



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **North Dakotans Encouraged To Eat More Fruits and Vegetables for Better Health**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is observing Fruits & Veggies – More Matters® Month by encouraging North Dakotans to eat more fruits and vegetables for better health, according to Deanna Askew, Healthy Communities coordinator for the Department of Health.

“September is a great month to turn over a new leaf ... of lettuce or kale or Swiss chard,” Askew said. “September is Fruit & Veggies – More Matters Month and also a time of bounteous harvest from North Dakota’s gardens and fields.”

The *Trends in Fruit and Vegetable Consumption* report released today by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention discusses two national goals: (1) for 75 percent of Americans to eat at least two servings of fruit each day, and (2) for 50 percent of Americans to eat at least three servings of vegetables daily. In North Dakota, the rates are slightly less than the national rates: about 31 percent of North Dakota adults are meeting the fruit recommendation, compared to 33 percent nationally; and about 25 percent are meeting the vegetable recommendation, compared to 26 percent nationally.

“North Dakota adults have not increased their intake of fruits and vegetables, but neither has the amount of fruit and vegetable intake declined as it has in some states,” Askew said. “It’s very important for people to eat a diet high in fruits and vegetables because it reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke and plays an important role in weight management.”

Efforts across North Dakota to help more people eat more fruits and vegetables include:

- *A Year of Fruits and Vegetables* and the *Fruit and Vegetable Challenge* programs for worksites offered through Healthy North Dakota partners, including local public health units and NDSU Extension offices.

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- The North Dakota Hunger Free Garden project, which is providing hundreds of pounds of produce to food pantries and other organizations throughout the state.
- Continued growth in the number of farmers markets across the state, with five new markets this past year.
- A pilot program of the North Dakota Department of Agriculture and Department of Human Services that makes it possible for SNAP EBT benefits to be used to purchase food at farmers markets in Bismarck, Beulah, Hazen, Washburn, Minot and Fargo.
- "On the Move to Better Health," a curriculum for fifth-grade students taught across the state that promotes a variety of healthy lifestyle behaviors, including eating more fruits and vegetables.
- Tips, recipes and information for choosing fruits and vegetables in season from Healthy North Dakota available at [www.healthynd.org/In\\_Season.html](http://www.healthynd.org/In_Season.html).

“The Department of Health encourages people to visit a farmers market this month, send fruit or vegetable snacks to school with students, or contribute excess produce from your gardens to a local food pantry,” Askew said. “It will take coordinated and additional efforts at the national, state and local levels to make it easier for people to access and eat more fruits and vegetables.”

For more information, contact Deanna Askew, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4568.

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