

HEALTHY START PARTNERSHIP LAUNCHES INITIATIVE TO ENHANCE MEALS FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

“Eat Well, Eat Local and Eat Together”: These words describe a new campaign of the Healthy Start Partnership to be launched soon in six upstate New York counties. The goal is to help families choose, prepare and enjoy healthy meals together using locally-grown produce. The Healthy Start Partnership believes following the slogan’s advice will help individuals and families achieve and maintain healthy body weights.

The “Eat Well. Eat Local and Eat Together” (nicknamed Eat³) Campaign will be unveiled in mid-September when a campaign website, www.eat3.org, is launched. At this site, families will find recipes, tips, games and a chance to share their comments and questions about the recipes and eating together. They can also register to win prizes.

During the month of October, a different “meal of the week” will be featured in local media and grocery stores. Recipes and a colorful refrigerator magnet will be featured in displays. Eat³ will be promoted by local food retailers and through radio, newspaper and local events with information on the meals and goals of the campaign. Local agencies will conduct nutrition education related to the Eat³ campaign. Health and nutrition educators will inform the public about the benefits of eating *well, local, and together*.

According to Dr. Christine Olson, a professor in the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University who leads the Healthy Start Partnership, when family members eat a home-prepared meal together, they generally eat better. This means more fruits and

vegetables, more dairy foods and whole grains, and fewer soft drinks. Buying locally-produced foods means your dollars stay within the local community.

“The intent of the campaign is to make sure that the “what, where and how” of nutrition and eating are included in the work of the Healthy Start Partnership. Along with physical activity, what and how we eat is important to a healthy lifestyle that supports healthy weights,” Olson said. “While our partnership is specifically designed to promote healthy weights in childbearing women and their infants, the Eat³ Campaign is for people of all ages and genders. We want everyone to participate.”

Eat³ is an initiative of the Healthy Start Partnership, a multi-county coalition working to promote healthy weights in childbearing women and their infants in Chenango, Delaware, Herkimer, Madison, Otsego, and Schoharie counties. “The Healthy Start Partnership envisions communities that promote and support healthy lifestyles for women, their children and all young families,” according to Dr. Olson.