

# National Nutrition Month

“Nutrition from the Ground Up” is the 2010 theme of National Nutrition Month®, a nutrition education and information campaign created annually by the American Dietetic Association. The campaign focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

It seems that every day we are showered with new, and sometimes conflicting, information. You probably already know it is important to eat a “healthy diet” but what does that mean?

An easy way to focus on eating better, according to the American Dietetic Association, is to start with the basics and build your nutritional health from the ground up. Start slowly and give yourself a good foundation as you work toward a healthier life. You may be eating plenty of food, but not eating the right foods that give your body the nutrients you need to be healthy. You may not be getting enough physical activity to stay fit and burn those extra calories. Don't try to make a lot of changes immediately. Look over the information below and find one or two healthy changes you could make. Remember, even small changes can add up to big benefits.

“Finding Your Way to a Healthier You”, a brochure based on the Dietary Guidelines for American from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U. S. Department of Agriculture, gives the following suggestions for eating better. The best way to give your body the balanced nutrition it needs is by eating a variety of nutrient-packed foods every day. Just be sure to stay within your daily calorie needs.

A healthy eating plan is one that:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars

Mix up your choices within each food group.

- Focus on fruits. Eat a variety of fruits—whether fresh, frozen, canned, or dried—rather than fruit juice for most of your fruit choices. For a 2,000-calorie diet, you will need 2 cups of fruit each day (for example, 1 small banana, 1 large orange, and 1/4 cup of dried apricots or peaches).
- Vary your veggies. Eat more dark green veggies, such as broccoli, kale, and other dark leafy greens; orange veggies, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, and winter squash; and beans and peas, such as pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, garbanzo beans, split peas, and lentils.
- Get your calcium-rich foods. Get 3 cups of low-fat or fat-free milk—or an equivalent amount of low-fat yogurt and/or low-fat cheese (1½ ounces of cheese equals 1 cup of milk)—every day. For kids aged 2 to 8, it's 2 cups of milk. If you don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free milk products and/or calcium-fortified foods and beverages.
- Make half your grains whole. Eat at least 3 ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta every day. One ounce is about 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of breakfast cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice or pasta. Look to see that grains such as wheat, rice, oats, or corn are referred to as "whole" in the list of ingredients.
- Go lean with protein. Choose lean meats and poultry. Bake it, broil it, or grill it. And vary your protein choices—with more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.

Know the limits on fats, salt, and sugars. Read the Nutrition Facts label on foods. Look for foods low in saturated fats and trans fats. Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little salt (sodium) and/or added sugars (caloric sweeteners).

Find your balance between food and physical activity.

Becoming a healthier you isn't just about eating healthy—it's also about physical activity. Regular physical activity is important for your overall health and fitness. It also helps you control body weight by balancing the calories you take in as food with the calories you expend each day.

- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- Increasing the intensity or the amount of time that you are physically active can have even greater health benefits and may be needed to control body weight. About 60 minutes a day may be needed to prevent weight gain.
- Children and teenagers should be physically active for 60 minutes every day, or most every day.

**CONSIDER THIS:** If you eat just 100 more food calories a day than you burn, you'll gain about 1 pound in a month. That's about 10 pounds in a year. The bottom line is that to lose weight, it's important to reduce calories and increase physical activity.

Celebrate National Nutrition Month by setting a goal to incorporate one or two healthy changes. Once you have successfully done that, you can gradually add more. It might be as simple as eating one more serving of vegetables each day. Remember, small changes can result in big benefits. Start today! The recipes below are tasty ways to add more vegetables.

### **Garden Orchard Salad**

1 1/2 cups coarsely chopped broccoli florets	1/4 cup sliced green onion
1/2 cup grated carrots	1/2 cup yogurt, nonfat vanilla
1/2 cup coarsely chopped cauliflower	1/4 cup chopped peanuts, unsalted, dry-roasted
1/2 cup chopped, cored and diced, not peeled, apple	

Mix all ingredients together in serving bowl. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours or longer to allow flavors to blend. Serve cold. Yield: 4 servings

*Nutrition Facts per serving: 110 calories; 5 g total fat; 0.5 g saturated fat; 45 mg sodium; 14 g total carbohydrate; 3 g dietary fiber.*

### **Party-Time Pasta**

1/2 pound turkey, lean ground	2 cups pasta, bow-tie, uncooked
1 teaspoon paprika	3 cups frozen vegetables such as carrots, broccoli and cauliflower, thawed
1 can (14 1/2 ounces) tomatoes, crushed	
1 can (14 1/2 ounces) chicken broth, reduced sodium	

#### **Tasty Topping:**

1/2 cup chopped fresh or dried parsley	1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup bread crumbs, seasoned, dry	

Heat a large nonstick pan over medium heat. Add ground turkey and paprika. Cook and stir until meat is brown and no longer pink, about 5 minutes. Stir in tomatoes, chicken broth and pasta. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and simmer until pasta is almost tender, about 10-15 minutes. Place vegetables on top of pasta. Cook covered until vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes. Prepare the topping by mixing parsley, bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese; set aside. Just before serving, sprinkle topping over vegetables in skillet. Yield: 6 servings

*Nutrition Facts per serving (1 cup prepared): 210 calories; 6 g total fat; 2 g saturated fat; 410 mg sodium; 26 g total carbohydrate; 5 g dietary fiber.*

## Spring Vegetable Sauté

1 teaspoon olive oil

1/2 cup sliced sweet onion

1 finely chopped garlic clove

3-4 tiny quartered new potatoes

3/4 cup sliced carrots

3/4 cup asparagus pieces

3/4 cup sugar snap peas, or green beans

1/2 cup quartered radishes

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1/2 teaspoon dried dill

Heat the oil in a skillet. Cook onion 2 minutes, add garlic and cook another minute. Stir in the potatoes and carrots. Cover, turn the heat to low, and cook until almost tender, about 4 minutes. If the vegetables start to brown, add a little water. Add remaining ingredients. Cook, stirring often, until just tender - about 4 minutes more. Serve immediately. Yield: 4 servings

*Nutrition Facts per serving: 80 calories; 1.5 g total fat; 0 g saturated fat; 200 mg sodium; 14 g total carbohydrate; 3 g dietary fiber.*

<http://www.smallstep.gov/index.htm> will help you learn to set healthy nutritional goals.

For more information about nutrition and physical activity try these websites <http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/>, [www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov), <http://www.eatright.org/> or [www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines](http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines)

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