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NO MAGIC PILLS: FOR NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH® 2021, ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS RECOMMENDS NUTRIENT-RICH FOODS FOR VITAMINS, MINERALS

CHICAGO – Good nutrition is essential for a healthy immune system, which may offer protection from seasonal illness and other health problems. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends focusing on food to get the vitamins and minerals your body needs to stay healthy.

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.

“There is no magic immune-boosting pill or food, but a well-balanced eating plan that includes a variety of nutritious foods from all of the food groups will help give your body the nutrients it needs to support your immune system,” said registered dietitian nutritionist Wesley McWhorter, a national spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in Houston, Texas.

The Academy recommends obtaining nutrients primarily through food, because multivitamin and mineral supplements are not scientifically proven to prevent disease. They can benefit those who are unable to meet vitamin and mineral requirements through food or have been diagnosed with a deficiency, according to the Academy's 2018 position paper “[Micronutrient Supplementation](#).”

“To get the most nutrients out of your meals, a registered dietitian nutritionist can help navigate delicious, healthful eating plans that are individualized to meet your preferences. An RDN can also provide guidance if supplements are needed,” McWhorter said. To find a registered dietitian nutritionist near you, use the Academy's online [Find an Expert](#) service.

McWhorter recommends the following nutrients to help support a healthy immune system:

- **Beta carotene** is found in plant foods, such as sweet potatoes, spinach, carrots, mango, broccoli and tomatoes.
- **Vitamin C** is found in citrus fruits such as oranges and grapefruit, bell peppers, and strawberries or foods fortified with vitamin C, such as some breakfast cereals.
- **Vitamin D** is found in fatty fish, eggs and milk and 100 percent juices fortified with vitamin D.
- **Zinc** tends to be better absorbed from animal sources such as beef and seafood, but also is in plant-based sources such as beans, nuts and seeds.

- **Probiotics** are “good” bacteria that promote health. They can be found in cultured dairy products such as yogurt and in fermented foods such as kimchi.
- **Protein** is found in animal sources such as seafood, lean meat, poultry, eggs and plant-based sources such as beans and peas, soy products, nuts and seeds.

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.