

NEWS



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Edward A. Diana
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HEALTH DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES HEALTHY ORANGE FIT KIDS CAMPAIGN

Goshen, NY - According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, obesity in the United States, has risen significantly in the past 20 years. In New York State, 58 percent of New York adults are overweight or obese. Obesity increases the risk of so many health conditions, including hypertension, type 2 diabetes, asthma, coronary artery disease, and stroke. These increasing rates raise concerns since children born during this decade may not live as long as their parents.

In an effort to keep kids from becoming victims of what is fast becoming America's number one preventable cause of death, Orange County Executive Edward A. Diana and Health Commissioner Dr. Jean M. Hudson urge all county schools to celebrate "No Junk Food Week" in their school. "As part of our Fit Kids program, we are encouraging schools throughout Orange County to participate in "No Junk Food Week" during the month of March, which is National Nutrition Month," said Dr. Hudson. "Students will be asked to sign a pledge promising to eat healthy snacks instead of junk food for one week."

"We understand the appeal that junk food has. They taste good, but they are not good for your health," said County Executive Diana. "It's not a matter of giving up chips and cookies for one day and then that's it. It's a matter of learning how to eat healthier, and changing your behavior a little at a time.

Schools in Orange County participating in Fit Kids of the Hudson Valley program have agreed to participate by asking their students to sign a pledge, promising to eat only healthy snacks for one week. Prizes provided by Fit Kids will be raffled off to those who sign up and the school with the most participants will be presented with a framed certificate. Port Jervis Middle School and Pakanasink Elementary School are two Fit Kids participants in this year's No Junk Food Week campaign.

Port Jervis Middle School is planning a "No Junk Week", March 18th to March 23rd. They will have their "Healthy Choices" lunch/recess groups make posters to promote the "No Junk Food Week" theme. Daily school announcements in the morning will provide nutrition facts and the Cafeteria Council will meet with the Director of Food Services to implement a healthy snack taste test during their lunch periods. The students will vote for their favorite, which will be featured in the cafeteria during No Junk Food Week.

Pakanasink Elementary will be sending education packets home to parents. The packet consists of the "No Junk Food" pledge and the list of healthy snack alternatives. The collected pledges will be entered in a raffle and a drawing for each grade level will be conducted. The school will also be giving some healthy tips during the Morning Announcements that week.

The Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported last week that in 2000 there were 400,000 deaths related to poor nutrition and lack of physical activity, a 33 percent jump from 1990. This puts obesity only slightly behind smoking as the number one preventable cause of death in the United States. While the number of deaths attributed to smoking is declining, those attributed to obesity continue to rise. We need to encourage healthy life style changes now and make education part of our routine interaction with the community. Orange County Department of Health's Healthy Orange Campaign promotes three simple but vital issues to improve the health of Orange County residents: healthier eating including 5 to 9 fruits and vegetable servings every day; increasing physical activity; and reducing the effects of tobacco through tobacco cessation.

For more information about Healthy Orange, or "No Junk Food Week", contact Danielle Moser, Health & Wellness Coordinator at 568-5226.