

March is winding down and spring will be here before we know it! I'm ready!! It's still National Nutrition Month so I want to toss out some more nutrition tips! If you want to interact with others and get even more nutrition information, join our lunch-and-learn discussion "Step up to Nutrition and Health" next Thursday, March 30 from noon to 1 PM in 0331 Palmer (please respond to this e-mail if you'd like to reserve a seat!) Feel free to bring your lunch along!

It seems we get so many messages from different sources about what is best to eat! It's best to leave the fad diets behind and use the tried and true basics (below) of healthy eating! Visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) for your own personal eating plan and to learn more about good nutrition! Remember as an ISU employee you are eligible for free nutrition counseling with a Registered Dietitian as one of your employee benefits—take advantage of it!

**Choose whole grains for their fiber and nutrition.** Aim to consume at least half of your grains as whole grains. Find whole grain bread you enjoy (with the very first ingredient containing the word "whole" and with at least 2 grams of fiber per slice). Consider oatmeal or another whole grain cereal (again watch for the word "whole" in the first listed ingredient and aim for at least 5 grams of fiber per serving). Get adventurous and try brown rice, whole wheat pasta, buckwheat, quinoa, whole wheat couscous, wild rice

**Increase your fruit and vegetable intake!** They are naturally packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and antioxidants to boost your immunity and keep you healthy and strong. (Mother Nature's gift to you!) Add them to your breakfast in smoothies, on cereal, or in omelets. Bring them for your snacks at work! Add them to your sandwich or salad as a side at lunch. And incorporate them into your dinner. Stretch yourself and try something new and different!

**Choose lower fat milk products.** They provide protein and the important nutrients of vitamins A and D and minerals like calcium, phosphorus and magnesium which form the building blocks for healthy bones and teeth. Lower fat products offer these same nutrients without the harmful saturated fat. Look for low fat or nonfat yogurt, cottage cheese, ricotta cheese, sour cream and cheese. If you are lactose intolerant, try soy beverages, yogurt or cheeses fortified with the same important nutrients.

**Go lean with protein!** Choose lean meats, poultry, and fish to provide your body with protein, iron and B vitamins. Consider meatless meals using beans, lentils, nut butters, dried peas and tofu for good quality protein without harmful saturated fats and cholesterol plus the added benefit of dietary fiber and phytochemicals that fight chronic disease.

**Drink plenty of water!** Water quenches your thirst best and keeps you well hydrated. Your cells and organs depend on water to function. One way to assess your water needs is to divide your weight in pounds in half and the result is the approximate number of ounces of fluid your body needs.

**Limit your intake of salt, alcohol and caffeine.** Use other herbs and spices to season your food—many of them have health benefits as well! Drink beverages with alcohol in moderation as they contain primarily calories and offer few nutrients to your body. Caffeine is a stimulant and excessive amounts can have drug-like effects on your body.

**Find your balance between food and physical activity.** Good health is achieved by a combination of healthy eating and active living. You don't have to be a professional athlete or get membership in a gym! Just spend 30-60 minutes each day being active by walking, gardening, bike-riding, swimming—pick your passion and find an activity you enjoy! It's amazing the health benefits it can offer to you!

Benefits of physical activity:

- Slows the loss of lean body mass

- Burn calories during exercise but this continues at a higher rate for several hours after exercise
- Exercise builds muscle (especially resistance or weight training, but aerobic activity also helps)
- Helps individuals make a commitment to a healthier lifestyle
- Boost your mood, curbs depression and lowers anxiety
- Improves sleep and enhances self-esteem
- Sustained activity is helpful in preventing weight regain
- Helps reduce the risk of CVD and diabetes

With the arrival of spring, several delicious and nutritious foods come to mind—kiwi, strawberries, asparagus, beets, morel mushrooms, spring greens, broccoli, and artichokes—give them a try and offer your body one of Mother Nature’s healthy gifts! For ideas on how to prepare these, check out the recipes on the Nutrition Clinic Website at <http://www.fshn.hs.iastate.edu/nutritionclinic/recipes.htm> and <http://www.foodfit.com/healthy/healthySpringFoods.asp> . Other helpful websites for health recipes are [www.cookinglight.com](http://www.cookinglight.com) and <http://healthy.allrecipes.com/> .

Eat healthy and enjoy!!

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