

Nutrition News

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A COMMUNITY NUTRITION PROGRAMS NEWSLETTER

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Eat Right with Color

This March, the American Dietetic Association focused attention on returning to the basics of healthy eating – with a National Nutrition Month theme that encouraged everyone to “Eat Right with Color.”

With that theme, the association encouraged consumers to remember to include a colorful variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and dairy on their plates every day.

Nutritionists say that eating a variety of colorful foods diversifies the vitamins and minerals in your diet and also means you are likely filling your plate with more fruits and vegetables, which are low in calories and high in fiber. A colorful plate nourishes your body on many levels by involving all of your senses to generate interest in your food. Simply put, colorful plates get your body more interested in healthy foods.

Among the tips for various colors and types of food are:

Grains (Orange)

It's important to make at least half of your daily grains whole grains. Easy ways to do this include:

- Use whole-grain or oat bread for sandwiches.
- Opt for oat or whole-wheat cereal for breakfast.
- Substitute brown rice for white rice in favorite recipes.
- Add whole barley to soups and stews or bulgur wheat to salads and casseroles.

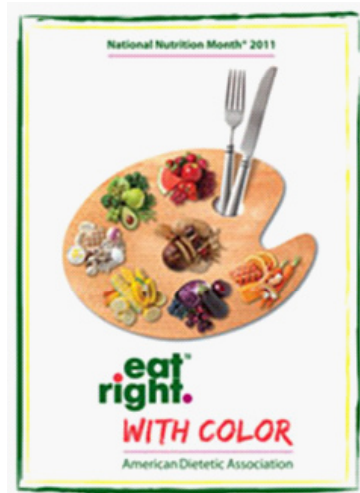
When looking for whole-grain choices, make sure the label says "100 percent whole grain" and the ingredient label says "whole" before the grain listed.

Vegetables (Green)

Vegetables are a great source of vitamins and other nutrients, which is why The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that we consume at least 2 1/2 cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruits each day.

- Try crunchy vegetables instead of chips with your favorite dip or low-fat salad dressing.
- Top a baked potato with beans and salsa or broccoli and low-fat or fat-free cheese.
- Make your main dish a salad of dark, leafy greens and other colorful vegetables. Add chickpeas or edamame (fresh soybeans). Top with a low-fat dressing.
- Stuff an omelet with vegetables. Try any combination of chopped tomatoes, onions, green peppers, spinach or mushrooms plus some low-fat or fat-free cheese.

Vegetables can be consumed fresh, frozen, canned, raw or cooked.



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Fruits (Red)

Fruits make for a great snack and satisfy a craving or “sweet-tooth.”

- Start your day by adding sliced fruit to your cereal or on top of whole-grain waffles or pancakes.
- Add fruit to salads. This boosts nutrition and adds texture and taste. Add orange slices or strawberries to spinach salads or toss grapes into a mixed green salad.
- For dessert, add sliced bananas, berries or peaches to nonfat yogurt or as a topper on angel food cake.
- Dried fruit makes a handy snack and can be equally as nutritious as fresh. But be mindful of serving sizes.

Oils (Yellow)

Used in cooking and baking as well as for flavor, oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature. There are a variety of oils that come from many different plants. Common types include canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean, sunflower, walnut and sesame oils. Oils provide essential fatty acids and vitamin E. They also provide calories – at about 120 calories per tablespoon.

Milk (Blue)

Dairy foods also are good sources of protein, phosphorus, potassium, vitamin A and vitamin D, and they are the best sources of calcium. Try these ideas:

- Low-fat cheese in a sandwich.
- Yogurt dips with vegetables.
- Low-fat shredded cheese on soups and salads.
- Evaporated low-fat or fat-free milk in recipes that call for cream.

Meat and Beans (Purple)

The protein group includes a wide variety of foods, such as those made from meat, poultry, fish, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts and seeds. Think about diversifying your meals and including more of the nonmeat protein options at meals.

- Choose lean cuts of meat. Look for words like loin or round in the description.
- To prepare lean cuts of meat, try broiling, grilling, roasting, pan-broiling, braising, stewing or stir-frying.
- Choose fish like salmon, tuna and mackerel that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which help reduce your risk of heart disease and may help reduce the inflammation of rheumatoid arthritis.
- Use canned beans for making quick vegetarian meals. Combine them with corn bread or toast for a complete protein.
- There are many different types of lentils to choose from for a hearty soup or stew that will provide complete protein when combined with bread or rice.
- Add nuts and seeds to your favorite breakfast items, muffins, pancakes and yogurt to increase the protein content.

Beans can be counted in the vegetable group or in the meat and beans group.

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