

WELL BALANCED^o

- MARCH 2024 -

Nutrition Month

Fuel YOUR Future



Welcome to Nutrition Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the significance of healthy eating habits and their impact on our overall well-being. A healthy diet protects against many chronic diseases but did you know it can also make a huge impact on mental health? A focus on nutrition can:

- » Reduce risk and severity of depression
- » Aid in the treatment of depressive disorders
- » Reduce anxiety and stress
- » Improve mood and satisfaction with life.

Ready to make a change? Healthy eating should start with achievable and maintainable small goals, and then build from there. Here are three tips to get you started:



Want more resources on nutrition?

Talk to your employer to find out what is available to you through your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or employee wellness program.



Visit welcoa.org/health-observances for online nutrition resources.

- » **Change one thing in your diet for three to four weeks.** Once it becomes a staple of your diet, move on to another area and repeat the process. For example, if you drink soda three or four times per week, cut it back to twice a week, and drink a mixture of seltzer water the other days. Eventually, drink soda once a week, and then try for none.
- » **Expand good habits.** If you eat a daily serving of fiber (beans, lentils, nuts, etc.) add another one to an everyday meal by substituting it for something less healthy (throw it on your salad or whole grain pasta, for example). This helps choosing healthy foods feel more automatic and less like a chore.
- » **Cook something new.** Sometimes dealing with recipes, ingredients, and cooking feels intimidating, so focus on creating just one new meal per week, which can help make preparing meals less daunting.

Nutrition month is a great reason to start incorporating small changes to your diet, growing healthy habits for your mind and body from there.

SNACK TIME!

When deciding on a snack, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Do some Sunday prepping so you're set with grab-and-go option for the week. According to USDA MyPlate, here are some tips to get you started:



Build Your Own

Make your own trail mix with unsalted nuts and add-ins such as seeds, dried fruit, plain popcorn, or a sprinkle of chocolate chips.



Prep Ahead

Portion snack foods into reusable containers when you get home from the store so they're ready to grab-and-go.



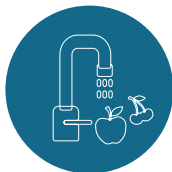
Make it a Combo

Use the food groups to build a satisfying snack: yogurt and berries, apple with nut butter, or whole-grain crackers with turkey and avocado.



Eat Vibrant Vegetables

Try raw vegetables with dips. Try dipping bell peppers, carrots, or cucumbers in hummus, guacamole, or a low-fat yogurt sauce.



Wash and Enjoy

Apples, pears, grapes, and fresh berries are great go-to snacks when you are looking for a quick sweet treat.



Stock Your Fridge

Keep cut up fruits and vegetables visible and within reach in the fridge for a convenient anytime snack.
