

Chow Line

News from the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

Great nutrition ideas ripe for the picking

I need some fresh ideas to give my diet a boost. I eat fairly well now, but I feel like I'm in a rut and want some easy ways to make some changes while keeping health and nutrition front and center. Your thoughts?

You picked a good time to focus on a healthy diet with National Nutrition Month just around the corner in March.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly the American Dietetic Association) has sponsored the annual event since 1973, when it started as National Nutrition Week. The group has a website devoted to the month, nationalnutritionmonth.org, which is chock-full of handouts and tip sheets with just the kind of information you're looking for. Look under "Promotional Resources" on the website for access.

The great ideas from this group of registered dietitians include tips such as:

- Want some crunch? Don't reach for chips — try crunchy vegetables instead. Use low-fat dressing as a dip.
- Dress up seafood or poultry with a fruit puree. Just blend apples, berries, peaches or pears for a thick, sweet sauce.
- Thirsty? Choose water first, and drink plenty of it, especially if you're active or if you're an older adult.
- Reducing sodium doesn't have to be bland. Create your own salt-free seasoning blend. The group's "Eating Right with Less Salt" tip sheet offers recipes for a mixed herb blend, an Italian blend and a Mexican blend.
- Are your portion sizes reasonable? If you haven't measured foods in awhile, it could be



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a good exercise to get out the kitchen scale and measuring spoons and cups to evaluate how close your normal portions compare with recommended serving sizes. (It also wouldn't hurt to review recommended serving sizes for different foods at choosemyplate.gov.)

- Not getting enough vegetables? Try heating a cup of vegetable soup as a snack or as part of lunch or dinner.
- Add some variety to healthy snacks by combining options from different food groups: top a banana with frozen yogurt and a few nuts, or spread a tablespoon of peanut butter on apple slices.
- When you're doing your food shopping, make it a point to buy one fruit, vegetable or whole grain you've never tried before. You never know what might become a new favorite.
- If you're not doing so already, and if you're able to, eat fish or shellfish twice a week. Types that are higher in healthy omega-3 fatty acids and lower in mercury include salmon, trout, oysters and sardines.

The National Nutrition Month website also offers plenty of other resources, including healthy eating quizzes and games for kids and adults, and information on services offered by registered dietitians. Check it out. You're bound to come away with plenty of new ideas to chew on.

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