

March

National Nutrition Month

Cardinal Pharmacy's *Health Topic of the Month*



National Nutrition Month® is a nutrition education and information campaign created annually in March by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The campaign focuses on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

Dedicate yourself to a healthy lifestyle in 2017 with these 17 food, nutrition and physical activity tips:

- 1. Eat Breakfast.** Start your morning with a healthy breakfast that includes lean protein, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Try making a breakfast burrito with scrambled eggs, low-fat cheese, salsa and a whole wheat tortilla or a parfait with low-fat plain yogurt, fruit and whole grain cereal.
- 2. Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables.** Fruits and veggies add color, flavor and texture plus vitamins, minerals and fiber to your plate. Make 2 cups of fruit and 2 ½ cups of vegetables your daily goal. Experiment with different types, including fresh, frozen and canned.
- 3. Watch Portion Sizes.** Get out the measuring cups and see how close your portions are to the recommended serving size. Use half your plate for fruits and vegetable sand the other half for grains and lean protein foods. To complete the meal, add a serving of fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt.
- 4. Be Active.** Regular physical activity has so many health benefits. Start by doing what exercise you can for at least 10 minutes at a time. Children and teens should get 60 or more minutes of physical activity per day, and adults should get two hours and 30 minutes per week. You don't have to hit the gym—take a walk after dinner or play a game of catch or basketball.
- 5. Fix Healthy Snacks.** Healthy snacks can sustain your energy levels between meals, especially when they include a combination of foods. Choose from two or more of the MyPlate food groups: grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, and protein. Try raw veggies with low-fat cottage cheese, or a tablespoon of peanut butter with an apple or banana.
- 6. Get to Know Food Labels.** Reading the Nutrition Facts panel can help you shop and eat or drink smarter.
- 7. Consult an RDN.** Whether you want to eat better to lose weight or lower your risk or manage a chronic disease, consult the experts! Registered dietitian nutritionists can help you by providing sound, easy-to-follow personalized nutrition advice.
- 8. Follow Food Safety Guidelines.** Reduce your chances of getting sick by practicing proper food safety. This includes: regular hand washing, separating raw protein foods from ready-to-eat foods, cooking foods to the appropriate temperature by using a food thermometer, and refrigerating food quickly at a proper temperature to slow bacteria growth.
- 9. Get Cooking.** Preparing foods at home can be healthy, rewarding and cost-effective. Resolve to learn some cooking and kitchen basics, like how to dice an onion or cook dried beans.
- 10. Dine Out without Ditching Your Goals.** You can eat out and stick to your healthy eating plan! The key is to plan ahead, ask questions and choose foods carefully. Compare nutrition information, if available, and look for healthier options that are grilled, baked, broiled or steamed.
- 11. Enact Family Meal Time.** Plan to eat as a family at least a few times each week. Set a regular mealtime. Turn off the TV, phones and other electronic devices to encourage mealtime talk. Get kids involved in meal planning and cooking and use this time to teach them about good nutrition.
- 12. Banish Brown Bag Boredom.** Whether it's a lunch for work or school, prevent brown bag boredom with easy-to-fix, healthy lunch ideas. Try a whole-wheat pita pocket with veggies and hummus or a low sodium vegetable soup with whole grain crackers or a salad of mixed greens with low-fat dressing and a hardboiled egg.
- 13. Drink More Water.** Quench your thirst by drinking water instead of sugary drinks. Stay well hydrated by drinking plenty of water if you are active, live or work in hot conditions, or are an older adult.
- 14. Explore New Foods and Flavors.** Add more nutrition and eating pleasure by expanding your range of food choices. When shopping, make a point of selecting a fruit, vegetable or whole grain that's new to you or your family. Try different versions of familiar foods like purple asparagus, Honeycrisp apples, broccoflower or quinoa.
- 15. Eat Seafood Twice a Week.** Seafood—fish and shellfish—contains a range of nutrients including healthy omega-3 fats. Salmon, trout, oysters and sardines are higher in omega-3s and lower in mercury.
- 16. Cut Back on Added Sugars.** Foods and drinks with added sugars can contribute empty calories and little or no nutrition. Reviewing ingredients on the food label can help you identify sources of added sugar.
- 17. Experiment with More Plant-Based Meals.** Expand the variety in your menus with budget-friendly meatless meals. Many recipes that use meat and poultry can be made without. Eating a variety of plant foods can help. Vegetables, beans, and lentils are all great substitutes. Try including one meatless meal per week to start out.

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