Spring is (finally) in the air, making March a great time to dust off your New Year’s resolutions and resume your quest for better health. March is National Nutrition Month and the 2015 campaign theme is “Bite into a Healthy Lifestyle.” The focus is not just cutting back on calories, but ramping up your exercise, too. The overall goal of National Nutrition Month is to encourage people to achieve a healthy weight, reduce their risk for chronic conditions and promote their overall health. Visit www.nationalnutritionmonth.org for tools, resources, recipes and tips for sneaking healthier choices into your daily calendar.

March is National Nutrition Month!

Fun and Healthy Dips and Snacks*
- Dip baby carrots in low-fat ranch dressing.
- Dip strawberries or apples in low-fat yogurt.
- Dip pita chips in hummus.
- Dip animal crackers in low-fat pudding.
- Dip bread sticks in salsa.
- Dip a granola bar in low-fat yogurt.

*Source: www.nationalnutritionmonth.org

What Can Be Done?
Healthy lifestyle campaigns, such as “National Nutrition Month” (www.nationalnutritionmonth.org) and Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move” (www.letsmove.gov) initiative are hard at work to bring education to families in the United States. If you have a family member who is obese or overweight, here are some tips to help encourage healthier eating:

- Drink water instead of juice or soda. Serve fat-free or low-fat milk with meals.
- Craving a snack? Offer family and friends healthy options like grapes, raisins and string cheese.
- Limit food consumption to kitchen or dining room.
- Start out the day with a healthy breakfast.
- Limit fast food to once a week.
- Encourage your loved ones to choose their favorite fruits and vegetables at the grocery store to try each week. (Skip the candy, cookie and soda aisles.)
- Encourage your family to try activities such as sports, dance, martial arts or swimming in a safe and supportive program.
- Limit screen time (computer or TV) to fewer than two hours each day.


Childhood Obesity — A Growing Epidemic
Here’s an unfortunate statistic: According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), more than one third of children and adolescents in the United States are overweight or obese. This is a big deal—childhood obesity has immediate effects on health and well-being (pre-diabetes, joint problems, sleep apnea and social and psychological problems, just to name a few) as well as long-term effects (like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer and osteoarthritis). One study showed that 70% of obese children had at least one factor for heart disease.

Why Is This Happening?
The childhood obesity epidemic has gradually worsened in the United States. Over the last 30 years, obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents. Studies have shown that kids who are overweight in kindergarten are four times more likely to be obese by eighth grade compared with their normal-weight peers.

It’s not just a matter of larger portions, either. Nutrition and exercise behaviors of young adults and children are influenced by family, community, schools, the media, the entertainment industry and the food and beverage industry.

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New Coverage Rules for Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs)

Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) are used to treat certain gastrointestinal disorders (like ulcers and acid reflux disease) and work by reducing the amount of acid in the stomach. They are available both in prescription and in over-the-counter (OTC) medications. Some of the more common PPIs include Prilosec, Prevacid and Nexium.

Because studies show that extended use of PPIs can lead to a number of health issues, coverage for prescription PPI medications has changed. Your doctor will discuss with you the reasons for the 60-day maximum and your options following this period. If you are affected by this change, you should have received a letter from Express Scripts.

- If you are currently taking a brand-name prescription PPI on a regular basis, you will be required to move to the generic equivalent, generic alternative, or an over-the-counter option. If you continue on a brand product after March 1, 2015, you will be required to pay the full cost of the product.
- If you are currently taking a generic prescription PPI on a regular basis, there will be no change to your coverage.
- If you are not currently taking a prescription PPI, but one is prescribed for you after March 1, 2015, coverage will be available for the generic version only for a maximum of eight weeks (or 60 days) unless you have prior authorization. To obtain prior authorization your doctor must contact Express Scripts at 800-753-2851 and explain why you need to take the medication beyond the eight-week maximum.

Note: Certain conditions require long-term use of PPIs. If you have one of these excepted conditions and provide a doctor’s note of medical necessity to Express Scripts, your prescription will not be subject to the eight-week (or 60-day) limit.