



National Nutrition Month

Why is nutrition important? Your body needs six essential nutrients provided through your diet in adequate amount, so that you can live, grow and function properly. The six essential nutrients required for good health and wellbeing are carbohydrates, protein, fat, vitamins, minerals and water. The most nutritious or nutrient-dense foods include fresh vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, legumes, raw nuts and seeds, fat-free and low fat dairy products, and lean meats. Most importantly, foods with none or very little saturated fat, sodium and added sugars! Knowing how to read nutrition fact labels on products is essential when deciding if a food item is nutrient dense or not.



Basics of Reading the Nutrition Facts Label

- Start with the **Serving Size**: Look here for both the serving size and the number of servings in the package. Compare your portion size to the actual serving size listed. For example, if the serving size is one cup and you eat two cups, you are getting twice the calories, fat and other nutrients listed on the label.
- Check out the **Total Calories**: Find out how many calories are in a single serving,
- Let the percent **Daily Values (DV)** be your guide: Daily Values are average levels of nutrients for a person eating 2,000 calories a day. A food item with 5% DV of fat provides 5% of the total fat that a person consuming 2,000 calories a day should eat. You personally may need more or less than 2,000 calories per day. For some nutrients you may need more or less than 100% DV.
- Limit **Saturated Fat, Added Sugars and Sodium**: Saturated and Trans fats are linked to an increase in heart disease. Eating too much added sugar makes it difficult to meet nutrient needs. High levels of sodium can add up to high blood pressure. Overall, aim for low percentages of DV of these nutrients.
- Look at the **Vitamins, Minerals and Fiber**: Choose more fruits and vegetables to get more of these nutrients. Aiming for high percentages of DV of these nutrients.
- **Protein, Carbohydrates and Sugars**: The percentage Daily Value for protein is not required on the label; therefore, eat moderate portions of lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese. Strive when eating carbohydrates to mainly eat vegetables and fruit, as well as whole grain breads, cereals, rice and pasta. Always keep an eye out for sugars-natural occurring sugars are fructose and lactose, whereas sucrose, corn syrup and other syrups are refined sugars.
- Check the **Ingredients**: Most important aspect of making sure you are getting the proper nutrients for good health is simply looking at the ingredient list. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. Reading the ingredients is key when one has a food allergy, as well as seeing what kinds of extra sugars, preservatives and other added ingredients. Try to buy products with as few ingredients as possible, as well as making sure you can read and know what all the ingredients listed are.

Health Tip: Eating Right On A Budget

- Plan for the Week Ahead: Before heading for the grocery store, plan your meals and snacks for the week. Review the recipes for the required ingredients. And before going shopping first check to see which foods you already have and then make your grocery list. You will be less likely to buy extra items that you do not need!
- Decide How Much to Make: Foods purchased in bulk are almost always cheaper. Therefore, try doubling recipes that can be used for lunches, meals later in the week or frozen for future use. This saves not only money but also time in the kitchen.

- **Decide Where to Shop:** Check the local newspaper, online and at the front of the store for sales and coupons. While at the store compare prices of different brands and different sizes of the same brand to see which has a lower unit price. Often it is cheaper to buy particular items such as meats and sea foods at one store, and then the other items like fresh produce and bulk items elsewhere.
- **Shop for foods that are in season:** Fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season are usually easier to get and cheaper. Local farmer's markets are also a great source for seasonal produce.
- **Make your own healthy snacks:** Convenience costs money, so many pre-packaged snacks cost more. Plan ahead and make your own snacks by purchasing the ingredients (raw nuts and dried fruit) for trail mix separately and mixing it all together to make a big batch. Divide up yogurt into smaller containers, veggies in zip lock baggies, air-popped popcorn and fresh fruits are also all great low cost snacks.
- **Cook more, and eat out less:** Majority of foods prepared at home are cheaper and more nutritious than eating out. Even though eating out is convenient, that convenience comes with a price tag. Not only is it ultimately cheaper cooking at home, but also you will most likely have more nutrient dense food for leftovers.
- **Drink more water:** Water is both significantly cheaper to drink compared to purchasing soda, juice, beer or wine, as well as essential in transporting nutrients throughout the body.



Exercise of the Month

Maintaining a strong digestive system goes hand in hand with proper nutrition. One way you can assist your digestive system in detoxifying and cleansing the body is by performing twists. Twisting yoga poses help wring out the internal organs and speed up the digestion process.

Supine Twist

Begin by lying on your back and relaxing your muscles, breath and mind for a few moments. Extend both arms out along the floor at shoulder level, making a T-shape. Keeping your shoulders on the ground, inhale drawing both knees up to the chest. Then on the exhale let your knees fall to the right, taking your hips and lower torso with them. Try to consciously release any stiffness you feel in your back muscles by thinking of settling your spine into the floor.

Focus on your breath. As you inhale filling up the diaphragm create space in the abdomen, and then on each exhale relax the muscles deeper into the twist. Hold for a couple inhales and exhales, and then bring the knees back to center and twist to the other side.

Recipe of the Month

Nutrient Packed Green Smoothie

Directions

1. Pick One (Unsweetened) Liquid 1.5 cups: Almond milk, Hemp milk, Coconut milk, Coconut water or Plain water
2. Choose your Greens (1-2 Big Handfuls): Kale, Spinach, Beet Greens, Collards, Swiss Chard, Cucumber, Celery
3. Choose your Fruit (1-2 cups fresh or frozen): Banana, Apple, Melon, Strawberries, Blackberries, Blueberries, Raspberries, Mango, Pear, Peach, Pineapple, Oranges



4. Supercharge It (Add as many as you like): 1-2tbsp Plant Based Protein, 1tbsp Chia Seeds, 1tbsp Ground Flaxseed, 2tbsp Avocado, 1tbsp Hemp Seeds, 1tsp Coconut Oil or Flax Oil, 1tbsp Nut Butter, 1tbsp Raw Cacao, 1tbsp Bee Pollen, 1-2tsp Cinnamon, 1tsp Ginger, 1-2tsp Vanilla extract, 1-2tsp Green Powders (Spirulina, Chlorella) or 1tsp Maca Powder
5. Only if needed add a sweetener: 1tsp Stevia, 1tsp raw Honey, 1tsp Chopped Dates or 1tsp Maple Syrup
6. Blend it all up!

**For more Health & Wellness information visit: www.4eap.com
Or Call for More Information: (800) 324-4327**

Interface EAP PO Box 421879 Houston TX 77242-1879 (800) 324-4327