March 2015 is Healthy Eating Month. Part of healthy eating is to include fruits and vegetables in your diet. Many people do not eat enough fruits and vegetables in their daily lives. Here are a few reasons to eat more fruits and vegetables:

- **Color & Texture**: Fruits and veggies add color, texture, and appeal to your plate.
- **Convenience**: Fruits and veggies are nutritious in any form—fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% juice, so they’re ready when you are!
- **Fiber**: Fruits and veggies provide fiber that helps fill you up and keeps your digestive system happy.
- **Low in Calories**: Fruits and veggies are naturally low in calories.
- **May Reduce Disease Risk**: Eating plenty of fruits and veggies may help reduce the risk of many diseases, including heart disease, high blood pressure, and some cancers.
- **Vitamins & Minerals**: Fruits and veggies are rich in vitamins and minerals that help you feel healthy and energized.
- **Variety**: Fruits and veggies are available in an almost infinite variety...there's always something new to try!
- **Quick, Natural Snack**: Fruits and veggies are nature’s treat and easy to grab for a snack.
- **Fun to Eat!**: Some crunch, some squirt, some you peel...some you don’t, and some grow right in your own backyard!
- **Fruits and Veggies are Nutritious AND Delicious!**

March 2015 Challenge Options: Add at least 1 green vegetable to your day, at least 3 times a week for the month of March 2015; Participate in a group/family exercise for at least 30 minutes, at least once a week for the month of March 2015.

Did you know that fruits and veggies help prevent high blood pressure, stroke, and heart disease? The National Institutes of Health endorses the "DASH" or diet to reduce blood pressure. This diet recommends 4-5 cups of fruits and vegetables daily along with an overall diet that is low in saturated fat and high in fiber. Fresh fruits and vegetables are low in sodium and high in potassium—a combination that helps reduce high blood pressure.

Large population studies show that the higher the intake of fruits and vegetables, the lower the risk for heart disease and stroke. Vegetables are very low in...
saturated fat and are cholesterol and
trans fat-free. When large studies
looked at heart disease, such as the
INTERHEART study, which included 52
nations, the results showed that people
who ate the most vegetables and fruits
had 30% fewer heart attacks.

By eating 4 or more cups of fruits and
vegetables daily, you can decrease your
risk of stroke by as much as 30-50%.
The best foods for preventing high
blood pressure, stroke, and heart dis-
ease are green, leafy vegetables and
citrus fruits, which are high in folate
and vitamin C. Researchers estimated
that for each serving of citrus fruit
eaten daily, the risk of heart disease
dropped 6%. Each serving of greens
dropped the risk by an amazing 23%.

Another vitamin that can protect your
heart is B6, found in bananas, whole
grains, milk, fish, and chicken.

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**Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month**

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness
Month. So you may be wondering what
exactly colorectal cancer is? Colorectal
cancer is cancer that occurs in the co-
lon or rectum, sometimes called colon
cancer. The colon is the large intestine
or large bowel. The rectum is the pas-
sageway that connects the colon to the
anus. Colorectal cancer is the second
leading cancer killer in the US, but it
doesn't have to be. If everyone aged
50 years or older had regular screening
tests, at least 60% of deaths from this
cancer could be avoided. So if you are
50 or older, start getting screened now!

“About 90% of people live 5 or more
years when their colorectal cancer is
found early through testing” ~Centers
for Disease Control and Prevention~

Who Gets Colorectal Cancer? Both
men and women get it. It is most often
found in people 50 or older. The risk
increases with age.

Are You at High Risk? Your risk for
colorectal cancer may be higher than
average if:

- You or a close relative have had
colorectal polyps or colorectal
cancer.
- You have inflammatory bowel dis-
 ease.
- You have a genetic syndrome such
  as familial adenomatous polyposis
  (FAP) or hereditary nonpolyposis
colorectal cancer.

People at high risk for colorectal cancer
may need earlier or more frequent
tests than other people. Talk to your
doctor about when to begin screening
and how often you should be tested.

**Screening Saves Lives.** If you're 50
or older, getting a colorectal cancer
screening test could save your life.
Here's how:

- Colorectal cancer usually starts
  from polyps in the colon or rectum.
  A polyp is a growth that shouldn't
  be there.
- Over time some polyps can turn into
cancer.
- Screening tests can find polyps, so
  they can be removed before they
  turn into cancer.
- Screening tests also can find colo-
  rectal cancer early. When it is
  found early, the chance of being
cured is good.

Precancerous polyps and early-stage
colorectal cancer don't always cause
symptoms, this is why screening is so
very important!!!
I have recently began “clean eating” (healthier eating) and have been trying some new recipes out. I will begin including at least one recipe every newsletter for you all to enjoy. Clean eating can be fun and I hope you all find this recipe to be just as yummy as I did :)

Baked Pears with Walnuts

Ingredients:
- 2 large pears (ripe)
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1/4 cup crushed walnuts

Directions:
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut pears in half and scoop out seeds. Place on a baking sheet. Sprinkle with cinnamon, topping with honey and crushed walnuts. Bake for 30 minutes. Let cool and enjoy!!!