Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pumpkin – A Thanksgiving Tradition

Coldwater, MI. There are conflicting reports as to whether pumpkins were a part of the first Thanksgiving meal of the Pilgrims and the Indians, or whether it was the second Thanksgiving celebration the next year. We do know that pumpkins were a staple of the Indians long before the arrival of the pilgrims and have become a principle ingredient of our 21st century feast! The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency offers its own healthy pumpkin soup recipe for your consideration:

Healthy Pumpkin Soup

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, chopped *
1 small pumpkin, peel and remove seeds and chop *
1 carrot *
3 sprigs fresh rosemary (or 1 T of dried)
3 cups chicken stock or 3 cups vegetable stock
3 bay leaves
1 cup skim milk *

Directions:

1. In a large saucepan, heat olive oil and gently cook onion without browning, for 3-4 minutes.
2. Add pumpkin, carrot and rosemary and cook, stirring for 2-3 minutes.
3. Add stock and bay leaves.

4. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 12-15 minutes until vegetables are tender.
5. Remove any rosemary stalks and bay leaves.
6. Place a third of the soup in the blender with a third of the skim milk and puree.
7. Pour into a large bowl.
8. Repeat with the remaining soup and milk and pour the whole lot back into the saucepan, heat through and serve.

Yield: 4 servings

* WIC foods

Kim Wilhelm, Prevention Services Director for the tri-county health agency says "This low-cal, low-fat soup is high in fiber and in Vitamin A, C and E, all antioxidants that fight inflammation and promote cell health. It's nutritious and delicious. For women receiving WIC, it's also very inexpensive since the four main ingredients – pumpkin, onion, carrot and milk - can be purchased at no cost by using the WIC EBT card."

WIC, which stands for Women, Infants and Children Program, is a supplemental food program offered through the tri-county health agency. Women that are pregnant, recently had a baby and/or are breast-feeding or who have children under the age of 5 years and who meet certain income requirements can apply. According to Dave Fowler, R.N., WIC Coordinator, "WIC income guidelines are the same as those used by the schools for determining free and reduced lunches – 185% of poverty. That means a family of four with small children can earn up to $44,123 and still qualify." Dave adds "It just makes good 'cents' to sign up for WIC."

To learn more about how to use your WIC foods to make new holiday favorites sure to please your family, stop by one of our three county offices. To learn how you can sign up for WIC, visit our website at www.bhsj.org and call for an appointment. From the store shelf to the table, WIC is here to help you enjoy a happy, healthy, holiday season!

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