a new year, now is the time when most people resolve to make some type of change in their diet or physical activity to lose weight or to become healthier. During *Healthy Weight Week*, the Eau Claire City-County Health Department encourages everyone to celebrate healthy diet-free living habits that last a lifetime to prevent eating and weight problems.

Overweight and obesity is a serious concern because it is associated with reduced quality of life, poor mental health outcomes, and the leading causes of death in the U.S., including diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and some types of cancer. In Eau Claire County, 31% of adults are considered obese. A recent community health needs assessment found that 81% of Eau Claire residents feel obesity is a moderate or major problem in our community. “Many of us should make changes in our lifestyles to achieve a healthier weight. We know that 75% of Eau Claire County adults do not consume the recommended 5 fruits and vegetables daily and 22% of adults engage in no leisure-time physical activity,” says Susan Krahn, Public Health Nutritionist at the Eau Claire City-County Health Department. “Our weight is a result of many factors. Individual behaviors and genetics are causes of overweight and obesity, but our community environment also plays an important role. It’s very difficult to make healthy changes if factors in our environment make those changes hard,” adds Susan Krahn.

Healthy Weight Week encourages people to stop dieting and pursue *livable* and *sustainable* healthy lifestyles. “One way we can all make an impact on the health of our community is to examine our environments- such as our homes, schools, childcare sites, workplaces, neighborhoods, and places where we purchase and eat food. Everyone can make or advocate for changes that make healthy food choices and physical activity easier,” states Susan Krahn.



Below are tips on how we, as a community, can work towards reducing obesity rates and making our hometowns a healthier place to live:

- **Increase physical activity:** Create opportunities to simply move more. Encourage kids to safely walk or bike to schools. Take a walking meeting, rather than sending emails with a co-worker. Plan events with your local church that are active, rather than sedentary.
- **Increase fruit and vegetable access, availability and consumption:** Support and promote community gardens, support a healthy food policy at worksites, and be role model of healthy eating for children.
- **Encourage healthy food & beverage consumption:** Limit access to foods and drinks of little nutritional value in your home. Bring fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and water for snacks at extracurricular activities. Model healthy eating by bringing healthier choices to family, school, or neighborhood gatherings.

- **Reduce screen time:** Limit total screen time for children to no more than 2 hours a day and don't put a television or computer in a child's room.
- **Increase breastfeeding:** Give mothers the support they need to breastfeed their babies, including education, time, flexibility and emotional encouragement.

For evidence-based ways our community can strive for healthy weights for all, visit <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity/stateplan/index.htm> to read the complete Wisconsin Nutrition, Physical Activity & Obesity state plan.

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