

## Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **New Year: New Healthy Eating Habits**

**Coldwater, MI.** Have you made your New Year's Resolution yet? The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency wants to remind you that the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program can help you feed your children more nutritionally balanced meals that can keep their bodies strong and healthy. In fact, we would like to challenge you to make a New Year's Resolution that will jump start 2015 as your healthiest year yet. "Starting healthy eating habits early in life is vital," says Health Officer Steve Todd. He adds, "Obesity rates are at an all-time high in Michigan. Since studies have shown that 70% to 80% of overweight children become obese adults, it's important that healthy eating behaviors are adopted from the start."

Making lifestyle changes within a family can seem overwhelming, but it really is as simple as establishing one change at a time. **Remember:** Keeping your children at a healthy weight for their age will help them to maintain that weight as they move into adulthood.

**How can WIC help?** WIC can help by providing nutritionally packed meals that can make healthy eating an easy choice. According to Dave Fowler, WIC Coordinator for the tri-county health department "WIC strives to correct or prevent poor nutrition in pregnant, postpartum or breastfeeding women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at risk for poor health in our community. Through WIC, program participants receive

healthy food, nutrition education, health screenings and assessments and, if needed, referrals to other community resources.”

Qualifying for WIC is easy. There are only a few requirements that need to be met which include:

- Being currently pregnant, breastfeeding or having recently had a baby; or having children under the age of five years. You must also be:
  - A resident of Michigan (US citizenship is not required)
  - Income Eligible (such as currently receive Medicaid, Food Stamps, or have older children who receive Free or Reduced Lunch at school.)

If you are unsure whether you are eligible and would like additional information, please feel free to call your local, county health department office for more information; or visit our website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org).

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