



ADSA celebrates National Nutrition Week

Every year, South Africa celebrates National Nutrition Week from 9-15 October. ADSA has partnered with the National Department of Health since the late 1990s to highlight important nutrition messages for South Africans, especially during National Nutrition Week. This year was no different. ADSA utilised the services of the newly appointed media company, Liquidlingo, to spread messages, using various media platforms. The theme for 2013 was "Eat less. Choose your portion with caution". The aim for 2013 was to educate South Africans about portion size and choices, and to change attitudes and habits so that people downsize and reduce the risk to their health.

Three supplementary messages underpinned the theme.

Choose a variety of foods from different food groups and eat the recommended amounts

Variety in the diet helps to ensure that all the nutrients needed by the body are supplied over time. This refers to variety within a group of similar foods, and to the inclusion of many different types of foods. Enjoyment is enhanced when the food is attractively garnished, served in a relaxing environment (not while watching television), and when sufficient time is allocated to eating. Children should take a lunchbox that contains healthy snacks to school.

Make portion control a daily way of life

The portion size for most South Africans has grown, astronomically so, in the past few years, and with it, their body weight. Fast food outlets encourage patrons to upsize their meals for a few extra rands and customers believe that they are getting more for less.

Unfortunately, this is occurring early on in life, and it will have a serious negative health impact on individuals and the nation. South Africans are encouraged to start watching what they eat, and where possible, to use available units of measure, such as plates and cups, to determine and control the portion size of the foods that they eat.

Use salt, and foods that are high in salt, sparingly

A high salt intake, which can lead to an increased risk of high blood pressure, is an additional concern that is associated with portion distortion. The World Health Organization recommends that adults eat no more than a teaspoon (5 g) of salt a day from all sources. Although new legislation will limit the salt content of many prepared foods, such as bread, awareness of the salt content in food is crucial.

A select group of dietitians from the ADSA spokesperson panel participated in nine NNW 2013 radio interviews. On Wednesday, 9 October from 2-3 pm, ADSA hosted a twitter talk that focused on the theme of NNW 2013: "Eat less. Choose your portion with caution". Three media outlets were invited to participate in and share the conversation with their followers: Sarie; All 4women and mommy blogger, Tanya Kovarsky. The conversation was moderated from the ADSA twitter handle and publicised through a selection of tweets and posts in the week leading up to the talk.

The following questions were pre-set, shared upfront and then answered during the talk:

- What are your tips to control portions in the home?
- How do you control the portions you eat when eating out?
- How do you ensure that your family eats a variety of foods?
- What is your "to go" healthy snack to avoid getting too hungry?

The hash tag for the talk was #portioncaution



NSSA newsbits

NSSA Western Cape Branch and the University of the Western Cape hosted an event on 25 September 2013. Prof Hughes, the Head of Department and Deputy Dean, Research, at Bond University in Australia, presented on *Building capacity for nutrition improvement: experiences from around the world*. Prof Hughes is internationally recognised for his research and scholarship in public health nutrition workforce development, and his passion for this topic was evident as he relayed a lecture on capacity building in public health nutrition. Currently, little recognition is given to public health nutritionists and the value that they can bring in leadership and empowerment at

community level. The core functions of the public health nutrition workforce should include research and analysis, capacity building and nutrition intervention management. He emphasised that these functions should be built into the training for both dietitians and nutritionists before they enter the workforce. Prof Hughes still trains dietitians and nutritionists, but with a vision that they practise and promote public health nutrition.

The branch committee for the Western Cape branch for 2013-2014 is Stefan Abel, Chairman; Anniza de Villiers, Natasha Danster and Candice Lombardo.