

# WA State Employee Assistance Program

## Nutrition: Small Changes, Big Impact

March 2016

March is National Nutrition Month, a time for reinforcing healthy and nutritious eating habits. But a good reminder is to always check with your doctor before making any dietary changes. Here are some tips to help you get started making healthy choices.



- ◇ **Ditch the diet mentality.** Healthy eating is a way of life, not a quick fix. There are many types of “diets” and not every diet is going to work for every person. Listen to your body and experiment with different foods to see what works best for you.
- ◇ **Set healthy, realistic goals.** Don’t expect overnight results when you start making healthy changes. You are more likely to succeed if you make small, specific changes step by step.
- ◇ **Drink water.** There are so many health benefits to drinking water. Water helps keep your body hydrated and also may provide a feeling of fullness. Add a slice of lemon if you want to add some flavor.
- ◇ **Plan ahead.** Meal prep is key for success. Make a weekly menu to include healthy foods before you go grocery shopping. Planning healthy meals can take time so schedule time in the week for it. This will limit the urge to eat convenient unhealthy choices due to lack of preparedness.
- ◇ **Prioritize clean eating.** Incorporate whole, nutritious foods and eliminate processed, packaged items. High quality whole foods may be expensive but so are poor health, diet-related disease, and doctor visits. The most important thing to do to ensure optimal health is to just eat real food.
- ◇ **Limit added sugar.** Sugar contains empty calories and has no nutritional values. Sugar has also been linked to decreased immune systems, increased insulin levels, obesity, cardiovascular disease, and type II diabetes.
- ◇ **Embrace good fats.** Our bodies need them. Good fats, like monounsaturated fat, provide vital energy, enhance our immune system, protect our cells and organs, and help lower blood cholesterol levels. Avocados, coconut oil, nuts, and olive oil are a few examples.
- ◇ **Cook more, eat out less.** Garden, cook, bake, and prepare food with your family. Food is your body’s fuel. Power up with nutritious, locally-sourced, made from scratch foods.