



Celebrate Healthy Eating in March!

NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH® is an education and information campaign sponsored by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. It is held annually in March and invites everyone to learn about making informed food choices and developing healthful eating and physical activity habits. It has been a month-long observance since 1980, the theme for National Nutrition Month 2024 is **“Beyond the Table.”**



2024 NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH®
A CAMPAIGN By
THE ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

IDEAS TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH THAT GO BEYOND THE TABLE:

Eat locally grown produce. Join a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) or visit a farmers’ market or farm to see where your food comes from. Finding fresh, local, seasonal foods will enable you to eat well, support community farmers and practice sustainability.

Share your favorite, healthy recipes. Start a recipe exchange with your families.

Reduce the sodium in your diet. The average American consumes twice the recommended upper limit of sodium. Excess sodium in your diet can contribute to high blood pressure. Add some spices to your food and leave the salt shaker in the kitchen.

Avoid unhealthy choices during time crunches. Set aside one day each week to plan and cook healthy meals. Make a double batch of your favorites and freeze half for later.

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Hydration & the Active Child

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the amount of physical activity children need depends on their age. Children ages 3–5 years need to be active throughout the day and adolescents ages 6–17 need to be active for at least 60 minutes every day.

Children love to play and be active. It doesn’t need to be a structured sport; anything that gets them up and moving counts. Encouraging children to be physically active every day helps them stay active and healthy throughout life.

Hydration during exercise

Drinking fluid during exercise helps to replace the fluids lost in perspiration, which reduces the risk of heat stress, maintains normal body function and boosts performance levels.

The best way to hydrate during exercise is simple, drink water. Water is best during and after a workout that’s less than an hour. With exercise lasting longer than an hour, sports drinks may be useful.

Tips to encourage hydration

- Mark lines on water bottles to show how much should be consumed by a certain time.
- Infuse water with fresh fruit or herbs to add flavor and variety.
- Offer water in fun cups or with straws.
- Be a good example and drink water during exercise and throughout the day.

INSIDE:

- Understanding and Managing Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease
- 5 Smart Tips for Perfect Pasta
- Recipes
- Food Funny

Celebrate Healthy Eating in March!

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When grocery shopping, shop the outer aisles. You can find produce, meats, fish and eggs in the outer aisles of grocery stores, while processed foods live within the aisles.

Look for whole foods. Choose foods closest to nature for more nutritional bang for your buck. Choose to eat something fresh; if you've never tried anything but canned pineapple, try a fresh one.

Don't believe everything you read. Unregulated front of the package claims such as "all natural" or "low-fat" are deceiving.

Read nutrition facts labels. Be an informed consumer; although many fresh foods with great nutrition won't require labels, be sure to look at processed food labels to determine if they are worth buying.

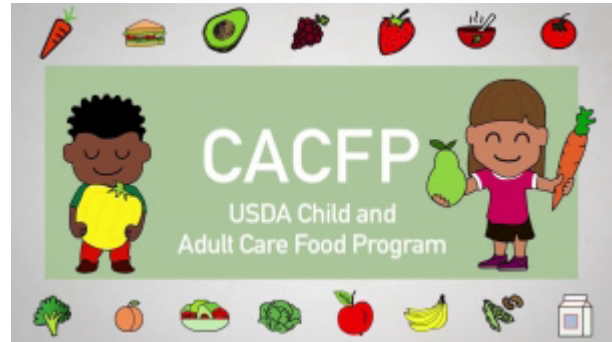
Drink tap water. Want to eat healthy on a budget? Not only is tap water free, it is also better for the environment and contains cavity-preventing fluoride. Staying hydrated prevents dehydration headaches (the cause of 70% of all headaches), prevents overeating and keeps skin healthy. Use the money you save to buy healthier food!

Learn to recognize all forms of sugar. It can come with different names, so look for corn syrup, fructose, caramel, syrups, honey and more.

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM WEEK

CACFP Week is a national education and information campaign sponsored annually the third week of March by the National CACFP Sponsors Association. The campaign is designed to raise awareness of how the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program works to combat hunger. The CACFP brings healthy foods to tables across the country for children in child care centers, homes and afterschool programs as well as adults in day care. This year we celebrate CACFP Week from March 10th to 16th and the theme is **"Eating the Rainbow."**

Shop for colorful foods. A variety of phytonutrients are available with a rainbow of colorful fruits and veggies on your plate. Phytonutrients add a cancer fighting element to your meals with their rich color. Increasing the number of fruits and veggies in your diet can also help protect against diabetes and heart disease.



Simple rainbow recipe ideas for celebrating healthy eating with children: For each recipe include either a rainbow of fresh, chopped, sliced or shredded fruit or vegetables. Let children help with the preparation or make their own!

- **Rainbow Plate:** Help children arrange fresh fruits/vegetables into a rainbow on their plate.
- **Rainbow Wraps:** Using whole grain tortillas wrap up fresh fruit with a nut spread or fresh vegetables with a spread of hummus.
- **Rainbow Coleslaw:** Toss a variety of raw, shredded veggies with your favorite coleslaw dressing.
- **Rainbow Parfaits:** Layer diced, fresh fruit with yogurt or fresh veggies with cottage cheese in clear glasses.
- **Rainbow Skewers:** Provide wooden skewers for children to make their own fruit or veggie skewer.
- **Rainbow Pasta Salad:** Toss cooked, drained pasta with veggies and your favorite salad dressing.
- **Rainbow Pizza:** Let children top English muffins with sauce, cheese and a rainbow of veggies.
- **Rainbow Toast:** Spread toast with butter or other spread and let children add the rainbow.
- **Rainbow Yogurt Bowl:** Spoon yogurt into a bowl and let children top the yogurt with a rainbow of fruit.

March is an excellent time to think more about the food you're eating and focus on nutritional health. Rather than labeling foods good or bad, think of food as nourishment and maximize your intake of protein, vitamins, minerals and fiber through fresh, nourishing foods while minimizing your intake of foods high in sugar, salt and unhealthy fats.

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Understanding and Managing Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (HFMD) is a common childhood illness caused by the Coxsackievirus. While generally mild, HFMD can cause discomfort for young children. Family child care homes, being environments where children often interact closely, must be equipped with knowledge on prevention, identification, and the best ways to manage HFMD.



UNDERSTANDING HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

HFMD typically affects children under the age of 5, although older children and adults can also contract the virus. The disease is characterized by the development of sores or blisters on the hands, feet and inside the mouth. It is highly contagious and spreads through close personal contact, as well as through contact with contaminated surfaces and fluids.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

1 Hand Hygiene: Regular handwashing with soap and water is crucial in preventing the spread of HFMD. Caregivers in family child care homes should encourage children to wash their hands thoroughly, especially after using the toilet and before meals.

2 Surface Disinfection: Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, toys and communal areas can help prevent the spread of the virus. Using a solution of bleach diluted in water is an effective method to disinfect.

3 Isolation of Sick Children: If a child is diagnosed with HFMD, it is important to isolate them from other children to prevent the spread of the virus. Parents may need to be called to pick up their children and they should keep them home until they are no longer contagious.

IDENTIFYING SYMPTOMS

HFMD typically starts with a fever, followed by the development of painful sores on the hands, feet and inside the mouth. Caregivers should be vigilant in observing any signs of discomfort or changes in behavior in children under their care.

TREATMENT FOR HFMD

1 Fluid Intake: Encourage children to drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated, especially if they have sores in their mouth, making it painful to swallow. Offer a variety of liquids such as water, clear soups, milk and fruit juice.

2 Pain Relief Medications: Over-the-counter pain relievers such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen can help alleviate fever and discomfort. Parents should follow appropriate dosage guidelines after consulting with their child's physician.

3 Comfort Measures: Provide soft, easy-to-eat foods that are gentle on the mouth sores. Avoid spicy or acidic foods that may cause further irritation. Additionally, offer comfort through activities that do not involve close physical contact with other children.

While Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease is common in childhood, family child care homes can take proactive measures to prevent its spread and effectively manage cases that arise. By promoting good hygiene practices, identifying symptoms early and implementing appropriate treatment measures, caregivers can create a safe and supportive environment for children affected by HFMD. Regular communication with parents and collaboration with healthcare professionals are essential components of managing this childhood disease within the family child care setting.

Chicken Meatballs with Marinara Sauce

Ground chicken	1 pound	Parsley, dried	1/2 tsp
Parmesan cheese, grated	1/3 cup	Paprika	1/4 tsp
Egg, beaten	1	Salt and pepper	to taste
Garlic minced	2 cloves	Olive oil	2 Tbsp
Basil, dried	1 tsp	Marinara sauce	1 (29 oz) can
Oregano dried	1/2 tsp	Pasta, whole wheat	8 ounces

1. In a large bowl, combine chicken, cheese, breadcrumbs, egg, garlic, seasonings and combine until well blended.
2. Using wet hands form the mixture into approximately 16 small meatballs.
3. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat and sauté meatballs for 2–3 minutes per side, until lightly browned, but not fully cooked.
4. Pour marinara sauce over meatballs, reduce heat to low and simmer uncovered for 15–20 minutes. Cook the pasta according to package directions. Drain, reserving about 1/2 cup of pasta water. Add pasta and water to the sauce with the meat balls, mixing well.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for whole grain-rich and meat/meat alternate

— *Feelgoodfoodie.net*

St. Patrick's Day Muffins

Milk	3/4 cup	Vanilla extract	1 tsp
Butter, melted	1/2 cup	Whole wheat flour	1 cup
Sugar	1/2 cup	Enriched flour	1 cup
Baby spinach	4 cups packed (6 ounces)	Cinnamon	1 1/2 tsp
Banana, ripe	1 large	Baking powder	2 tsp
Egg	1 large	Baking soda	1/2 tsp
		Salt	1/2 tsp

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray muffin tins with cooking spray or use silicone or paper muffin liners.
2. To a blender add milk, raw spinach, banana, sugar, egg, vanilla and melted butter. Blend until completely pureed. Combine dry ingredients in a separate bowl.
3. Fold the spinach mixture and dry ingredients together gently until just combined, do not over-mix.
4. Scoop the batter into the muffin pan and bake for 17-20 minutes, or until the muffins bounce back when you touch the top.

Yield: 16 servings

Meets requirement for whole grain-rich.



Kickin' it in the Kitchen

5 SMART TIPS FOR PERFECT PASTA

Don't rinse the pasta

The starch in the pasta water is there to help the sauce adhere. Pasta, after all, means “paste,” which may help you remember not to rinse the pasta in order to meld the sauce to the noodle.

Salt the cooking water

The boiling process is the only time you can season the pasta. Cooking water should taste salty, about the level of a good chicken broth.

Don't add oil to the pasta water

Don't attempt to flavor your pasta or “prevent it from sticking” by adding oil. Oil will prevent the noodles from sticking to each other but it will also prevent your sauce from sticking to your pasta.

Check pasta early and often

Al dente means “to the tooth.” Pasta shouldn't be mush but have a nice chewy texture. Start taste-testing your pasta 2-3 minutes before the package directions indicate.

Save some pasta water

The starchy, seasoned cooking water will help create a pasta sauce that clings to every noodle. Always add a little to your sauce as you combine the pasta and sauce.



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Food Q. What has eyes but cannot see?
Funny A. A potato!