

NUTRITION NEWS

WRITTEN BY: SHANNON DAVIS, RD, CDN

LAYOUT BY: REGINA PIZZO

National Nutrition Month

MARCH 2026

March is National Nutrition Month! Every year there are a number of new findings regarding nutrition and its impact on health. Early in January, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services released the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Every five years since 1980, these guidelines are updated. The new set of guidelines highlight the importance of a balanced protein intake. Not only should this include lean meats, poultry, and eggs, but it should also include beans, peas, lentils, nuts, seeds, soy products, and seafood.

Keep in mind that our nutritional needs do change as we age. A basic plan for health promotion and disease prevention along the continuum of age should focus on a variety of foods as well as moderation in fat. It should also encompass regular physical activity, maintaining or improving body weight status, consuming adequate fluids, abstaining from smoking, limiting alcohol intake, and getting adequate sleep.

Portion size is also a key concept of any healthy diet plan. Reading food labels can be overwhelming, so the following information should be helpful in managing your portion control. Aim for 1/2 cup of starches (such as pasta, rice, and starchy vegetables like corn and peas.) Half cup portions are also appropriate for vegetables, although keep in mind that most vegetables are considered “free,” meaning that portion size is less important as vegetables tend to be low in calories and fat and high in beneficial nutrients. A protein source should consist of a 3-4 oz. serving. For example, a piece of chicken that is similar to the size of the palm of your hand or the size of a deck of cards constitutes a 3 or 4 oz serving. Serving sizes for fruits are half cup servings or one small fruit (such as one small apple or orange.) If you are not a diabetic, fruits may also be used liberally. Keep in mind that fruit juices are not as nutritious as whole fruits, and since they can con-

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NUTRITION QUIZ	2
ANSWERS TO QUIZ	3
LENTIL SAUSAGE SOUP	4

Monthly Exercise:

Shoulder Rolls

- Stand tall, arms by your sides.
- Raise your shoulders toward your ears, gently shift them forward, then down and back and up toward the ears again.
- Complete several circles in this direction and then switch, doing the same number on both sides. Finish with your shoulder away from your ears and slightly back.

tain added sugars, are generally limited more than fruit intake.

Here are some true/false questions to assess how much you know about nutrition and overall wellness, especially nutrition throughout adulthood.

1. Excess body fat is a more accurate indicator of risk of poor health than is excess body weight.
2. Men and women tend to store most excess fat in the abdomen.
3. Health problems related to obesity begin when a person's body mass index (BMI) exceeds 25.
4. The major cause of obesity in America is low thyroid gland activity.
5. Rapid weight loss likely means loss of considerable muscle tissue.
6. A weight loss program should include close examination of current eating behavior.
7. A weight loss program should discourage the consumption of meat right after the consumption of milk products.
8. Eating a low fat diet for weight control is impractical.
9. Changing habits is the single most important factor in maintaining weight loss.
10. Most weight loss attempts are followed by equivalent weight regain within a few years.



Keeping these tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in mind will also promote a healthy intake.

- ◆ Focus on fruits. Eat a variety of fruits—fresh, frozen, canned, or dried. For a 2000 calorie diet, you need 2 cups of fruit each day.
- ◆ Vary your veggies. Eat more orange and dark green vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes, broccoli, and dark leafy greens. Include beans and peas such as pinto beans, kidney beans, split peas, and lentils more often.
- ◆ Get your calcium rich foods. Have 3 cups of low fat or fat free milk or an equivalent amount of low fat yogurt and/or low fat cheese every day. (1 1/2 ounces of cheese equals 1 cup of milk). If you don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose free milk products and/or calcium fortified foods and beverages.
- ◆ Make all your grains whole. Eat at least 3 ounces of whole grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta each day. Look to see that grains such as wheat, rice, oats, or corn are referred to as "whole" in the list of ingredients.
- ◆ Go lean with protein. Choose lean meats and poultry. Bake it, broil it, or grill it. And vary your protein choices with more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.
- ◆ Know the limits on fats, salt, and sugars. Read the Nutrition Facts label on foods. Look for foods low in saturated fats and trans fats. Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little salt and/or added sugars.

So let's see how you did with the quiz from the previous page! Here are the answers and some brief explanations.

1. True. Body weight may be greater than a desirable amount, but excess weight yields a healthy risk only if it is from excess body fat. Extra muscle mass poses no risk.
2. False. Women tend to store more fat in the hip and thigh areas, whereas men tend to store fat in the abdominal area.
3. True. Health problems usually begin when a person exceeds a BMI of 25. The greater the increase, the greater the risk to your health.
4. False. Limited physical activity is much more important, as is controlling energy intake. If you take in more calories on a daily basis than you expend, the result will be weight gain.
5. True. Much muscle tissue can be lost in rapid weight loss. Rapid weight loss is also impractical because of the great restriction in calories and intake that is required.
6. True. Changes in behavior are likely to both address bad habits and reduce the tendency to relapse into these habits.
7. False. There is no evidence that eating meat affects the body's ability to metabolize and utilize the nutrients found in milk.
8. False. Recent studies show that a low fat diet is practical and can still provide satiety.
9. True. People who can change their habits are able to have more control over their food choices and behavior. This contributes to weight maintenance.
10. True. This fact must be kept in mind as a plan for weight loss and later weight maintenance is developed.

Physical fitness and nutrition often go hand in hand. Making a positive change in one area can result in positive changes in other areas! Lack of physical activity leads to more doctor visits, more hospitalizations, and increased use of medications. Here are some additional benefits to physical activity:

- ◆ May help to prevent cancers of the breast, uterus, and colon
- ◆ Strengthens your lungs and helps them to work more efficiently
- ◆ Tones and strengthens your muscles
- ◆ Keeps your joints in good condition
- ◆ Improves your balance
- ◆ May slow bone loss
- ◆ Gives you more energy
- ◆ Helps you to relax, cope better with stress, and beat the blues
- ◆ Allows you to fall asleep more quickly and sleep more soundly

Remember to choose activities that are appropriate for your lifestyle and health. Whether it's walking around the house or hitting the gym, choose the activity that is right for you (and safe for you). It is what will allow you to maintain the level of activity and reap its benefits.



Herkimer county Office for the Aging
 &
 Bassett Healthcare Network
 Is presenting
 Informational Session
FIRE AND FALL PREVENTION AT HOME

March 26 th at 1PM
 Holy Family Parish Gymnasium
 637 East John St, Little Falls
 Free light lunch will be provided
 Call 315-867-1371
 To reserve a spot

HEAP
Spring is a great time for
Clean and Tune on your furnace!
HEAP offers the
 Clean and Tune Program
Call the HEAP OFFICE



109 Mary Street, Suite 1101
Herkimer, NY 13350

Phone: 315-867-1195
Fax: 315-867-1448

E-mail: hcofa@herkimercountyny.gov

Sometimes the hardest part of getting started with some new foods is trying to find a good recipe! Here is one to get you started!

Lentil Sausage Soup

- 2 tbs vegetable oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 2 stalks celery with leaves, chopped
- 1 pound kielbasa sausage, sliced
- 2 quarts chicken broth
- 1 (15 ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 pound of dry lentils, rinsed
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil in a large stockpot over medium heat. Stir in the onion, carrots, and celery; cook and stir for 2 minutes. Add kielbasa, chicken broth, tomatoes, garlic, lentils, and bay leaves and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 2 hours. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Serve with fresh bread or dinner rolls. Pair with a fresh salad to add some more veggies!

Light Fruit Mousse

- 8 1/2 ounces frozen berries (about 2 1/4 cups)
- 2 tbs sugar - 1 large egg white
- Fresh berries and whipped cream for serving

Add fruit to a food processor and puree, about one minute. Add the sugar and combine. Add the egg white and process until smooth and fluffy and the mixture has lightened in color. (The volume should double or almost triple.) Spoon the mousse into glasses and top or layer with fresh berries and whipped cream. Serve immediately or store in the fridge for up to 2 hours.