

March: National Nutrition Month®

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Social, emotional and health factors play a role in the foods we choose to eat. But the foods we enjoy are the ones we eat most. That is why, as part of National Nutrition Month 2014®, the Academy of



Nutrition and Dietetics encourages everyone to "Enjoy the Taste of Eating Right." Each March, the Academy encourages Americans to return to the basics of healthful eating through National Nutrition

Month. This year's theme focuses on combining taste and nutrition to create healthy meals that follow the 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

Tips to enjoy the taste of eating right:

Try purchasing new foods at the grocery store.

When grocery shopping, make it a point to try one new fruit, vegetable or whole grain every week. Start small by picking a different type of apple, a different color potato or a new flavor of whole-grain rice until you are comfortable picking entirely new things that you've never tried or heard of before.



Add variety to dishes when cooking at home. Add variety to staple dishes by varying the ways you cook them. Grill or broil the chicken you usually bake. Mash the potatoes you typically roast. Steam the vegetables you normally sauté. And get to know your spice cabinet. A pinch of this and a dash of



that can add a fresh zest to an old favorite. Remember, you have about 10,000 taste buds. So don't be afraid to experiment with new flavors and foods.

Choose foods from the five MyPlate food groups every day.

When your daily eating plans include foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, fat-free or low-fat dairy, beans, nuts and seeds in the appropriate amounts, you're able to get many of the nutrients you need, all with relatively low amounts of calories. Below are some tips to add nutrient-rich foods and beverages to your daily eating plan:



- **Breakfast** - Make oatmeal with fat-free milk and mix in dried cranberries or blueberries.
- **Lunch** - Make sandwiches on whole-grain bread, such as whole wheat or whole rye. Add slices of avocado, tomato or cucumber.
- **Dinner** - Serve multiple nutrient-rich foods in one dish, such as hearty, broth-based soups full of colorful vegetables, beans and lean meat. Make chili with a dollop of low-fat yogurt. Serve with whole-grain breads or rolls.
- **Dining out** - Look for healthier choices, such as entrée salads with grilled seafood and low-calorie dressing, baked potatoes topped with salsa, grilled vegetables and reduced-fat cheese and yogurt parfaits with fruit.

Cooking tips to enhance the flavor of foods. Proper food handling and storage can enhance natural flavors and minimize nutrient loss. Overcooking can destroy flavor and nutrients. Cook foods



properly to retain nutrients and enhance flavor, color, and texture. Try these techniques to enhance the flavor of foods:

- Intensify the flavors of meat, poultry and fish with high-heat cooking techniques such as pan-searing, grilling or broiling.
- Use red, green and yellow peppers of all varieties—sweet, hot and dried.

- For fuller flavors, incorporate more whole grains such as brown rice or quinoa, or experiment with amaranth and wild rice.
- Add small amounts of ingredients with bold flavors like chipotle pepper or cilantro.
- Add a tangy taste with citrus juice or grated citrus peel: lemon, lime or orange.
- Enhance sauces, soups and salads with a splash of flavored balsamic or rice vinegar.
- Give a flavor burst with good-quality condiments such as horseradish, flavored mustard, chutney, wasabi, and salsas.

Family meals – eat better, eat together. Research shows family meals promote healthier eating.

Beyond preparing the meal, we sometimes forget mealtimes provide time to talk, listen and build relationships. And it's a chance for parents to be good role models for healthful eating. Below are some ideas for adding family meals to your routine:



- **Start slow.** However many family meals you eat now, add one more to your weekly schedule. If school nights are too hectic, make it a weekend breakfast or lunch. After a few weeks, add another meal to your schedule.
- **Plan menus.** Putting together a family meal does not have to be complicated. Let everyone choose a favorite item and build simple, delicious meals around them.
- **Have positive conversations.** Dinner-time conversations have a huge impact, as you share experiences and ideas, and pass along family values. Pick topics that are positive and allow everyone to talk.
- **Turn off the noise.** TV and mobile devices can create distractions that can throw off any family's mealtime. Declare mealtime a TV- and phone-free zone, except for emergencies.



For more food, nutrition, and health information go to food.unl.edu or scan the QR code with your smart phone or other electronic device and go directly to the website.

Additional Resources & Links:

- **MyPlate Daily Food Plans.** Want to know the amount of each food group you need daily? Enter your information into this website to find out and receive a customized Daily Food Plan. www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate/index.aspx
- **Library of Recipes.** Visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' library of recipes to help you "Enjoy the Taste of Eating Right." <http://www.eatright.org/Public/list.aspx?TaxID=6442576421>
- **Recipe Central.** Enjoy healthy cooking from your own kitchen. Use recipes from our collections to get started! <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/recipe-central>
- **UNL Extension Calendar** – National Food Days, Weeks, and Months for March. <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/march>

Sources:

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