



GAUTENG PROVINCE
HEALTH
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

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EATING MORE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES HELPS REDUCE THE RISK OF OBESITY AND NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

As the country marks the National Nutrition Week which is commemorated every year between 09 to 15 October,” the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) wishes to remind the public that eating more vegetables and fruits helps strengthen the immune system and protects against diseases.

The theme for this year’s National Nutrition Week is “Eat more vegetables and fruit every day,” and it is meant to showcase the health benefits of fruit and vegetables.

Eating more fruit and vegetables promotes well-being and help with gut health, protects against heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes. Furthermore, fruit and vegetables help to reduce the risk of obesity and diabetes, and other Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

Studies among adolescents and children younger than 15 years show that fruit and vegetables consumption is inadequate. South Africans aged 15 years and older eat below the recommended 400 grams.

Increasing the portion sizes of vegetables and fruit in meals and replacing unhealthy snacks with fruit and vegetables can assist in achieving the recommended target.

The World Health Organisation recommends that one should eat more than five portions (400 grams) of fruit and vegetables combined per day. Healthy food that one can have in their diet include leafy vegetables, whole or dried fruit, 100% fruit juice, as well as fresh, frozen or tinned vegetables or fruit.

The South African Food Based Dietary Guidelines also recommends eating “plenty of fruit and vegetables every day”, in line with the international recommendation. This is supported by the evidence that this contributes to an overall healthier dietary pattern that reduces the risk for disease.

The GDoH urges parents to introduce and promote fruit and vegetables including amongst others, banana, pawpaw, sweet potato or pumpkin. This will not only strengthen the child’s immune system, it will also help protect against diseases.

It is further recommended that households plant fruit trees in the yards and create mini vegetable gardens as this has proven to be an affordable and sustainable way to increase dietary diversity and improve health outcomes.

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