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NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH® 2021: ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS ENCOURAGES ‘EATING RIGHT FOR LIFE STAGES’

CHICAGO –For National Nutrition Month® 2021, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends people adjust their eating habits to address the nutritional needs of their bodies during all stages of life.

“What works for you in your twenties won’t necessarily work for you in your fifties. As you age and evolve, so do your health and nutrition needs. It’s important to eat right for life,” said registered dietitian nutritionist Colleen Tewksbury, a national spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in Philadelphia, Pa.

In March, the Academy focuses attention on healthful eating through [National Nutrition Month®](#). This year’s theme, *Personalize Your Plate*, promotes creating nutritious meals to meet individuals’ cultural and personal food preferences. The Academy encourages everyone to make informed food choices and develop sound eating and physical activity habits they can follow all year long.

The new 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* provide authoritative advice to help people of all ages meet their dietary needs while limiting added sugars, sodium and saturated fat. The federal guidelines are issued and updated every five years.

“A registered dietitian nutritionist, a food and nutrition expert, can translate the recommendations of the *Dietary Guidelines* to help people of all ages find the healthful eating plan that works best for them. Modest changes like healthful food choices and regular physical activity can help people manage or reduce their risk for chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, obesity or heart disease,” Tewksbury said.

To find a registered dietitian nutritionist near you, use the Academy’s online [Find an Expert](#) service.

Registered dietitian nutritionists can show people how to use [MyPlate](#), which provides practical, consumer-friendly tips to follow the key recommendations of the *Dietary Guidelines*. MyPlate recommends visualizing your plate as nutrient-rich sections with one quarter reserved for grains, another with protein-rich foods and the remaining half with fruits and vegetables along with a serving of low-fat or fat-free dairy.

In addition to maintaining healthful eating habits throughout life, Tewksbury recommends the following tips:

- **Teens to 20s** — Build bone density by eating and drinking calcium-rich foods and beverages such as fat-free or low-fat dairy milk or yogurt or calcium-fortified soy beverages. Non-dairy sources of calcium include fortified cereals, beans, some leafy greens and canned salmon with bones.
- **20s to 30s** — Reduce your risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, Type 2 diabetes and heart disease by eating more dietary fiber, including whole grains, legumes, fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds. Women of childbearing age should include sources of folate, such as beans and peas and dark-green leafy vegetables, and eat foods fortified with folic acid such as breads, cereals and other grain products. A folic acid supplement may also be needed and should be discussed with a health care provider.
- **30s to 40s** — Continue to eat a variety of nutritious foods, especially plenty of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and beans, peas and lentils for vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and dietary fiber.
- **40s to 50s** — Fine tune your healthful eating habits and continue to incorporate regular physical activity as your body changes due to fluctuating hormones and slowing metabolism. Also continue to focus on ways to limit foods and beverages with added sugars, salt and saturated fat.
- **60s and beyond** — Continue to include a variety of protein-rich foods to maintain bone strength and incorporate strength-building activities to maintain muscle. Good sources of protein include seafood, lean cuts of meat, eggs, beans, tofu and nuts. Animal-based protein foods also provide vitamin B12, which is a concern for some older adults. Foods also may be fortified with vitamin B12 or a supplement may be recommended by your health care provider.

National Nutrition Month®

National Nutrition Month® was initiated in 1973 as National Nutrition Week, and it became a month-long observance in 1980 in response to growing interest in nutrition. The second Wednesday of March is Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day, an annual celebration of the dedication of RDNs as the leading advocates for advancing the nutritional status of Americans and people around the world. This year's observance will be March 10.

As part of National Nutrition Month®, the [Academy's website will host resources](#) to spread the message of good nutrition and the importance of an overall healthy lifestyle for all. Follow National Nutrition Month® on the Academy's social media channels including [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) using #NationalNutritionMonth.

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Representing more than 100,000 credentialed nutrition and dietetics practitioners, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy. Visit the Academy at www.eatright.org.