

# March: National Nutrition Month®

By: Lisa Franzen-Castle, RD, PhD, Nutrition Specialist  
UNL Panhandle Research & Extension Center  
Author E-mail: lfranzen2@unl.edu

If you have a chronic condition, a carefully planned diet can help you manage symptoms and improve health. March is National Nutrition Month®, and The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND)



([www.eatright.org/Public/](http://www.eatright.org/Public/)) encourages people to develop a healthful eating plan centered on personal health concerns and "Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day."

Below are some tips from the Academy on eating healthy and being physically active while keeping personal health concerns in mind.

## Tips for Eating Right, Your Way, Every Day:

**Hypertension and heart disease.** Eating heart-healthy foods can help lower high blood pressure, which reduces the risk of heart attack and stroke. Even if you don't have high blood pressure, eating a heart-healthy diet reduces your chances of future heart disease. It's important to balance calories with physical activity. Increase the variety of nutrient-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat dairy. Consume foods lower in sodium, saturated fats, trans-fats, cholesterol, added sugars, and refined grains.



**Diabetes.** Managing diabetes can be challenging and understanding how foods and nutrition affect the body is important. Choose foods to support a healthy weight and heart, including whole grains, vegetables and fruits, beans, lean meat, fish and poultry, low-fat or fat-free dairy, and healthy fats. Carbohydrates affect blood sugar more than protein or fat so keeping track of carbohydrates consumed is an important part of monitoring and keeping blood sugar levels in good control.



**Food allergies and intolerances.** Learn about ingredients in foods. Eggs, wheat, milk and other food allergens often are called by other names. Food companies specify on product labels if any



major allergens are contained in the food. Manufacturers might change ingredients of products without notice, so double-check ingredient

labels every time you buy a food. Talk with your day care, school and workplace. Make sure faculty and staff are aware of the food allergies and that they know how to respond to adverse reactions. Some people are familiar with food allergies and know what to do if a person has a reaction; others may not and will need your help in keeping the risk for exposure low.

**Maintaining a healthy weight.** For those struggling with maintaining a healthy weight, establish a balance between calories consumed and calories burned through physical activity. Include foods like fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains, which offer vitamins and minerals without excess calories and keep you feeling full longer. Watch your portion sizes to help manage calorie intake and cut back on empty calories from added sugars and refined grains.



As part of this public education campaign, the Academy's website, [www.eatright.org/Public/](http://www.eatright.org/Public/), includes helpful tips, promotional tools, and nutrition education resources, to spread the message of good nutrition around the "Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day" theme. For more food, nutrition and health information go to [www.food.unl.edu](http://www.food.unl.edu) or scan the QR to go straight to the website.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

## Additional Resources & Links:

- **Heart360<sup>®</sup> from the American Heart Association.** Heart360<sup>®</sup> is an online tool which helps you track and manage your heart health and provides helpful advice and information. Just enter your health information in an easy-to-use tool, and your records will be safely and securely stored in Microsoft<sup>®</sup> HealthVault<sup>™</sup>.  
<https://www.heart360.org/>
- **Food & Fitness from the American Diabetes Association.** Covers topics such as recipes for healthy living and fitness management.  
<http://www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/?loc=GlobalNavFF>
- **Control Diabetes for Life from UNL Extension.** Control Diabetes for Life is an educational program that is offered 1-3 times a year in various locations in Nebraska. The sessions are broadcast to several locations throughout the state and recorded for later viewing. Participants learn to control diabetes while preparing nutritious and delicious foods that are low in sugar and fat.  
<http://food.unl.edu/controldiabetesforlife>
- **UNL Extension Calendar – National Food Days, Weeks, and Months for March.**  
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/march>
- **Overview of Food Allergies and Sensitivities from UNL Food.** Food allergies and sensitivities are illnesses that affect certain individuals when eating foods or food ingredients that most consumers can tolerate

with no problem.

<http://food.unl.edu/web/allergy/home>

- **Weight Management Resources from UNL Food.** Weight management is about balancing calories consumed with the calories our body "burns off." It is important to consume foods that keep our calories at a desirable level and that also provide sufficient nutrients to keep us healthy. These articles and links provide guidance on choosing foods and planning an activity level for your optimum weight.  
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/weight-management>
- **Walk Nebraska Newsletters.** Each month these newsletters cover a variety of topics related to getting active by walking year round.  
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/walknewsletters>

## Sources:

1. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. 2013. If it's March it's National Nutrition Month<sup>®</sup>. Accessed at: <http://www.eatright.org/nmm/>.
2. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. 2013. National Nutrition Month<sup>®</sup> Media Materials. Accessed at: <http://www.eatright.org/Media/content.aspx?id=7849>

Updated: March 2013