

March is National Nutrition Month

The food choices you make today – and everyday – will affect your health and how you feel in the months and years ahead. Eating right is key to a healthy lifestyle. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005*, can lead the way to a healthier you.

Make Smart Choices from Every Food Group

Give your body the balanced nutrition it needs by eating a variety of nutrient-packed foods every day. Just be sure to stay within your daily calorie needs, which vary according to factors like, your height, weight, gender, and age. To learn about your daily calorie needs, visit http://www.mypyramid.gov/downloads/MyPyramid_Calorie_Levels.pdf.

Get the Most Nutrition Out of Your Choices

Choose the most nutritionally rich foods you can from each food group each day – those packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients.

- **Focus on fruits.** Eat a variety of fruits – fresh, frozen, canned or dried. For a 2,000 calorie diet, you need 2 cups of fruit each day.
- **Vary your vegetables.** Eat more orange and dark green vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes, broccoli and dark leafy greens. Include beans and peas such as pinto beans, kidney beans, split peas, and lentils more often.
- **Get calcium-rich foods.** Have 3 cups of low-fat or fat-free milk – or an equivalent amount of low-fat yogurt and/or low-fat cheese every day (1 ½ ounces of cheese equals 1 cup of milk). If you don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free milk products and/or calcium-fortified foods and beverages.
- **Make half your grains whole.** Eat at least 3 ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice or pasta every day. Look to see that grains such as wheat, rice, oats, or corn are referred to as "whole" in the list of ingredients.
- **Go lean with protein.** Choose lean meats and poultry. Bake it, broil it, or grill it. And vary your protein choices with more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.
- **Know the limits on fats, salt and sugars.** Read the Nutrition Facts label on foods. Look for foods low in saturated fats and trans fats. Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little salt (sodium) and/or added sugars.

Find A Balance between Food and Physical Activity

Regular physical activity is important for your overall health and fitness too – plus it helps control body weight, promotes a feeling of well-being and reduces the risk of chronic diseases.

Source: Eat Right. American Dietetic Association

* The 2005 Dietary Guidelines remain the current guidance until the 2010 Dietary Guidelines are published. Source: www.dietaryguidelines.gov

Did You Know?

Sharp Health Plan has a new Web site: www.sharphealthplan.com. The new site offers an array of online wellness tools right at your fingertips.

You can:

- Create a Personal Wellness Profile and get a customized report of information and tips specific to your needs,
- Print customized meal plans and grocery lists appropriate for you,
- View personalized nutritional analyses based on your caloric needs, and...
- So much more!

Start today! Visit www.sharphealthplan.com and click on the *Health & Wellness* tab. You will be on the path to a healthier living.

