



Healthy eating tips for National Nutrition Month!

How many times a day should I eat?

Listen to your body! You need to learn the cues your body gives you to indicate a need for fuel. Don't let your "tank" get too empty! Eating often is ideal (5-6 times/day) to keep yourself satisfied and to keep your blood sugar stable which helps to prevent food cravings as well as overeating. Also, slipping into a starvation mode makes your body want to store fat. Spread your calories and your protein intake throughout the day for satiety and remember to eat plenty of fiber –think whole grains, beans, fruits and veggies (see attached sheet) to slow absorption and keep you feeling full. Recommended daily fiber intake is 25-30 grams.

Got milk??

Are you getting in your 3 servings daily?? There are many health benefits!

Dairy provides calcium and 8 other essential nutrients including potassium, phosphorus, protein, vitamins A, D and B12, riboflavin, and niacin to **help keep bones strong** and bodies fit. No matter how healthy you are, your body starts losing bone mass naturally after age 30 or earlier. The result can be brittle, fragile bones and poor posture associated with osteoporosis. The good news is there are simple steps you can take to maintain bone health throughout your life. Eating 3 servings a day of low-fat dairy (milk, cheese, and yogurt) is important. Low fat dairy products offer the most calcium per serving. Products with less fat (non-fat or 1%) help you avoid artery-damaging saturated fat and cholesterol. Other sources of calcium include tofu and other calcium-fortified soy foods, legumes such as dried beans and lentils, some green leafy vegetables, sardines and salmon (with the bones), almonds, and calcium-fortified orange juice. Calcium, like other minerals, is absorbed rather selectively by the body. It appears that calcium is best absorbed from food sources rather than from supplements. Participating in regular weight bearing exercise (walking or jogging, tennis, dancing, weight training) can also help to build stronger bones and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

Intake of low-fat dairy and plenty of fruits and vegetables also seems to **help lower blood pressure**. Studies have shown that the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan www.dashdiet.org is an effective way to lower your blood pressure. In fact, this low-fat diet, rich in dairy foods, fruits and vegetables, has effects similar to single drug therapy in lowering the risk of heart attack and stroke by reducing blood pressure! Researchers aren't sure why but they feel the trio of minerals-calcium, magnesium and potassium—found in these foods may play an important role in blood pressure control.

A four-year clinical trial found that key milk nutrients, calcium and vitamin D **may reduce the risk of cancer** in women by at least 60 %. The women who took calcium and vitamin D had 60% lower chances of developing cancer while the decline in women who took only calcium was 47%. Dairy products are some of the few food sources of vitamin D, so consuming them on a daily basis could provide sufficient calcium and vitamin D levels and therefore lower the chances of cancer.

New research shows the **dairy food connection to weight loss and diabetes prevention**. Calcium and vitamin D may lower the risk of type 2 diabetes in people with pre-diabetes. In a study done at Tufts School of Medicine, participants with pre-diabetes who took vitamin D and calcium supplements for 3 years had a smaller rise in fasting blood glucose

compared to those taking a placebo pill. Vitamin D and calcium may have a direct effect on the pancreas to enhance insulin secretion. Food sources are always preferable to supplements for getting in nutrients because of the many other benefits of the foods and because the nutrients in the food work may work synergistically or “in concert”.

Dairy products can help **keep your gut healthy** as well. **Probiotics** (from the Greek word meaning “for life”) are beneficial bacteria that help to process our nutrients, produce important vitamins, support our immune system and help keep our digestive tract healthy according to Ruth Litchfield, ISU assistant professor and extension service nutrition specialist. Good bacteria are added to pasteurized milk or cream to change some of the lactose (milk sugar) into lactic acid. This gives the product a tangy taste and health benefits. Look for “active yogurt cultures” or the Live and Active Cultures seal to ensure the presence of these bacteria. These products include yogurt, acidophilus milk, kefir and buttermilk. Some manufacturers are adding additional good bacteria which may help those with lactose intolerance as well as heartburn, urinary tract yeast infections, gastro esophageal reflux. Activia yogurt adds a type of bacteria, Bifidus regularis, which may relieve constipation. In addition, sometimes inulin fiber to feed the good bacteria is added as well.

So you getting in your dairy intake can be beneficial to your health in **many** ways—be sure you are getting those benefits! Check out the attached tips for finding out how to make sure you are giving your bones what they need

St. Patrick’s Day is right around the corner! Even if you are not Irish you can serve up a **quick and healthy** Irish meal! Purchase sliced and lean deli corned beef which is already cooked (just heat in microwave) and serve with boiled red potatoes and steamed cabbage. Cabbage contains glucosinolates which are powerful cancer fighting nutrients. The downside is that these nutrients are partly lost by cooking the food. If you want to preserve the glucosinolates it is better to steam, stir fry or cook the food in the microwave. This way the nutrients are not lost. Cabbage is also a good source of vitamin C and fiber. Red potatoes contain high levels of antioxidants, especially carotenoids and anthocyanins. Potatoes are rich in vitamin C and potassium (eat the skin to get all of the nutrients!)

Here are some additional Irish meals ideas:

- http://find.myrecipes.com/recipes/recipefinder.dyn?action=displayRecipe&recipe_id=222933&package_id=410373
- <http://www.foodfit.com/recipes/recipe.asp?rid=1904&ic=6033>
- <http://www.recipezaar.com/sitenews/post.php?pid=906>
- <http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/Irish-Lamb-Stew/Detail.aspx>
- <http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/Special-Irish-Beef-Stew/Detail.aspx>

More tips to come after spring break!!

Sally Barclay, MS RD LD
Nutrition Clinic for Employee Wellness
Iowa State University
36 MacKay Hall
Ames, IA 50011
(515) 294-9625
barclay@iastate.edu