

SENIOR NUTRITION NEWS

March 2025



March is National Nutrition Month®

March is National Nutrition Month®. The theme is, **Food Connects Us** which showcases that food connects us to our cultures, our families, and our friends. Health, memories, traditions, seasons, and access can all impact our connections related to food.



The following tips can help you in your journey with food and health:

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

- Eat a variety of colored vegetables, including dark-green, red, and orange.
- Beans, peas, and lentils are also good choices.
- Fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables can all be healthful options.
- Look for “reduced sodium” or “no-salt-added” vegetables.
- Choose fruits that are fresh, dried, frozen, or canned in water or 100% juice.

Make at least half your grains whole.

- Read food labels to choose foods where a whole grain is the first ingredient listed. These include whole grain breads, cereals, crackers, and noodles, as well as corn tortillas, brown rice, bulgur, millet, and oats.

Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese.

- Older adults need more calcium and vitamin D to help keep bones healthy.
- Include three servings of fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt or cheese each day.
- If lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk or a calcium-fortified soy beverage.

Vary your protein choices.

- Eat a variety of protein group foods each week such as lean meat, poultry and eggs, seafood, nuts, beans, peas, and lentils.

Limit sodium, saturated fat and added sugars.

- Read labels to choose foods with lower amounts of sodium and saturated fat.
- Add spices or herbs to season food without adding salt.
- Select fruit for dessert more often than desserts that are high in added sugar.

Stay well-hydrated.

- Drink water throughout the day to stay hydrated and promote good digestion.
- Instead of sugary drinks include unsweetened beverages, like low-fat and fat-free milk, fortified soy beverages, and 100% fruit juices.

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Green Food

Green fruits and vegetables contain health promoting phytochemicals. Studies have shown that eating green foods on a regular basis can help protect against certain cancers, maintain healthy vision and promote strong bones and teeth.



A quick list of green foods include: leafy greens, asparagus, green peppers, broccoli, green beans, peas, cabbage, green onions, Brussels sprouts, okra, zucchini, green apples, green grapes, honeydew melon, kiwifruit and limes.

Consider these other green food ideas:

- Make a tossed lettuce salad, and add extra green with green peppers.
- Cabbage is a festive green addition to your St. Patrick's Day meal.
- Include kiwi fruit, green grapes and/or honeydew melon in your fruit salad.
- Add avocado slices to salads and sandwiches. To maintain the green color, eat avocados immediately or sprinkle them with lemon or lime juice. Two tablespoons of avocado have about 5 grams of fat, but it's mostly heart-healthy monounsaturated fat.
- Enjoy your favorite veggie dip with broccoli florets or a favorite fruit dip with green apple slices.
- Make a vegetable pizza with green peppers and/or spinach.
- Serve thinly sliced green onions over rice, pasta, broiled or baked fish or soups.

Sources: <https://www.eatright.org/about-national-nutrition-month>; https://extension.usu.edu/news_sections/home_family_and_food/eat-green-st-patricks retrieved 02/25/25

For Information on Eat Smart Idaho classes, contact the Nutrition Instructor in your county:

Panhandle: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary,
Kootenai & Shoshone Counties 208-292-2525

North Central Idaho: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah,
Lewis, & Nez Perce Counties 208-883-2267



Kali Gardiner, RD, LD, ESI Coordinator
E-mail: kalig@uidaho.edu
Phone: 208-292-2525

Shelly Johnson, MS, ESI Administrator
Email: sjohnson@uidaho.edu
Website: www.eatsmartidaho.org

This work and material is supported and funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-SNAP and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. USDA and University of Idaho are equal opportunity providers.