**Your March Wellness Email [Send if you don’t have a newsletter]**

**Subject line: Don’t go “on” a diet; learn to improve your diet for good!**

Dear employees,

When most people hear the word diet, they think of caloric restriction, hunger, flavorless foods that taste like cardboard and often removal or restriction of macronutrients (fat, carbs, or protein). Most of the time, we equate the word diet with something we go “on” or “off” for a period of time to reach a goal we imagine will make us happy or may improve our health. What we know from the research is that temporarily restricting your intake of foods over a period of time results in weight regain 95% of the time. (Tomiyama AJ, April 2008)

If we can start to think about diet in a differently, it may be more helpful in the long term. Diet, is what you eat on a daily basis. That’s it! Your diet is simply what you eat. When it comes to health, research has shown that eating competence is as important, if not more important than how much you weigh.

If you are wondering what eating competence is, it is defined as:

* Positive attitudes about eating and about food
* Food acceptance and skills that support eating an ever-increasing variety of available food
* Internal regulation skills (hunger and satiety)
* Skills and resources for managing the food context and making family meals. (Satter, 2007)

To truly be healthy, it is more important to learn to eat in a way that supports health and to establish a healthy lifestyle. Creating small, sustainable habits when it comes to food and a positive relationship with food can be challenging, but is completely doable. Here are a few lifestyle strategies that can make a big impact over time in creating real, sustainable change in your diet that can dramatically improve your health.

* Make half of everything you eat plants. The more variety the better
* Make your breakfast and lunch on most workdays.
* Eat your lunch away from your computer
* Chew your food slowly. Remember you taste food in your mouth, and there is no rush to get it to your stomach. You can enjoy eating more this way.
* Shop around the parameter of the grocery store where you will find foods that will spoil over time. Processed foods found in the middle of the store are higher in sodium, sugar, hydrogenated fats, and simple carbohydrates. All of these can diminish health and energy levels.

If you are ready to improve your health and would like to learn strategies to improve your eating competency, check out the many programs available through your health plan through the [ERS Wellness Webpage.](https://ers.texas.gov/Wellness-Resources-en)  Click on the health plan you are registered for below to find out exactly what is offered for you and your family.

[HealthSelect® of Texas and Consumer Directed HealthSelectSM Wellness Benefits](https://ers.texas.gov/Wellness-Resources-en/Wellness-HS-CDHS)

[Community First Health Plan Wellness Benefits](https://members.cfhp.com/)

[Scott & White Health Plan Wellness Benefits](https://ers.swhp.org/wellness-value-added-service)

This month, we will have a webinar focusing on nutrition titled [Insert title] featuring Mike Harper, M.Ed., is the Fitness Wellness Training Supervisor at the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) where we will be focusing on simple strategies to improve our food choices. You can find the link to register for the webinar through the [ERS Wellness Events Page!](https://ers.texas.gov/Event-Calendars/Wellness-Events)

Sincerely,

Your wellness coordinator