



National Nutrition Month is an annual nutrition campaign that takes place in March but can be recognized anytime during the year. This campaign began in 1973 by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and focuses on a new theme each year. The theme for 2023 is “Fuel for the Future”, which is centered on food sustainability. Let’s discover ways we can provide our body with sustainable energy for the present as well as into the future.

### **Eat with the environment in mind**

Our food choices can affect our health and well-being, but it can also have an enormous impact on the environment. About 133 billion pounds of food is thrown out annually; an estimated \$161 billion in value. This is not only financially burdensome but also strains and wastes labor, land usage, fertilizer, and energy which are all used to produce the food. Incorporate best practices into your cooking and meal planning to reduce the amount of food that is thrown away.

Consider incorporating a more plant-based eating style, such as one that includes more fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts and seeds. This can improve our overall health as well as our environment. Shopping locally and buying food in its peak season is another great option to fuel our environmental future and reduce food costs.

### **Stay nourished and save money**

Prices of food have gone up in recent months, which can make prioritizing healthy eating more challenging. However, many healthy foods are more satisfying and contain more nutrients when compared to food loaded with fillers. Healthy foods can cost less overall and may help to manage or decrease the risk of developing certain types of chronic health conditions.

Planning meals in advance helps save time and money, reduce waste, and encourage healthier eating. Decide on meals by incorporating foods already in your pantry and looking at what is on sale. Making a grocery list (and sticking to it) can help avoid unnecessary spending and spoiled food. Get creative with leftovers by incorporating food into other meals during the week. Consider buying the store-brand product, as it tends to be less expensive, and make sure to always compare the Nutrition Facts Labels.

It is important to store foods properly to maintain or improve shelf life. To help get the most out of your groceries, buy only what you can eat in any one week. Make sure to store refrigerated produce in the crisper drawer to help with air circulation and prevent it from spoiling faster. Consider purchasing frozen fruits and vegetables to increase the shelf life and contain the same nutritional value as fresh produce.

### **Eat a variety of foods from all food groups**



The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics encourages everyone to follow the MyPlate recommendations for each food group. MyPlate is a valuable tool that can help us better visualize how to balance meals and include a variety of nutrient-dense

foods. Aim to incorporate a variety of colorful foods each day – brightly-colored fruits and vegetables contain more nutrients. Choose lean proteins, whole grains and switch to low-fat dairy products. Fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins and dairy all play a very important role in fueling out bodies.

### **See a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist**

Having good nutrition can have a very positive influence on our health and well-being. There are many ways for us to eat healthy. A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can provide sound, easy-to-follow nutrition advice that is individually tailored to your specific needs. Whether you have a chronic health condition, are looking to lose or gain weight, or want to eat smarter, a registered dietitian nutritionist can help you set goals and establish healthy eating patterns. Ask your primary health physician for a referral to a RDN that fits your unique needs!

## Make tasty foods at home

While eating healthy can be joyful for some people, for others it can become stagnant and even bland. To help increase more variety in your eating routine, try various flavors and foods from around the world (including different dishes that you may not normally eat). Another avenue that can help us eat healthier and save money is to learn to hone our cooking and meal prepping skills. Becoming more refined at these skills can help you find more creative ways to use leftovers rather than tossing them in the trash!



Proper nutrition at any age is very important and the foods we choose to fuel our body with can have a big impact on how we feel. Finding ways to include more nutrient-dense foods in our diet should be one of our main goals. Our food and drink choices can be influenced by a wide variety of things such as our personal cooking skills, cultural preferences, taste, convenience, and overall cost. If you need expert input and ideas, ask your primary care doctor for a referral to an RDN. They are nutrition experts and can provide you with individualized nutrition advice, skills and resources to help you put your best foot forward.

## Fill In the Blanks and Show What You Know!

1. A \_\_\_\_ is a nutrition expert that has extensive schooling and is nationally accredited.
2. The 2023 nutrition theme is \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_.
3. One point of the National Nutrition Month 2023 theme is to eat with the \_\_\_\_\_ in mind.
4. To help you shop SMART, try looking for the \_\_\_\_ brands of food to help stretch your dollar.
5. By following \_\_\_\_\_ Daily Recommendations, we can be better prepared to nourish our bodies.
6. If you're curious about finding an RDN for your specific needs and situation, you should ask your \_\_\_\_\_ care doctor for a referral.
7. By learning to hone your \_\_\_\_\_ and meal \_\_\_\_\_ skills, you can learn to eat healthier and save money.

Answers in no order: RDN, Environment, Fuel For The Future, Store, Primary, MyPlate's, Cooking, and Prepping