



Parish Nurse Notes – March 10, 2024

National Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month, an annual campaign sponsored by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to educate people on the importance of making informed food choices, as well as developing good eating and physical activity habits.

This year, National Nutrition Month's theme is "Beyond the Table," which highlights how healthy choices go beyond just what we eat in a day. Our snacks, where and how we eat, where our foods are grown, and even how they are prepared all make a big impact on ourselves and our future.

"This includes how food is grown or raised, where and how it is made, as well as its safety," says a recent tip sheet by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. "It's important to think about the foods we eat and the nutrition they provide, but is there more we could be doing to improve our health and the environment?"

Throughout the month of March, Project Open Hand will be highlighting our services and programming that reach "Beyond the Table," as well as sharing educational resources to help consider when making your own healthy choices.

Here are a few ways to help you reach "Beyond the Table" in 2024 from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:

1. Focus on a healthy eating routine

Making healthy food choices may seem difficult at times, especially when eating away from home, but it doesn't have to be. Many eating places provide nutrition information right on the menu or online to help you choose healthier options. When purchasing food from a store, use a

grocery list and pay attention to sales. You also can learn about resources in your community that offer access to healthy foods, such as food banks.

2. Seek the help of a Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN)

Registered dietitian nutritionists, also known as RDNs, are food and nutrition experts who help people live healthier lives. RDNs can help you explore ways Beyond the Table to reach your health goals. Make an appointment with an RDN who specializes in your specific needs to jumpstart your plan for personal wellness.

3. Learn what's involved in growing your food

There are many ways you can learn about how your food is produced. Visit a local farm or farmers market and talk with the people who are growing and harvesting your food. Many farmers and food producers will be happy to answer your questions, let you sample products or provide recipes for foods that are new to you. Some local farms even have tours, so people can see how they operate.

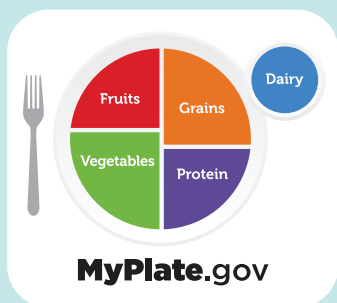
You also can grow your own fruits and vegetables at home. Want to try gardening but have limited space? Grow herbs or lettuce indoors.

Tomatoes, peppers or strawberries may work, too, if you have a patio or porch with enough sunlight. Schools, churches and other places may offer community gardens where you can participate in the growing process and share in the harvest.

Not quite ready to get your hands in the dirt? Many local farms offer programs, which include “farm shares” of produce during a growing season. Depending on the farm, additional products such as eggs or meat might be included.

Check out these resources from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to learn more! The Dietary Guidelines for Americans offers guidance on what to eat and drink to meet nutrition needs and promote health.

To contact Diane or Glenn, parish nurses, their email address is: parishnurse@fpcwinc.org or you can leave a message for them at 540-662-3824.



Small Changes Matter.

Start Simple With MyPlate Today.

Healthy eating is important at every stage of life.

Make half your plate fruits & vegetables.

Focus on whole fruits.

Vary your veggies.



Make half your grains whole grains.

Vary your protein routine.

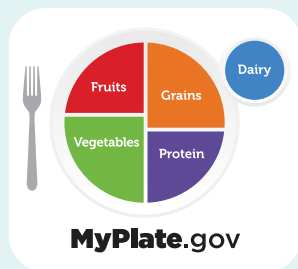
Move to low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or yogurt (or lactose-free dairy or fortified soy versions).



Choose foods and beverages with less added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.

The benefits add up over time, bite by bite.

Make every bite count



Take a look at your current eating routine. Pick one or two ways that you can switch to choices today that are rich in nutrition.

A healthy eating routine can help boost your health now and in the years to come. Think about how your food choices come together over the course of your day or week to help you create a healthy eating routine.

It's important to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. Choose options for meals, beverages, and snacks that have limited added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.



Choose from these simple tips to help you...

Fruits



Focus on whole fruits

- Start your day with **fruit at breakfast**. Top cereal with your favorite seasonal fruit, add bananas or chopped apples to pancakes, or mix a spoonful or two of raisins into hot oatmeal.
- Keep **ready-to-eat fruits** in the refrigerator for a quick snack.
- For dinner, chop up a combination of seasonal, frozen, or canned fruits to make a **quick fruit salsa** to top fish or chicken. Add fruit such as orange sections, apple wedges, or grapes to a **salad**.



Vegetables



Vary your veggies

- Add shredded carrots to the lettuce and tomato **in your sandwich**, make **soup** from the veggies in your vegetable drawer, and **snack on raw vegetables**.
- Try a **stir-fry** with fresh or frozen vegetables for a quick meal or easy side dish.
- Pick out a vegetable that the family has not tried and **get a new recipe** from a cookbook, website, supermarket, or friend.



Grains



Make half your grains whole grains

- For breakfast, enjoy a whole-grain-based **hot or cold cereal**. Consider trying whole-grain puffs or flakes that are new to you—you might discover a new favorite!
- Instead of sandwich bread, try a **whole-grain pita, tortillas, naan or other whole-grain flatbread, sliced breads, or rolls**.
- Create your own trail mix with whole-grain cereal or enjoy whole-grain crackers with turkey, hummus, or avocado for a **healthy whole-grain snack**.



Protein



Vary your protein routine

- **Broil lean beef cuts** like sirloin, top round, or flank steak. **Roast lean types of pork tenderloin or loin chops** and slice into strips for dinner, salads, and sandwiches.
- **Have fish or seafood twice a week.** Make a lunchtime sandwich or salad with canned tuna, grill fresh or frozen tilapia or salmon for dinner, or enjoy fish tacos.
- **Meatless meals** are tasty and budget friendly. Try bean-based vegetarian chili or lentil soup, grilled or braised tofu with vegetables, or adding nuts to salads.



Dairy



Move to low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or yogurt (or lactose-free dairy or fortified soy versions)

- **Add low-fat or fat-free dairy** to oatmeal or pureed vegetable soups instead of water, and to smoothies or scrambled eggs.
- The nutrients in dairy are **important at every stage of life.** Include foods like low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or yogurt. Need an alternative? Try lactose-free dairy milk or yogurt that's low-fat or fat-free or fortified soy versions.
- Looking for a beverage? Grab a **glass of low-fat or fat-free milk or fortified soy milk** (soy beverage). Choose the unsweetened option.



Choose foods and beverages with less added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium

Limit



Tips for Less Added Sugars

- Choose **packaged foods that have less or no added sugars**, such as canned fruit packed in 100% juice for an easy snack, plain yogurt (you can add your own fruit), and unsweetened applesauce.
- Try chilled, **plain water or sparkling water with a squeeze of fruit** for a splash of flavor. Limit sugary beverages such as soda, lemonade, sports drinks, or fruit drinks.

Tips for Less Saturated Fat

- In place of foods higher in saturated fat, **look for foods like nuts, seeds, and fatty fish** like tuna, salmon, trout, and mackerel, which are high in unsaturated fats and a healthier choice.
- Choose **canola oil, olive oil, or other vegetable oils** for cooking.

Tips for Less Salt and Sodium

- Start simple by choosing foods with less sodium. **Check the Nutrition Facts label and choose foods with a lower percent (%) Daily Value (DV) for sodium** on the label, especially if a family member has high blood pressure, diabetes, or kidney disease.
- **Cook at home!** Preparing your own food puts you in control of how much sodium goes into your meals. Add flavor to foods with herbs, spices, lemon, lime, and vinegar instead of salt or seasonings high in sodium.





The Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Developed jointly by the U.S Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* are the Nation's science-based guidance on how to eat for good health. The Guidelines encourage all Americans to start and maintain a healthy eating routine. Along with physical activity, improving what you eat can help you reduce your risk of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, some cancers, and obesity. Taking the steps in this brochure will help you follow the *Dietary Guidelines*.

For more information:

[MyPlate.gov](https://www.myplate.gov)

[DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.DietaryGuidelines.gov)



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Eat Right

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



Beyond the Table

This year's theme for National Nutrition Month® inspires us to look *Beyond the Table* when thinking about our health and the environment. Choices we make daily, including what we're going to eat and drink, can make a big difference — both now and in the future.



School and family meals are important, but healthy choices go beyond the foods and drinks we enjoy while sitting at the lunch or dinner table. They include our snacks, breakfasts on the go, eating out with friends, and even where foods are grown and how they're prepared.

Our food choices also can affect the health of our planet. Have you ever thought about the work that goes into producing the foods we eat? This includes how food is grown or raised, where and how it is made, as well as its safety. It's important to think about the foods we eat and the nutrition they provide, but is there more we could be doing to improve our health and the environment?

These are a few tips to help you reach Beyond the Table:

Focus on a healthy eating routine

Making healthy food choices may seem difficult at times, especially when eating away from home, but it doesn't have to be. Many eating places provide nutrition information right on the menu or online to help you choose healthier options. When purchasing food from a store, use a grocery list and pay attention to sales. You also can learn about resources in your community that offer access to healthy foods, such as food banks.

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Not quite ready to get your hands in the dirt? Many local farms offer programs, which include "farm shares" of produce during a growing season. Depending on the farm, additional products such as eggs or meat might be included.



Supporting farmers by buying locally grown and seasonal foods can help you eat with the environment in mind. Other steps include decreasing food waste at home by creating new dishes from leftovers or by composting. You also can add more plant-based foods to your meals and snacks.

National Nutrition Month® is a great time to start thinking about how you can go *Beyond the Table* to improve both your health and the planet's.

To find a registered dietitian nutritionist in your area and get additional food and nutrition information, visit eatright.org.



The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.

This tip sheet is provided by: